

## MOVIE REVIEW

# Zdravič gives beauty to found objects

By David Ehrenstein

There's a dual triumph on view in this evening's "Encounter Cinema" program of the films of Andrej Zdravic. The young Yugoslavian-born filmmaker emerges as a talent of major proportions, and the form he has chosen to work in — Super 8mm — is once and for all snatched from its lowly "home-movie" context. Zdravic shows that it can be a vital means of cinematic expression if intelligently used.

Zdravic's brief non-narrative works have been compared to the films of Stan Brakhage, but there's a matter-of-fact quality to them not at all like that experimental master's sense of grand romantic agony. There's a simple unpretentiousness here — a rarity in avant-garde — winning in its *obviousness*. With incredibly supple Super-8 sound equipment, Zdravic has found in the everyday world images of ravishing beauty that Kubrick, for all his Zeiss lenses and steadicams, can't match.

"Breath" (1976) consists of nothing more than shots of a newspaper blowing in the wind of an empty New York street. But Zdravic doesn't treat this subject with the wispy lyricism of Brakhage or Marie Menken. The newspaper is *just* a newspaper — a "found object" *a la*

Duchamp. The soundtrack, as in all of Zdravic's films, was recorded on the spot — its on/off click as each shot is taken making for *musique concrete* accompaniment.

"Home" (1979) is an investigation of old buildings discovering visual wonders amid decay, with the added fillip of a sense of horror. We see no people, but Zdravic makes us sense *presences*. He has a keen feel for the uncanny — what French master director George Franju calls the *insolite*. Curious as it might seem, "Home" is as unsettling as anything by Jacques Tourneur or Nicholas Roeg.

Zdravic's full of pure delight in filmmaking — no more so than in his latest work "From Above and Below" (1980). With his camera made properly watertight, the filmmaker dunks it in and out of the water to spectacular effect. In one breathtaking shot, a girl seen sitting on the shore jumps in as Zdravic (already in the water) immerses himself. He dives down, tilts up to film her swimming over him, and then turns over again to film fish and underwater plant life. It's Jacques Cousteau choreographed by Ballanchine. Zdravic's name is less familiar than theirs at the moment, but if he continues to develop along the lines shown here, that shouldn't be the case for long.

The program, co-sponsored by the Craft and Folk Art Museum and the UCLA Film Archive, will begin at 8:00 p.m. in Melnitz Auditorium at UCLA. Andrej Zdravic will be present. For further information, call 937-5544. Zdravic and his films will also be featured in a program at Pasadena Filmforum on June 9. For further information, call 358-6255.