

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

VARIETY

**Douglas Gordon Film on Avant-Garde Icon Jonas Mekas Set for Locarno
Festival Premiere**

Nick Vivarelli



Courtesy Locarno Film Festival

ROME — A new film by Scottish video artist Douglas Gordon about American avant-garde pioneer Jonas Mekas will world premiere at the upcoming Locarno Film Festival as the opener of the Swiss fest's Filmmakers of the Present section.

Gordon, who is known in the film world for "Zidane: A Portrait of the 21st Century" and for his cult cinematic installations including "24 Hour Psycho," has based his latest filmic foray on a diary of the 93-year-old Mekas titled "I Had Nowhere to Go."

Born in Lithuania, Mekas left his village to escape Nazi persecution and arrived in 1949 in Brooklyn where he started shooting his first films. He developed a type of film diary in which he recorded instances from his daily life and went on to become a fixture of the New York art scene, eventually known as the godfather of American avant-gard cinema. Besides being a filmmaker, Mekas is an author, poet and co-founder of the Anthology Film Archives in New York.

"'I Had Nowhere to Go' is his story of exile; brought on by the horrors of the twentieth century, propelled by the need to create rather than destroy, to move on, to make sense... or not, where bewilderment is more honest," the fest said in a statement. "It's been over 70 years since Jonas Mekas left his village in Lithuania to escape Nazi persecution. He was 22 years old. Today he is one of the last surviving members of a displaced generation. He is also one of the greatest documenters of the human experience."

Gordon and Mekas are both expected in Locarno on August 4 to introduce the potentially potent film's premiere.

Locarno fest artistic director Carlo Chatrian called the still officially untitled work "the outcome of a collaboration between two internationally famous artists: Douglas Gordon, who for some years now has been interested in the 'filmic event,' and Jonas Mekas, a magnificent 93-year-old, full of energy and still a fabulous storyteller."

"Although I do not want to reveal any more about this extraordinary project, I can say that Douglas Gordon offers us a truly sensorial experience, which challenges the concept of seeing, and links the idea of the present with that of memory," he added.

Locarno, which is dedicated to indie and cutting-edge fare, runs Aug. 3-13. The fest will announce its lineup on July 13.