



Jonas Mekas: *Walden (DIARIES Notes and Sketches), Part 6, 1969*

September 9 - October 9, 2011

Jonas Mekas is widely regarded as a key proponent in experimental cinema in the United States, both for his own adventurous filmmaking, and for his active involvement with the presentation of avant-garde films since the early 1960s. This presentation features part six of the film project *Walden*, also known as *DIARIES Notes and Sketches*, which features footage shot between 1965 and 1969. The film embodies Mekas' pioneering use of film to document the flow of everyday life in a diary-like fashion, and much of *Walden* reflects his participation in the counter-cultural social scene of New York in the 1960s. It presents fragmentary views of scenes from daily life—from a wedding, to winter activities such as ice skating or sledding, to people eating Sunday breakfast. Towards the end of Part Six, Mekas sets footage of John Lennon (British, 1940-1980) and Yoko Ono's (Japanese, b. 1933) famous 1969 "bed-in" protest against the Vietnam War to a recording of "Give Peace a Chance" by the Plastic Ono Band. His documentation of the event—in which the iconic pop couple remained in bed for a week as a non-violent act for peace—counters the sensationalized coverage of the event by the media with an emphasis on more tender and intimate moments between Lennon and Ono. (CAM is currently presenting a work from 1966 by Ono entitled *Play it by Trust*.) *Walden* is notable for simultaneously expanding the potential for film as an expressive medium, and capturing everyday life in an intensively personal and intimate manner.

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Jonas Mekas was born in 1922 in Semeniškiai, Lithuania and lives and works in New York City. In addition to his role at the forefront of the American avant-garde film movement, he has published over twenty books of prose and poetry. Mekas has recently presented his work in the solo exhibition, *Jonas Mekas: The Beauty of Friends Being Together Quartet* at the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York (2007), and *Jonas Mekas: Celebration of the small and the personal in the times of bigness* at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England, (2006). His recent films include *Sleepless Night Stories* (2011) and *365 Day Project* (2007).

image: Jonas Mekas, *Walden (DIARIES Notes and Sketches), Part 6*, 1969, 16 mm color film transferred to video, 34 minutes.
Courtesy of Jonas Mekas Films

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