

# movie JOURNAL

by Jonas Mekas

I saw "Slow Run" one very, very late night, some ungodly hour, one of those midnight—or, perhaps, even later—film-makers' previews. A film-maker will take any hour to look at his film, as long as the theater is willing. Anyway, I saw it through four cups of coffee. I came to see it with many hesitations and suspicions. I have to confess here that I am very suspicious of Canadian films. Larry Kardish happened to be a young Canadian who came to New York two years ago. This is his first feature film, made in New York.

I don't know what did it—New York, or the four cups of coffee—but I sat through "Slow Run" and I was amazed how good a film it was. And I forgot that it was made by a Canadian. It must be true, there are all kinds of facts to back this "speculation," but it looks like the Canadian film-makers finally have freed themselves from the deadly grip of the National Canadian Film Board. During last two years I have seen short and long films from Canada where imagination was running into all directions.

I would have to see it once more to write about "Slow Run" with any intelligence. One thing about it is that it puts to test one very tempting idea, which many film-makers had but never really tried: to let the images run their own way, and the soundtrack its own—and then put the two together. It has been tried, here and there, in a small way, accidentally—but Kardish did it in a big, sweeping way, consciously, as a formal, aesthetic principle of his film. And it works. Maybe because of the subject, which is New York: New York swallows everything without a trace.

The images: New York, streets, people, Larry's friends and girlfriends going through scenes of dalliance—eating, walking, talking, taking baths, combing hair (influences of Andrew Noren), doing this or that. Soundtrack: Kardish talking about his mother, about New York, about his experiences as a Young Canadian Artist in New York, in America; his observations, his criticisms, his loves, his girlfriends, his hangups. He just rattles, he lets his mind and his tongue loose, and it makes one of the best of such rambling soundtracks. I think it's the most successful since "Pull My Daisy." One could call it a diary film, perhaps. Or an extended short story. I don't know what it is. There is no plot, in the old-fashioned way—there is only Larry Kardish and New York. You see nothing very important or significant, you hear nothing important or significant. The whole thing is very casual, unpretentious, and, you could say, having nothing to do with cinema. But it is. You sit, you relax, you watch, you listen, you go with it (is Larry Kardish a "lyrical realist"?)—and that's how it goes with all real, breathing (and breeding) things.

PS: "Slow Run" opens this Thursday at the New Cinema Playhouse, 120 West 42nd Street.

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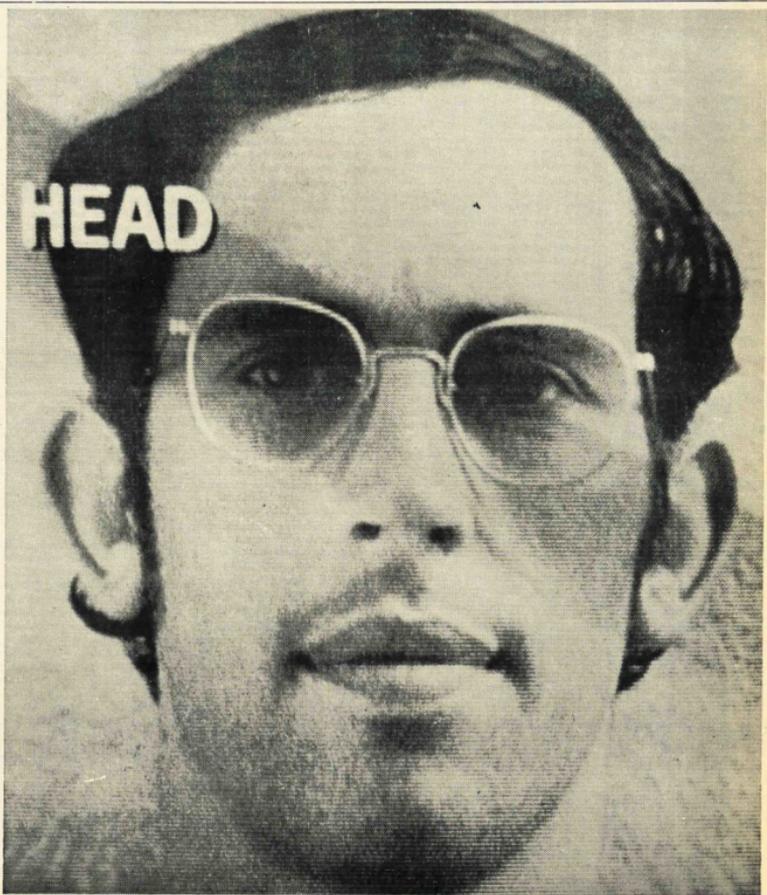
N.Y. TIMES

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no. 11

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## films

Continued from page 51

this not the mark of the journalist rather than the novelist, the conversationalist rather than the orator?

It is only when Mailer tries to ritualize his persona that he becomes ridiculous. Hence, I would rather read all of Mailer's insightful perceptions of policemen in the pages of Harper's than see these same perceptions enacted piecemeal on the screen. Similarly, I would rather look at Steve McQueen's cop in "Bullitt" and Clint Eastwood's in "Coogan's Bluff" than read their rambling ruminations on law and order. McQueen and Eastwood are interesting screen personalities because their essence is more interesting than their existence. Mailer is uninteresting on the screen because his essence is less interesting than his existence. The screen functions to freeze life styles into myth rather than to adjust life forces to art. The beauty of actors is that they are basically vain enough and stupid enough to allow themselves to be embalmed for the edification of their audience. By contrast, intellectuals are always undercutting their persona with their anxieties and analyses. Besides, Mailer is a lousy lecturer,

a lousy actor, and a lousy tv panelist. (To be chewed up by Buckley is no disgrace, but to be chewed up by Truman Capote!) Of course, a brilliant writer like Mailer can dismiss lecturing, acting, and tv paneling as the most minor of art-forms, but to persist in these activities is merely to indulge in prolonged Plimptonism.

Mailer is quoted in Variety as complaining that some of the critiques of "Wild 90" failed to take into consideration that he was a beginner in his craft, and that first novelists are seemingly given greater leeway than first film-makers. We will not go into the comparative generosity of book and movie reviewers except insofar as certain writers are pampered and others ignored and certain lines are upheld, not to mention Mailer's singularly ungenerous critique of Mary McCarthy's "The Group" in the New York Review of Books, and she no more beginner. Also, movie reviewers are under greater pressure from their readers, because people see movies almost as fast as they are reviewed, and they have strong opinions about them whereas no one reads books anymore if a comprehensive review is available.

When Mailer talks about "craft" in movie-making, he seems to be confusing a medium with an art-form. No one expects Mailer to start taking film courses in his mid-40s so that he can mingle in the technical mumbo-jumbo. People hate "Wild 90" because the dialogue is almost inaudible, and this has nothing to do with "craft." The production is simply too cheap to afford the proper facilities, and this is a problem of money. Would Mailer's articles be admired as much if they were circulated clandestinely on smudged-up mimeograph sheets with innumerable typos? Mailer himself used to complain about the typos in his Village Voice articles, and finally stopped writing in this periodical because of his bruised sensibilities. Moviegoers prefer glossy screens the way readers prefer glossy pages, and there is nothing to be done about it. If anything, the screen as a window to dreams and realities demands more technological care than the printed page. If Norman Mailer wants to win over audiences, he doesn't have to learn his craft. He can buy it on the open market, but it will cost a great deal more than he has been willing to invest thus far, and I don't think it will be worth it.

### Chelsea Art

The Fifth Chelsea Art Festival will be held from October 25 through November 9 at the St. Peter's Parish House, 236 West 26th Street, open daily from 2 to 4 and 8 to 10 p. m. The show features work by about 100 artists living or working in Chelsea.

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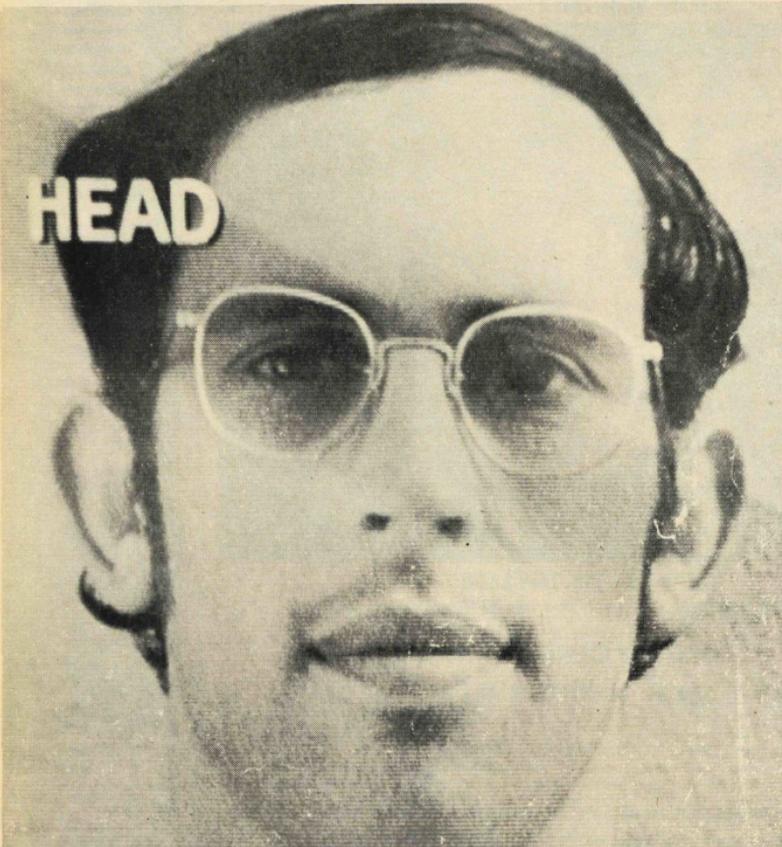
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 —Renata Adler, N. Y. Times

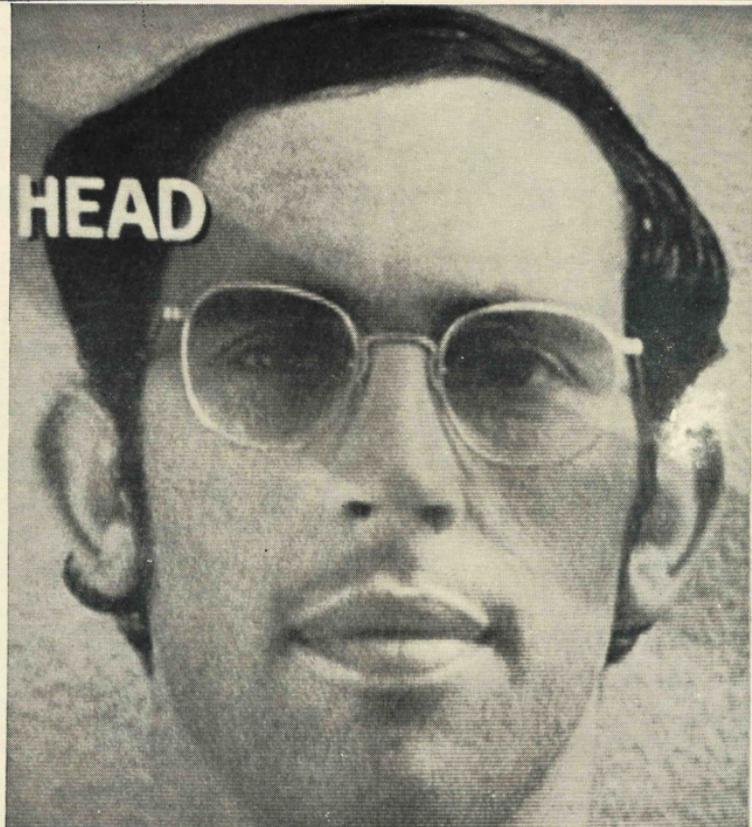


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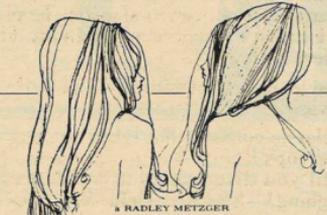
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A Robert and Raymond Hakim Production in EASTMANCOLOR - Presented by ALLIED ARTISTS

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE AUDIENCES

<b>MANHATTAN</b> BRANDT'S APOLLO 42nd ST. BRANDT'S MIDTOWN 99th ST. ROBERT'S 8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE <b>QUEENS</b> BRANDT'S EARLE NECK HICKSON NIGHTS WATER HEADS CONTINENTAL FOREST HILLS <b>WESTCHESTER</b> BRANDT'S ORMONT MALL EAST ORANGE	<b>BRONX</b> BRANDT'S ASCOT GRAND CONCOURSE <b>PLAZA</b> WALTER HEADS LITTLE NECK MULVERNE POLKING A. I. S. BAR HARBOR HUNTINGTON	<b>BROOKLYN</b> BRANDT'S ASTOR ELM FUTURES IN CHURCH MIE WALEY <b>LONG ISLAND</b> BRANDT'S SALISBURY WESTBURY S. S. WELLS MALVERNE POLKING A. I. S. BAR HARBOR HUNTINGTON BRANDT'S PLAZA PATROUILLE BRANDT'S HAMPTON ARTS WEST HAMPTON HUNTINGTON HUNTS BROOK <b>STATEN ISLAND</b> TRAMBLE'S EMPIRE PT. RICHMOND	<b>NEW JERSEY</b> BRANDT'S MALL EAST ORANGE S. S. WELLS PARAMUS GENERAL CENTER'S TOTOWA CINEMA <b>N.Y. STATE</b> U. S. S. BROOKSIDE DRIVE-IN GREENBURGH
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