

INDEPENDENT FILM MAKER: LARRY GOTTHEIM

HARMONICA (1970) 9 minutes
HORIZONS (1971-73) 80 minutes

I found my cinema voice in an effort to transform real events into cinema through intense camera seeing. The resulting experiences were cinematic not so much by asserting their physical nature as projected sequential frames, nor by my asserting expressive camera work or editing; their cinema life manifested itself in the special flow of consciousness they called forth. The viewer could experience intense creative concentration and discovery similar to mine in the act of filming. It was a matter of establishing a clear filming situation with dynamic harmony between my own vision, the camera procedure, and the events being 'recorded.'

This was a principle concern in BLUES (1969), CORN (1970) and FOG LINE (1970). In DOORWAY (1970) and the sound film HARMONICA (1970-71) the camera becomes more active, and in BARN RUSHES (1971), the organization involves blocks of shots, clear architectural patterns. This concern with the shot as distinct unit, with the problem of organizing these units, is manifest in HORIZONS.

Aside from this film work, there's little I want to say about myself. I teach in the Cinema Department at Harpur College, State University of New York at Binghamton, a department I developed, and of which I have been Chairman since 1970.

HORIZONS (1971-1973) 80 minutes.

For a year I filmed landscape horizons, mostly within hours of my home. I sought them out in endless waiting and wandering, in each shot trying to be true to the concrete relationship between myself and the landscape before me; feeling the velocities, the breathings and body movements, the durations, the starting and coming to an end, making of each shot an independent whole. Then the year long process of discovering connections, coming upon and noting the rhymes between shots quite distantly filmed, some quite apparant (though never before noticed), some deeply felt, but quietly mysterious. Once pairs were chosen, the groups of shots were ordered in patterns, growing more complex in the succession of seasons. In the first section the shots are adjacent in time, an AA pattern, nestled in a green frame from which they take off, touching each other at their meeting place, the horizon of the cut, and running into, or over, or under, the next green second. The next section consists of groups of four shots framed by red, ABBA, with the inner pair familiarly close, but the outer pair, taxing memory, lie wide apart. The third section, the long blue winter, separates the pairs all, ABAB, making consciousness leapfrog, and the final golden section links triads together in BAB CBC.... Suspended from the framework of the formal pattern is a web of inner rhymes; non-schematic relationships will sometimes be clearer than the pattern itself.

I am not concerned with making a puzzle, but in creating a particularly rich and complex experience for consciousness. Can the powers of association, memory, organization coexist with purer sensual experiencing? The eye is invited to partake of the continuous flow from image to image, savoring the qualities of motion, the passage of tremblings across a cut, the slidings of landscape wedges, the repertoire of light. The color intervals not only provide separations and temporal reference, they help shift the color interest from 'natural' to a more formal study in color relationships. The intensity of seeing will produce its own inner music.

Perception has been formed scanning the horizon. During the long duration of the film, the mind has time to explore familiar modes of visual language, and perhaps now and then taste a new, purer relationship to images.

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