

SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED

MIKE LEGGETT

A film in seven parts for continuous single screen projection with an approximate running time of two and a half hours. A project originating in 1970, commencing in 1972 and reaching final stages of completion in 1976. The order of each parts showing is approximately chronological though each of its parts may be seen separately and in a varying order.

The intention of the project emerges from both personal concerns in filmwork evident in earlier films, (*SHEPHERD'S BUSH* and *TENDER KISSES*), and the general context of independent film-making activity in Europe in general and England in particular. The work, practically, the theoretically and critically, which has developed in the last ten years being centred on the London Film-makers Co-op has formed the mainstay of the context for my own pursuit and researches.* This, broadly speaking, has been motivated by a critique of 'dominant film' as manifest in the cinema and on television. It has been generated by a refusal to accept the illusion of meaning rooted in, for instance, the narrative use of the medium; the work has concentrated on, (in each film though with some overlapping), an attempt to de-mystify the medium, its various tools and machines though more particularly through its handling by the film-maker - the physical contact, decision making as evidence, as intent.

SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED takes Landscape as Object in front of the film-maker and

the medium; it is not about rural life or the mythology of The Land, neither does it seek to present a personalised impression, visual or otherwise of the state of residing in a rural district of the south-west of England. The coincidence of flora, fauna and man-made object, processes the total process by which an observation of this kind is made possible - specific conditions to do with both Nature, (phenomena of the material world), and men's activity with it are **recorded** but such that the relationship is essentially one of **coincidence**; pre-determined approach guides the camera's function for instance, though its operation at the time of shooting is subject to the observation and reaction of its operator. Beside the subsequent control of assembly, control of printing processes is also important; beside being able to make projection prints more important are its particular functions evident in the duplication and controlled superimposition of material.

The films demand of an audience less the identificatory and passive outlook but more the reflexive response intent upon the **clarification** of the projection and, as extension of it, the pre-projection process.

* Three reference sources can be suggested; *Structural Film Anthology*, edited by Peter Gidal; BFI, 1976. *Afterimage* Nos. 1-6 periodic mag. *Abstract Film and Beyond* by Malcolm Legrice, *Studio Vista*, 1977.

continued . . .

SHEEPMAN & THE SHEARED; INVENTORY
(Provisional).

"Sheep" - remains of a cut roll of rushes; images of sheep, splices, grease pencil marks, flash frames, marker boards and man talking to camera without sound - 3 minutes.

"Sheepman" - assembly of same found footage plus more and including images of humans, motor cars and other machines. Governed by a constant 12 frame/half second linear measurement of acetate and functioning as the durational basis for the selection and re-ordering of material originally destined to be ordered according to the dictates of an explanatory script.

"Window" - the camera and operator record 40 seconds of film each week throughout a period of twelve months from the same vantage point; each period finishes with the camera framing the *area* in front of the window in the same way as the shot commenced. Selection of the *part* of the area with the use of a zoom lens and camera movement of decision about the time of day (or even day itself), and precise length of run were not pre-determined. The footage obtained is assembled in the order of shooting\, (April 1973-74), each camera run being indicated by the blanking of six individual frames spaced; 12+12+12+12cut+12+12. A twenty minute continuous sound recording made at the same window is printed twice onto the upgraded final print with a five minute gap before the repeat - 45 minutes.

"Film Lane" - film is shot from a moving vehicle; from its roof pointing forward, from its rear pointing backwards. This occurs on two occasions; the summer of 1973 and the winter

of 1974. The camera runs at either 24 frames per second or 12. The film is assembled according to pre-determined double binary - alternating apparent movement away from and toward the surface of the screen, (a function relying on the perception of successive relying on the perception of but one frame); (iii) combinations of one or other of these frames - 18 minutes.

"Farm" - an assembly of eight rolls of film each in their different ways examining spacial relationships; object/camera film/projector film planes - bearing the image of a wall in movement, the screen with an image of movement towards moving animals, movement of tractor on which a moving camera is mounted - 25 minutes.

"Blue Plus Green Plus Red" - colour originating from the sky, the grass and berries, printed through a system of graphic loops designed to permute the mixing of these three colours basic to the maintenance of the illusion of colour in film emulsion. The primaries, blue, green and red, produce magenta, cyan and yellow; and white as a hue shift - 15 minutes.

"Sheepwoman" - returns to the camera image of Sheepman together with control of camera and then examines through systematic application the image resultant in conjunction with synchronous/non-synchronous sound and written word image - 20 minutes.

MIKE LEGGETT

July 1976.

FILM & VIDEO NIGHT

TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 7:30 pm

GRIERSON CINEMA

17 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne

7:30 pm The Films of Robert Breer

Admission \$2.⁰⁰

8:30 pm Mike Leggett introduces excerpts from "*Sheepman & the Sheared*".

9:30 pm Open Screenings



On June 28 MIMA will commence a new format of exhibition as a complement to the current exhibitions, EXPERIMENTA, Schools Programme and the National Tour. These screenings will retain the *Open Screenings* format as a component and introduce programmes of historical relevance from the National Lending collection and other film libraries and special collected works introduced by the artist/s.

The first of these screenings includes a programme of the films by Robert Breer.

"The single frame experiments of Robert Breer have pioneered in expanding the psychology and physiology of perception in contemporary animation. His films, which are produced with inexpensive equipment and minimal graphic techniques, are not composed of realistic movements but of rapidly changing images and optical sensations. In many of his animated works such as *Image By Images 1*

(1954), *Blazes* (1961), and *66* (1966), Breer gives new meaning to the filmic phenomenon of intermittent movement by constructing his footage with distinctly different images on each frame. The experience created by this frenetic succession of visual sensations does not, of course, have a life-like continuity but instead constitutes an illusory form of collage, which has its own expressive possibilities comparable to other techniques of animation. Although Breer's animated works vary from linear configurations to pure plastic abstraction, his major occupation is with the dynamic temporal activity that can be generated by the single-frame process. His filmic experiments, which make a new order of visual relationships possible, have had an enormous impact on much of the animation of the sixties and seventies."

Robert Russett
Experimental Animation
An Illustrated Anthology (P.131)