

'Painters Painting' Explores the Art Scene Here

PAINTERS PAINTING, a documentary of him). Jasper Johns is followed abstract expression- amounts to a social mistake. the Rossiya Concert Hall, Moscow's newest, were apparently not entirely prepared for the carefully structured dancing, so different Judging from applause and comments, the audience appeared to appreciate "Panae," a piece based on the Othello theme and danced by norms of classical ballet. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, she became a supporter of the fledgling Soviet regime and accepted an operate for two more decades until it was closed by Stalin at the height of anti-Western feeling during the cold war.

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PAINTERS PAINTING, a documentary feature produced and directed by Emile de Antonio; sound and editing, Mary Lamson; camera, Ed Emshwiller; distributed by New Yorker Films. Running time: 116 minutes. At the Fifth Avenue Cinema, Fifth Avenue at 12th Street.

With: Willem de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler, Hans Hoffman, Jasper Johns, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Philip Payle, Larry Poons, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, Andy Warhol, Leo Castelli, Henry Geldzahler, Clement Greenberg, Tom Hess, Philip Johnson, Hilton Kramer, William Rubin, Robert Scull, among others.

By VINCENT CANBY

In the past, Emile de Antonio has made some fine documentaries, including "Point of Order" and "Millhouse," each a scathing, highly biased attack against someone or something. His newest film, "Painters Painting," represents a change of mood. It's a great big, cheerfully uncritical hug of a movie about a subject he adores, the contemporary New York art scene and the people who make it hustle.

Watching it is like being at a cocktail party. Robert Rauschenberg is there. Andy Warhol is there (with Brigit Berlin taking Polaroid snaps

of him). Jasper Johns is there. As are Barnett Newman and Henry Geldzahler and Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella and Larry Poons. Robert Scull and Ethel are there, looking pleased and modest and just slightly uncomfortable, as if waiting for the next attack by the philistines who refer to him as the taxi tycoon when he is really the Lorenzo di Medici of pop.

The movie is mistitled. It should be called "Painters Talking." Although we do see Larry Poons ripping a large color-filled canvas off his studio floor, and although we see old still pictures of the late Jackson Pollock at work, most of the movie is devoted to the painters talking about themselves and their work.

A few make sense: Jasper Johns, Willem de Kooning, Andy Warhol (at least, he smiles a lot and looks genuinely modest). At one place or another, some basic points are made about the various trends in American art that

followed abstract expressionism. Much of it, however, is cocktail party conversation. Says Barnett Newman: "Esthetics are for me what ornithology is for birds."

Mr. Rauschenberg says that to be an abstract expressionist one had to have time to feel sorry for oneself. He doesn't and didn't. Mr. Stella says that the kind of contemporary painting he represents is designed, among other things, to keep the viewer from "reading" the painting, and to make it difficult for critics to describe and thus difficult to carry out their function.

A lot of "Painters Painting" is funny (intentionally), some of it is boring (unintentionally) and a great deal of it is somewhat less informative than is absolutely necessary. Hilton Kramer, art editor of The New York Times, is given rather short shrift when he tries to trace the European roots of American abstract expressionism. In the festive context of the rest of the film, his attempt

amounts to a social mistake.

I would assume that Mr. de Antonio has some opinions (not entirely favorable) about the parts played in the New York scene by various art dealers and curators. You wouldn't know it from "Painters Painting." It all looks like a warm, lovable rat race, even though one in which the stakes can be tremendous. Leo Castelli, the dealer, smiles benignly as he tells of the Jasper Johns that was bought for \$2,000 and could be sold today for \$200,000.

Mr. de Antonio has been an observer of the scene for years, and is obviously as fond of the artists as he is fascinated by their work, which has been beautifully photographed in color and black and white by Ed Emshwiller, who is a first-class film maker in his own right.

"Painters Painting," which opened yesterday at the Fifth Avenue Cinema, looks great. Like so much contemporary painting, however, it involves too much talk.

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NOMINATED FOR 2 ACADEMY AWARDS

Walter Matthau / Carol Burnett

Berlin taking Polaroid snaps trends in American art that of the film, his attempt too much talk.

Melanie Flood Projects

left

front

right

JOHN OPERA

all works
Untitled, 2022
gum bichromate and watercolor on waxed canvas
in artist frame
21h x 17w x 1 3/4d in

SARAH WERTZBERGER

Transperse 1, 2021
hand woven poly & cotton digital weaving
with sublimation printing
19.5h x 15.5w in

MATTHEW FISCHER

Double, 2022
glass, copper foil, lead and tin solder
22h x 11w x 8.5d in

TANNER LIND

Untitled 4, 2021
acrylic and ink on canvas
82h x 84w in

ERIN O'KEEFE

Circle Circle Elipse Elipse with Purple Block, 2020
archival pigment print on photo rag
16h x 12w in
Unique

Gathering, 2021
archival pigment print on photo rag
20h x 25w in
Unique

MATTHEW FISCHER

I.H.P. 2, 2020
oil and acrylic on panel in artist frame
13h x 11.25w in

Light Organ, 2022
glass, copper foil, lead and tin solder
26h x 11.5 w x 9.24d in

JOHN HOUCK

Pure Colour, 2022
oil on canvas
28h x 21w in

San Marco, 2022
oil on canvas
28h x 21w in

LILA JARZOMBEK

A Garden Needs its Flowers, 2022
oil on panel
11 x 14 in

OFER WOLBERGER

Study for a Height Indicator, 2021
Acrylic on muslin on birch plywood
2 x 36 in

MARTHA DAGHLIAN

of thy new paradise, extended, 2022
digitally printed cotton
52 x 22 in

ROSE DICKSON

Heat Map, 2021
egg tempera on panel
7.25h x 12.25w x 1.5d in

Hivemind, 2021
egg tempera on panel
7.25h x 12.25w x 1.5 d in

DEREK FRANKLIN

MMTH #4, 2022
oil on canvas
63.5 x 51.5w in

Johnson Creek Floodplain Sample #7, 2022
oil on Canvas
17.5h x 13.5w in

LILA JARZOMBEK

Weed and Shrooms, 2022
14x17 in
oil on panel

OFER WOLBERGER

Height Indicator (4 feet), 2022
Acrylic on linen
6 x 48 inches