

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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PRESS PREVIEW OF 3 FILMS: TUESDAY
April 14, 4:30-4:45 p.m., 4th floor

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY
April 15, 1953

EIGHT EXPERIMENTAL FILMS BY OSKAR FISCHINGER

ACQUIRED FOR CIRCULATION BY MUSEUM

Eight short films made over the past 25 years by the pioneer experimentalist Oskar Fischinger are now available for rent through the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19. This offers to the film public the first opportunity to secure and look at both color and black and white work by this film-maker. These are all sound films and in most cases are interpretations of the accompanying music.

Oskar Fischinger is the champion of the absolute film of abstract experimentation. He left Germany in 1936 at the invitation of Paramount and went to Hollywood where he still works in the abstract field both in painting and in film-making. He also worked for MGM, and later he did an abstract episode for Disney's "Fantasia." One of the films to be distributed by the Museum, "Motion Painting #1," received the "Grand Prix" in a Brussels International Art and Film Festival. For the past few years Mr. Fischinger has worked on stereo abstract films and is currently interested in these experiments.

The idea for this type of film was born in 1913 when Leopold Survage executed designs for an abstract film that are now in the Film Library. The idea took root in the freely experimental period that followed the first World War, when many artists, especially in Germany, turned to film to give motion to their abstract conceptions. For a while, the "absolute" film was the beau idéal of most film theorists and many film-makers. But when the course of film experiment turned elsewhere - toward surrealism in the late twenties - abstract films were abandoned to an obscurity which is only now beginning to lift.

Fischinger alone, of the many who had used the form, continued solely to produce abstractions on film, to the point where his name became identified with the form. He received esthetic recognition but had no financial success. He continued his film-making at his own ex-

pense in the belief, as he has said, that, "There is only one way for the creative artist: To produce only for the highest ideals - not thinking in terms of money or sensations or to please the masses."

Rather than to explain what he is working towards, he has preferred to describe why he started making these films. At the age of 19 he was preparing a talk on Shakespeare for his school literary society. "I began to analyse the work in a graphic way. On large sheets of drawing paper, along a horizontal line, I put down all the feelings and happenings, scene after scene, in graphic lines and curves. The lines and curves showed the dramatic development of the whole work and the emotional moods very clearly.... The drawings needed movement, the same speed and tempo as the feeling originally possessed.... To do this, the motion picture film was a welcome medium."

For further information please communicate with the Film Library.