

Naomi Levine

Oh beautiful world, oh world of so much sweetness that could be, As if it isn't enough that the laws of our archaic society bind us and prohibit joy and life. As if it isn't enough that our economic and political systems suffocate and submerge and wound all but the very, very strongest; now even those who survive and become creative artists are so bitter with envy, bitterness and aggression and "Well, let's see how I can best and only do for myself" syndrome. The rottenness is beginning to show in the creative arts too - as if all the rest isn't enough!

The spirit that existed ten to fifteen years ago in painting is fading - how people used to crowd together, even if they didn't like each other's work - they did. They tried to help each other. They came to each other's openings and shows. They became successful: the blood in them became very thin. The painter who wants to ... works things out is no longer "in". Instead of blood, it's ideas that flow in the artist's veins: it's much more profitable. "Painting" as such is said to be "dead". It's supposed to be happening, now, in film.

Well, it started to happen. About five years ago it started, every filmmaker helping the other, going to each other's shows, even helping to film. And a few still are involved with helping above and beyond anything they get paid for. Len Lye does not stand alone: there is Brakage, Mander, Breer, Gehr. These people do care and always try to help, but there are hundreds of others I know of who do not. There is not the exciting feeling of all of us being together as pioneers in a relatively new medium. We

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don't all get together and support each other by attending the shows. There is no allegiance to the art of filmmaking, but just to our silly selves. And it is a shame, with all the horror in our streets, our Vietnam, our racism, our economy that chokes and mutilates men's spirit, the man who is supposed to know - the Creative Artist - even he is dying. Very soon there will be no-one, no place, and no interest in film as an art, as a growing creative art.

I always believed that it was the artist who knew. But the showing of extreme self-centeredness and bitterness, this is not knowing. When the artist does completely disappear, there will be no hope left, because it is the artist, manifest in his being that expresses the joy and reality of being and feeling itself. And if those of us who are filmmakers and painters don't help each other, we will not survive. The creative artist will perish. Something must be done now.