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| Hammid, Alexander (1907-2004) |
| Alexandr Hackenschmied |
| Alexander Hackenschmied, Americanised as Alexander Hammid, created and promoted experimental art films in both Czechoslovakia and the United States. In 1930 he organised two avant-garde exhibitions in Prague, ‘Nová ĉeská fotografie’ [New Czech Photography] and the ‘First Week of Avant-garde Film’ (during which he showed his own short film *Bezúčelná procházka* [*An Aimless Walk*]). He later worked in Zlín for the Baťa Film Studio, which hired young artists to make advertising films. Hammid collaborated with American filmmaker Herbert Kline on the feature documentaries *Crisis* and *Lights Out in Europe*, both about the early years of World War Two. After fleeing Czechoslovakia, Hammid came to the United States and helped Kline adapt John Steinbeck’s *The* *Forgotten Village*. After moving to the United States Hammid met his first wife, Maya Deren, with whom he made several films, including the American avant-garde watershed *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943). While employed making industrial films, Hammid continued directing and editing art films, including adaptations of Gian Carlo Menotti’s opera *The Medium* and Martha Graham’s dance composition *Night Journey*. Hammid's best known later films include the three-screen *To Be Alive!* and the early IMAX documentary To Fly. Considered one of the First Czech avant-garde filmmakers, Hammid’s works point to the influence of the transnationalism in the blending of documentary, avant-garde, and advertising modes in early twentieth century filmmaking. |
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| Further reading:  (Anděl, Alexandr Hackenschmied)  (Anděl, Czech Modernism, 1900-1945)  (Clark, Hodson and Neiman)  (Drubek)  (Omasta)  (Shattuck)  (Valasek)  (Willoughby) |