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'CORRESPONDENCE'

Dear Sir,

I was disappointed, though not surprised, at reading Malcolm LeGrice's views (May Issue) on the apparent success 'Artists' films are having at present over 'Filmmakers' films, due it seems, to the comparative sympathy from 'Artist' oriented public galleries. If 'discrimination' abounds, as he suggests, thus creating factions of independent film (viz. 'Film Art'), then this obviously must be changed.

However, I did not take this as the simple message. LeGrice was, in effect, perpetuating the time-worn problems the underground filmmaker has had with the commercial cinema, and aligning (thus irritating) these with the art world, with I suspect, the implication that if 'Artists' become involved with the medium they are, in some way, encroaching upon hallowed territory. In fact, it goes without saying that the roots of present film art stem directly out of recent movements in painting and sculpture; that present concerns are often synonymous; and that most of of the more substantial contributors are, or have been, 'Artists': Warhol, Snow, Sharits et al. To even consider such polarities at this time is totally absurd.

That is not (he would claim) the nature of his argument, and indeed on the surface it is simply, and in certain instances rightfully, a dig at gallery management. But, below the surface there lurks a typical gripe implicit in, for instance, the innuendo in his very brief passage on my recent show at the Tate: "No criticism of the work intended, but it is unfortunate and predictable that the first film artist to get extensive presentation is one who's initial reputation was made as a sculptor". Why unfortunate, and for whom? Does he have someone else in mind?

It is sad that he should contrive to imply that my show came about solely on the basis that I was once a sculptor. I would hope it had something to do with the quality of the films themselves. More important, I would have hoped that he would have seen it as a furtherance of the 'cause', in precisely the same way as the show he was involved there himself last year.

It is also sad that this attitude should impede his responsibility as the magazine's film columnist, and prevent him making a more constructive comment on the show. In fact, I suspect this tactic was an excuse to evade the issue, since it is clearly apparent that he is only prepared to put his critical attention to a specific area of film art development in Britain, which seems more to do with the geography of its origins, than a thoroughly objective appraisal of the total endeavour.

The paramount issues concerning the exposure of film art (in whatever context) should be brought together as a common cause by filmmakers with common intent, rather than being polarised by such biased and protective anachronisms, particularly when many of us have been advocating demystification as integral to the work.

Yours sincerely,

David Hall.