

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

No. 64A
FOR RELEASE:
July 3, 1968

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HAND-PICKED FILMS CHARACTERIZE MUSEUM'S WEEKLY SHOWINGS

The Museum of Modern Art, continuing its Wednesday at Noon Series of shorts, will present in the month of July a variety of nine short subjects, as well as a sixty minute dramatic documentary selected by Margareta Akermark, Associate Director of the Department of Film. Miss Akermark conducts the weekly series that consists for the most part of contemporary themes given an original treatment by new filmmakers.

"Ever since the Wednesday Showings began two years ago, the number of filmmakers who are beating a path to the Museum's Film Department is constantly increasing," Miss Akermark reported. "They are anxious to participate in the series," she said, "because the Museum affords them a showcase. Some of them have never before seen a film of theirs on a large screen."

The audience at the Museum's Wednesday noon-time showings, according to the Associate Director, is extremely vocal. It includes corporate executives planning to make film presentations, television producers and Madison Avenue advertising agency people on the lookout for new talent. "There is always, in addition," she stated, "the students and friends of filmmakers."

The sixty minute documentary to be introduced this month on July 10, "Never Take a Backward Step," was produced by the National Film Board of Canada, and is described "as the way to live in a money-minded age." The film profiles Lord Thomson of Fleet, born Ray Thomson of Toronto, whose generosities and frugalities are equally exposed in this candid film dissection. It has not been shown theatrically.

The program, starting today, July 3, has "Legend of the Paramo," written and produced by Gabriela Samper. It tells of a 12-year-old boy's fantasized trip over an impassable glacial mountain in Columbia, peopled by the phantoms of his imagination, in tormenting cold, in a test of his personal endurance. This film, a Contemporary McGraw Hill release, has not yet been shown in theatres here.

"El Santero" from the Museum's own archive is also on the first program. Its central character is a wood carving saint maker who confronts the machine-made modern world, when a factory for producing plastic saints offers him competition. The film was made in Puerto Rico in 1957.

"Ishi in Two Worlds," which completes the July 3 program, gives the story of the last survivor of the Yahi tribe, which virtually ended in 1911. Alone Ishi lives the life of his forebears until he goes to San Francisco, where his final years are spent among sympathetic friends. This is also a Contemporary McGraw Hill release not yet shown in theatres and was directed by Richard C. Tompkins in 1967.

The films shown in July come from the Far East, Latin America, South America, Europe and Canada. The United States is also represented by student films, such as "The Other World of R. Patrick Sullivan," by Mark Sadan, a graduate student at New York University. R. Patrick Sullivan is an actor, whose avocation is painting, and the film deals with his life as an artist. It will be shown Wednesday, July 24th, with "Toys," produced and directed by Grant Munro for the National Film Board of Canada. "Toys" draws a parallel between the games children play and the games of war. On the same program will be "Jukoka," in which a Canadian adapts the Japanese way of life and trains under the great Japanese fighter Kimura. This film is being released by Contemporary McGraw Hill.

The last Wednesday of the month, July 31st, will be devoted to American student films. John Howard from Grinnell College made "Rose of Castile" in an abandoned Iowa railroad yard, where a boy and girl meet against the criss-crossed background of the tracks. "Hey Little One," filmed by Jerry Cotts of New York University, covers the youngest element among Greenwich Village habitués. "How Do You Like the Bowery?" in the style of cinema verite, was also made by two New York University students, Dan Hallas and Allen Raymond. "Offon," which refers to the television set, is an experiment both in black and white and in color, made by Scott Bartlett at San Francisco State College. It has live actors against abstract backgrounds, and avant-garde music. Bartlett, like many of the other young, independent filmmakers, is working on a feature production.

By offering a single public viewing, the Museum services the filmmaker, Associate Film Director, Miss Akermark points out. The filmmaker can judge an audience reaction, while professionals and producers can evaluate the filmmaker. The exposure of new filmmakers, domestic and foreign, also provides an opportunity to survey the innovations that are now being undertaken in the world of film.

"The Museum wants to encourage the new filmmaker, working without adequate capital, and at the same time, it wants to make known particularly to the industry, those efforts that warrant attention and give evidence of promising talent."

Further information and photographs are available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York 10019, 245-3200.