

Things to Come - a film about László, Lucia and Sibyl Moholy-Nagy

This is the story of a visionary light designer who was broken down by the popular taste of the film-going public. Inspired by László Moholy-Nagy, the most experimental of the Bauhaus artists, the film uses new technology to translate moments from Moholy-Nagy's life into the style that the artist intended in the 1930s to be the film of the future.

Angela Zumpe's *Things to Come* consists of a mutually entwined split screen film in which both film tracks interact with each other. Sometimes only slightly different images run in parallel, sometimes different ones run against each other, sometimes they spring ahead, sometimes they are in counterpoint, sometimes they fully drift apart, and sometimes they split into even more windows or unify into one image. The ingredients are Moholy-Nagy's own films, contextualizing documentary films from the period, artist animations using Moholy-motifs, photographs, and above all directed scenes, in which Moholy-Nagy, his wives Lucia and Sibyl, and Lucia's brother Franz Schultz appear.

The film takes place in the post-Bauhaus period, when Sibylle Pietzsch, a production assistant in the film company Tobis, is asked by her boss to politely decline a Hungarian artist who has shown up with his experimental film. That is how their love story starts. The film uses anecdotes from Sibyl's memoirs, "László Moholy-Nagy, Experiment in Totality" (1950). That is the film writer's first setting (Script: Oliver Held). The directed scenes are interposed with a pleasantly ironic distance: When the Hungarian *Großstadtzigeuner* (city gypsies) in Moholy's film reach for their instruments, László and Sibyl share an excessively ecstatic dance on the other. When the London film producer Alexander Korda tells the artist that his designs are "too overthought, too intellectual", he is lisping sweetly.

What is unusual about this portrait of an artist is that it primarily explores the private life of the artist, going between wife and lover and both of their work lives. Moholy-Nagy's actual visual work takes the back burner, and while present through many references in the film, it is only one part of a biographical narrative. The film also asks, how can an artist live off of his work? How much must he fight to survive? Is he better off as a professor or as an artist, filmmaker, and stage designer? Here the film writer inserts her own themes and highlights her interests in this exemplary biography. For fans of Moholy and insiders, the film is flush with easter eggs and takes into account recent discoveries, for example about Lucia's brother Franz, Moholy's advertising films for Jenaer Glas, the film "Audible ABC" which was only found in 2019, and even the baby videos of his daughter Hattula, which were not made publicly available for a long time.

It is a new kind of (intelligent) film or viewing, because we continue with Moholy: "We can no longer jealously separate painting, photography, film, and light show from one another."¹ The modern conjunction of hybrid films reflects and thematizes this combining and coexisting of art forms – and the end of false separations and categories whose last proponents languish in the rigid structures of mainstream television. Fundamentally, there are only inspired or uninspired films!

¹ 1944, in: *Vision in Motion*.

Thomas Tode's unabridged text may be found under the title, "**Das wird nichts mit dir und dem Film**", lieber Moholy-Nagy *Things to come* - die Neufassung des filmischen Künstlerporträts ("Nothing will come of you and the film", rather Moholy-Nagy *Things to Come* - the updated cinematic portrait of an artist) in the documentation "THINGS TO COME. A film installation about László, Lucia, and Sibyl Moholy-Nagy"