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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM STILL ARCHIVE

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be able to install any overhead or backlights. "I started working with bounced light, and from then on I made every picture with bounced light. This soft, shadowless light produced a nice pastel tone. The only critical thing I have to say about my color is that it's too nice, too pretty."

Born in 1924 to Lutheran missionaries, Nykvist spent his childhood with relatives near Stockholm while his parents were in Africa. His father was an avid amateur photographer who gave illustrated lectures on his work in Africa. "He would make his photographs—he took around 3,000—into slides and invite my two brothers and me to see them. My brothers snuck out when the lights went out, but I always stayed." His father gave the young Nykvist a darkroom and encouraged his son to go to photography school, where Nykvist decided to switch from still photography to film.

Since there were no film schools in Sweden, Nykvist started an apprenticeship as a focus puller. He worked in Sweden as well as in Rome for a year, until he had to serve in the military. After the service he started making his own documentaries and continued working as a camera assistant.

At 22, Nykvist got his first chance to shoot a film when, working as an assistant on *The Poor Millionaire*, the cinematographer got sick. "The director had been a cameraman and thought I was using too much light, so I started putting in diffuser after diffuser. We met the next day to see what we had shot—well, we never saw it, we heard it. It was pitch black. I thought, 'My first

and last day as a cinematographer.' But the next day we re-shot it and everything was fine."

Nykvist began working with Bergman in 1953 on *The Naked Night*. The cinematographer that Nykvist was supposed to assist on the film left for Hollywood to learn about Cinemascope. Bergman was not too happy having to work with the junior cameraman, even though Bergman was only four years older than Nykvist. They made it through the film successfully, though, and continued to collaborate until *Fanny and Alexander*, Bergman's final film, in 1982. (Nykvist shot every one of Bergman's films after 1957.) Bergman reminisces about working with Nykvist in his autobiography, *The Magic Lantern*: "Confidence and total security prevailed in our collab-

"I will always compromise the process, but I will never compromise the result."

oration. Occasionally I grieve over the fact that we shall never work together again."

By 1970, Nykvist started working with other directors besides Bergman. He became familiar with them by working on American films being shot in Europe, for he could not work in the US without being in the union. He worked in Paris with Louis Malle and in Spain with John Huston and Dick Fleischer.