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October 27, 1970

Sally Dixon  
Carnegie Museum  
Film Dept.  
4400 Forest  
Pittsburgh, PA.

Dear Sally,

I must have written your name a dozen times this morning, giving credit to your help in making "eyes" -- which will have its first public show at Harpur College, S.U.N.Y., Binghamton, when Ken Jacobs has me there in three weeks for lecture-show -- and also writing your name on boxes of film, mailed today, TO you personally, and c/o you for passing on (after you've seen 'em) to Mike and Walter (as marked on each box: these are gifts to be shared by all in happy company: one "Song" each . . . wish it could be more -- you've all been so generous with me that I cannot thank you enough.

In the event that any of the "Songs" are repeats of what Mike already has, you might return that, unless the new 'owner' wants his own copy: I've, anyway, tried not to duplicate Mike's collection (which, I believe, is #12, #16 - thru - 22 -- right? . . . please let me know that info. again, so that I can keep my records straight). I sent "Song# # 1" to you as a SIGN that I think you, eventually, should have ALL of them -- or at least available to you . . . bless you -- and/or to Carnegie Inst. Film Dept. which is, to me, indistinguishable from your lovely self.

I talked to Marie, yesterday, and very much encouraged her to ask you if she couldn't, perhaps, come to Pittsburgh later: she'll probably be too shy: thus you might, if possible for you, initiate this possibility: (I really think she got sick in nervousness at possibly interfering with Willard doing things HIS way: she has always been like this, taking a very shy back-seat in relation to The Maas-ter): anyway, she has easily two-to-three times over the number of films he showed of hers in Pittsburgh, enough thus for a very FULL evening of her alone.

As to "eyes", I now have hope that my lab. can get a print finished tomorrow, which I can check tomorrow night, take with me on Thurs. to Lexington, Kentucky, and mail to you, from there, by Sat.: you might therefore have it (U. S. Mails and all-going-well permitting) by mid next week.

Please convey to Walter Seng that we received his amazing pictures this morning -- even Jane . . . slow to recognize anyone else's vision of me -- thought they were extraordinary: "Tho' you are, in them, too much The Politician", she says . . . anyway, we are very happy to have them. I have the additional thought that IF Walter makes some prints of these and sends them to: Harvey Brown, Stewart Street, West Newbury, Mass. 01985: Harvey might use one or another in his publication of my "Scrapbook". This move would be 'on speculation', so to speak: but they could be sent to Harvey, with a note that it was on my say-so, and premised that Harvey pay for them (whatever Walt thinks fair).

card asking me to persuade you (how did she put it?) "that it wouldn't be so bad to come to P." Well, I would never presume to "persuade" you unless you asked for my advice; but I feel I must give testimony to the gifts Pittsburgh (which really centers, for me, around Jolly Wexer and Mike Chikiris) has (have) bestowed upon me. I have been there four times and have created over two hours of finished film as a result of those visits -- i.e. the two hours composed entirely of film shot there . . . not only the so-called "Pittsburgh Films" of mine ("Eyes", "Hous/Ex", and "The Act of Seeing with one's own eyes") but also several short films. I love Jolly dearly, and do r Mike as well; and they've somehow managed to shake my sensibilities meaningfully into whole new areas of film-making . . . (I don't mean by any particular thing they said, or that they are at all pushy -- their influence is simply something that just happened and did surprise all of us equally). There is no way of saying if this is of any use to you -- most likely not, as you are totally different in your relationship to creativity (have beaten your own totally different path); but then it should also be said that many film-makers beside myself have gone to Pittsburgh and (again, to everyone's surprise) come away with ideas or whole films from being there: Ken Jacobs, Hollis Frampton, Jonas Mekas . . . to name a few. Something strange is happening there; and it does all center of Jolly and Mike. Jolly, of course, is the one who really makes it all possible. She had nearly died, then recovered (haunted by visions from her illness), did then change her whole life and begin a dedication to film which is only equalled in fervor by that of Jonas Mekas. Well, I've said enough. It would perhaps only be a distraction for you. But I felt I had to pay homage to the joy these friendships have been and are being to me and to the creativity inspired there in this cool company. It is otherwise just Pittsburgh of the histories and jokes of same. I'm only trying to counter-balance the bad name the town historically had; for the first time I was to go and lecture there I groaned audibly at the prospect and did finally accept only for-the-money. Hollis Frampton later went with some intention of making a film, but only because of the steel mills and his want of that specific imagery . . . ending up (surprise again) photographing dissection cadavers).

Okay, enough! Jane just said "you ready?" . . . meaning she's going to work up "Homer", our car, for the trip to the post office; and I want to get this off to you. Next time I even have time to say something to you, it'll be SPEAKING we'll be doing!

I must just stretch Jane's patience enough to share with you a wonderful thing I saw this morning (which the children have been seeing all winter): billions on tiny black creatures (flea-size, tho' they are not fleas) which cover (so minutely you do not easily see them) the surface of the new fallen snow. They gather in depressions in that snow (always depressions caused by collapsing snow -- i.e. NOT foot-steps patterns); but they do appear almost everywhere, here and there, across that white surface. Imagine! a snow-creature I'd never noticed before . . . a beautifully creature with a remarkable long antennae.

Blessings,  
Staw

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