

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

No. 142

FOR RELEASE

Sunday, January 1, 1961

The Contemporary American Screen, 42 films produced between 1948 - 1958, will be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, beginning January 1. Screenings will be held at 3 and 5:30 p.m., in chronological sequence, the program changing daily. The series was selected by Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library, to represent "the best that Hollywood has done in the years in question, and also what movie audiences have liked best. A few 'flops d'estime' are here, and a few pictures whose principal reason for inclusion is that they or their characters have passed into the language. But the bulk of the exhibition consists of films of quality which have connected with the mass audience which makes movies possible."

Arranged with the help and participation of major film companies, the survey will consist of loans from Columbia Pictures, Twentieth-Century-Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, United Artists, and Universal-International. The one exception, The Man with the Golden Arm, was presented to the Museum's Film Library by Otto Preminger last year.

The review of recent American films, the first to be presented by the Museum, will include Sitting Pretty (1948), All the King's Men (1949), All About Eve (1950), Viva Zapata (1952), High Noon (1952), Shane (1953), It Came from Outer Space (1953), Roman Holiday (1953), It Should Happen to You (1954), The Wild One (1954), The Shrike (1955), Marty (1955), Night of the Hunter (1955), The Ten Commandments (1956), Twelve Angry Men (1957), Bridge Over the River Kwai (1957), and Touch of Evil (1958).

Discussing the purpose of the series, Mr. Griffith says that "The decade covered by this exhibition has proved the most revolutionary period in American film history since the coming of sound. The advent of free television as the movies' chief competitor in the field of popular entertainment, and the adoption, in response, of new screen techniques, have radically modified the system of production and distribution which had prevailed ever since about 1918. What has happened, in essence, is the modification of the mass production of five to six hundred films a year in favor of the hand-tooled individual production. Hand-tooled, and expensive.

"The object of the present exhibition is to provide a conspectus of American film achievement under the new conditions described above.

"Main currents in the taste of the Fifties are readily identified here. The coming of the wide screen brought spectacle to the fore as a major film genre. It also provided Cecil B. De Mille, long spectacle's lone specialist, with the opportunity for his last and greatest triumph, The Ten Commandments. The second most notable trend has been toward psychological realism, a field with which the American movie

has had comparatively little traffic in the past. The Long Hot Summer, for one, illustrates themes common enough in the films of other countries but hitherto tabu here, or nearly so. A related trend is the social realism of Marty and Twelve Angry Men.

"Of the perennial cycles, Westerns of course lead the field - but Westerns with a difference, in that the characters of Shane approximate real people with problems which cannot altogether be solved by quick trigger fingers. Musicals, though their vogue has somewhat waned, attained in Funny Face and Singin' in the Rain new heights of sophistication and fun. Finally, comedy. Comedy has always been the most artistically satisfying branch of American movie-making, and It Should Happen to You is the present writer's favorite of all the films in the exhibition. Gladys Glover is a genuinely original creation, a new image of the new forms which the American success saga has recently taken. Here, more deeply perhaps than even in the films of social realism, the American film is rooted in American life.

"This rich review of memorable films has been made possible by the art-industry itself. With the exception of Otto Preminger's The Man with the Golden Arm, presented to the Film Library last year by Mr. Preminger, all of the films have been loaned to the exhibition by their distributors, Columbia Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, Twentieth-Century-Fox, United Artists, and Universal-International, and we take this opportunity of thanking them all. Of the individuals who have given generous assistance in the assembling of the exhibition, the Museum especially wishes to thank: Paul Lazarus, Jr. and Albert Schwartz of Columbia; Dan Terrell and Haven Falconer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Bernard Donnenfeld and Frank LeGrand of Paramount; W. C. Michel and Harry Mersay of Twentieth-Century-Fox; David Picker of United Artists; Herbert Golden of United Artists Associates; John J. O'Connor and Henry Fellerman of Universal International. Eric Johnston, Kenneth Clark and Ralph Hetzel of the Motion Picture Association have been generous with their time and advice.

"The avid film fan will spot the absence of certain key films from the period under consideration. Sunset Boulevard unfortunately is missing; so are Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Moby Dick and others. Legal restrictions, unavailability of prints, and other difficulties have so far prevented their inclusion. It is still possible that some of these or other films of equal quality will become available before the exhibition closes. Consequently the scheduled films are announced as Part I of the exhibition. It is hoped that a Part II can later be provided."

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Complete schedule attached

Film stills and further information available from Herbert Bronstein, Associate Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York. CI 5-8900.

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

No. 142

December 8, 1961

ADVANCE

NOT FOR RELEASE

The Contemporary American Screen, a series of about 60 films produced between 1948 - 1958, will be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, beginning January 1, 1961. Arranged with the help and participation of major film companies, the survey will consist of loans from Columbia Pictures, Twentieth-Century-Fox, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, United Artists, and Universal-International. The one exception, The Man With the Golden Arm, was presented to the Museum's Film Library by Otto Preminger last year. Screenings, in chronological sequence, will be held at 3 and 5:30 p.m., the program changing daily. Richard Griffith, Curator of the Film Library, selected the series.

The review of recent American films, the first to be presented by the Museum, will include Sitting Pretty (1948), Battleground (1949), All the King's Men (1949), All About Eve (1950), Asphalt Jungle (1950), Viva Zapata (1952), Singing in the Rain (1952), Shane (1953), It Came From Outer Space (1953), Roman Holiday (1953), It Should Happen to You (1954), The Wild One (1954), The Shrike (1955), Marty (1955), Night of the Hunter (1955), The Ten Commandments (1956), Twelve Angry Men (1957), Bridge Over the River Kwai (1957), Touch of Evil (1958).

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A complete schedule, further information, and photographs will be available from Herbert Bronstein, Associate Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City. CI 5-8900.