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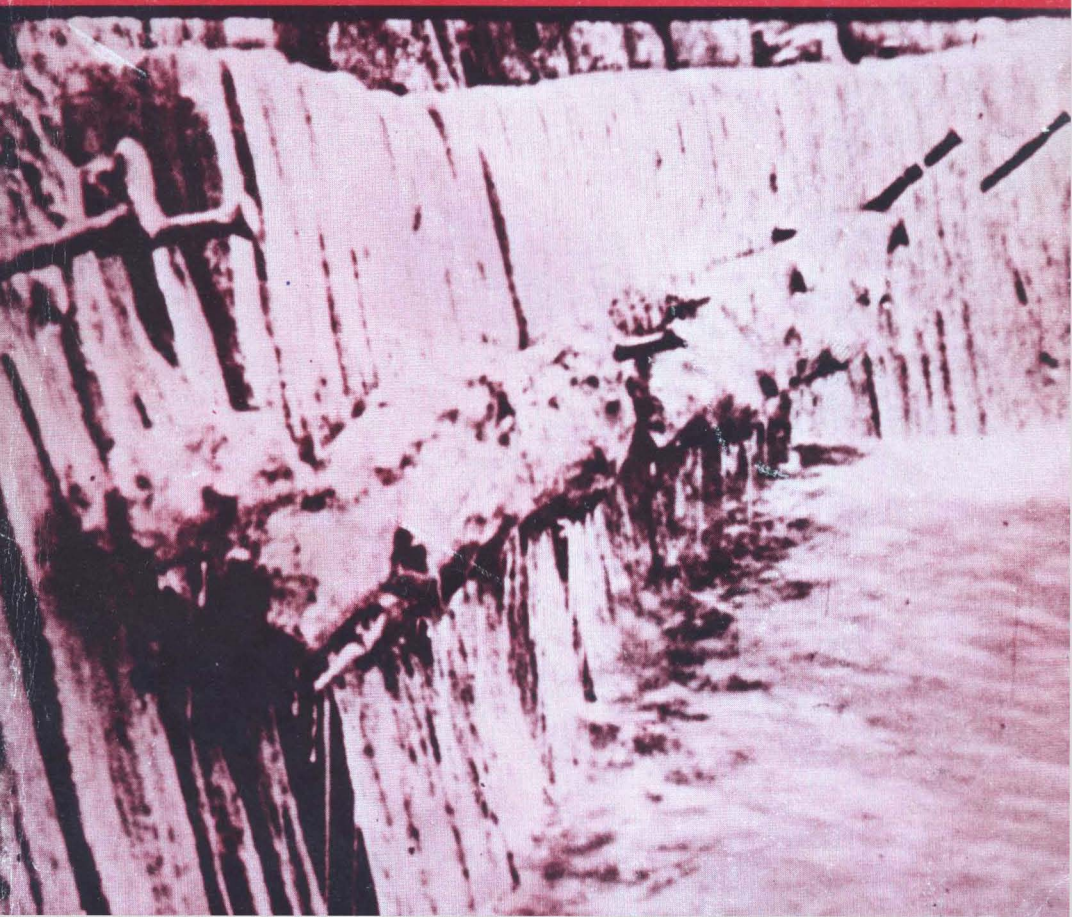
STRUCTURAL FILM ANTHOLOGY



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STRUCTURAL FILM ANTHOLOGY

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Interview with Peter Kubelka

Jonas Mekas

About the Irrelevancy of this Interview

Jonas Mekas: Should we concentrate specifically on your latest film, *Unsere Afrikareise,* or should we also talk about the European avant-garde?
Peter Kubelka: No, I cannot talk about the European film avant-garde at all, because there is nothing there that I respect. When you transcribe this interview, you should state that nothing I say has anything to do with my films. I have, I feel a very great need to communicate. I work hundreds and hundreds of hours for one particular minute in my films, and I could never produce such a minute by talking. I want, therefore, my talk to be completely irrelevant. Because, otherwise, it might just spoil what I have to say through my films. The real statement that I want to make in my world is my films. Everything else is irrelevant.
Jonas: You mean, there is nothing that we can say about *Unsere Afrikareise* at all?

Films – Documents for the Future Generations

Kubelka: Yes, we can talk. There are certain things that could be said. For instance: What I had in mind, with *Unsere Afrikareise,* was to leave a document for the future generations, when all this our life will be over . . . I thought this is a document. Of course, it may seem like a poem. Of course, it has very lyrical form – but this is document, too. My film is a *document for future generations.** There is nothing that has to be said with it. It just can't be said.

Jonas: It is interesting that Andy Warhol, too, considers his films – even films like *Sleep* – as documents for the future generations. Once he said to me: Wouldn't it be great today to have films made in the year 1266 – a film of a man's shoulder, for instance, or his ass, to see how differently people looked 700 years ago.

*All italics mine. *Editor.*

Kubelka: Did he say that? Yes. It's true. Then there is a second thing that I would like to say. I work for this living generation. I want to help in aging mankind, to get it away from the stone age. Make it adult. I feel that mankind is still a very young child – if you can make such a comparison. I feel that the age of mankind now is that of a very young child. For example, it just begins to be articulate. These are the first stages where it's articulate. It's beginning to have a memory. History is very young. What we call history is not history but very subjective statements of single beings and not right at all, and very mystic and mysterious. Mankind is now just in the process of growing up a little bit, slowly, slowly. My films have a function (this goes for the African film) – I play with the emotions and try to tear the emotions loose from the people, so that they would gain distance to their emotions, to their own feelings. This is one of my main tasks: *to get distance to the whole existence,* you see . . . I have a lot of distance. I always had it, and I have too much, so I feel very lonely and I want to communicate. You see, you have this whole range of emotions and these mechanisms, how the emotions are created. When you see certain images or hear certain sounds you have certain emotions. So I must always cry when I see moving scenes, when I see the hero getting the first prize for the biggest round and they play the national anthem . . . I have to cry . . . or when they bury somebody, I have to cry. At the same time, I am angry at myself, because I know that it's just the emotional mechanism. So, with the African film, I do a lot of this, I trigger a lot of those mechanisms at the same time and create a lot of – at the same time – comic feelings, sad feelings.

The Multiple Meanings of Image and Sound in Unsere Afrikareise

Jonas: Like the lion's death scene, when they are dragging him up on the truck – I think this is one of the saddest scenes I have ever seen. Or death of the giraffe – they are both very sad. They are pulling up this poor dead lion, and it's difficult to pull him up; it is a very sad shot. And the giraffe dies, falling on his side, and we hear this laugh, like sides splitting from laughing, I'm dying . . . these multi-level feelings.
Kubelka: This is achieved through the perfect synchronization of the music, did you notice that?
Jonas: Yes.
Kubelka: They move all in rhythm. There are many things that are not noticeable on first few viewings at all.
Jonas: *Or the eye, when the dying lion lifts his eye and looks directly into the camera accusingly and forgivingly and then dies. If there is a great moment of cinema, this is one.*

Economy in Cinema: Frame by Frame Film-making

Kubelka: Did you hear the music? When the lion looks at the camera, the music says (he sings): 'You look at me, and I watch thee . . .' – this comes together, then. And this brings up the question of economy. When you have the public sitting there, you have a very short time that they are looking at you,

and you must consider that the senses of the people now are the senses of the stone age: hunters and gatherers. They just have the senses to survive. Human beings are not in a position to sit and be interested. All their senses have survival reasons. So you must count on the audience, which sits there and will only be attentive to things that they are vitally interested in, or they will give you just a certain amount of time. So, when you really want to communicate, you must be very economical with every part, and with every second. For me, film is the projection of still frames. My economy is one single frame and every part of the screen. So I feel that every frame that is projected too much makes the whole thing less articulate. So I always work in frames. Even the African film, which doesn't seem to be like that, because it's very natural, is worked frame by frame. I have twenty-four communication possibilities per second, and I don't want to waste one. This is the economy. And the same is with the sound. Because one of the major fields where cinema works is when sound and image meet. So, the meeting of every frame with the sound is very important. That means, you must have the same economy with sound as you have with the image.

Jonas: Let us suppose, one reasons this way: If we accept the proposition that we are still in the stone age, and if we now say something to these stone-age people in a sentence that is so concentrated and distilled, that every sound, every word, every letter in it means something – do you think they will understand it? Isn't it better to divide the message that you want to put across into five sentences? So that they would get it, in the long run? Because you say, you want to communicate; and you don't want to waste a single frame?

Kubelka: You see, I don't make any distinction between myself and others. I don't say, 'The others are in the stone age, and I am not.' I am in the stone age as well as the others. So, if it works for me, it should work for everybody.

Jonas: I see. That places everything in the proper perspective. Even *Unsere Afrikareise* is a stone-age product.

Kubelka: Yes, I try to get myself and everybody else away from the stone age. But you see, when you say that perhaps I should give more time to people – I do this through repetition. I want my films to be viewed many many times. (A note in the Film-Makers Cooperative *Catalogue* says that, when rented, each of Kubelka's films should be projected twice. On reels, there are two prints of each film spliced side by side – to help the projectionist. – Jonas.)As I work a long time on my films, I don't want to lose them, I am not like many other artists who say, Oh, I made this long ago, and I have overcome it, and I don't like it anymore. I can still see all my films, even the very first one. Everything that I do must be so clear and dry and . . .

When is a Film Completed?

Jonas: Yes, we find this in cinema very often. Film-makers dislike or are indifferent to their early work. But we don't find this in poetry, for instance. A poet can write a poem, put it somewhere, and come back to it ten years later, after four volumes of his poems have come out, and say, Isn't it fantastic? Did

I write it? It's so perfect. Or he may change a word or a comma or two. But not in cinema. The cinema doesn't yet have its working tradition and is still full of all kinds of inhibitions and paranoias: You can't do this, you can't do that . . . The tradition in poetry is that the poet perfects his poem before he lets it go, even if it takes his lifetime – but not in cinema. In cinema, the release time is dictated more by festivals than perfection.

I think there is something more to your concentrated messages than the wish to communicate. I think we always have two kinds of artists: the emotion – and the intellect, reason. You are on the side of intellect and reason; Jack Smith is on the side of emotion. In your art, everything has to have a 'reasonable' meaning, otherwise you don't put it in. To Jack, he may put it in, even if he doesn't see the meaning, he may feel there is something to it anyway because it's beautiful. Even *Brakhage is more emotion than intellect, despite his writings, which are dominated by intellect* – although I am not so sure about that either.

Kubelka: I have been, in this sense, always very naïve. I consider myself a naïve artist.

Jonas: So what are the others? . . . The others are primitives? . . .

Kubelka: Yes . . . What did we talk about? . . . What would they like to know?

Jonas: I don't know. My trouble is that I don't want to know much about anything. I prefer to make things or look at things. But to some people it's helpful. I guess, I also am a garbage collector.

Kubelka: You think there is something in the African film that we could talk about?

Jonas: I have seen it only four times, so . . .

Kubelka: Twelve times is the beginning . . . Whenever I say something about my own work, I am always taken very seriously, because I am the person who says it. And I don't want that at all. I mean, what I say must be taken as a sort of chattering in the evening but not as a statement to go with my films. I want my films to be just alone. Of course, I am very happy if someone else says something. I have so many layers of meanings in my films that, of course, when I talk about one or two meanings, they may think that all the others are not important, and I don't want to give more weight to one layer and less to the other.

On Editing and on How The Frames 'Hit the Screen'; on Metric Rhythm

Jonas: It's interesting that the films that you brought back from the West coast are going into the same direction as yours. Like Bruce Lane's film. It is, no doubt, still very naïve, but its language has already a degree of condensation and crispness that stands out. Another similarity: It's an edited film. You have noticed, probably, that the West coast film-makers in general, are more interested in post-shooting editing than those of the East coast. They edit their films.

There was a discussion, at the New York Film Festival, and Annette Michelson said that Brakhage's cinema or way of making films is like an

extension of abstract expressionism, like De Kooning; that his art is not structured, etc.; it's action filming. And I said, at that time, that Brakhage's structuring of his films takes place inside of him – he has worked on it for many many years – so now his camera is like an extension of his body and is governed by the inner structuring – really, emotion, mind, and intuition blend together, and the hard work is not always on the editing or structuring table – *Songs* were structured in the camera. Brakhage did not begin his life as an artist the moment he pushed that 8mm button – he has been working on himself for years and years. Don't you think his method is a complete opposite of your method?

Kubelka: I esteem Brakhage's work very highly. And, for him, that's enough. But, for the imitators, it's not enough. It may not even be always enough for him.

Jonas: But then, *Dog Star Man* is an 'edited' film.

Kubelka: *I think Brakhage is very concerned with construction. He edits. I hope I have inspired him toward this,* and I would very much like to see what comes out. He has inspired me very much in what concerns his EYES, his EYES – what comes through the lens, how he leads his lens. Really, it's something. He's an eye-opener, so to say.

This is a very interesting problem. Because even if you don't edit the film, the precision and the economy might be there. It might be – I mean. If the person who makes it has really the power to be articulate. All the same, I feel I can do more when I compress my material. I like these concentrates. You see, there is a very essential point for me: I always want to enjoy what I do. I look thousands of times at what I do. I want to give to myself these very very rich seconds, and I enjoy these minutes very much. There must be a lot of essential pleasure just in the films when they hit the screen – I heard this expression yesterday, 'to hit the screen,' that's fantastic, in English. Hit the screen – this is really what the frames do. The projected frames hit the screen. For example, when you let the projector run empty, you hear the rhythm. There is a basic rhythm in cinema. I think very few film-makers – if there ever was one, I don't know – have departed making films from this feeling of the basic rhythm, these twenty-four impulses on the screen – brrhumm – it's a very metric rhythm. *I thought, the other day, that I am the only one who ever made metric films, with metric elements.* These three films, *Adebar, Schwechater,* and *Rainer,* are metric films. You know what I mean by metric? It's the German expression 'Metrisches System'. The classic music, for instance, has whole notes, and half notes, and quarter notes. Not frames as notes, but the time sections that I have in my films. I mean, I have no seventeenths and no thirteenths, but I have sixteen frames, and eight frames, and four frames, and six frames – it's a metric rhythm. For example, people always feel that my films are very even and have no edges and do not break apart and are equally heavy at the beginning and at the end. This is because the harmony spreads out of the unit of the frame, of the $\frac{1}{24}$th of the second, and I depart from this ground rhythm, from the twenty-four frames, which you feel, which you always feel. Even when you see a film by DeMille, you feel it prrrrr as it goes on the screen.

Jonas: Some people say, Cinema is Movement; some others say, Cinema is Light. Do you have anything to say on the 'essence' of cinema?
Kubelka: Cinema is not movement. This is the first thing. Cinema is not movement. Cinema is a projection of stills – which means images which do not move – in a very quick rhythm. And you can give the illusion of movement, of course, but this is a special case, and the film was invented originally for this special case. But, as often happens, people invent something, and, then, they create quite a different thing. They have created something else. *Cinema is not movement. It can give the illusion of movement.* Cinema is the quick projection of light impulses. These light impulses can be shaped when you put the film before the lamp – on the screen you can shape it. I am talking now about silent film. *You have the possibility to give light a dimension in time.* This is the first time since mankind exists that you can really do that. To talk about the essence of cinema, it's a very complex thing. Of course, when you ask what's the essence of music, you can say one thing, and another, and another – there are many things in cinema. One is this great fascination that light has on man. Of course, cinema is still very flimsy, a pale thing, and it passes quickly, and so on – but still, as weak as it is, it is a very strong thing, and it has a great fascination just because you can do something with the light. Then: It's in time. It can be conserved, preserved. You can work for years and years and produce – as I do – one minute of a concentrate in time, and, ever since mankind existed, you never could do such a thing. And then – sound. The meeting of sound and image. And we come to this problem: Where does film become articulate? When does a language become articulate? Language becomes articulation when you put one word and another word. One word alone is one word alone, but, when you put two words, it's between the two words, so to speak, that is your articulation. And, when you put three words, it's between one and two, and between two and three, and then there is also relation between one and three, but two is in between.
Jonas: *For Eisenstein it was collision,* to you it's . . . ?

It's Between Frames Where Cinema Speaks

Kubelka: Yes, it can be a collision. Or it could be a very weak succession. There are many many possibilities. It's just that Eisenstein wanted to have collision – that's what he liked. But what I wanted to say is: Where is, then, the articulation of cinema? Eisenstein, for example, said it's the collision of two shots. But it's very strange that nobody ever said that *it's not between shots but between frames.* It's between frames where cinema speaks. And then, when you have a roll of very weak collisions between frames – this is what I would call a shot, when one frame is very similar to the next frame, and the next frame, and the next frame, and the next frame, and the next frame – the result that you get when you have just a natural scene and you film it . . . this would be a shot. But, in reality, you can work with every frame.
Jonas: In *Afrikareise,* you had this shot, you see a river behind the trees, the

trees, and whatever animal there is, in the river, slowly rising, a small action spot behind the trees, and nothing else really happens – it was the longest shot in the film, it went for something like ten seconds. Almost a Warhol shot . . .

Kubelka: Yes, the crocodile shot. But this was on purpose. You see, I broke up this thing with *Schwechater*. The *Schwechater* was the first film that worked with the event of the frame. *Schwechater* film is very strong, strong, very strong optical event. And what is it? Just people drinking beer.

Jonas: Have you seen Len Lye's fifty-second automobile commercial? Nothing happens there either, except that it's filled with some kind of secret action of cinema.

Kubelka: Yes, I saw it in 1958. *Schwechater* was finished already by then. And then, this feeling, I never lost this frame-by-frame film-making. Also in the *Rainer,* I did it. And in the *Afrikareise*. But what I wanted in *Afrikareise* was to create a world that had the greatest fascination on the spectator possible. This world had to be very naturalistic, so that you could really identify and enter it. It's, therefore, that I want a big screen for it, so you can see the blood and the elephants and the women and the Negro flesh and all the landscapes. This was one thing. And the other thing was that I wanted to have it so controlled as if I had painted it or made up myself and I achieved that through this immense, immense, long work of thousands of hours of cataloguing the whole material practically frame by frame. So there is this continuous correspondence between sound and image. After you see the film twelve or twenty times, then you notice that practically every optical event corresponds to the acoustic event.

The Sound in Unsere Afrikareise

Jonas: Even that ten-second shot where we have . . . how many frames do we have? Almost 500 frames . . . after the fifth and sixth time, I may be noticing the sound, what it does, because as it was now, the first four times, I was watching most of the time the image . . . At least, I have no memory of the sounds in that scene.

Kubelka: Yes, there is sound. You hear the shot, and it makes a 'puff' and misses the crocodile. But a bird flies. And then the man says: 'Geh!' He is disappointed and amazed, you see. Then it makes again PUFF – and then he hits, you see the crocodile is hit, and he says 'Na also!' that is, 'Oh, finally!' 'Nun also,' 'Na also,' which could mean, if translated, 'Finally, you did it.' And he says it in a very . . . it could be meant for a completely different event. Like, for example, the zebra is hit mortally, and you hear a woman's voice who says 'Auu!' as if a mosquito had just given her a little bite.

Jonas: Yes, I noticed that. I think it was during the third viewing that I really noticed that, and it was very funny, and sad.

Kubelka: But there are many hundreds of such things. I never want to make a funny scene, or a sad scene – I always have these . . . I want them very complex, never one single feeling but many many feelings always. So, of course, it's funny, and, then, it's not funny at all, because, for the zebra, it's a tragedy, and you pity her. Then you have that other scene. Before the zebra appears, you

have this mysterious, my miracle shot of the moon where you see first this long fruit, brown, and it has a very phallic form, and then it dissolves (but it's not a dissolve, it's just changing of focus) into the moon, this beautiful white moon, and then you hear this voice of the everything-knowing German professor of something that says 'Die Erde', 'The earth'. But it's not the earth, it's the moon! And then both say, in chorus: 'Die Erde ist terra,' ('Earth means terra') – they bring in their Latin . . . and then, when you hear 'terra', – cut – and you see the terra, you see the dying zebra lying on the terra. You see then the real terra, then. It's black and grey and burned. And they shoot the zebra for the sixth time, because zebras don't die, you have to shoot them many times, because they have such a hard life, you see. And then she (zebra) says: 'Auu.' And the man says: 'Aufstehen!' – 'get up!' – and this is a reminiscence of the Bible, I often have such references . . .

Jonas: Lazarus?

Kubelka: Yes. It's exactly that. I have something like that in my first film also. The voice says, 'Steh auf und geh!' meaning 'Rise and walk'. And then he says something about Jesus, he says, 'Ich bin auch nur ein Beamter,' which means 'I am also nothing but an employee'. I don't know, it's very difficult to talk about that, but it has to do with my childhood, my Bible reading, and Jesus, what he did, and so on, and I always imagined him as an employee of his Father, and so he says so in this film. Also, in the African film, there are some things that relate to the Bible in image and meaning. One is this 'Aufstehen'.

The Control of the Colour, and the Moments of Standstill

Jonas: The brown, clay colour of the film – was this the colour of the actual footage, or did you do something to it?

Kubelka: Yes. I wanted a sort of monochrome through the whole thing. Sometimes I break it up. I make this very yellow grass when you see the Negroes walk, where the Negroes walk . . .

Jonas: Yes, that beautiful yellow. You made it that way?

Kubelka: Yes. This is like another world, then. In my films, there are moments when everything stands still. This is a very important thing for me. This is in all of my films. Some films as a whole are like that. These are moments of escape, from the burden of existence, so to say – moments where you are not human, nor something else – not an angle or something, but just *Out*, out of it, and when nothing happens, and nothing leads to this, and this leads to nothing, and there is no tension, and so on. This is the scene in the African film where just the Negroes walk. First, you have the Negroes walk, and you have the Austrians laughing, producing this incredible laughter, and the Negroes don't notice them, they just walk and walk in this yellow grass. And then, overpowered or something by this thing, the laughter ceases, and, then, you hear nothing anymore, just a few birds quacking . . . and the Negroes continue walking, and, then, it's silent, and they walk on and walk, one from the left, one from the right – so this is one of those moments. You remember that?

Jonas: Yes.

Kubelka: It has no reason – you understand. It does nothing for the story; it doesn't say anything; I cannot say what I really mean with that, but these moments are the biggest achievements for me – these are the moments that fascinate me always when I watch the films. In my first film, the moment is a love scene where this rather heavy guy with a cigar says, 'Du wirst mir schon noch verfallen' ('You'll fall for me'), and the girl watches him. And, then, later in the film, you see them again, and the voice says, 'Verfallen.' And then there is another shot, and he says again: 'Verfallen!' The other such moment is where this mannequin turns around, and this fat man comes in, and they watch each other. And, for example, on this, I can't speak at all, but these moments you can only create when you have this huge thing around them. But, for example, films such as *Schwechater* are such moments as a whole. When you watch the *Schwechater,* I mean, it has absolutely no classical tension that goes up and down. Then, it doesn't say anything, it says nothing – because what you see are people drinking beer or something like that – but, really, what is the *Schwechater* film? You don't know. And yet, it fills you very much. Since I work on my films for such a long time, I always make my films sort of . . . how do you say 'Geruest'? the thing that holds the house . . . maybe 'skeleton' – something on which I can hang onto . . . something sustaining and life-keeping. The *Rainer* is very much like that. Oh, it was fantastic in Los Angeles; you should have seen this, really. Because they had very powerful loudspeakers.

Jonas: Was this at the Cinema Theatre?

Kubelka: Yes. They had a screen as large as a house, and they had these powerful loudspeakers. The sound was like Niagara Falls, so loud – incredible, it was fantastic – and the lights, so strong – this was really the event that I wanted it to be. And with this element . . . Here it comes, this fascination of sound and light . . . And to have this element and, then, to be able to create a rhythmic construction with sound and image, which is so precise, on frames of a second – this gives me an incredible feeling. By the way, for *Schwechater,* my model, so to say, was running water, or a tree with thousands of leaves when the wind goes through – I was very concerned with these forms.

Jonas: When I was watching the *Rainer* film, I closed my eyes, at moments, and I could watch it with my eyes closed, as the light rhythms pulsated on and through the eyelids. One could say that the *Rainer* film is the only film ever made that can be seen with your eyes closed.

Kubelka: Yes, Brakhage noticed that, too.

How Many Films You Have to Make to be an Artist?

Jonas: How long is your total work now, how many minutes?

Kubelka: Twelve and a half; and one and a half; and one; and six and a half; and thirteen makes thirty-four and a half minutes.

Jonas: That makes about two minutes a year, no?

Kubelka: For the last fifteen years, I have been totally concentrating on cinema. I began in 1952. Yes, two minutes a year.

Jonas: How many frames? 2,880 frames per year.

Kubelka: This means, less than eight frames a day.
Jonas: That's plenty.
Kubelka: One is enough. When you really speak out, it must be enough. Eggeling spoke out, and he made only five minutes in his whole life. Anyhow, what I now plan is a very big thing.
Jonas: Fifteen minutes? . . . All your films are on 35mm?

On Sixteen Millimetre Films

Kubelka: Yes. But *Afrikareise* is on 16mm. I am convinced now that I can do something in 16mm. I wasn't before. I am so happy about it.
Jonas: You saw the *Afrikareise* projected at the Cinema Theatre, on a large theatre screen, and it was good?
Kubelka: Yes. And the colours were much better than on 35mm. The colours of the negative reversal are so much better than the negative colour, and, in 35mm, you have only negative and positive. I don't think I could have had these colours in 35mm. Therefore, I am starting my next film in 16mm. I feel now that I can do some things of which I always thought but which I couldn't do. After the African film, now, it comforted me very much. I have now the whole gamut I can use.
Jonas: You have really covered some ground, in your four films, from pure light, to live drama. *Unsere Afrikareise* contains, really, the dramatic cinema, novelistic cinema. It could be looked at as a short story – a film short story, because there are characters, people – they come through, each one comes through – it's like one of Joyce's short stories. One could look at it that way. One could look at it also in many other ways.
Kubelka: Whatever I learned from my films is in *Unsere Afrikareise*. I mean, my aim has always been to get articulate with film – because who really is articulate? This is just the beginning. I take time on my films. And really, you don't lose time. They say, if the film isn't finished in two years, it's too late, or something. I mean, when you work your whole life, and, then, you bring out something that speaks – it's time enough. It depends on what you do – this is the whole thing. But, when you really want to see and feel and communicate, and when you can really do it, as long as you work, it's all right; and, when you cannot do it, when you finished it, and it's not really finished – then everything is lost.

I thought that the African film would be finished in three months, when it began. And then, it was five years. Of course, I didn't work every day, and I couldn't work every day because I had no money – many things; and then the founding of the Film Museum came in between. But what's really true is that, these five years, I lived always with these images. I was always concentrated on this film, every day. There wasn't a day when I wasn't – I always lived in this film for five years. I told you already that I learned it all by heart, all the sound – I transcribed it first (I had fourteen hours of sounds recorded in Africa and three hours of film) – I still know this whole . . .

Jonas: Every sound that is in film, you know it by heart – with what image it goes . . .
Kubelka: Oh, yes, of course. But I know much more – I know all what it was before –
Jonas: . . . whatever you omitted, the whole fourteen hours of sound . . . and images . . .
Kubelka: Yes . . . Of course . . . Before I made this film, I learned it for a long time and scribbled every word – so I knew every word – but I also know the *Schwechater* film by heart, and everybody can know it by heart, this is something where . . .
Jonas: Like a poem . . .
Kubelka: Yes, and this is an interesting thing – because to learn by heart something is a very interesting thing. The easiest thing to learn by heart are those languages that you can produce with your body. I mean, you can sing a song, so you learn it by heart, and you can hear it. You can dance by heart. And you can learn a poem by heart. And you can beat the rhythm of the drum by heart. And so on. But when it comes to, say, architecture – this is the interesting thing: You can know architecture by heart; you can know a church or a skyscraper really by heart, and you can know the dimensions – and you have no means of transcribing it. And I don't mean the history – I mean the dimensions, you know the dimensions by heart.
Jonas: If your eye would have the power of recreation, you could almost recreate it. As a matter of fact, Mme. Blavatsky talks about it. Man can create anything he wants, if he knows it with his mind's eye . . . Like they could recreate this beer can . . . Or like the actors, how they train their memory, in the Stanislavsky school – you throw a few objects from your pocket on the table, for a second, then put them back into the pocket and now, describe each of them . . .
Kubelka: So, the same way with my films. For example, *Schwechater,* it's absolutely indescribable, all of them are indescribable, but you can know them by heart. You know exactly what will follow now, you see the forms. I really feel that, with cinema, we are really able to make a step forward. Film is the first of the synthetic arts – this is like the first automobile – it's the first art that is made with machines. Of course, the violin is also a machine, but . . .

I have begun establishing a language, and tradition, and so on, and, of course, I want to transmit all this to others. But what I really want other film-makers to have is the economy, and then the metric rhythms – I would like to see more film-makers working like that. Nobody really uses these rhythmic and akin-to-music qualities that the film has. For example, the *Schwechater* film, I might myself make other films now in this technique. It's a pity. No, it's not a pity. I mean, the films are there. Imitations are no good. I really feel that my films, especially from *Adebar* on, bring one step further on everything that has been done till now – because it has a greater control of the materials. I don't want to say 'editing' any more. I say 'construction'. And here I think my substance is thinning . . . *1 October 1966, New York.*