

The Museum of Modern Art

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JUNCTION AND JOURNEY: TRAINS AND FILM

June 21 - September 30, 1991

JUNCTION AND JOURNEY: TRAINS AND FILM, the first major American film exhibition celebrating cinema's profound involvement with the image of the train, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on June 21, 1991. For nearly a century, filmmakers from around the world have been attracted to the image of the train as both setting and metaphor. This comprehensive survey includes over 100 international features, shorts, documentaries, and animated works spanning the history of film. **JUNCTION AND JOURNEY: TRAINS AND FILM** continues through September 30.

From the turn of the century to the present, trains--their rails, cars, stations, and platforms, as well as the changing landscape as seen from their windows--have played a substantial role in film culture. The first film publicly projected was Louis Lumière's *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* in Paris in 1895. Not only was the audience reaction overwhelming, but, with this moving image of a train, the plastic arts became literally dynamic. Soon after, cinema moved from documentation to entertainment; from merely showing events or panoramic scenes to being a teller of tales. The romance of the railroad inspired the early narrative film, Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), which was a box-office success at nickelodeons across the United States. Ever since, filmmakers have found trains and the railroad irresistibly compelling.

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The exhibition features: from the United States, John Ford's *The Iron Horse* (1924), Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot* (1959), and Andrei Konchalovsky's *Runaway Train* (1985); from France, Jean Renoir's *The Human Beast* (1938) and Costa-Gavras's *The Sleeping Car Murders* (1965); from Germany, Niklaus Schilling's *Rheingold* (1978); from India, Satyajit Ray's *The Hero* (1966); from Japan, Akira Kurosawa's *High and Low* (1963); from the Soviet Union, Ilya Trauberg's *Blue Express* (1929); from Mexico, Fernando de Fuentes's *Let's Go with Pancho Villa!* (1935); from Argentina, Hector Olivera's *Rebellion in Patagonia* (1976); and, from both his British and American careers, Alfred Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) and *North by Northwest* (1959).

Besides providing a setting for a story (as in Sidney Lumet's *Murder on the Orient Express*, 1974), the railroad in cinema represents the past (Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon*, 1952), the present (Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels*, 1941), the future (Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, 1955), and the past, present, and future all at once (Arthur Joffé's *Alberto Express*, 1990). It can signify change on a national scale (Viktor Turin's *Turksib*, 1929) and on a personal one (Jiri Menzel's *Closely Watched Trains*, 1966), while expressing hope (Jacques Tourneur's *Berlin Express*, 1948), rootlessness (Chantal Akerman's *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna*, 1978), entrapment (Richard Fleischer's 1952 version and Peter Hyams's 1990 version of *The Narrow Margin*), and escape, both physical (Jan Němec's *Diamonds of the Night*, 1964) and social (David Lean's *Brief Encounter*, 1945). Train films explore the subjects of death (Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog*, 1955) and life, both literally (Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, 1959) and metaphorically (Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train*, 1989).

The films in **JUNCTION AND JOURNEY** reveal the substantial relationship between trains and cinema: the idea of a journey with a starting point, a voyage, and an end corresponding to a film's beginning, middle, and end; the tracking of the camera that imitates the flat roll of the train; and the similarity of watching a projected motion picture and watching a landscape roll by a train window. On another level, the exhibition illustrates how the power, freedom, mystery, and sensuality symbolized by the railroad provide filmmakers with endless possibilities for plot, character, and metaphor.

JUNCTION AND JOURNEY: TRAINS AND FILM was organized by Laurence Kardish, curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art.

A gallery exhibition of film-still enlargements and posters, on view in the lobby of the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1, has been organized by Mary Corliss, assistant curator, Department of Film.

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PUBLICATION *Junction and Journey: Trains and Film*. Edited and with an introduction by Laurence Kardish. Essays: "Railroads in the Western" by William K. Everson, "'Beats Flying, Doesn't It?': The Train in Hitchcock" by Roger Greenspun, "Trains in Japanese Film" by Donald Richie, and "Track Records, Trains of Events: The Limits of Cinematic Representation" by Annette Michelson. 48 pages. 46 black-and-white illustrations. Filmography. Published by The Museum of Modern Art. Paperbound, \$6.95. Available in The MoMA Book Store.

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For further information or film stills, contact Barbara Marshall, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.