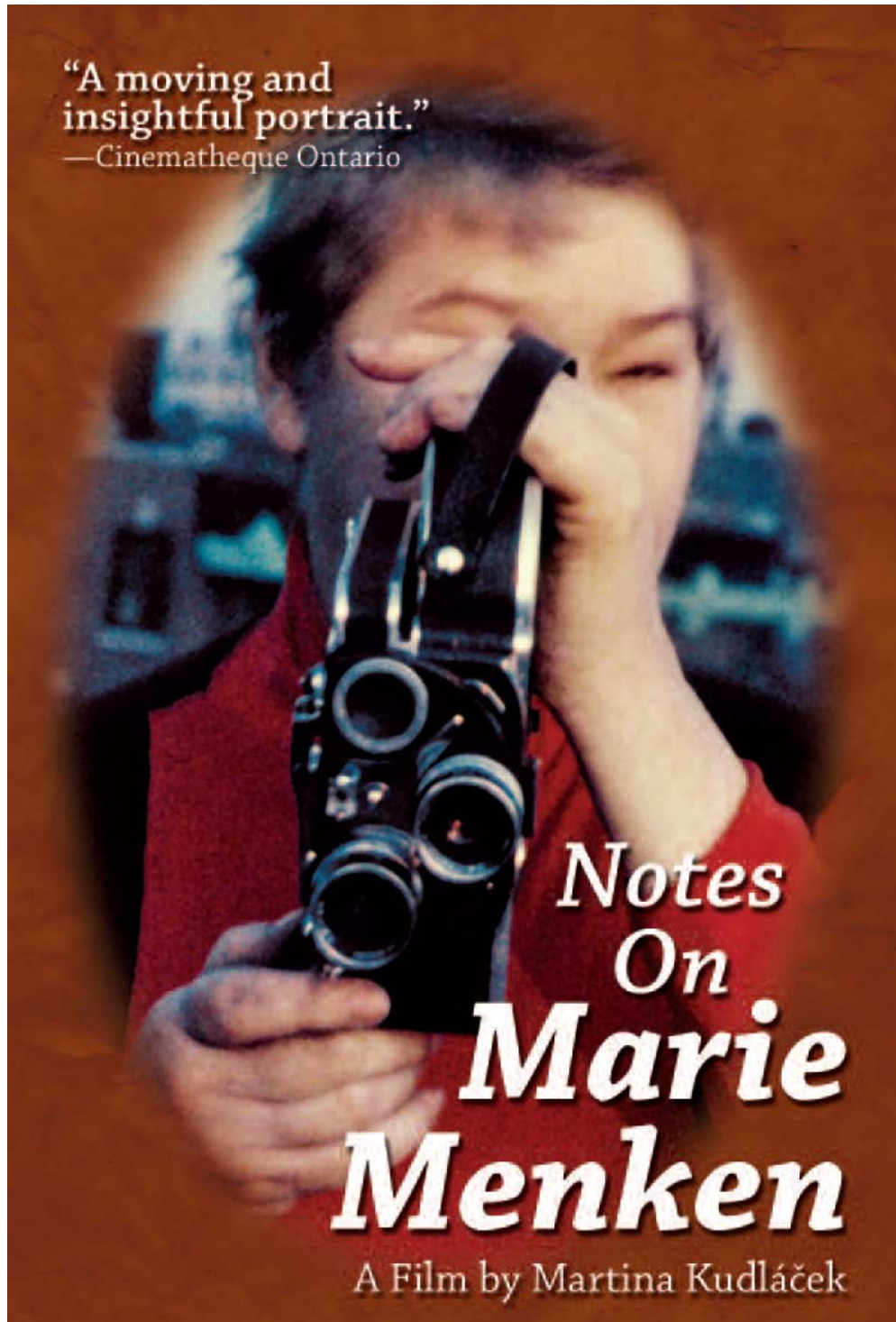


**"A moving and
insightful portrait."**
—Cinematheque Ontario



*Notes
On
**Marie
Menken***

A Film by Martina Kudláček

97 minutes / color – b&w / 16mm/DV-to-35mm / Stereo / 2006



A First Run/Icarus Films Release

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Synopsis

This documentary tells the story of the legendary artist Marie Menken (1909-1970), a Lithuanian immigrant who became one of New York's outstanding underground experimental filmmakers of the 1940's through the 1960's, inspiring artists such as Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger and Gerard Malanga. The large (a hefty 6' 2"), loud and tempestuous Menken—reportedly the inspiration for the character of "Martha" in Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*—also became a Warhol Superstar, making memorable appearances in *The Life of Juanita Castro* and *The Chelsea Girls*.

Originally an abstract painter and collage artist, Menken produced nearly two dozen experimental shorts, using a hand-held Bolex to create rhythmic patterns of light, color, form and texture, visual poems that extracted beauty from the world around her. *NOTES ON MARIE MENKEN* features lengthy excerpts from many of her films as well as never-before-seen footage by the filmmaker salvaged from basements and storage vaults, including a camera "duel" for Bolexes on a Brooklyn rooftop between Menken and Andy Warhol.

Complemented by a jazzy score by New York composer John Zorn, *NOTES ON MARIE MENKEN* features interviews with the filmmaker's friends, relatives and colleagues, including Alfred Leslie, Kenneth Anger, Gerard Malanga, Peter Kubelka, Mary Woronov and Jonas Mekas. They discuss Menken's distinctive film technique, her artistic struggle and personal life—including a night-shift job at *Time* magazine and her marriage to filmmaker Willard Maas—and provide colorful reminiscences of both Menken and the New York art scene of the era.

Synopsis 2

This new film by Martina Kudláček, director of the critically acclaimed *In the Mirror of Maya Deren*—hailed as "miraculous" by Jonathan Rosenbaum in *The Chicago Reader*—tells the story of Marie Menken (1909-1970), a Lithuanian immigrant who became one of New York's outstanding underground experimental filmmakers of the 1940's through the 1960's, inspiring artists such as Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger and Gerard Malanga. The large, loud and tempestuous Menken—reportedly the inspiration for the character of "Martha" in Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*—also became a Warhol Superstar, making memorable appearances in *The Life of Juanita Castro* and *The Chelsea Girls*.

Originally an abstract painter and collage artist, Menken produced nearly two dozen experimental shorts, using a hand-held Bolex to create rhythmic patterns of light, color, form and texture, visual poems that extracted beauty from the world around her. *Notes on Marie Menken* features lengthy excerpts from many of her films as well as never-before-seen footage by the filmmaker salvaged from basements and storage vaults—including a 'dueling Bolexes' scene on a Brooklyn rooftop between Menken and Warhol—complemented by an evocative score from New York composer John Zorn.

Review Excerpts

"[A] Handsome tribute... Interviews with various avant-garde luminaries help to excavate Menken's memory and reputation from the footnotes of film history while clips and entire reels of her rarely seen oeuvre are intercut. Beautifully transferred clips."

—Variety

"Affirms her powerful legacy to avant-garde film history."

—San Francisco Cinematheque

"Fascinating... brings Menken vividly back to life."

—Jon Gartenberg, Tribeca Film Festival

"A moving and insightful portrait."

—Cinematheque Ontario

"Marvelous... fascinating... overflowing with aesthetic verve and indomitable personality."

—Charles Bernstein Web Log

"A thought-provoking introduction to a fascinating and unjustly-overlooked cultural figure."

—Neil Young's Film Lounge



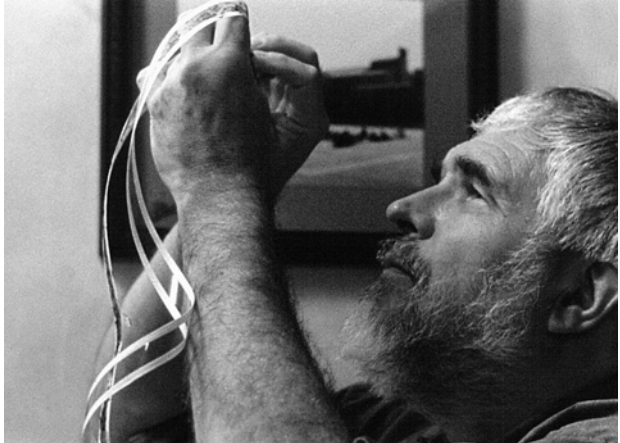
Marie Menken



Jonas Mekas



Peter Kubelka



Stan Brakhage

Filmmaker Biography



Martina Kudláček was born in Vienna and studied Theater, Film and Media Arts at the University of Vienna. She received an MFA degree in Documentary Film Directing at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts FAMU in Prague. Many of her films—experimental works in photography, Super-8, 16mm film and video—have won awards throughout Europe. Kudláček was the recipient of the Anthology Film Archives Film Preservation Award in 2004. In 2003 she made *In the Mirror of Maya Deren* which had its World Theatrical Premiere at Anthology Film Archives. *The Chicago Reader* referred to *In the Mirror of Maya Deren* as "miraculous."

Credits

Written and directed by
Martina Kudláček

Camera
Martina Kudláček

Editor
Henry Hills

Sound
Judy Karp

Original Music
John Zorn

With
Kenneth Anger
Stan Brakhage
Peter Kubelka
Alfred Leslie
Gerard Malanga
Jonas Mekas
Joseph J. Menkevich
Billy Name
Mary Woronov

Producer
Martina Kudláček /Mina Film

Supported by
Innovative Film Austria/Federal Chancellery Art Wien Kultur, Austria

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