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vergence toward the coast. Fresh water comes out of river mouths and turns to the right—something called the Coriolis effect—and the faster it flows, the sharper the turn it makes. It's one of the main sources of ocean current. But when it gets below a certain level—we're thankful for the drought, in a way, because we'd like to find what that level is—the wind takes over as a cause of surface currents. By and large, there's a southwest wind along this coast. I suspect that a lot of our bottles are blowing out to sea, but it takes between twelve and fourteen months for them to go from here to Europe, so we won't know for a while."

Mr. Bumpus smiled, and went on, "It's amazing how many folks aren't interested in the reward—just in where their bottle was launched. A lot ask for pamphlets and charts, or for answers to questions. On the other hand, here's a copy of a note we got from a man in North Uist, Outer Hebrides."

He handed us a sheet of paper, and we read the following: "50 cents is promised to the sender of the enclosed card, but a small amount of cents is of nae much use here. The Bank will charge 1/- to cash them, and as the bank is 16 miles fra here, it twa hae to be posted, and they would send the change back in a registered envelope costing a 1/- so there would nae be much left. So I would prefer the equivalent of 50 cents in English currency."

"We sent him four bob," Mr. Bumpus said. "And here's one from a young lady with similar problems."

The young lady had written, "I found one of your bottles used for the studying of ocean currents—Everybody says my findings are worth much more—but if 50¢ is all you can afford that's O.K. with me. Please hurry in sending it to me since my parents (cheap skates) give me an allowance so small that I'm continually borrowing from my younger sister. From the reward I will receive only 46¢ since I owe 4¢ to my sister for the stamp."

"Some kids send us specimens for identification, and some old people send their family histories," Mr. Bumpus went on. "A seventeen-year-old sent her measurements and phone number. One card came with a hole in it and the explanation 'My husband broke the bottle by shooting it with his forty-five.' We also got a long poem. The bottles have been fun, and they were the only way of doing the job. There's some information they can't give, but we have a new instrument that, if it works, will

overcome this. Unfortunately, it will be electronic."

Team Spirit

AT the furious height of the Ivy League Waterloo—the Dartmouth-Princeton football game (Dartmouth 28, Princeton 14), in Palmer Stadium—an Old Princetonian was carrying on a bit in the stands, overcome by the unfolding tragedy. His wife, a self-contained matron, was overheard to say that she wished he would consider his age and simmer down. The heartbroken alumnus paid no attention to his mate; indeed, he increased the volume of his despair. "If you don't stop that shouting this minute, I'm going to go," his wife said, just as a Princeton back dropped a pass. Her husband groaned loudly. With that, she inched her way out of their row, and presumably left the Stadium. A few moments later, the man noticed that his wife had departed. He turned to an adjacent stranger and explained, "The old girl just can't stand to see Princeton lose. Never could."

Festival I

THE Film-Makers' Cinematheque, a society of avant-garde film-makers, with headquarters at the Astor Place Playhouse, devoted last month to something called the New Cinema Festival I, which was described in a prospectus as "a survey of recent experiments to expand the dimensions of cinema" through the use of "multiple screens, multiple projectors, multiple images, inter-related screen forms and images, film-dance, moving slides, kinetic sculptures, handheld projectors, balloon screens, video tape and video projections, light and sound experiments."

We have always had a weakness for ambitious prospectuses, so when we read this one we headed for the Astor Place Playhouse to take in a representative sample of Festival programs. We came away convinced that the Cinematheque is fulfilling all its promises, and then some.

The Playhouse is in the basement of 434 Lafayette Street, which was constructed in 1831 and was occupied by both John Jacob Astor and Washington Irving. The Cinematheque, by contrast, was founded only in 1963, and already it has had six homes and is planning another move, according to John Brockman, its new managing director. Mr. Brockman is a clean-shaven, well-scrubbed man of twenty-four who

graduated from the Babson Institute in 1961 and took an M.B.A. in finance at Columbia Business School in 1963; his taste in clothes runs to dark three-piece suits, white shirts, and muted ties, and makes him easy to find in the lobby of the Playhouse, where most of the patrons dress just about the way struggling film-makers might be expected to dress. "We've signed a year's lease on the Forty-first Street Theatre, which is between Sixth Avenue and Broadway," Mr. Brockman told us. "All this moving around has got to stop. I took this job to bring some sanity to the experimental-film world. The Cinematheque has been too inefficient, too incestuous up to now. Which doesn't mean it hasn't had a great impact. This is a festival that wouldn't have been possible five years ago. Everybody knew what a film was then. Not anymore. We've invited people from all the creative arts. We're trying to break down people's ideas of what film is. Film doesn't have to be movies. We don't define it at all, except as 'a visual experience.'"

We understood Mr. Brockman's difficulties with definition when we saw our first program, which turned out to be Part III of a week-long presentation entitled "Rites of the Dreamweapon" and "coördinated" by Angus MacLise. Part III, "The Mysteries of the Essence Chamber," was set on a stage that resembled the inside of a bombed-out church being used for a rummage sale. An assemblage of objects, dimly lit by a revolving red-and-green beacon, was separated from the audience by a gauzy, see-through screen, on which two movie projectors were trained. One projector had no film in it, and the other had a short loop of film and kept repeating a few unrecognizable images. The operators of the machines occasionally held colored filters in front of the lenses; sometimes they swivelled the machines around the room, so that the light from them shone briefly on the ceiling and walls. The effect that we found most pleasing was a tattoo of brown spots beamed, possibly by accident, onto the neck of a man sitting in front of us. While the projectors were going their own way, a number of people walked or danced around the stage, accompanied at times by a group of musicians known as The Velvet Underground, who specialize in "mystical rock-'n'-roll"—a form of music that, they have explained, is attained primarily through the use of "amplified distortion." Later, Angus MacLise, a tall, ascetic-looking man of twenty-seven with a wispy brown beard, recited some of his poetry. During most of



the performance, the noise level—abetted by a demoniacally programmed tape recorder—was literally deafening, yet no one left the theatre except a young couple in the front row who seemed to be having a private argument.

After the program, we went backstage to ask the coordinator if he was satisfied with the evening. Mr. MacLise said that several people had told him they found the experience painful, but that he thought this could be attributed to tension caused by an inability to participate directly in the proceedings. "What I'm trying to do is blend as many elements of existence in our time as possible with the whole stream of ritual motifs developed through history," he explained. "For me, the rock-'n'-roll dancer is an archetypal figure. The fashion model is an archetypal figure." He went on to say that much of his work had been influenced by his travels—especially a recent hitchhiking trip from Istanbul to Benares. He arrived in Benares in time for the Festival of the Great Goddess and, in the courtyard of a Brahman house, saw

a celebration in which an attempt was made to "overload the senses" with a barrage of noise and motion. "The theory is that the senses have to be got beyond, because they stand in the way of contact with ourselves," he said. "It's the opposite path to meditation. Only when we batter down the threshold can we hear other things, including the proverbial still small voice within."

When our own senses had returned to normal, we paid another visit to the Festival and saw a performance of "The March of the Garter Snakes," by Standish D. Lawder, who, we had been informed, is an instructor, at Yale, in the history of art. What we saw was a lively, if garter-snakeless, kaleidoscope of colorful patterns created entirely by the use of hand-painted slides. The most exciting effects were achieved with what Mr. Lawder calls "sandwiches"—an amalgam of such substances as lipstick, fingernail polish, butter, and Unguentine pressed together between two glass slides. Upon being heated by the lamp of the projector, the contents of the sandwich begin to melt,

at different rates, throwing a constantly changing image on the screen. Lawder (clean-shaven, twenty-nine years old, baggy brown tweed suit) told us that he began as a painter and started working with glass slides while he was in the Army. "My wife and I lived in a series of tiny apartments for two years, and working on small slides, instead of on canvases, solved the space problem," he said. "The present sequence was first assembled in 1961, but it keeps changing. For one thing, sandwiches are used up in a single showing, and I have to make new ones." He has a vague idea of how each sandwich will look on the screen, he says, but a lot of "accident" is involved. "For instance, I know that butter will turn brown, and the more volatile substances will bubble with a nervous twitching, while lipstick, say, will give a bubbly-mud rhythm," he told us. "But I'm just as curious as the audience to see how the combination will turn out." Mr. Lawder said that despite his success with "The March of the Garter Snakes," which has already been seen in New

Haven, Munich, Frankfurt, and Paris, his real passion is film history. He is completing a Ph.D. dissertation on "The Relation Between Modern Art and the Silent Film in Europe," and next year he will conduct Yale's first course in the history and art of the cinema. "There's no question but that films are the most important art today—the uniquely twentieth-century art—and it's absurd for universities to provide courses in the appreciation of painting and just ignore films," he said. He added that his main problem at the moment is the enthusiasm of his students. "They keep calling up—sometimes in the middle of the night—to ask about the course," he said.

A FEW days later, one of the Old Masters of the New Cinema, Stan Vanderbeek, showed some specimens of his recent work, including four films made with the help of a grant from the Ford Foundation. Mr. Vanderbeek (heavily bearded, thirty-one years old, baggy brown corduroy suit) has developed a technique of animation involv-

ing a subtle, almost imperceptible transition from one static image to the next: a closeup of a face dissolves into a pattern of dots, which resolves into a landscape, which turns into a woman's torso. A huge eye socket becomes a stone bridge arched over a river; then the eyeball appears under the bridge. The slow procession of images sometimes achieves the haunting quality of Surrealist poetry. But Vanderbeek has also been experimenting with what he calls "ethos-cinema," or "combine-cinema," or "movie-murals." "An artist has to get out of private aesthetics," he explained to us in the lobby during an intermission. "Lately, I've been thinking that everything in life and art is a form of collage. What we may get someday is the idea of the film-maker as performer, rearranging images from the immense world stockpile, like an orchestra conductor." Vanderbeek said that he is building a "movie-drome" in the backyard of his house, in Stony Point. When it is completed, people will be able to lie on the floor and watch a display of moving images covering

the entire ceiling, which will be a dome. "I started out as a painter, but painting is dead now," Vanderbeek said. "Even motion pictures have been leading us along in basically nineteenth-century thinking, and the twentieth century is almost over." For a preview of what visitors to the movie-drome may expect, he conducted several uninhibited performances at the Playhouse. One was called "Feedback #1," and involved five movie projectors and three slide projectors operating simultaneously on a variety of white surfaces; another, "Move-Movies," called for volunteers to wander around the stage and up and down the aisle pointing very small handheld projectors at all four walls, the ceiling, the floor, the audience, and each other.

As the New Cinema Festival I was getting into full swing at the Playhouse, another survey of work by independent film-makers was being screened uptown in the Museum of Modern Art. Many of the best-known experimental

film-makers were represented in both places, but the Museum's selections went back as far as 1957, and all were shown on a single screen, from a single projector, and used either black-and-white or color film. Many of the movies, already regarded as classics in the field, have been giving fits to local police, college authorities, and conventional audiences for years, and the Museum's monthly calendar for members carried a special warning: "These films are not suitable for children." But, compared to what was happening downtown, the films looked as old-fashioned, as early-twentieth-century, as all those paintings by Picasso and Matisse on the walls upstairs.

Better Late

A TINY masked tatterdemalion wearing a witch's costume of orange-and-black rags accosted us on our way home the other evening. "Trick or treat!" it said. We informed the apparition that Halloween, at least for this year, had come and gone. "I know," it said, "but I've been away."