

TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED IN 35MM BY THE YALE FILM STUDY CENTER

FRIDAY
APRIL 26, 2019
7 PM • WHITNEY
HUMANITIES CENTER

FOUR FILMS BY NICK DOOB

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



PLASTIC SAINTS (1968, 16mm, 6 min.)

Preserved by the Yale Film Study Center through a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation

In the summer of 1967, Nick Doob studied filmmaking at the Free School of Union Square in New York, under the direction of Allan Siegel, one of the founders of the Newsreel collective. In October of that year, Doob and four other students from the class traveled to Washington, D.C. to film the March on the Pentagon, a massive demonstration organized by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. Later documented by Norman Mailer in his non-fiction novel *The Armies of the Night*, the event attracted tens of thousands of participants, and ended with more than 600 arrests for civil disobedience. **PLASTIC SAINTS** is made up of black and white reversal footage of the demonstration, as well as color reversal paint-on-film loops, all set to a recording of "When the Saints Go Marching In." After seeing the film at a small film festival, the documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker asked Doob to come work with him at his production company in New York, an invitation which began a long creative association that continues to this day.



COSTUMED DANCER (1969, 16mm, 7 min.) *Preserved by the Yale Film Study Center through a grant from the NFPF*

As a senior at Yale College in 1968, Doob was invited to participate in the Scholars of the House Program, a senior honors program that required students to create, in lieu of regular classes, "a finished essay or project which must justify by its scope and quality the freedom which has been granted." Rather than pursue a more traditional written work, Doob initially chose to make a film, an unorthodox approach that had not been previously attempted. In the end, Doob chose to make two films to fulfill the requirement, beginning with **COSTUMED DANCER**. He had a job at a small commercial film production office in New Haven and had access to a Bell & Howell contact printer, which he made use of in the creation of this film. The film is a progression of images of a dancer, shot and printed on high contrast stock, and stacked in the printer in a number of layers so as to create multiple images of the dancer, moving from single image to multiple image in a kind of phasing. It is cut to music composed by Doob's friend David Sewall, who was the subject of one of Doob's later films, **LONDON SONGS** (1972).



*Doob (at right), with fellow filmmakers (and assorted dogs) at Alden Parlor on Chapel Street, from **MAYDAY HOME MOVIE** (1970).*

42ND ST MOVIE (1969, 16mm, 18 min.) *Preserved by the Yale Film Study Center through a grant from the NFPF*

Doob's first longer film, **42ND ST MOVIE** was also made as part of his Scholars of the House project, as well as for a film class Doob took under the instruction of director Murray Lerner. Lerner had made the documentary film **TO BE A MAN** (also preserved by the FSC), examining Yale through interviews with students and faculty, in 1966, and had subsequently been invited to teach filmmaking at the university. Doob's film begins with a shot of the sun setting over the Hudson River in New York City, and goes on to examine the nighttime street life found in the block of 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. As Doob describes it, "That block was fairly notorious at that time, with pornographic bookstores and theaters, peep-shows, and prostitution. It was also a kind of magnet for exotic personalities, and a visually interesting location." The film showed at many film festivals, won a prize at the West German Short Film Festival in Oberhausen, and was well reviewed in the *New York Times*. After making this film, and after the experience of taking Murray Lerner's class, Doob worked as Lerner's cinematographer on a number of films, including his 1979 Academy Award-winning documentary **FROM MAO TO MOZART**.

STREET MUSIC (1979, 16mm, 57 min.) *Preserved by the Yale Film Study Center*

STREET MUSIC presents performances by 19 street musicians in seven cities across the United States, and was one of Doob's first feature-length films. The film features singers, guitarists, drummers, dancers, and others, including street performance legends like Porkchop, Brother Blue, the Automatic Human Jukebox, and Jimmy Davis. From San Francisco to New York, and Chicago to New Orleans, the film captures a cross-section of Americans filled with raw talent, showmanship, and hustle, and presents a time capsule of the fashion, architecture, and culture of the 1970s.

DID YOU KNOW: IN **STREET MUSIC**, LOOK FOR DRUMMER GENE PALMA, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS APPEARANCE IN **TAXI DRIVER** (1976), IN A SCENE JUST BEFORE TRAVIS (ROBERT DENIRO) AND BETSY (CYBILL SHEPHERD) HEAD INTO THE LYRIC THEATER ON 42ND STREET.

NEXT UP: JOIN CORKY ST. CLAIR AND THE REST OF HIS MOTLEY CREW OF COMMUNITY THEATER ENTHUSIASTS AS THEY PUT ON "RED, WHITE, AND BLAINE," A 150TH ANNIVERSARY "OFF-OFF-OFF-OFF-BROADWAY" TRIBUTE TO THEIR HOME TOWN OF BLAINE, MISSOURI. ADVERTISED AS "A NEW COMEDY FROM THE LEAD GUITARIST OF **SPINAL TAP**," CHRISTOPHER GUEST'S 1996 MOCKUMENTARY **WAITING FOR GUFFMAN** SCREENS ON 35MM ON **WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 AT 7:00 PM**