



STATEN ISLAND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Staten Island Museum
High Rock Park Conservation Center
William T. Davis Wildlife Refuge

FILMS BY INDEPENDENT FILM-MAKER LARRY JORDAN, II

November 8, 1987

At the Museum of the Staten Island Institute

SOPHIE'S PLACE (1987) by Larry Jordan. Color, sound, 90 minutes. 16 mm print provided by Mr. Jordan, who will be present to discuss the film with the audience.

Larry Jordan has been making films since the 1950s. While he is best known for his animated works, which usually utilize steel engravings and other imagery made about 100 years ago, he has also made dramatic works with actors and dialog, though these films too have surreal, magical qualities. This screening of Sophie's Place is one of the premieres of the film on the east coast (yesterday it was at Millennium Film Workshop, and on Tuesday it will be at the Museum of Modern Art). Earlier this year, in a letter to Howard Guttenplan of Millennium, Jordan described Sophie's Place:

I consider it my first fully animated feature. It is the product of the last seven years' labor, the last five full time upon it. I call it Sophie's Place because it evolved from and revolves around the mosque (both interior and exterior) of Saint Sophia in Constantinople. Essentially it is an autobiography in animated form (as once suggested by Stan Brakhage many years ago), but a spiritual one, an 'alchemical' one.

It is interesting in that the film took place in a timeless working atmosphere, where no limits or restrictions were ever placed on how long it took to complete an idea or a sequence. No pre-plans were made; it all took place under the camera--that is, it is the reality of what happened there, not a 're-enactment.' The entire film is unedited, possibly the longest 'in-camera' film ever made. (Also possibly the first totally experimental animated feature-length film [90 minutes or above] ever made). At any rate, the continuity is more flowing and complete than any animation I've ever done.

Audiences at the Institute will recall previous Jordan films which have been shown here, notably The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (with Orson Welles reading Coleridge) from last year, and five films shown in 1985, Big Sur: The Ladies, Cut Out Animation, and the trilogy Adagio, In a Summer Garden, and Winter Light, as well as the program of works presented here last week.

--R.A. Haller for SIIAS

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