

galerie du jour agnès b.

A FEW THINGS  
I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU,  
MY PARIS FRIENDS



**by Jonas Mekas**  
**A Galerie du Jour Agnès b. exhibition.**  
**May 16 - June 20, 2009**  
**Curated by Benn Northover**

Legendary filmmaker, poet and artist Jonas Mekas returns to Galerie du Jour with an exhibition of new and previously unseen works. This exhibition titled "*A few things I want to share with you, my Paris friends*" is a diverse mixture of video, film, audio, still image works and rare documentation from Mekas' life. The exhibition largely includes new and unseen works by Mekas spanning the last five years. Documenting his life, friends and the world around him since the late 1950's, Mekas continues to explore new formats and approaches including video installation, live music and his Internet based 365 day film project. This gallery show is a dedication to the long standing friendship between Jonas Mekas and his close friend Agnes b.

**Artists Statement:**

**A NOTE ON THIS EXHIBITION**

As time goes, one's essential preoccupations begin to become more and more visible. Mine, it seems, is the preoccupation with what we still have left in our self-destructive civilization that really and essentially matters to the more subtle aspects of our souls. So I have gravitated to the personal, private aspects of life, of my own life, lives of my friends; away from the big thematic, dramatic, psychological, political and etc. and etc. events. The world's bustle. I think that it was this same preoccupation that made me also gravitate to the diaristic forms of film, video, literature and whatever else I do. I have to add that there is one more aspect to my preoccupation with small and personal: I stay totally away from what I consider negative in our civilization. At the risk of being called romantic and even sentimental I exclude all violence and horror of my times - and I have seen a lot of it. I leave it to other artists who seem to prefer working with those aspects of our civilization, myself preferring moments in nature and life around me that are paradisiac, full of sun that affect us in subtle poetic angelic ways and thus contribute to the sustenance of invisible Paradise in our lives. I have no pretensions in « creating » art. I am just a maker. I keep making things I like. I have done so all the way from my childhood. I chose Galerie du Jour because of its unpretentiousness. But I will always do anything for friends. That's why I chose to do this show at Galerie du Jour, I am doing it because Agnes b is a good dear friend. I will do anything for friends. And that's why I chose to do a show at the Serpentine, because Hans Ulrich Obrist is a good friend. I work only out of friendship but not because of art career considerations.

I have a need, an irresistible need to share what I am doing with friends. It's like having a conversation with good friends.

- Thank you, Agnes!

- Jonas Mekas

Elements of the exhibition:

**I. SUMMER MANIFESTO.**

An installation of 40 summer images, from my films, originally made as a live projected performance for the Serpentine Gallery manifesto event in 2008. Manifestoes usually are artistic/political statements, most of the time oppositional, but I felt like making a manifesto in support of something we all love, and we all love summer.

## **2. MISTRAL/CASSIS 1966.**

A four-monitor/screen installation. Images of Cassis filmed in 1966 during the mistral period. The wind, the ocean, the lighthouse, the people of Cassis, and some brief cameo glimpses of friends, Jerome Hill, Bernadette Lafont, Taylor Mead, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Alec Wilder.

## **3. 365 DAY PROJECT.**

In 2007 I challenged myself to make one short film/video for each day of the calendar. These films/videos were made accessible to over the Internet. It was a very challenging and demanding undertaking, but I did it. The Project will be presented via iPods, on twelve monitors, one for each month. There will be a printed catalogue, which will give you information on all the 365 days.

## **4. TO NEW YORK WITH LOVE.**

An installation of 40 images of New York, as caught by my 16mm Bolex. Originally commissioned by Phong Bui for a show at PS1 (MOMA), this is my declaration of love to the city that saved my sanity.

## **5. 491 BROADWAY.**

A sound installation. Sounds from my life on 491 Broadway, Soho, New York. Friends having good time, Stan Brakhage and Peter Kubelka discussing cinema, children making noises, ordinary daily sounds, singing, etc etc. There will be a table, some chairs, and some wine on the table too, while you sit and listen to the sounds that took place some time ago. Also there are collected poems and documents from the period of time I lived there at 491 Broadway.

## **6. QUARTETS.**

An installation of four quartet pieces, each on four monitors:

A) DESTRUCTION QUARTET, Nam June Paik destroying a piano. Danius Kesminas fire event. 9/11 piece, destruction of Berlin Wall.

B) SOHO QUARTET. Images of old Soho. I leave my 491 Soho apartment. A walk through Soho winter. George Maciunas.

C) MARTIN SCORSESE SHOOTING «THE DEPARTED».

Footage, on four monitors, of Scorsese directing and shooting his feature film THE DEPARTED.

D) THE EDUCATION OF SEBASTIAN. A four-monitor piece of my journey through Egypt, with my son Sebastian.

### **7. THE SUMMERS OF NEW YORK.**

Occasionally I join my music friends Dalius Naujo and Kenny Wollesen at Zebulon, a French music bistro in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. They are great musicians and I am happy to improvise with them, as a vocalist, we always have great time. So here are six pieces from our work together, documenting rehearsals and performances with me and my musician friends.

### **8. TO PETRARCA SOUND INSTILLATION.**

TO PETRARCA consists of 54 sound pieces from my sound recordings. My Sound diaries of the last fifty years - Sounds of New York, sounds of nature, sounds from my travels, me singing with friends, etc etc. The sound pieces range from 20 seconds to a minute and more.

### **9. TO PETRARCA: COLLECTED IMAGES.**

On the occasion of the publication of the first in a series of Sound Books by Editions Dis Voir and L'atelier de creation Radiophonique. The first one being my book TO PETRARCA. Images from the book will be exhibited in the show.

### **10. A LETTER FROM GREENPOINT.**

In February 2004, after 30 years of my life in Soho, I made a decision to leave Soho and move to Greenpoint Brooklyn. This video is about what it feels like to leave a place in which I've spent more time than any other place, and which was also a place of my family life, I am somewhere else now. It's also about beginning of letting roots grow, in a new place, new home, with new friends, new thoughts, and experiences.

### **JONAS MEKAS' 365 PROJECT.**

#### **Curators' statement.**

In November of 2006, Jonas Mekas launched his website.

The inauguration was celebrated with the release of 40 new short films, including portraits of friends, filmmakers, happenings, performances and travels spanning the past 50 years of Mekas' life. On January 1st of 2007, Mekas began his epic 365 project inspired by the Italian poet Petrarca and his Canzoniere. Releasing one film for every day of the year through his website, Mekas draw upon a vast archive of video footage recorded over the past decades, as well as new material from his everyday life. The 365 project painted an intimate portrait of Mekas' life, friends, and travels. As writer, artist, activist, organizer and cineaste, Jonas Mekas' activities since the 1950's have become legendary, inspiring generations of filmmakers, artists and poets alike. The project attracted a strong international following, and prompted many filmmakers young and old around the world to begin their own 365 film and video projects.

Embracing both film and video in the poignant diaristic style which he has come to embody, Mekas depicts the passion and enthusiasm for life that has accompanied him through his involvement and activities within the Cinema, Art, Poetry scenes of New York and beyond, up to the present day. The gallery show *A Few Things I Want To Share With You, My Paris Friends*, is a monumental occasion, as this marks the first time Mekas' 365 project has been exhibited in full, to the public outside of its original internet based release in 2007. Themes of the personal and of friendship are strong reoccurring elements that run through all 365 films, so it is only fitting that the first public screening of the 365 project in it's entirety, is at the Galerie du Jour as a homage to Mekas' close friendship with Agnes b and with the city of Paris.

The full length of the 365 project amounts to 38 hours in total.

In this exhibition the viewer is able to watch all 365 films simultaneously as an entire piece or choose to view each day individually.

- Benn Northover

**“ I want to celebrate the small forms of cinema, the lyrical form, the poem, the watercolour, etude, sketch, portrait, arabesque, and bagatelle, and little 8mm songs. I am standing in the middle of the information highway and laughing, because a butterfly on a little flower somewhere in China just fluttered its wings, and I know that the entire history, culture will drastically change because of that fluttering. A super-8 millimetre camera just made a little soft buzz somewhere, somewhere on the lower east side of New York, and the world will never be the same. “**

- Jonas Mekas