



DE  
andere  
FILM

CINÉCLUB

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# LENI RIEFENSTAHL - OLYMPIA



Ik kan alleen maar zeggen dat ik me spontaan aangetrokken voel tot alles wat mooi is. Tja... schoonheid, harmonie. En misschien is deze aandacht voor compositie, dit streven naar schoonheid van vorm inderdaad iets typisch Duits. Maar dat weet ik niet zo precies. Het komt uit het onbewuste voort en niet uit mijn bewuste kennis... Wat moet ik er nog meer van zeggen? Alles wat louter realistisch, uit het leven gegrepen is, het middelmatige of alledaagse, interesseert me niet... Ik word geboid door wat mooi en sterk en gezond is, door wat leeft. Ik zoek naar harmonie. Wanneer er harmonie tot stand komt, ben ik gelukkig.



„Im Prologteil des Films wird das Ideal der klassischen Gestalten durch die lebendige Verwirklichung des Kämpfers von heute abgelöst. Ihnen treten Frauengestalten zur Seite, die die Sehnsucht verkörpern, aus der immer wieder die Flamme geboren wird.“ „Als ich den Auftrag erhielt, diesen Film zu machen, ist mir sofort klar geworden, daß ich über die realistischen Vorgänge hinaus (...) die inneren Kräfte gestalten müßte...“



... es müßte versucht werden, zu zeigen, was der Marathonläufer fühlt, wenn er müde wird, und daß man das dadurch ausdrückt, daß man seine Beine zeigt, wie sie schwerer laufen und seine Bewegung wie die einer Maschine wird, wie alles vorbeizieht, und daß er dann wie im Traum und mit letzter Kraft gerade noch den Lärm aus dem Stadion hört, das zieht ihn an und stützt seinen Willen. Während man seine Beine noch in der Überblendung sieht, hört man schon die Trompete und das Rufen, und das hält ihn wach. Den Willen, den er zum Laufen benötigt, konnte ich ja nicht nur bildlich darstellen, das hat dann der Wind mit der Musik unterstützt, daß, während er fast Zeitlupe läuft, die Musik ganz peitschend ist. Dieser Gegensatz: Die Musik bringt den Willen und die Bilder zeigen seine Erschöpfung, dadurch erlebt man etwas unbewußt die Mühen des Marathonläufers mit.“



## SUSAN SONTAG:

Sinds de jaren vijftig heeft Riefenstahl in interviews altijd beweerd dat *Olympia* in opdracht van het Internationaal Olympisch Comité is gemaakt door haar eigen produktiemaatschappij, tegen alle protesten van Goebbels in. *Olympia* is in werkelijkheid gemaakt in opdracht van en volledig gefinancierd door de nationaal-socialistische overheid (er werd alleen op naam van Riefenstahl een 'papieren vennootschap' gesticht, omdat men het niet verstandig achtte de overheid als producente te laten optreden). In alle stadia van de verfilming heeft het departement van Goebbels bijstand verleend,\* en zelfs het aannemelijk, klinkende verhaaltje dat Goebbels bezwaar maakte tegen de metrage die aan de zwarte Amerikaanse hardloper en verspringer Jesse Owens was besteed, is uit de duim gezogen. Riefenstahl heeft achttien maanden lang aan de montage gewerkt en had de film op tijd klaar voor zijn première op 29 april 1938 in Berlijn, als onderdeel van de feestelijkheden bij Hitlers negenenveertigste verjaardag. Later in dat jaar vormde *Olympia* de belangrijkste Duitse inzending op het filmfestival van Venetië, waar hij met de gouden medaille werd bekroond.



\* Zie: Hans Barkhausen, 'Footnote to the History of Riefenstahl's "Olympia"', *Film Quarterly*, najaar 1974 - een zeldzaam geval van gefundeerde afwijkende mening tussen de veelheid van lofzangen op Riefenstahl die de laatste paar jaar in Amerikaanse en Westeuropese filmtijdschriften zijn verschenen.

... The voluminous documentary material of the former Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment and the materials of the former Reich Ministry of Finances, today deposited in the Federal Archives in Koblenz (the central depository of the Federal Republic of Germany) tell a different story.

These records show that the two *Olympia* films were financed by the Nazi government, that the *Olympia* Film Company was founded by that government, that the government made money by distributing the films through the Tobis-Filmkunst Company, and that the government, finally, ordered the liquidation of the *Olympia* Film Company, in which Leni Riefenstahl and her brother were partners.

The true story of the origin of the two *Olympics* films of 1936 begins with a short memo written in the Reich Finance Ministry on October 16, 1935, saying: "On the order of Herr Minister Goebbels, Ministerial Counselor Ott, on October 15, proposed the following special appropriations to me: (1) for promotion of the Olympic Games: RM 300-350,000; (2) for the Olympic film: RM 1,500,000."

HANS BARKHAUSEN

# MAYA DEREN

**MESHERS OF THE AFTERNOON** 1943 - 12 MIN.

**RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME** 1946 - 15 MIN.

**AT LAND** 1944 - 15 MIN.

1917 Born in Kiev  
1961 Died in New York City

1943 *Mesher of the Afternoon* 12 min  
1944 *At Land* min  
1945 *A Study in Choreography for Camera* 15 min  
1946 *Ritual in Transfigured Time* 15 min  
1948 *Meditation on Violence* 12 min  
1959 *The Very Eye of Night* 15 min



Deren's father was a psychiatrist, and the family emigrated from Russia to America in 1922; she graduated in journalism from the University of Syracuse and New York University. Interested in poetry and modern dance; later also in voodoo and superstitious ritual, which led her to spend several years in Haiti and to write the book-length study *Divine Horsemen* (1953). Her first film was made in Los Angeles in 1943, in collaboration with her then-husband Alexander Hammid (ex-Hackenschmidt, a Czech emigré). Four of her five other films were made in the same decade, with various other collaborators in New York. She was a tireless organiser and propagandist for independent cinema. She published numerous theoretical articles on her own work and on cinema in general; many, including the whole of her 1946 pamphlet *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film*, are reprinted in *Film Culture* No. 39 (1965).



## A Statement of Principles

### Maya Deren

My films are for everyone.

I include myself, for I believe that I am a part of, not apart from humanity; that nothing I may feel, think, perceive, experience, despise, desire, or despair of is really unknowable to any other man.

I speak of man as a principle, not in the singular nor in the plural.

I reject the accountant mentality which would dismember such a complete miracle in order to apply to it the simple arithmetic of statistics — which would reduce this principle to parts, to power pluralities and status singularities, as if man were an animal or a machine whose meaning was either a function of his size and number — or as if he were a collector's item prized for its singular rarity.

I reject also that inversion of democracy which is detachment, that detachment which is expressed in the formula of equal but separate opinions — the vicious

snobbery which tolerates and even welcomes the distinctions and divisions of differences, the superficial equality which stalemates and arrests the discovery and development of unity.

I believe that, in every man, there is an area which speaks and hears in the poetic idiom . . . something in him which can still sing in the desert when the throat is almost too dry for speaking.

To insist on this capacity in all men, to address my films to this — that, to me, is the true democracy . . .

I feel that no man has a right to deny this in himself: nor any other man to accept such self debasement in another, under this guise of democratic privilege.

My films might be called metaphysical, referring to their thematic content. It has required milleniums of torturous evolution for nature to produce the intricate miracle which is man's mind. It is this which distinguishes him from all other living creatures, for he not only reacts to matter but can meditate upon its meaning. This metaphysical action of the mind has as much reality and importance as the material and physical activities of his body. My films are concerned with meanings — ideas and concepts — not with matter.

My films might be called poetic, referring to the attitude towards these meanings. If philosophy is concerned with understanding the meaning of reality, then poetry — and art in general — is a celebration, a singing of values and meanings. I refer also to the structure of the films — a logic of ideas and qualities, rather than of causes and events.

My films might be called choreographic, referring to the design and stylization of movement which confers ritual dimension upon functional motion — just as simple speech is made into song when affirmation of intensification on a higher level is intended.

My films might be called experimental, referring to the use of the medium itself. In these films, the camera is not an observant, recording eye in the customary fashion. The full dynamics and expressive potentials of the total medium are ardently dedicated to creating the most accurate metaphor for the meaning.

In setting out to communicate principles, rather than to relay particulars, and in creating a metaphor which is true to the idea rather than to the history of experience of any one of several individuals, I am addressing myself not to any particular group but to a special area and definite faculty in every or any man — to that part of him which creates myths, invents divinities, and ponders, for no practical purpose whatsoever, on the nature of things.

But man has many aspects — he is a many-faceted being — not a monotonous one-dimensional creature. He has many possibilities, many truths. The question is not, or should not be, whether he is tough or tender, and the question is only which truth is important at any given time.

VOLGENDE VERTONING DINSDAG 13 FEBRUARI

NACHTREIN - JERZY KAWALEROWICZ (1959) 100 min  
LES MAMMIFERES - ROMAN POLANSKY (1962) 111 min