

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EIGHT NEW VIDEO DOCUMENTARIES TO BE SHOWN AT MoMA BEGINNING FEBRUARY 28 IN VIDEO: RECENT NONFICTION

Issues of war and peace dominate the works to be shown in VIDEO: RECENT NON-FICTION, a series that will be on view in the Video Gallery of The Museum of Modern Art from February 28 through March 31. The tapes in the exhibition are less journalistic reports than works of advocacy by videomakers who have taken their cameras everywhere from the silo of a Minuteman missile to the streets of Moscow.

Video from Russia: The People Speak is the work of Dimitri Devyatkin, a former film student in Moscow who now resides in the United States. In August 1983, he toured six cities in the Soviet Union, conducting interviews with ordinary people he encountered in the streets, the parks, the markets. None of the interviews was arranged in advance; Devyatkin simply went up to people and offered them the chance to speak to the citizens of the United States. According to Devyatkin, he sometimes aroused the curiosity of the police but never their interference. As for the people Devyatkin met, they were voluble, spontaneous, and virtually unanimous about one concern: peace.

That concern is addressed directly in the tape What About the Russians? by Eric Thiermann, Ian Thiermann, and Vivienne Verdon-Roe. The subject is the nuclear arms race; the speakers are experts such as former CIA chief William Colby, retired admiral Gene LaRocque, diplomat George Kennan, and nuclear freeze advocate Dr. Helen Caldicott. Deanna Kamiel's Nuclear Outpost brings the subject closer to home with a startling portrait of Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. Kamiel shows the daily lives of officers who might someday be ordered to fire nuclear missiles or drop nuclear bombs; and in one of the tape's most extraordinary sequences, she even participates in a B-52's practice bomb run over Wyoming.

Peace is also an underlying theme of Saxophone Diplomacy, a tape made by the collective Ideas in Motion. The work records a tour made of the Soviet Union by the ROVA Saxophone Quartet, an avant-garde jazz group based in San Francisco. Although ROVA encountered some of the bureaucratic obduracy that Americans expect of the Soviets, the outstanding feature of the tour seems to have been the goodwill and

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enthusiasm shown by musicians and fans everywhere, qualities that were all the more remarkable given that ROVA's music is far more challenging than the traditional jazz the Soviets are used to.

Two other tapes in the exhibition focus on music-making, both as an artistic activity and in its social and political dimensions. Southern Voices by George Stoney is a profile of Doris Hays, an American composer in the tradition of Charles Ives and Henry Cowell; its point of departure is the premiere of her composition Southern Voices at the Chattanooga Symphony. Gotta Make This Journey, produced by Michelle Parkerson and directed by Joseph Camp, celebrates the group of black women who perform as Sweet Honey in the Rock, whose a capella renditions of traditional black music reflect deep cultural and political commitments.

In Not the American Dream, Tammy Gold reveals the pain, anger, and frustration of middle-class rental tenants in Essex County, New Jersey, who realize they have slipped into the ranks of the American poor. And in The West Bank: Whose Promised Land?, Esti Galili Marpet shows the human cost of the Israeli occupation, both to the Palestinians and to the Israelis themselves.

VIDEO: RECENT NONFICTION has been organized by Barbara London, director of the Museum's Video Program. The Video Program is made possible with support from the New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For further information, the public may call (212) 708-9500.

COMPLETE SCHEDULE IS ATTACHED

January 1985

For further PRESS information, please contact Stuart Klawans, Film Press Representative, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019 (212) 708-9752.

VIDEO: RECENT NONFICTION

February 28 - March 31, 1985

- 1. George Stoney, Southern Voices. 1984. 58 min. Produced in collaboration with Doris Hays, with music by Doris Hays.
- 2. Tammy Gold, Not the American Dream. 1983. 30 min. Produced by Shelterforce; John Atlas, Project Director and Narrative Writer; Steve Krinsky, Administrative Coordinator and Narrative Writer. Music by Daniel B. Gordon and Frame Shift.
- 3. Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey in the Rock. 1983. 58 min. Michelle Parkerson, Producer; Joseph Camp, Director; Executive Producer, Joyce Campbell, WETA, Washington, DC. Sweet Honey in the Rock: Bernice Reagon, Yasmee Williams, Aisha Kahlil, Evelyn Harris, Ysaye Barnwell, Shirley Childress Johnson (interpreter for the hearing-impaired).
- 4. Esti Galili Marpet, The West Bank: Whose Promised Land? 1984. 29 min.
- 5. Ideas in Motion (Lynn Adler, Jim Mayer, John Rogers), Saxophone Diplomacy. 1984. 28 min. Produced by Ideas in Motion and Eva Soltes Associates with support from KQED, San Francisco. Directed by Dimitri Devyatkin, Jim Mayer, John Rogers.
- 6. Deanna Kamiel, Nuclear Outpost. 1982. 34 min. Peter Brownfombe, photographer and director; Kathleen Foulrière, editor; Scott Constant, field engineer; R. Jeff Smith, audio engineer. A production of KTCA, Minneapolis.
- 7. Eric Thiermann, Ian Thiermann, Vivienne Verdon-Roe, What About the Russians? 1983. 26 min. Produced by Educational Film and Video Project, Berkeley, California.
- 8. Dimitri Devyatkin, Video from Russia: The People Speak. 1984. 47 min.

Tapes are shown continuously in the Video Gallery, First Floor, starting at noon.

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