

The Museum of Modern Art

DEPARTMENT OF FILM

FACT SHEET

DEPARTMENT HISTORY

In 1935 the Department of Film, then known as the Film Library, was founded with Iris Barry as the first curator. Among its first acquisitions were Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) and Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* (1924). In 1936 the Film Library presented its first series A SHORT SURVEY OF THE FILM IN AMERICA, 1895 TO 1932 and SOME MEMORABLE AMERICAN FILMS, 1896 TO 1934 as circulating exhibitions. In 1938 the Film Library became one of the founding members of the Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAF), and in 1939 it hosted FIAF's first annual congress.

In 1966 the Film Library was renamed the Department of Film to reflect the changing scope of its work, and an expanded and more flexible programming policy went into effect. In 1979 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave the Department an Honorary Academy Award in recognition of its "on-going program of film preservation and its continuing support of the motion picture as an art form."

FILM ARCHIVE

With over 12,000 international films of both contemporary and historical importance, the collection comprises fiction features, animation, avant-garde works, propaganda films, and independent films. Films are acquired through exchanges between archival institutions, donations from film studios and filmmakers, and individual gifts. Special to the Archive are the D.W. Griffith Collection, the Biograph Collection, the David O. Selznick Collection, the Edison Collection, the Twentieth Century-Fox Collection, and the Andy Warhol Collection.

EXHIBITION PROGRAM

Since 1939, over 700 exhibitions have been mounted. Recent highlights include YIDDISH FILM BETWEEN TWO WORLDS (1991-92), VITTORIO D: DE SICA BEHIND THE CAMERA AND ON THE SCREEN (1991), JUNCTION AND JOURNEY: TRAINS AND FILM (1991), PIER PAOLO PASOLINI: THE EYES OF A POET (1990), RIPSTEIN AND HERMOSILLO: FILMMAKERS (1990), CARL TH. DREYER (1989), AMERICAN MOVIEMAKERS: THE DAWN OF SOUND and AMERICAN MOVIEMAKERS: DIRECTED BY VINCENTE MINNELLI (both 1989), ANNA MAGNANI (1988), COMEDY, ITALIAN STYLE (1986), 50 YEARS OF FILM AT MoMA (1985), PARAMOUNT PICTURES: 70TH ANNIVERSARY (1982), REDISCOVERING FRENCH FILM (1981 and 1983), and JOHN CASSAVETES: FILMMAKER AND ACTOR (1980).

Ongoing series include CINEPROBE (independent and avant-garde films), WHAT'S HAPPENING (documentaries on social and political issues), VIDEO VIEWPOINTS (works by independent

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videomakers), and RECENT FILMS FROM GERMANY (a yearly survey of new films).

FILM STILLS
ARCHIVE

The Archive contains four million photographs of films from all periods and includes color slides and transparencies. Approximately three shows of film-still enlargements and posters are mounted throughout the year in the theater gallery.

FILM STUDY
CENTER

Film students, scholars, and filmmakers may view films from the Department of Film's study collection, as well as have access to a large collection of screenplays and dialogue continuities, files of film reviews and articles, reference books, and posters.

PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

Preservation of the films in the Archive, both from nitrate deterioration for films made before 1950 and from fading of color films, is the Department's priority. More than twelve million feet of nitrate film have been transferred to safety stock, and approximately half of the film collection has been successfully restored. A Film Preservation Fund ensures the preservation of the remaining films in the Archive, as well as the new acquisitions that continually enter the collection.

VIDEO PROGRAM

Established in 1974, the video program presents approximately six video exhibitions a year, as well as VIDEO VIEWPOINTS (works by independent videomakers) and occasional video premieres. The collection contains 700 independently produced videotapes from around the world. Recent acquisitions include all the videotapes produced by Joan Jonas, Nam June Paik, and William Wegman. The Video Study Center, formed in 1984, is a reference library of exhibition catalogues, periodicals, and interviews documenting the history of video art.

CIRCULATING
FILM/VIDEO
LIBRARY

A collection of more than 1,300 films spans the history of cinema from the 1890s to the present. The library provides about 4,000 films each year to approximately 500 institutions. One hundred videotapes from the Video Collection are also available.

THEATERS

The Museum has two state-of-the-art theaters, the Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters 1 and 2.

DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR

Mary Lea Bandy

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