



The major obstacle for amateur film-makers is their own sense of inferiority vis-a-vis professional productions. The very classification "amateur" has an apologetic ring. But that very word—from the Latin "amateur"—"lover" means one who does something for the love of the thing rather than for economic reasons or necessity. And this is the meaning from which the amateur film-maker should take his clue. Instead of envying the script and dialogue writers, the trained actors, the elaborate staffs and sets, the enormous production budgets of the professional film, the amateur should make use of the one great advantage which all professionals envy him, namely, freedom—both artistic and physical.

Artistic freedom means that the amateur film-maker is never forced to sacrifice visual drama and beauty to a stream of words, words, words, words, to the relentless activity and explanations of a plot, or to the display of a star or a sponsor's product; nor is the amateur production expected to return profit on a huge investment by holding the attention of a massive and motley audience for 90 minutes.

Like the amateur still-photographer, the amateur film-maker can devote himself to capturing the poetry and

By Maya Deren

beauty of places and events.... Instead of trying to invent a plot that moves, use the movement or wind, or water,

supports, joints, muscles, and nerves which is the human body, which, with a bit of practice, makes possible the

mother of avant-garde film

children, people, elevators, balls, etc. as a poem might celebrate these. And use your freedom to experiment with visual ideas; your mistakes will not get you fired.

enormous variety of camera angles and visual action. You have all this, and a brain too, in one neat, compact, mobile package. Cameras do not make films; film-makers make films.

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Improve your films not by adding more equipment and personnel but by using what you have to its fullest capacity. The most important part of your equipment is yourself: your mobile body, your imaginative mind, and your freedom to use both. Make sure you do use them.

Physical freedom includes time freedom—a freedom from budget imposed deadlines. But above all, the amateur film-maker, with his small, light-weight equipment, has an inconspicuousness (for candid shooting) and a physical mobility which is well the envy of most professionals, burdened as they are by their many-ton monsters, cables and crews. Don't forget that no tripod has yet been built which is as miraculously versatile in movement as the complex system of



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AMATEUR

versus Professional