

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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film list³⁴

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Five weekly programs of American films will be presented in Paris this spring as part of the exhibition AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, for the "Salute to France" program of cultural events. Five experimental films, including several made very recently, will climax the program of screenings which will be presented at the Musée Guimet. Examples of narrative films from 1911 to Lost Boundaries, produced in 1951, will be shown and two documentaries: In the Street, directed by the well-known photographer Helen Levitt, Janice Loeb and the writer-director James Agee; and Robert Flaherty's famous last film Louisiana Story.

The experimental films, usually of particular interest to the French public, include Blacktop, directed by Charles and Ray Eames, Treadle and Bobbin, directed by Wheaton Galentine, and Analogies, directed by James Davis. Both the Galentine and the Davis films have been lent by Film Images. The rest are from the Museum of Modern Art's Film Library.

The "Salute to France" program, under the Honorary Chairmanship of Ambassador C. Douglas Dillon, includes two art exhibitions and special concerts, dance and drama performances to be presented from March 31 through July in Paris. William A. M. Burden, President of the Museum of Modern Art, is Chairman of the Visual Arts sections of the program. Robert Dowling is Chairman of the performing arts section.

In addition to the film showings, panels of stills symbolizing the Film Library Collection and its activities of twice daily showings at the Museum in New York, its program of circulating films and special symposia and publications, will be shown at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris where AMERICAN ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY is being presented.

Two of the experimental films were completed only last year. Analogies, directed by James Davis, deals with the parallels between light reflections of natural forms as seen in water and the way in which abstract plastic forms reflect artificial light. The film, is in color and although there is a musical score there is no narratioi . The film-maker, Mr. Davis, is an artist and was assistant professor of art and architecture at Princeton University.

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Treadle and Bobbin was also completed in 1954. This color film, by the young photographer Wheaton Galentine, is a color study of an old sewing machine. Like Analogies there is a musical score but no narration. Mr. Galentine made this film entirely on his own and has since become a professional film maker. He is now in Egypt.

Blacktop was produced by Charles and Ray Eames, well-known designers of modern furniture who have recently become interested in film making as a creative medium. This film is a study of natural design, showing the motion of water as it flows over a grainy surface with occasional irregularities and geometric painted lines.

The most recent documentary to be shown in the series is In the Street, directed by Helen Levitt, Janice Loeb and James Agee. In the program notes published in the catalog for the exhibition, Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum of Modern Art's Film Library, says: In the Street was not originally intended to be a film. It grew out of sporadic street shooting.... Using angle viewers to conceal from their subjects that they were being photographed, they sought what the camera could reveal and 'fix' of random human behaviour in the street.... In this sense In the Street is an 'endless film,' as well as an advance inquiry into the nature of motion picture photography."

The other documentary in the series is Robert Flaherty's famous last film Louisiana Story in which he used seven separate sound tracts to record the derrick noises and fed the speeches to his players in dialogue scenes, urging them to rephrase them in words natural to them rather than using written lines. "With King Vidor's Hallelujah!, Louisiana Story is one of the few films made so far which approach the world of sound in the same manner as photography approaches the visual world," Mr. Griffith says.

Three programs on the narrative film, which had its beginnings in the United States as early as 1903, open with Shootin' Mad, directed by Billy Anderson in 1911. Among the famous films included in these programs are The Avenging Conscience, directed by D.W. Griffith, the Thief of Bagdad, directed by Raoul Walsh and the first issue of The March of Time, produced by Louis de Rochemont in 1935. Mr. de Rochemont's Lost Boundaries, produced in 1951, closes this section of the program.

Note: Complete list, stills and program notes available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 St., New York City 19.