

Stan Brakhage
Box # 170
Rollinsville, Colorado
80474

July 6, 1974

Dear Bob,

It is very kind, thoughtfully kind, of you to think of this arrangement whereby I too could be in Pittsburgh for Jane's birthday party: and, yes, I'd be very happy to lecture on Maya Deren on the 8th of Sept. (in accordance with your letters of June 20,21). Sally had mentioned your plans on the phone; and I had said to tell you "okay" IF you'd rent her complete work for the occasion. Now then I'm wondering if that wouldn't make too long a program, particularly as I see from your letter that it is in the afternoon and thus not 'open-ended'. Okay then -- I would prefer if we dropped "At Land" and "Ritual in Transfigured Time" (which are often both shown, anyway) and replaced them with "Meditation# on Violence" and "The Very Eye of Night". In fact, I think I would even like to replace the ALWAYS shown "Meshes..." with Maya's (and Sasha Hammid's) little known "The Private Life of The Cat" -- tho' that may be going TOO far...(what do you think?) You see, I would like to make a defense of that aspect of Maya's work which finally engaged (and 'married') ALL her interest -- that aspect which is most poised upon visual motion (as distinct from the liter-air-eeeeee-motion of those psycho-dramas). The very best idea would be if you could show your students the three psycho-dramas before I arrive (like the week before or somesuch) and then let my arrival co-incide with THIS program: "The Private Life of The Cat", "Study in Choreography for the Camera", "Meditation on Violence", "The Very Eye of Night". THAT way they would have seen everything; and then I could speak about the least known drift of her (or what I take to be her) primary and ultimate considerations. After all, many have written much about her dramas (dramas being, after all, closer to lit. / more accessible for writ); and P. Adams Sitney has certainly "done" them well (the very best) in his new book. The dance of her remains overlooked and even, these days, ignored. She was working on "The Very Eye of Night" when I was living with her; and I remember especially those nights when she and Teiji shared with me those earlier then (and still) despised films ("The Private...", "Meditations...") which she was afraid to either claim (giving too much credit to Sasha) or show publically (as with "Meditations...").

I don't think the program should be too long; so DON'T try to have them all at once. Let me know what you think. The more I think abt. it, I'd like to steer/be-clear-OF closet-drama ALtogether that afternoon. This will seem extreme, but: I think her psycho-dramas are the least important of all her good works...least as films! I think she thought so, too. She too dreamed (and made) Film more free of Literature (more than was, of course, popular then, or now still). As for the "fix" Woman's Lib-brrrs have on her: Maya WAS a woman -- WOW! . . . didn't have to THINK of herself as one. She'd never have let them show her films in Lib. context -- tho' she would have approved ANY move(meant) to increase women's rights, would have done everything (except join) to straighten out male-ish bias, as it is, in the 'movement'. . . much as Yvonne Rainer did recently with her vacuum sweeper dance for woman's gathering.

Okay, the really good news IS that the first two movements of "The Text of Light" are completed. I'm very much at work on the second reel. And how's your summer?

Stan

CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART

ONE OF THE FOUR CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH

Copyright © Creator, by permission. All rights reserved.

CMOA respects the intellectual property rights of artists and others. The CMOA website and all images and text contained therein are protected by applicable U.S. and international laws and regulations, and are owned by CMOA or used by CMOA with permission from the owners or under fair use or where otherwise specified. Copyright for some items are held by the artists and/or other third parties. You agree not to download, copy, reproduce, publish or transmit, or otherwise use any portion of the CMOA website (including any images or text contained therein), except for your own personal noncommercial use or “fair use,” as this term is defined by applicable copyright laws, without written permission from CMOA and/or other appropriate rights holders.

Commercial Use Is Restricted

Unauthorized publication or exploitation of museum files is specifically prohibited. Anyone wishing to use any of these files or images for commercial use, publication, or any purpose other than fair use as defined by law must request and receive prior permission from the appropriate rights holder(s). CMOA reviews all requests on a case-by-case basis and may require payment of a license fee depending upon the intended nature of such use.

For additional information, see the Carnegie Museum of Art Terms of Use.