End of the Art World

Thursday, March 7, 7 p.m.
Humanities Quadrangle Alice Cinema

Directed by Alexis Krasilovsky
With Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Jo Baer, Robert Rauschenberg
Produced by Alexis Krasilovsky (1971), 33 mins.

Daisies

Directed by Vera Chytilová
Written by Vera Chytilová, Pavel Jurácek, and Ester Krumbachova
Starring Ivana Karbanová, Jitka Cermáková, Marie Cesková, Jirina Myskova, Marcela Brezínová, Julius Albert, and Oldrich Hora
Cinematography by Jaroslav Kučera
Produced by Filmové studio Barrandov (1966), 75 mins.
END OF THE ART WORLD
Alexis Krasilovsky was born in Juneau, Alaska, in 1950, and grew up in Chappaqua, New York. In 1969, she transferred from Smith College to Yale University as part of the first cohort of women admitted to Yale, and was among the first class of graduates to include women, the class of 1971. Her interest in film, sparked during a study abroad in Florence, Italy, led her to enroll in a graduate filmmaking course taught by Murray Lerner, who had, five years earlier, made the Yale-focused documentary To Be a Man (preserved in 2016 by the Yale Film Archive). End of the Art World began as an assignment for Lerner’s course. As Krasilovsky described the film’s origins, “I was the only—or one of the only—women studying filmmaking. The guys were mostly graduate students, as I recall. They would pick apart each others’ dailies ruthlessly; if you could survive these critique sessions, liberally peppered with words like ‘bullshit,’ which at the time was new vocabulary for me, the quality of your film would toughen up. But no one gave me feedback in the class. I was invisible. That actually helped my film improve... If my film stands up to time, I have my fellow students’ cold shoulders and the books that Susan Sontag and Rudolf Arnheim wrote to thank, as well as Murray Lerner, who was kind enough to let me, a mere undergraduate, into his filmmaking class.”

Krasilovsky enrolled in the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, which allowed her to spend most of the Spring 1971 semester in New York, working with her mentor, the Canadian experimental filmmaker Michael Snow. She shot the film with a borrowed sync sound camera from D.A. Pennebaker. In a 1976, Kevin Thomas of the Los Angeles Times wrote, “With ferocious wit, Ms. Krasilovsky sends up New York’s art scene in End of the Art World (1971). In essence, Ms. Krasilovsky uses the sounds and images of the usual art documentary to create her own work of art. In the process—or re-process—that satirizes the fatuity of the standard interview with the artist and by the end identifies art with revolution as she fantasizes the quite literal obliteration of the Metropolitan Museum’s 20th-Century art curator, Henry Geldzahler.”

DAISIES
One of the most vibrant and anarchic films of the Czech New Wave, Vera Chytilová’s Daisies is a masterpiece of feminist filmmaking and a landmark film in Czech film history. Chytilová was born in 1929 in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, and studied philosophy and architecture. She made her way into the field of film through work as a model, photo editor, clapper girl, actress, writer, and assistant director. At 28, she enrolled at FAMU, the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, becoming the first woman to study directing there.

Daisies, which follows the cheerfully defiant, anti-establishment adventures of Marie I and Marie II (Ivana Karbanová and Jitka Cerhová), was received positively by audiences and won an award for best feature film from the Czech Film and Television Union. The following year, however, it was castigated as “depicting the wanton” by the government and was removed from theaters. Chytilová was not officially blacklisted, but her subsequent productions met with government resistance and censorship for decades.

Chytilová and her cinematographer (and husband) Jaroslav Kučera used a number of different film stocks to shoot Daisies: Eastmancolor negative, Orwo black-and-white negative, and Orwocolor duplicate negative stock that simulates tinting through various color filters. Numerous black-and-white shots in the negative were intended to be seen in color in distribution prints, using the film printer to simulate a “toned” effect via color grading.

When the film was originally distributed, film prints were made in Orwocolor, produced in East Germany, because it was prohibitively expensive for the studio to acquire Eastmancolor film stock from Kodak. Chytilová received only 10,000 meters of Eastmancolor film stock for the shoot, and even that was an expense that the studio was hesitant to bear.

These characteristics made for a complex preservation project, and the Yale Film Archive would like to thank our colleagues at the Czech National Film Archive, especially Jeanne Pommeau, for their help in making this new print from the original camera negative for the YFA collection.

NEXT UP Director James Ivory’s 1983 feature Heat and Dust screens in 35mm from a print donated by Ivory. An Englishwoman (Julie Christie) discovers a long-buried scandal involving her great-aunt under the British Raj, and travels to India on her own adventures. Screening Thursday, March 28 at 7 p.m.