

CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF ART

ONE OF THE FOUR CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH

Independent Filmmaker, Storm de Hirsch, Press Conference

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Male 1: [crosstalk 00:00:03] Yes, probably. We're getting a tour at the museum to see what-

Male 2: We're going to have a find of a kind of [inaudible 00:00:14]?

Male 1: Probably just respond to any [inaudible 00:00:23].

Male 2: Jody, why are you here today, if I may be so bold?

Jody: Why am I here today, if you may be so bold? I'd say you're being pretty bloody bold about this.

Male 2: Since we have enjoyed your presence in these-

Female 1: Sessions before.

Male 2: Press conferences before and this is a press conference.

Jody: Now that I'm blushing.

Male 1: [inaudible 00:00:57] Of course, you were bending down, so that might [crosstalk 00:01:03].

Jody: Right. [inaudible 00:01:05].

Male 1: I guess both of you have been interviewing these filmmakers [crosstalk 00:01:15].

Male 2: It's kind of an interesting development, isn't it? For [crosstalk 00:01:24].

Male 1: -many of the filmmakers wanted to do things here.

Male 2: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:01:30].

Male 3: It's almost finished. Another film, it's on the way. An artist has made a film here, a visiting artist, not through this program [inaudible 00:01:45].

Male 2: [crosstalk 00:01:46].

Male 3: Robert Nunferd who lived on Abetha for a long time, about 12 years. He's in New York. He's made a film. He's calling it-what is it?

Male 2: *The Ghost of the Great Weenie.*

Jody: The what?

Storm de Hirsch: The ghost of what?

Male 3: *Ghost of the Great Weenie.*

Female: [crosstalk 00:02:13].

Male 2: Yeah, it's about Forbes Field.

Male 4: It's about Forbes Field, surreal. He has people dressed up in all sorts of crazy costumes, cubes.

Female: Oh, that's brave.

Male 4: Playing different [crosstalk 00:02:28] playing baseball with the condemned Wal-Mart across the street. Sun coming down. The green weenie part was a symbol from when Pittsburgh won the pennant in 1960. He found a room full of all these things. [inaudible 00:02:49].

Storm de Hirsch: The green weenies? [crosstalk 00:02:52].

Male 3: You don't know about the green weenies?

Storm de Hirsch: No, I-

Male 3: The little plastic things. They look like banana shapes, except they're bright green. Does it say [inaudible 00:03:07]? Something like that.

Storm de Hirsch: Oh my. [crosstalk 00:03:09]. The allure of this town.

Male 4: [inaudible 00:03:14].

Storm de Hirsch: There's a very interesting atmosphere about. I've never been here before, but I was telling Sally that coming down on the plane, I was very surprised because you're going to talk about, like Chicago's "The Windy City" or that Pittsburgh is supposed to be "The Industrial City", but you always see smoke stacks.

Somebody gave me a gift the other day. It's an old post card of Pittsburgh. They're all smoke stacks. When the plane was coming down, I saw this beautiful softness of the landscape, the trees and the grass. I told Sally that it looked very much to me like a corral. What was the other one I told you?

Sally Dixon: Inness.

Storm de Hirsch: Inness was the first artist I thought of, and I thought, wow, this is a far cry from the-

Male 3: [inaudible 00:04:18].

Storm de Hirsch: -from talking about Pittsburgh as smoke stacks over. There's a very [crosstalk 00:04:26] the landscape here, even just driving through.

Male 3: You should have seen yesterday, we had like [crosstalk 00:04:33].

Sally Dixon: It was gorgeous. [crosstalk 00:04:43]

Male 3: In terms of visible pollution, [crosstalk 00:05:01]

Storm de Hirsch: You feel it in your chest. They tell you [inaudible 00:05:17] unsatisfactory. Then, the next day, it's hazardous [inaudible 00:05:27].

Male 3: What?

Sally Dixon: Is the tape recorder registering with phones and me rattling? Seeing Storm [inaudible 00:05:38].

Male 3: The river hazard was much worst. If you were not [crosstalk 00:05:44].

Sally Dixon: It's bad enough, I'm telling you. I can't sit. What did you walk?

Male 4: A little accident.

Sally Dixon: What do you mean you were [inaudible 00:05:54].

Male 4: -told me you were in an accident. I guess I assumed [crosstalk 00:05:58].

Female: Okay. Now [inaudible 00:06:28]. Excuse me.

Sally Dixon: I have oatmeal cookies with little cheese things for the rest of you to nibble on since I didn't know what anyone would want. [inaudible 00:06:35] Want some ice tea or hot tea?

Male 2: A lot of work to do.

Sally Dixon: OK, now you may proceed. Excuse me. [crosstalk 00:06:43].

Male 2: He says I don't have to worry about [inaudible 00:07:33].

Storm de Hirsch: [crosstalk 00:07:35] How much time do we have?

I have a film which is a trilogy. It encompasses three films and also encompasses a personal animation technique of painting and etching on the film. It's both photography and that. Each of the three films in the trilogy have

some of this technique with it. They each have individual titles, but the overall title is *The Color of Ritual*, the color of so on. It's an area of which I have explored a great deal in terms of working on, that is doing etching and painting on film.

There's never been any kind of organized method to it. Each filmmaker has his own way of doing it. If you want to draw, I remember once asking, I think I asked Jonas Mekas and he said that you just take a pen and put it in the pencil. I did that, but I wanted to go beyond that point, although that's all right, too.

Male 2: [inaudible 00:09:23].

Storm de Hirsch: Yes, they're abstract patterns or they're some kind of satire, mostly abstract. I still feel there's a great area there. There are a number of schools now that have film courses that are using some of my techniques [inaudible 00:09:49] asking about [inaudible 00:09:53].

Sally Dixon: The red ball, do you know [inaudible 00:09:56]?

Storm de Hirsch: Oh, no. I forget the name of the girl that teaches these young children [inaudible 00:10:04]. No. They've been using some of that, yeah. They call it "scratch". I think they do because that's what they're doing now with the youngsters in that sense. Maybe they're doing it at a more elementary level. I thought you'd kind of like to see that, for various reasons. Now that's 28 minutes long.

The Tattooed Man is 35 minutes. You could [crosstalk 00:10:40] with those. I don't know whether you should see *Meditations* now, because it's incomplete. It also is it grew kind of long, too. It might be too much. I also have one reel here, of which you might want to save 10 or 15 minutes of, and it's the second reel from my first film, which, oddly enough, was a feature film, which I shot in Rome. It's had quite a career at various festivals all over the world.

Male 3: [crosstalk 00:11:21]. This should be a part of a feature film.

Storm de Hirsch: I couldn't bring the whole film, and I was talking with Sally about what to bring in terms of just the things. Having a little more space in the box, I thought, "I'll bring that along." I had, at some universities, not shown the whole film, because that's an hour and a half already of time.

Sometimes students want to see a more representative film. Sometimes, and at certainly reverses included just so much of it. Then, if the students were interested, we would book the film for their [inaudible 00:12:09] sessions.

Female 2: Now, here's never.

Male 2: If you wish to see a section, we could also [crosstalk 00:12:14].

Sally Dixon: Do you want [inaudible 00:12:34]? What we're trying to do is to get at least a shot of [inaudible 00:12:37].

Storm de Hirsch: Oh [crosstalk 00:12:42]?

Sally Dixon: With a sandwich in her mouth.

Male 2: [inaudible 00:12:49] They never look good that way.

Storm de Hirsch: No they don't, do they?

Male 2: It's very delicate [inaudible 00:12:54].

Storm de Hirsch: *The Tattooed Man* won two awards so far.

Sally Dixon: Think we've got [crosstalk 00:13:07].

Storm de Hirsch: The AL Film Festival and Stan Vanderbeek gave it an award [crosstalk 00:13:21] fourth annual Independent Filmmakers competition, St. Lawrence University.

Bob Haller: Did any particular texture get you interested in film years ago? Some people [inaudible 00:13:42].

Storm de Hirsch: No. In fact, I resisted it. I've known Jonas Mekas almost ever since he came of this country. I was exposed to film all the time. I worked with film [inaudible 00:14:04].

Sally Dixon: [inaudible 00:14:05].

Storm de Hirsch: I just kept [crosstalk 00:14:07]. When I went to Rome, two years in a row, I was covered in festivals, Venice and some other festivals. I saw some things happening with these girls that would come from different countries including America and [crosstalk 00:14:27]. I started a little script in '61. I came back in '62 and I finished the script. Somebody saw it quite by accident and got very interested. I was all ready to go home. I was tired. I was there about five months or something.

They said, "How would you like to direct your script?" I thought they were crazy. I said, "No." They said, "Well, think about it." That night, several people who were in the new American cinema [inaudible 00:15:12] underground film, said, "You're crazy. If you go back to New York and you don't make that film, you'll probably never forgive yourself. Furthermore, you may never then get anybody to offer to back a film," which is true.

"It's not that simple. If this happens, you should accept the challenge." I did. I stayed there and shot the film. Then, brought it back to the states for the editing and the dubbing of the sound. Somebody then, again, was kind enough to help me, to finance me with the editing. Then the film was finished.

Male 3: What do you mean when you say you were covering? Were you at the Venice Film Festival?

Storm de Hirsch: Yeah, occasionally I would write-

Male 3: You're reporting on it.

Storm de Hirsch:- yeah, on the film.

Male 3: For what?

Storm de Hirsch: For *Film Culture Magazine*.

Male 3: Were you reviewing or just reporting?

Storm de Hirsch: No, really sort of reviewing things and a few other periodicals. I'm not a professional in that sense, but I've been exposed [inaudible 00:16:48].

Male 3: [inaudible 00:16:55]

Storm der Hirsch: It such a deathly word, but it's true. It was critical. Also, the state of film in Rome, war effort [inaudible 00:17:11], things like that.

Male 3: Did you like the Roman situation at all? It must be very exciting with all those weird things going on there.

Storm de Hirsch: It's very exciting. It still is. [crosstalk 00:17:26] It's really the film capital of the world.

Male 3: How long ago was it? '62? '63?

Storm de Hirsch: '61, '62.

Male 3: [inaudible 00:17:37].

Storm de Hirsch: [crosstalk 00:17:41] all these people and all these promoters and all these fabulous people from all over the world.

Male 3: That would have been just about two or three years after *La Dolce Vita* international distribution.

Storm de Hirsch: Yeah, before.

Male 3: That was '58, I think, it first came to Pittsburgh.

Storm de Hirsch: Yeah, I guess so. That's right. It was a fantastic place. It's a beautiful city.
[inaudible 00:18:11]. You went to the [be-anon 00:18:17]?

Male 3: [crosstalk 00:18:21].

Storm de Hirsch: The air is so clear. I shot it in black and white feature, but it was just
marvelous to shoot. Nobody bothered you in the streets about it. People were
so happy. Everybody was so [inaudible 00:18:40] to be in a film.

Male 3: Did you shoot in summer?

Sally Dixon: No sugar?

Storm de Hirsch: No sugar.

Male 3: Did you shoot in the summer?

Storm de Hirsch: Actually it was in the fall.

Male 3: [inaudible 00:19:01] Were you shooting at the festival?

Storm de Hirsch: No, I didn't shoot at the festival. I shot in Rome [inaudible 00:19:06]. An
area which overlooked a big pyramid. Not so much the tourist area, but it was
from the top floor apartment. Very interesting.

Sally Dixon: She's learning to make a little film here at the museum. I think I've told you.
The possibility [inaudible 00:19:33].

Storm de Hirsch: Can't wait.

Male 3: This is a fascinating building.

Storm de Hirsch: I'm just hoping I don't say too much. [crosstalk 00:19:44] I have to stay all
week if it's not [inaudible 00:19:46].

Sally Dixon: You can stay all week. [crosstalk 00:19:52] Jody is wishing you would stay all
week.

Jody: I wish you would stay all week. I don't know [inaudible 00:19:56] [crosstalk
00:20:03]

Male 2: [inaudible 00:20:02] music hall for you downstairs.

Sally Dixon: No, we came in through the basement. [crosstalk 00:20:08] I just walked past the Vikings to go get our lunch.

Storm de Hirsch: Oh no.

Sally Dixon: It's almost better in the catalog, out of the cases. [crosstalk 00:20:26] ... individual things so that you're not [crosstalk 00:20:31] Also, there are a bunch of [inaudible 00:20:39] things that they [inaudible 00:20:41]. Remember the room we went through to get inside?

Male 3: There are 75 [inaudible 00:20:51] Of Mice and Men and other forms [crosstalk 00:20:55], which were given to the museum here because of this curator that ...

Storm de Hirsch: Can they be photographed?

Male 3: Actually, it's at the point of still being largely unclassified [crosstalk 00:21:15]. Just the idea of this tremendous storehouse of stuff which we never would have seen here if it hadn't been for David's thinking maybe Mrs. Bruce may have left something here. They were getting their pick of everything she had. 3,000 items.

Storm de Hirsch: It's such a pity when they get lost.

Male: That's right.

Sally Dixon: Then they break up collections [crosstalk 00:21:47]. I see the reason for it [crosstalk 00:21:50].

Male 3: This is fairly, very personal, willy nilly kind of a collection, but still individual pieces are really nice. Choice furniture, silver, and especially the porcelain.

Storm de Hirsch: Fantastic porcelain.

Male 3: Not a lot of stuff.

Sally Dixon: A gorgeous rug. New rug collection, not new rugs, but a new collection of rugs, a new show going up on 2nd floor galleries that is gorgeous.

Storm de Hirsch: I'll have to get some more film stuff tomorrow.

Sally Dixon: All we can get. It's what we're going to do with [crosstalk 00:22:30].

Male 3: Are you normally interested architectural things in a sense or rich stuffs, as we used to say.

Storm de Hirsch: It depends. I'm very interested in certain types of perspectives. [crosstalk 00:22:47] I've been doing a series of collages to put in the catwalks upstairs under the lights. [crosstalk 00:22:51]

Sally Dixon: That would be a good one. [inaudible 00:22:56] We should maybe, when we go back out and look at her film, just go up and take the one with the lance out of her architectural halls. [crosstalk 00:23:07] Have you got that? Oh, we did it, yeah.

Storm de Hirsch: I just want to mention, I talk about how collections get lost and stuff, I told Sally that I was given some books and they're all very old books before the 1700s. One was a book that was 1552 or something like that. It's the first translation from Latin in England I think.

Sally Dixon: Cicero.

Storm de Hirsch: Cicero, thoughts about certain things, but the book is about this big, about this high. It has a crazy goat skin or some kind of skin on it, sewn together. The printing is magnificent.

Sally Dixon: That sounds marvelous.

Storm de Hirsch: I'll have to show it to you when you come again. [crosstalk 00:24:05] These were parts of an auction for some post card club something or other. This person dumped out all these books and somebody bought them and then Avery bought. He said, "I don't want them. Anybody wants them can take them because I'm just donating. I don't want these dirty books." That's how I got them because a friend of mine asked for them knowing [inaudible 00:24:37].

Male 3: Do you collect anything? Do you collect books?

Storm de Hirsch: I collect too much. I like particularly books and stones, mineral rocks and Indian relics. My feeling about stones are that they're the first of the sacred books of the world, the sacred history. Books are in the stones before [crosstalk 00:25:13]. I have strong feelings. I have to clean house every 6 months now to get the rocks out. [crosstalk 00:25:30] Coming back from Italy, the customs man said to me, "Gee, what have you got in there? Rocks?" I said, "Yes."

Sally Dixon: [inaudible 00:25:43]

Storm de Hirsch: I came back with seashells.

Male 3: I meant to ask you, what did you come back with?

Male 3: Seashells. They were large sea urchins. [crosstalk 00:25:58] They cost about \$4 [inaudible 00:25:59]. A couple of murik shells. They just opened Philadelphia. You can fly in from London [inaudible 00:26:08] rather than flying to Kennedy. They didn't know what they were. They were looking inside for [crosstalk 00:26:13] some small signs of pot or heroin. It would make a wonderful place if they weren't so obvious.

Storm de Hirsch: Yeah.

Sally Dixon: How big were your sea urchins?

Male: Like this.

Sally Dixon: With stickles?

Male 3: No, the stickles were off. [crosstalk 00:26:27]

Sally Dixon: You mean it was a complete shell itself? [crosstalk 00:26:31] They're so lovely, but terribly fragile though. [crosstalk 00:26:36] like zippers. Have you seen how they fit together?

Male 3: Yes. [crosstalk 00:26:44]

Sally Dixon: Beautiful.

Male 3: You hold it up to the light and the light comes through where the stickles used to be.

Sally Dixon: Beautiful things.

Male 2: QED Magazine says that Pauline Kael is speaking after *Fists in the Pocket*.

Sally Dixon: She's speaking -

Male 2: After the movie, *Fists in the Pocket*.

Sally Dixon: Speaking on what?

Male 2: She's speaking on film.

Bob Haller: We can't disappoint them so ...

Female 1: You mean she's speaking on *Fists in the Pocket*?

Male 2: Right.

Sally Dixon: On TV?

Male 2: Speaking after the film, after our film. QED Magazine. It's written in QED Magazine.

Sally Dixon: I think anything to do with it.

Male 2: It's written in QED Magazine that after *Fists in the Pocket* on April 23 and 24th, Pauline Kael's going to speak in Carnegie Lecture Hall.

Sally Dixon: How did they get that?

Male 2: I don't know.

Sally Dixon: You're [crosstalk 00:27:35]. We don't have enough trouble with [crosstalk 00:27:44].

Storm de Hirsch: What is this now? I don't quite understand it. [crosstalk 00:27:51]

Male 2: On our post head is a quote by Pauline Kael [inaudible 00:27:54] *Fists in the Pocket*.

Sally Dixon: Simply quoting here and then giving credit. How did they every pick up and say she was speaking after the film?

Male 2: Maybe this woman just read it.

Sally Dixon: Who was your help? Was this just a part of our public calling in?

Male 2: Just a person. Maybe she wanted to buy tickets for it to hear Pauline Kael. [crosstalk 00:28:13] Not mentioning *Fists in the Park*, just Pauline Kael.

Sally Dixon: Who do we call over there, Jody? [crosstalk 00:28:22]

Jody: I don't know. Who do you contact? [crosstalk 00:28:26]

Sally Dixon: Is the magazine out, I guess?

Male: It was out last week she said.

Jody: Whom do you send? [crosstalk 00:28:32]

Sally Dixon: We send a schedule. We send them a schedule regularly with whoever [crosstalk 00:28:42]. Should we go and look at-I think it's better. You put your eyes on some film. [crosstalk 00:28:57] Storm, this is Steve Savage. Storm Hirsch.

Storm de Hirsch: Hi.

Sally Dixon: The University of Pittsburgh's Franklin Pangborn Film [crosstalk 00:29:06].

Storm de Hirsch: Oh, wow.

Sally Dixon: Absolutely the best programming in the city of Pittsburgh outside your museum. [crosstalk 00:29:15] Absolutely top good stuff. [inaudible 00:29:26] [crosstalk 00:30:33]

Male 2: We have 3 set lines that are supposed to be [crosstalk 00:30:48].

Sally Dixon: Did you arrive at some decision as to what you want to see? [crosstalk 00:31:06]

[change in recording 00:31:15]

Male 2: It comes first and it stays [inaudible 00:31:22].

Sally Dixon: I'm intrigued [crosstalk 00:31:23].

Storm de Hirsch: Then I have to go beyond the word. You see, I have no more words to express something. [crosstalk 00:31:32]

Sally Dixon: [inaudible 00:31:35]

Storm de Hirsch: No, I just feel that there's a verbal language and there's a non-verbal language [inaudible 00:31:44].

Sally Dixon: It's language that intrigues you in whatever vocabulary, visual, verbal, [crosstalk 00:31:57].

Storm de Hirsch: Yes, the expression of a moment or a state of mind or something. Sometimes it's based on visually and sometimes it's based on verbally. They're both together for me. [crosstalk 00:32:17]

Sally Dixon: You use the verbal in this film with your soundtrack.

Storm de Hirsch: I what?

Sally Dixon: No verbal.

Storm de Hirsch: Oh, no, no.

Sally Dixon: Sound, but not- [inaudible 00:32:33]

Storm de Hirsch: I did voices in the feature film, but these other things I don't feel required to voice. I'm translating the voice into a visual instead. [crosstalk 00:32:52]

Sally Dixon: You're a translator rather than a reporter.

Storm de Hirsch: Oh, yeah.

Sally Dixon [inaudible 00:33:00]

Storm de Hirsch: Yeah, or interpreter.

Sally Dixon: It's made so clear. Yeah, interpreter rather than reporter. That's what I meant.

Storm de Hirsch: I still am interested in people even though my things may not have people per se in them, but the whole experience-

Sally Dixon: You're going to make it down there all right? [end of recording 00:33:26]

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