

"KODAK GHOST POEMS is a diary that consists of a series of short (from one to two-and-a-half minute) segments. Some of the segments are miniature pieces of daily realism, others are extended haikus, still others are small romantic poems. I was speaking last week about Malanga as a romantic film poet. I should state here, that Noren is probably the sublime romantic of cinema today. His very posture and his looks; the things he likes (all the lushy Rubenses and the landscapes and cows of Corot and Courbet); his actual film work: everything is permeated with the spirit of romanticism. I have seen him (myself unnoticed) strolling. I saw him a month ago or so, walking along the Seventh Avenue, with his slow, evenly paced, giant step; with his head high up, his hair like a fantastic tree; walking there, head and shoulders above the other people around him, with his dreamy eyes lost somewhere in some space before him—he strolled past me, without seeing me or anybody—like a walking island, exactly in the kind of stroll Cocteau was seeing himself in the TESTAMENT OF ORPHEUS, in slow motion—it was a sight to see: a poet walking along Seventh Avenue. I understood, that moment, why New York, contrary to all predictions, hasn't gone down into the sea yet: as long as one single poet walks the streets of New York the city will be spared its ultimate destruction.

"Anyway, I was looking at KODAK GHOST POEMS again, and for the first time I was able to put my finger on some essential things, at least for myself. The romantic feeling in itself wouldn't really make the KODAK GHOST POEMS so lasting. What does it is Noren's almost fantastic preoccupation with textures and materials. I know no other film-maker who has such a feeling for textures and materials. We speak about Sternberg's ornamental obsessions, or Murnau's genius for the moods of men and nature, or the qualities of Max Ophuls and Fritz Lang—but none of them has achieved the degree of materiality Noren has in the GHOST POEMS. The fabrics, those fantastic blues, those reds, those pinks—you can almost touch them. He keeps coming back to them, again and again. I have no doubt now that this feeling for the texture-surface-material is also the main reason for all the nudity in his films. The nudity of Noren's work, all the bathtub footage which has caused him all kinds of problems with the censors—this nudity is there for the same and sole reason. No, Andrew Noren is not a sex maniac. It's only that he's got to put on film all those textures of skin, all those bodies. A body, just a dry body is okay. But a wet body, a wet texture is richer than just a body surface. Flesh, all kinds of flesh we see in Noren's films. So that Noren's people don't just sit displaying their skin, which would be boring. No. They keep washing themselves, they keep rubbing and scrubbing their skins until they are almost transparent, beautifully transparent. And not only their legs, their backs, their feet, but also their breasts, and their most private parts, which has always embarrassed me (don't forget, I'm a farmer's boy). But once you understand why the artist is doing whatever he is doing, everything gains a new dimension, a new interest, a new beauty.

"So we have this luxurious and sensuous world of bodies and details and light before our eyes. Light, light, and again light. Only through the light are these materials revealed to us. So he keeps filming light on these textures, on materials. Light falling on the floor, on the materials. And then, the people. I haven't seen anybody, for instance, filming (or painting) woman's hair, long hair, as beautifully and expressively as Noren has done. Detail after detail for a full hour. KODAK GHOST POEMS sings the phenomenal world in the language and voice of all great romantic poets of the past. And I, a poor scribbler, all I can do is to pay tribute to one of the great artists of America who is walking the streets of New York with his head in the sky, with his fingers on his Bolex."—Jonas Mekas, *The Village VOICE*, Jan. 15, 1970.

THE WIND VARIATIONS

16mm. 25 min. Color. Silent (16FPS.). Rental: \$25.00

"Meditative ecstasy. Possibly carries the essence of the artist himself—a wind spirit that whispers to all the gentle spirits and creatures of light. It steers the senses towards the sun."—Ernie Gehr.

"...THE WIND VARIATIONS seems, these few viewings, to be completely within its means (a very rare accomplishment these days of celluloid outpouring) and thus is meaningful, in the best sense of that word. I use caution marks(') around the words "perfection" and "infinite" because only the more natural viewing of it, again and again over a long period of time, will confirm the aesthetic sustenance of the work, as distinct from the craftsmanship of intention, etc.; but I can speak/(write) to the point of that/techne immediately available—particularly as the film's area-of-existence concerns me, in all my working, very directly these days: the slight movements of the hand-held camera, altering the frame-line of 'the picture'...altering therefore the "composition", as it's called, thus the inter-relationshipshape of everything imaged within the frame—transforming, thus also, each image into imagery and/or an almost infinite number of light-induced imaginings in constantly shifting inter-and-outer relation to each and each's every other pose and possibility—and frame's dance...altering, thus therefore then, the very *nature* of seeing scene, as inherited from painting, in a way exactly intrinsic to moving pictures (i.e., what any film does, natch: but what you do DO, herein this film, articulately—thus possibly 'perfectly'/'infinitely'...i.e., hopefully, as an art: and I do fully expect THE WIND VARIATIONS will deserve to be called that/art, in the happiest sense of the word: for it is a simply joyful film and most cheerfully UNpompous): your choice of overall imagery aids articulation, apropos frame-line, inasmuch as the window is a frame which 'speaks' directly to the film frame, and the curtain is the most traditional light-catcher one could fine—the original film, so to speak—its shadow the primal projected transparency: your choices of overall compositions establishes the best sets of horizontals, verticals, and diagonals, for clean interplay, I've ever experienced—your shifts of camera, and cuts shot-to-shot, sustaining the themes-&-variations of these comp.-lines with baroque mastery...and very little rococo distraction...beautifully—your rhythms almost always very feelingly varying the wind-curtain theme (your few cuts defining these emotional varieties as solidly as stanza in poetics)—your exposure changes, in final inter-play with curtain's reflective light-shifts, adding a dimension of finale' both visually and philosophically wondrous for ending the film.'—Stan Brakhage letter, October, 1969.