

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES • 32 SECOND AVENUE AT SECOND STREET • NEW YORK, NY 10003 • TEL 212/505-5181 • FAX 212/477-2714

Cinema -- or, if one prefers, the motion pictures -- is like a big tree with many branches.

The Hollywood movie is only one of the branches of this huge tree. There are other equally green branches: the branch of the documentary film; the branch of the avantgarde or poetic film; the branch of the home movie and the anthropological film; etc

This multi-branched nature of cinema shouldn't be forgotten when we talk about preservation of our moving image heritage.

Another thing to remember is that each of these branches has very strong advocates, I would even say, fanatics, who will insist, and very persuasively sometimes, that their branch is the only one that matters.

An example: If one would estimate the importance of motion pictures in our culture, or civilization today, by what's annually voted into the National Film Registry, one would conclude that commercial, Hollywood movies constitute 95% of what's important to preserve or see from all that was done in the past or is being done today in the medium of moving images.

Future generations will be interested in what kind of movies made us laugh, cry, or cringe. But equally the future generations, students and scholars will be searching for visual documents of our daily life, the movies that recorded our daily activities: our weddings, our birthday parties, our children growing up -- yes, our home movies! And also our more public activities -- our governments, our wars, our ozone holes, our travels into outer space -- the work of our moving image journalists.

And then, after they'll have seen all the melodramas of all the Hollywoods, and all the documents of real

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life, they'll be surprised and elated to see the work of our film poets, the work of our avantgarde filmmakers, singing in their work the complex beauty of the world we live in. They will see that we were interested not only in violence, guns, sex, drugs and circus: they will see the human spirit move into more subtle aesthetic and spiritual spheres, and they will be uplifted and transported into those spheres themselves -- as we all are by the works of the great poets of the past.

One more thing I would like to say or stress, regarding the preservation of our moving image heritage: We should not entrust it entirely to the archivists. We have today in United States over 1200 universities and colleges teaching film. We have a solid body of film historians and scholars who are familiar with all the branches of this huge tree called cinema. Their input is vital in deciding the priorities of what should be preserved from each of these branches.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonas Mekas". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.