

The Museum of Modern Art

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TRIBUTE TO ANITA LOOS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART MONTH-LONG RETROSPECTIVE OF LOOS FILMS IN RECOGNITION OF SCREEN WRITER'S ROLE

A Tribute to Anita Loos, a month-long retrospective of 30 films authored or adapted by the famous first lady of screen writers, will be presented from June 14 to July 13 by the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art. The tribute to Miss Loos will focus attention on the contribution of the screen writer to the development of the motion picture medium.

One of the most prolific of screen writers, Anita Loos started her career with D.W. Griffith in his Biograph Studio days. She later wrote original scenarios for stars of the dimension of Douglas Fairbanks in the 20's and Jean Harlow in the 30's. She also worked with the highest ranking directors -- Edmund Goulding, Sam Wood, William Wellman, George Cukor, Clarence Brown, Mervyn LeRoy and Howard Hawks. Her most popular work "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," written in 1925 in her celebrated youth, was remade as a Broadway musical a quarter of a century later.

Miss Loos, a life-time non-conformist, came to fame in the 20's, a period not unlike the 60's in respect to the revolutionary changes of style and mores. Born in the Far West, she was a symbol of the flapper age, and knew Hollywood in its halcyon days. She then became an intimate of the international set of Gertrude Stein as well as the American literati, H.L. Mencken, Aldous Huxley, Sherwood Anderson, and Alexander Woolcott. She nevertheless retained her own blend of humor and sense of the ridiculous as expressed in her work on the screen, which provides the occasion for this tribute to her as a screen writer and to the craft of screen writing.

In her autobiography, "A Girl Like I," Miss Loos tells of her precocious years as a child actress, after which in her teens she became a scenarist. She sold her first script, "The New York Hat," for fifteen dollars to D.W. Griffith, who filmed it with

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Mary Pickford and Lionel Barrymore. "The New York Hat" will be shown with other Biograph films she wrote in the first program of the Loos retrospective.

Gary Carey, Assistant Curator, Department of Film, has assembled an array of films illustrating Miss Loos's wide range of accomplishments. Included in the selection is D.W. Griffith's three-hour epic, "Intolerance," for which Miss Loos wrote the titles. Title writing was then a succinct, expressive form conveying the gestures and reactions of the silent performers. It led to Miss Loos creating numerous original screen plays, many of them directed by John Emerson, her husband, who was sometimes her co-author. Together they wrote the script for one of the last D.W. Griffith films, "The Struggle," a part of this series.

When "talkies" arrived Miss Loos wrote the dialogue for Marion Davies in "Blondie of the Follies." She continued to devise original scenarios, but was also a recognized novelist, who was in demand to adapt stage plays to the screen. She adapted Clare Booth Luce's "The Women," several Rachel Crothers plays, including "Susan and God," and S.N. Behrman's "Biography," which became "Biography of a Bachelor Girl." The girl in this Irving Thalberg production was Ann Harding.

In a star-studded age Miss Loos wrote lines delivered by the most celebrated names in screen history: Clark Gable in "Hold Your Man," Spencer Tracy in "Riff-Raff," both Tracy and Gable together in "San Francisco," Joan Crawford in "Susan and God," Greer Garson in "Blossoms in the Dust," and others.

At that time only the stars counted; today the directors are practically "starred;" but the screen writer, then as now, has been traditionally neglected, according to Mr. Carey. The Loos retrospective, in fact, is designed as one of a series planned by the Museum to emphasize the work of individual scenarists because "in this day and age of director-oriented movie-goers and film critics the screen writer has been belittled when not ignored."

According to Mr. Carey the touch of individuality that is often the work of the writer is sometimes erroneously attributed to what he calls "directorial omnipotence."

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He points to the fact that three Hitchcock films of the mid-fifties have a texture that set them apart from the rest of the director's work. They were written by John Michael Hayes. /^{Mr.}Carey also notes that a certain femme fatale element in the films of Josef von Sternberg was also to be found in some of Howard Hawks's films. The scenarist for Sternberg, Jules Furthman, had also written for Hawks.

A further instance cited by Mr. Carey is "Citizen Kane," of which Herman Mankiewicz was co-author with Orson Welles. Many aspects of the power-driven anti-hero, as well as the structure of the film, had previously appeared in "The Power and the Glory," written by Mankiewicz, although most of the credit for this picture was given to the director.

The screen writer merits more careful study, it was stated by Mr. Carey, despite the collaborative nature of film writing, "to permit certain characteristics to emerge" so the public will be able to discern and evaluate the writer's personal touch.

Anita Loos is typical of a writer whose personality pervades her screen work. Her last film was an adaptation of the Broadway musical, "I Married an Angel," produced in 1942. Since then she has continued to write novels and plays, providing Helen Hayes with "Happy Birthday," and Carol Channing with the musical book of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," and introducing Audrey Hepburn to America with the stage adaptation of Colette's novel "Gigi." On the London stage last year Glynis Johns starred in "The King's Mare," a Loos play about Henry IV and Anne of Cleves.

Commenting on Miss Loos's ability to work in other media than film, Mr. Carey points to her skill in handling "potentially melodramatic material and turning it upside down through her peculiarly comic vision of the world. Her humor acts as a deflation of human foibles and hypocrisy, social fads and frivolities." It applies even to herself, for she admits, "I whacked out the first recorded boyish bob of the twentieth century" -- this at a time when long hair was considered de rigeur.

The Loos program follows:

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SHOWINGS ARE SCHEDULED AT 2:00 P.M. AND 5:30 P.M., WITH AN EXTRA SHOWING THURSDAY EVENING AT 8:00 P.M., AND SATURDAY SHOWINGS AT 3:00 AND 5:30 P.M.

- June 14 Six films made by Biograph Studios. "The New York Hat" (1912). Directed by D.W. Griffith. With Mary Pickford, Lionel Barrymore. "The Power of the Camera" (1913). Directed by and with Dell Henderson. "Highbrow Love" (1913). Directed by Dell Henderson. "A Cure for Suffragettes" (1913). Directed by Dell Henderson. "The Meal Ticket" (1914). Director unknown. "At the Road's End" (1914). Directed by Morgan.
- June 15 "Intolerance" (1916). Directed by D.W. Griffith. Titles by Anita Loos. With Mae Marsh, Robert Harron, Lillian Gish, Constance Talmadge. 191 min. 3:00 P.M. showing only.
- June 16 "The Social Secretary" (1916). Directed by John Emerson. Written by Anita Loos. With Norma Talmadge, Erich Von Stroheim. 60 min.
- June 19 "The Americano" (1916). Directed by John Emerson. Screenplay by Anita Loos. With Douglas Fairbanks, Alma Rubens. Print courtesy of Eastman House.
- June 20 "American Aristocracy" (1916). Directed by Lloyd Ingraham. Written by Anita Loos. With Douglas Fairbanks, Jewel Carmen. Print courtesy of Eastman House.
- June 21 "In Again, Out Again" (1917). Directed by John Emerson. Written by Anita Loos. With John Fairbanks, Arline Pretty, and Bull Montana. 85 min.
- June 22 "Down to Earth" (1917). Directed by John Emerson. Written by Anita Loos. With Douglas Fairbanks, Eileen Percy.
- June 23 "Wild and Woolly" (1917). Directed by John Emerson. Script by Anita Loos from a story by H. B. Carpenter. With Douglas Fairbanks, Eileen Percy.
- June 24 "Reaching for the Moon" (1917). Directed by John Emerson. Written by Anita Loos and Emerson. With Douglas Fairbanks, Eileen Percy.
- June 26 "The Struggle" (1931). Directed by D.W. Griffith. Script by John Emerson and Anita Loos. With Hal Skelly, Aita Johann.
- June 27 "Blondie of the Follies" (1932). Produced for M.G.M. Directed by Edmund Goulding. Continuity by Frances Marion. Dialogue by Anita Loos. With Marion Davies, Robert Montgomery, Billie Dove, Jimmy Durante, James Gleason, ZaSu Pitts, Sidney Toler, Douglass Dumbrille, Sarah Padden, Louise Carter. 90 min.
- June 28 "Red-Headed Woman" (1932). Produced by M.G.M. Directed by Jack Conway. From the novel of the same name by Katherine Brush. Screenplay by Anita Loos. With Jean Harlow, Chester Morris, Lewis Stone, Leila Hyams, Una Merkel, Henry Stephenson, May Robson, Charles Boyer, Harvey Clark. 74 min.

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- June 29 "Biography of a Bachelor Girl" (1933). Produced for M.G.M. Directed by Edward H. Griffith. From the stage play "Biography" by S.N. Behrman. Screenplay by Anita Loos. Produced by Irving Thalberg. Camera by James Wong Howe. With Ann Harding, Robert Montgomery, Edward Everett Horton, Edward Arnold, Una Merkel, Charles Richman, Greta Meyer. 84 min.
- June 30 "Girl from Missouri" (1934). Produced for M.G.M. Directed by Jack Conway. Story by Anita Loos and John Emerson. With Jean Harlow, Lionel Barrymore, Franchot Tone, Lewis Stone, Patsy Kelly, Allan Mowbray, Clara Blandick, Hale Hamilton, Henry Kolker. 65 min.
- July 3 "Lady of the Night (Midnight Mary)" (1933). Produced for M.G.M. Directed by William Wellman. Original story by Anita Loos. Adapted by Gene Markey and Kathryn Scola. With Loretta Young, Ricardo Cortez, Franchot Tone, Andy Devine, Una Merkel, Frank Conroy, Warren Hymer, Ivan Simpson, Harold Huber, Sandy Roth, Martha Sleeper, Charles Grapewin, Halliwell Hobbes, Robert Emmett O'Conner. 75 min.
- July 4 "Riff-Raff" (1935). Produced for M.G.M. by Irving Thalberg. Directed by J. Walter Ruben. Original story by Frances Marion. Screenplay by Frances Marion, H.W. Hannemann, and Anita Loos. With Jean Harlow, Spencer Tracy, Una Merkel, Joseph Calleia, Victor Kilan, Mickey Rooney, J. Farrell McDonald, Roger Imhoff, Juanita Quigley, Paul Eurst, Vince Barnett, Dorothy Appleby, Judith Wood, Arthur Houseman, Wade Boteler, Joe Phillips, William Newell, Al Hill, Helen Flint, Lillian Harmer, Bob Perry, George Givot. 89 min.
- July 5 "San Francisco" (1936). Produced for M.G.M. by John Emerson and Bernard H. Hyman. Directed by W.S. Van Dyke. Based on a story by Robert Hopkins. Screenplay by Anita Loos. Musical score by Herbert Stothart. With Clark Gable, Jeanette MacDonald, Spencer Tracy, Jack Holt, Jessie Ralph, Ted Healy, Shirley Ross, Margaret Irving, Harold Huber, Edgard Kennedy, Al Shean, William Ricciardi, Kenneth Harlan, Roger Imhof, Charles Judels, Russell Simpson, Bert Roach, Warren B. Hymer. 115 min.
- July 6 "Saratoga" (1937). Produced for M.G.M. by Bernard H. Hyman and John Emerson. Directed by Jack Conway. Original and screenplay by Anita Loos and Robert Hopkins. Score by Edward Ward. Songs by Walter Donaldson, Bob Wright and Chet Forrest. With Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Lionel Barrymore, Frank Morgan, Walter Pidgeon, Una Merkel, Cliff Edwards, George Zucco, Jonathan Hale, Hattie McDaniels, Frankie Darro, Henry Stone.
- July 7 "The Women" (1939). Released by M.G.M. for Hunt Stromberg Productions. Directed by George Cukor. Screenplay by Anita Loos and Jane Murfin from the play by Clare Booth. With Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, Mary Boland, Paulette Goddard, Phyllis Povah, Joan Fontaine, Virginia Weidler, Lucile Watson, Florence Nash, Muriel Hutchison, Esther Dale, Ann Morriss, Ruth Hussey, Dennie Moore, Mary Cecil, Mary Beth Hughes, Virginia Grey, Marjorie Main, Cora Witherspoon, Hedda Hopper. 132 min.
- July 8 "Susan and God" (1940). M.G.M. ~~release~~ of Hunt Stromberg Productions. Directed by George Cukor. Screenplay by Anita Loos. Based on a play by Rachel Crothers. With Joan Crawford, Fredric March, Ruth Hussey, John Carroll, Rita Hayworth, Nigel Bruce, Bruce Cabot, Rose Hobart, Constance Collier, Rita Quigley, Gloria DeHaven, Richard O. Crane, Norma Mitchell, Marjorie Main, Aldrich Bowker. 115 min.

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July 10 "They Met in Bombay" (1941). M.G.M. release. Produced by Hunt Stromberg. Directed by Clarence Brown. Screenplay by Anita Loos, Edwin Justus Mayer, and Leon Gordon. Based on a story by John Kafka. With Clark Gable, Rosalind Russell, Peter Lorre, Jessie Ralph, Reginald Owen, Matthew Boulton, Edward Ciannelli, Louis Alberni, Rosina Galli, Jay Novello. 90 min.

July 11 "Blossoms in the Dust" (1941). Produced for M.G.M. by Irving Asher. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Screenplay by Anita Loos. Based on a story by Ralph Wheelright. With Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Felix Bressart, Marsha Hunt, Fay Holden, Samuel S. Hinds, Kathleen Howard, George Lassey, William Henry, Henry O'Neill, John Eldredge, Clinton Rosemond, Theresa Harris, Charlie Arnt, Cecil Cunningham, Ann Morriss, Richard Nichols, Pat Barker, Mary Taylor, Marc Lawrence.

July 12 "When Ladies Meet" (1941). Produced for M.G.M. by Robert Z. Leonard and Orville O. Dull. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard. Screenplay by S. K. Lauren and Anita Loos from a play by Rachel Crothers. With Joan Crawford, Robert Taylor, Greer Garson, Herbert Marshall, Spring Byington, Rafael Storm, Mona Barrie. 103 min.

July 14 "Hold Your Man" (1933). Produced for M.G.M. Directed by Sam Wood. Story by Anita Loos. Adapted by Anita Loos and Howard Emmett Rogers. With Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Stuart Erwin, Dorothy Burgess, Muriel Kirkland, Garry Owen, Barbara Barondess, Paul Hurst, Elizabeth Patterson, Theresa Harris, Blanche Friderici, George Reed. 85 min.

July 13 "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953).* 20th Century Fox release of Sol C. Siegel Productions. Directed by Howard Hawks. Screenplay by Charles Lederer. Based on musical comedy by Joseph Fields and Anita Loos. Songs by Jule Styne and Leo Robin. New songs by Hoagy Carmichael and Harold Adamson. Dances by Jack Cole. With Jane Russell, Marilyn Monroe, Charles Coburn, Elliott Reid, George Winslow, Marcel Holmes, Norma Warden, Howard Wendell, Steven Geray, Henri Letondal, Leo Mostovoy, Alex Frazer, George Davis, Alphonse Martell, Jimmie and Freddie Moultrie, Jean de Briac, George Dee, Peter Camlin, Harry Carey, Jr., Jean Del Val, Ray Montgomery, Alvy Moore, Robert Nichols, Charles Tannen, Jimmy Young, Charles De Ravenne, John Close, William Cabanne, Philip Sylvestre, Jack Chefe. 91 min.

*The Museum regrets the silent film version of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" appears to be lost, a search of film vaults has revealed.

and stills

Additional information/available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 956-7501, 7296.