



Film at Wit's End: Eight Avant-Garde Filmmakers

By Stan Brakhage

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In these eight sparkling biographies, Stan Brakhage brings us into intimate acquaintance with some of America's most influential independent filmmakers. With insight and sharp detail, Brakhage puts the lives and works of these filmic visionaries into personal focus. We meet Jerome Hill, born to inherit railroads and banks but destined to forge his artistic vision into a lasting film statement. And Marie Menken who, against the odds of a miserable and brutal marriage, developed a film aesthetic that revolutionized the very essence of independent filmmaking. Then James Broughton, the inveterate San Franciscan, whose irrepressible sense of whimsy and profound grasp of classical symbols combined to create some of the most vital filmworks of the last four decades; Christopher MacLaine, the "Artaud of North Beach"; Maya Deren, known to independent filmmakers as "the mother of us all"; Sidney Peterson, sophisticated, erudite, shy, the gentleman of the avant-garde film world; and two of Brakhage's most prominent contemporaries, Bruce Conner and Ken Jacobs.

These filmmakers are members of one of the most radical of 20th-century art movements; and yet as radical and individual as they are, their films and their lives are a continuous source of inspiration, not only to young, developing film-artists, but to the makers of commercial movies and videos as well. Brakhage presents them and their work in portraits that are at once critical and anecdotal. One comes away from Film at Wit's End as one leaves an enjoyable, lively evening among friends.

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Editorial Review

Review

A basic book in the canon of experimental cinema. -- *Film Quarterly*

Intelligent, warm and often highly personal tributes. -- *Classic Images*

Not only luminous...miniature biographies, but also social and cultural portraits of art-in-America. A fascinating collection. -- *The Columbus Dispatch*

About the Author

Stan Brakhage was one of the most influential of independent American filmmakers. From 1952 to 2003, he issued nearly 400 original films, ranging in length from a few seconds to several hours. The recipient of many awards and prizes, including the 1986 Maya Deren Award from the American Film Institute and the 1989 MacDowell Colony Medal, Brakhage was also a professor of film studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

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