

Yellow Submarine

Film review

John Wilcock

LONDON The cartoon about the Beatles, "Yellow Submarine" is a watershed movie that could change the pictorial content of all movies and the style of cartoons for all time

Full of puns, (Ringo, rescued by the U.S. Cavalry after being chased by Indians, describes his adventure as "arrowing"), pictorial tricks (clouds patterned like Mexican blankets), thought-provoking jokes (vicious dog with four heads, all pulling different ways) it is a melange of all the commercial and pop art tricks of the past decade.

It's a kind of Disney-ish Alice in Wonderland for heads—there's even a stretch of territory called the "Headlands"—with a thin plot that can be easily illustrated: a gang of baddies that take all the color out of life (and the film). One 60-second segment, demonstrating how slowly time goes, fills the screen with sixty one-second images one after another, ah brilliant, and each one a separate gag in itself.

The film deals with time and space dimensions, art nouveaux, a world somewhat like Hieronymus Bosch, slapstick, and color visuals, constantly changing direction and form, sometimes in the obvious way of animals and objects changing color as they move, sometimes a more subtle type of lightshow.

It's poetry in film that far surpasses the poetry of "Nowhere Man"—one of its cast—who explains: "If I spoke prose you'd all find out I don't know what I talk about."

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