

Film

Emil Bacilla

1966

In the last issue of the *Fifth Estate* [FE #14, September 15, 1966] I said that film was dead in Detroit. I wrote that shortly after arriving in San Francisco, and have since managed to see what film makers here are doing to promote films and film making in the Bay area.

The film makers in this area have banded together and are forming the Canyon Cinema Co-op, patterned after the Filmmakers Co-op in New York, the arrangement being that anyone who has a film that they would like to see distributed arranges to have it listed in the co-op's catalogue, and every time the film is rented the film-maker receives 75% of the rental fee and the co-op gets 25% to help cover operating expenses.

The co-op has been started and is being run by filmmakers. Bruce Baillie, Robert Nelson and Ben Van Meter make up the board of directors and Earl Bodien is at present managing the organization. (Information can be received about the organization by writing: Canyon Cinema Co-op, 1748 Haight St., San Francisco, California, 94117.) Their reasons for starting a co-op is that they believe that The Film-makers Co-operative, as good as it is, cannot service the western part of the country as well as a group located here; although they will be working with the New York co-op quite closely. This does not mean, however, that the co-op is dealing only with filmmakers from this area, they also plan to handle films from all over the country. This does mean that filmmakers anywhere in the country can list their films with both co-ops and be reasonably assured of adequate distribution on both coasts and all points in between. In addition the filmmaker still has the freedom to do whatever personal distribution he may feel necessary, since neither co-op demands exclusive rights to a film.

The people involved in the co-operative also publish a magazine called the *Canyon Cinema News*. It contains reviews, articles by filmmakers, interviews, news of film activity across the country, and listings of film festivals that independent filmmakers may enter. The magazine can be received by sending \$2.00 for a one year subscription to 263 Colgate Avenue, Berkeley, California, 94708. In fact, it was through this magazine that I was made to realize, again, how bad the film situation is in Detroit. For the last two years I have been trying to find other filmmakers in the Detroit area. Of the few I've managed to meet, most have since left for places that have active film movements. Then, while leafing through the August issue of *The Canyon Cinema News* I found mention of a filmmaker named Larry Weiner, who is working in Huntington Woods. I hope that by the time this is published I've managed to contact him and see what he's doing, but it's a sad state of affairs when a person has to travel 2500 miles to find out about a filmmaker 25 miles away from where he started.

The trouble with Detroit is that there is no organization, no communication. I wonder how many other filmmakers there are that neither Weiner nor I know about, and probably never will know about, except through some fluke. The situation here is hopeless.

But wait. Maybe the *Fifth Estate* can help. Maybe this column can help. Is there anyone out there interested in film? Anyone who would like to see something happen in Detroit? Anyone? If so, contact me. My address is 1615 Fort Park, Lincoln Park, Michigan, 48146. My name is Emil Bacilla. If that doesn't work, contact The Fifth Estate and they'll put me in touch with you. Maybe we can get together and make something happen. Maybe we can save the Midwest Film Society. Maybe we can organize a new group if the MFS is beyond help. Maybe we can help bring

film back to life in Detroit. Maybe, if there's no hope, we can all get the hell out of here and find someplace where something is happening.

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/15-october-1-15-1966/film>
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