



Bathers meet the nuclear age in "Koyaanisqatsi."

## Breathtaking film offers unique music for the eyes

By Duane Dudek

"*Koyaanisqatsi*" is a symphony of color and light. It is a ballet of nature and technology. It is a sophisticated flood of wordless imagery that tries to show us what was, what is and what should be.

Its title (which sounds like "key-ann-is-cot-si") is from the Hopi language and means life out of balance. As the English translation of the title suggests, director Godfrey Reggio's theme is civilization expanding at the expense of the Earth and the survival of mankind.

I saw this film six months ago in Los Angeles and its images remain vivid in my memory. Initially Reggio's sweeping camera offers familiar textures that find us straining to identify the substances.

Nature's reality is distilled to its essences: color, form, light and motion. Rock formations resemble a moonscape. The blue of the sky dances above the clay red earth and a floral kaleidoscope. Then we ascend to a level where cloud formations suggest the rolling surf.

Enter mankind with roaring tractors and

## Movies

ugly nuclear plants. Yet Reggio finds garish beauty even in our neon cities filled with internal combustion. His camera watches automotive traffic as it moves in a time lapse motion across big city freeways. Anonymous faces clog escalators.

Reggio turns the familiar into the strange and the ordinary into things of beauty. He places the world on a microscope, distorting its perspective but creating images that are unique and breathtaking.

In 87 minutes not one word of dialog is spoken. The film is totally visual and Reggio succeeds in creating images not only worthy of our attention but strongly suggestive of a coherent narrative. Philip Glass provides a soundtrack that is alternately haunting and majestic.

I strongly recommend "*Koyaanisqatsi*." It is music for the eyes.

"*Koyaanisqatsi*" begins Sunday at the Oriental Theater and runs through Dec. 17.