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The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53rd Street, New York, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 7-7470

Cable Address: Modernart

July 9, 1935.

TO CITY EDITORS
FEATURE EDITORS
MOTION PICTURE CRITICS

Dear Sirs:

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library Corporation, 485 Madison Avenue, will give a private press showing at three o'clock Tuesday afternoon, July 10, of its recent acquisitions mentioned in the enclosed release. The press view will not be in the nature of a motion picture pre-view but will demonstrate visually the wide scope of the Museum's Film Library. For example:

Acquisition (1) - - new-style, non-commercial animated cartoon Joie de Vivre, made by two impoverished artists entirely inexperienced in motion picture technique, combines MODERN ART with modern music in such a way as to make this cartoon a distinct step in motion picture progress.

Acquisition (2) - - The Great Train Robbery, produced in 1903 - - the FIRST AMERICAN MOVIE to have any semblance of PLOT.

Acquisition (3) - - large portfolio of 90 sheets (published 1878), each sheet containing 24 "still" photographs analyzing separate segments of one continuous motion. These unusual photographic experiments by the brilliant photographer Muybridge FORECAST the advent of MOTION PICTURES in a remarkable way.

Acquisition (4) - - the famous May Irwin-John C. Rice "kiss" movie made in 1896 and severely frowned upon by the moralists of the nineties. In spite of this (or perhaps because of it?) the picture was such a tremendous success it was worn to shreds through continuous use.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ABOVE WILL BE AVAILABLE

Motion picture critics are being invited but we hope that city and feature editors, ^{and} will be interested in sending reporters to cover the amusing angles and human interest features of the showing.

If additional information is desired, will you please telephone me, Circle 7-7470.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
Sarah Newmeyer, Publicity Director.

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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FOR RELEASE Wednesday, July 10, 1935

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 485 Madison Avenue, announces the acquisition of a new type of animated cartoon, Joie de Vivre, created by two young artists in Paris: Anthony Gross, an Englishman, and Hector Hoppin, an American. Without capital or financial backing, and with no experience or even observation of the technical production methods of animated cartoons, these young men spent two years of incessant labor evolving their cartoon from the original idea to the finished product. They themselves made not only the "key" drawings but the "fill-in" ones as well - - a total of 34,000 drawings: 17,000 on celluloid, 17,000 on tracing paper. Although the mechanical process they used was the same as that of any other animated cartoon, the result is altogether different. Their cartoon "drama" is a sort of dream-ballet showing the sprightly and fantastic adventures of two French shop girls and a bicycle-riding Apache. The three swing through the clouds, dance over telegraph wires, and jumble up railway signals to send trains scurrying in every possible wrong direction.

The young artists have carried out their animated drawing in entirely new fashion. The animation is in ballet rhythm to modern music especially written for the film by Tibor Harsanyi. The backgrounds, showing factories and countryside, are handled in the manner of contemporary artists, utilizing railroad tracks, telegraph poles and factory angles graphically. Joie de Vivre is a distinctly new and original step in that branch of the motion picture devoted to the animated cartoon, and as such it has its place in the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. The picture has been exhibited to enthusiastic audiences in Europe, but has not been shown commercially in this country.

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library also announces the acquisition of The Great Train Robbery, produced in 1903 by an Edison camera man, Edwin S. Porter. Up to that time motion pictures had consisted chiefly of short reels showing scenic views, galloping horsemen, railroad engines puffing toward an audience or other natural and mechanical phenomena. Mr. Porter was inspired to combine several of these standard thrills so that they composed the rough outline of

a story which he called The Great Train Robbery, the first American motion picture to have any semblance of plot. Like Joie de Vivre, The Great Train Robbery marks a distinct step in the progress of film-making.

A third acquisition of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library is interesting as a record of the scientific curiosity and experiment that preceded the actual development of pictures that move. In 1872 Governor Stanford of California wanted to settle a bet as to whether or not a horse took all four feet off the ground at once when racing. He hired an ingenious photographer, Edward Muybridge, who had an engineer set up forty cameras along a race track. Wires operated the camera shutters and as the horse passed each camera a separate picture was taken. These were not motion pictures, of course, in the true sense; they were simply a series of still pictures that analyzed motion. Years later, in Paris, transparencies were made of these photographs and projected on a toy screen to refute criticism regarding the postures of horses painted by the French artist Meissonier.

Muybridge continued his photographic studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where the majority of his models were students or instructors; most of the women he photographed were artists' models. He used approximately the same method he had employed in photographing the racing horse for Governor Stanford, except that in his later work he operated only twenty-four cameras. The Museum of Modern Art Film Library has acquired a large portfolio of 90 of his photographic studies entitled Animal Locomotion, which was published in 1887. Each study is composed of twenty-four individual photographs which record a segment each of continuous movement.

Muybridge's photography of successive stages of motion is regarded as one of the important steps which preceded the invention of cinematography. When exhibited publicly on a screen by the zoopraxinoscope (an early type of projection machine) his photographs caused a sensation in London and Paris where the apparent animation that resulted from the demonstration of these "still" pictures was described as "magic lantern run mad".

Another recent acquisition of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library is the famous "kiss" movie made by May Irwin and John C. Rice in 1896, when they were appearing on the Broadway stage in a play called The Widow Jones. The play was famed for an osculatory scene of great length. An independent producer conceived the brilliant idea

of turning that single scene into a motion picture. His studio was the roof of an office building on 28th Street, New York, where he had made a number of pictures. Edison sent a camera man to take the picture, which consisted solely of the kiss and its two participants. Over the protests of whatever league was operating in the nineties to keep the world pure and proper, the picture was shown all over the country. The Museum of Modern Art Film Library copy of the "kiss" reel was found in a trash can in the Bronx a few weeks ago.

As rapidly as possible, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library is gathering and arranging the material for the first of its traveling exhibitions, which it hopes to have ready in the Fall. Single motion pictures and programs will be circulated to colleges and museums throughout the country in the same way that the Museum now circulates traveling exhibitions of paintings, models and photographs of architecture, and reproductions of works of art. The officers of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, which was recently established by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, are John Hay Whitney, President, John E. Abbott, Vice-President and General Manager, and Edward M.M. Warburg, Treasurer. Miss Iris Barry is Curator.

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ON REQUEST ADDRESSED TO

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY CORPORATION
 485 Madison Avenue
 New York City

one or more photographs of the above-mentioned acquisitions will be sent you for publication.