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| McLaren, Norman (1914 – 1987) |
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| Born in Scotland, Norman McLaren was a filmmaker and one of the most inventive creators of animation films. His career is closely connected to the animation studio at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), where he worked from 1941 to 1984. All in all, he made some 50 films in a stunning range of styles and techniques. McLaren attended the Glasgow School of Art from 1932-36. While specializing in Interior Design he joined a filmmaking club, discovered the works of Pudovkin and Eisenstein and made his first films. For lack of a camera and unexposed film, he experimented with old prints and painted coloured ink directly onto the frames. John Grierson, the then-time director of the British General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit and a documentary filmmaker himself, discovered McLaren when being adjudicator at the Glasgow Amateur Film Festival in 1936 and offered him a job at his unit in London. While learning documentary filmmaking at the GPO, McLaren continued his experiments with sound and movement. During a stint in Spain where he covered the Civil War as cameraman, he developed his lifelong abhorrence of war. |
| Born in Scotland, Norman McLaren was a filmmaker and one of the most inventive creators of animation films. His career is closely connected to the animation studio at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), where he worked from 1941 to 1984. All in all, he made some 50 films in a stunning range of styles and techniques.  McLaren attended the Glasgow School of Art from 1932-36. While specializing in Interior Design he joined a filmmaking club, discovered the works of Pudovkin and Eisenstein and made his first films. For lack of a camera and unexposed film, he experimented with old prints and painted coloured ink directly onto the frames. John Grierson, the then-time director of the British General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit and a documentary filmmaker himself, discovered McLaren when being adjudicator at the Glasgow Amateur Film Festival in 1936 and offered him a job at his unit in London. While learning documentary filmmaking at the GPO, McLaren continued his experiments with sound and movement. During a stint in Spain where he covered the Civil War as cameraman, he developed his lifelong abhorrence of war.  In September 1939, McLaren emigrated to the USA, where he worked as an independent filmmaker. In 1941, John Grierson, now head of the newly founded National Film Board of Canada (NFB), recruited him to join his institution. McLaren established the NFB’s animation department in 1942. Starting out with wartime films such as *Mail Early* (1941), *Boogie-Doodle* (1941) and *V for Victory* (1941), he undertook rhythmic and cinematic experiments by drawing symbols and lettering directly onto 35mm film stock. *Alouette* (1944) is based on the single-frame animation of paper cut-outs. McLaren’s interest in acoustic exploration led him to create synthetic soundtracks by hand-drawing on the soundtrack of the film. His selection of music ranged from Oscar Peterson (*Begone Dull Care*, 1949) to Quebecois folk song (*Le Merle*, 1958) to Ravi Shankar’s and Chatur Lal’s Indian sitar music (*A Chairy Tale*, 1957) and a Glenn Gould interpretation of Bach (*Spheres*, 1969).  In his anti-war allegory *Neighbours* (1952), the Oscar-winning story of a neighbourly fight over a flower, McLaren used pixilation, a stop-motion technique consisting in moving the object or actors in small increments between individually photographed frames. In *Blinkity-Blank* (1954), which won the Palme d’or at Cannes in 1955, McLaren scratched the images with razor blades and needles onto black film and then hand-coloured the resultant ‘etching’.  Between 1967 and his retirement in 1984, McLaren made three films with ballet dancers, using techniques such as multiplied photographic images in *Pas de deux* (1968).  Apart from two brief periods in which he trained film students in China (1949) and India (1953) in the context of a UNESCO programme, McLaren remained with the NFB for his entire career. The most honoured Canadian filmmaker, he received an estimated 200 international awards. In 1973 he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada and in 1985 Chevalier of the Ordre national du Québec. |
| Further reading:  (Collins)  (Dobson)  (McWilliams)  (Vallière)  **Filmography**  (McLaren)  (McClaren)  (McClaren, Camera Makes Whoopee)  (McClaren, Polychrome Phantasy)  (McClaren, Five Untitled Shorts)  (McClaren, Colour Cocktail)  (McClaren, Hell UnLtd)  (McClaren, Book Bargain)  (McClaren, News for the Navy)  (McClaren, "Mony a Pickle")  (McClaren, Love on the Wing)  (McClaren, The Obedient Flame)  (McClaren, NBC Greeting)  (McClaren, Allegro)  (McClaren, Stars and Stripes)  (McClaren, Dots)  (McClaren, Loops)  (McLaren, Boogie-Doodle)  (McLaren, Mail Early)  (McLaren, V for Victory)  (McLaren, Five for Four)  (McLaren, Hen Hop)  (McLaren, Dollar Dance)  (McLaren, Alouette)  (McLaren, Keep Your Mouth Shut)  (McLaren, C'est l'aviron)  (McLaren, Là-haut sur ces montagnes )  (McLaren, A Little Phantasy on a 19th-Century Painting)  (McLaren, Hoppity Pop)  (McLaren, Fiddle-de-dee)  (McLaren, La Poulette grise)  (McLaren, A Phantasy)  (McLaren and Lambart, Begone Dull Care)  (McLaren, Now is the Time)  (McLaren, Around is Around)  (McLaren, Neighbours)  (McLaren, Two Bagatelles)  (McLaren, Blinkity Blank)  (McLaren, Rhythmetic)  (McLaren, A Chairy Tale)  (McLaren, La Merle)  (McLaren, Short and Suite)  (McLaren, Serenal)  (McLaren, Jack Paar Credit Titles)  (McLaren, Lines Vertical)  (McLaren, Opening Speech: McLaren)  (McLaren, New York Lightboard)  (N. McLaren, New York Lightboard Record)  (McLaren, Lines Horizontal)  (McLaren, Hale and Grant)  (McLaren, Canon)  (McLaren, Mosaic)  (McLaren, Pas de deux)  (McLaren and Jodoin, Spheres)  (McLaren, Synchromy)  (McLaren, Ballet Adagio)  (McLaren, Pinscreen)  (McLaren and Munro, Animated Motion: Part 1)  (McLaren and Munro, Animated Motion: Part 2)  (McLaren and Munro, Animated Motion: Part 3)  (McLaren and Munro, Animated Motion: Part 4)  (McLaren and Munro, Animated Motion: Part 5)  (McLaren, Narcissus)  (National Film Board Canada)  (McLaren, Pen Point Percussion)  (D. McWilliams) |