Anthropologist makes his point through film

By Louise Okruteky staff writer

Philip Singer's use of a videocam-era in his anthropological field work isn't as unsual as his view that West-ern society deserves as much profes-sional scrutiny as the most remote

Singer, a professor in the Oakland University School of Health Sciences, has made it a career to challenge mainstream views in society and as well as anthropology. "We have just as much exoticism as in Bali. I want us to see our own Western European culture and American culture," said Singer, a Burningham resident.

One of his films follows the work of a medicine woman who practices not in a remote rural village but in a trailer park in Pontlac.

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Anthropologists are romantic enough in their thinking to prefer stidying societies more remote thinking to their own, he says. "They would think she's not as authentic as someone in the bush."
"There's just as much anthropology in a bar in Filint as In Guyana."
Singer said.

AUDIENCES FOR the films he distributes himself have been limited to the medical and academic communities. His films are distributed through the World Health Organization. He's served Will oa a consultant in traditional medicine. Unlike many of his colleagues he sees his films as more than academic inquiry. In a discipline which has lopk but don't touch as a basic tenet, Slieger wants his films to describe and confront Western culture.

It's an attitude that hasn't won him the support of the traditional academic community. They would just as soon not acknowledge that I exist.' Singer says of his colleagues, His Illm, "Esychic Surgery: A Case History of Shamanic Sleight of Hand" shows people who say that can perform surgery without scapels. People who believe in these sleight of hands technques aren't lightled to rural areas of the Phillippipes.

"There are thousands of people in Michigan who have gone to the Philippines for these cures. But right now they can go to Charlotte, N.C., where traveling shamans are. They travel all over doing these things,"

ravei air over uoing inese inings, he sald.
"I saw a man in New York City who was treating United Nations employees, upper middle class and middle class persons. In five hours the man made \$10,000. People paid him in cash."

FOR SINGER, it illustrates again that societies aren't as isolated from each other as they once were. 'The world has changed so dramatically that you can no longer study cultures in isolation. You can't just say say someone's in a trance like state and has powers. You can't do that; you have to see the connection between this and the common interest. You have to exceed the connection between that you can the common interest. You have to expend the village isolate into the global village."

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Another work, "Irreversible Coma" was filmed in Rochester and shown recently before a meeting a judges in the state of New York. "The issue is the right to live to and the right to die," Singer said. "The dead are kept alive through technology, You're dead as far as your mind is concerned.

"We have technozombies. We're just as primitive with our technolog-ical superiority as the most primi-tive tribe."

Singer recently finished shooting and has yet to edit a film describing he work of an upstate New York psychiatrist who believes that a life long regime of drugs isn't the only treatment for schizophrenia. "He takes people who have spen 20, 30, 40, year in the back wards of hospitals and gets them into day care, off of drugs," Singer says. "Gradually he restores humanity to them. Everybody wants to say it's a bio chemical disorder. This is another view of the same subject."

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Using a video camera to document his study of traditional healing and more accepted medical techniques was once costly but technical advances have made it more convenient. "The idea in anthropology has always been to document what we do. The still cumera had always been used. "Singer said.

About 15 y-ars ago, Singer's first film, "Trance Dance and Healing in Guyana" was honored at the Margaret Mead Film Pestival and wongood reviews from American Anthropologist magazine and the American Library Association's magazine: "Choices."

IN THE. FIELD of commercial filmntaking, his budget would be seen as ridiculously sparse. Most video productions cost \$2,000-\$5,000 per minute. He logs in at \$1,000-\$5,000 per 30 minutes. He funds his work out of his own pocket.

"There's almost no grant money available. The whole grants business in this area favors more commercial-type approaches," he said. He sees it as a satisfying way to spend his money. "What do you do with your money then?" he said. "You make choices. Do I spend it on sports or a new cellular phone?

Once the films are made it's diffi-cult for him to have them shown out-side of the classroom. Public televi-sion betworks seem to perfer the glossy films with a mainstream point of view, he says. "It's extreme-ly difficult just to have them look at your stuff. This industry is so con-cerned with the bottom line."

Keep pets cool Humane Society has tips for hot weather

The Michigan Humane Society (MHS) offers some helpful tips for pet owners during hot summer whather. While the heat and humidity is uncomfortable for us, it can be potentially dangerous for pets. ty is uncomfortable for us, it can be potentially dangerous for pets. Pro-viding extra care can help to avert as accident or injury.

"The MHS has the following suggestions:

Never leave a pet unattended in a parked car. Even when the win-dows are left partially open, the temperature can rise to unbearable ldvels in a very short time, creating the conditions for heat stroke, and earn death

in conditions for heat stroke, and egen death.

• If your pet is outdoors, make sure he is confined and that shade and fresh, clean water are available at all times. Also, watch for any insect bites. They generally appear on the face and the ears. Consult with your veterinarian if you notice any irregularities.

• Exercising and walks are best done in the early morning or late expening when temperatures are color.

• The very careful about the use and storage of fertilitiers, pesticides and cleaning products to avoid accidinal potsonings.

out of the car window while you're driving and never let them ride in the back of a pick-up truck. Eye and ear infections can result from blow-ing airborne particles, as well as se-vere injury or death, from leaping or being thrown out of a moving vchi-city.

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*Panting is a dog's way of
"sweating." Never bind a dog's
mouth closed. As crary as this
sounds, some people tie or tape this
dogs mouth closed to stop them from
barking. This unacceptable training
measure has resulted in heatstroke
and death.

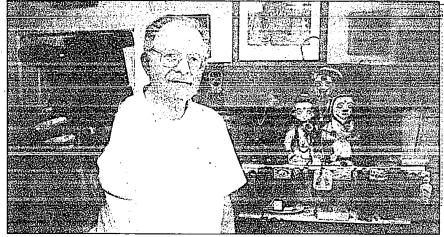
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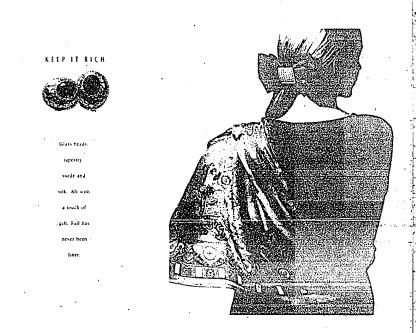
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> 2" suede belt with baroque

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