

The Museum of Modern Art

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"THE CLAW" - A MOTION PICTURE FABLE OF URBANIA
DEBUTS AT MUSEUM

"The Claw," a motion picture comment on the machine, written and directed by Manfred Kirchheimer, will have its debut at The Museum of Modern Art on the opening day of the exhibition, "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age," Wednesday, November 27. There will be one showing at noon of this thirty-minute lyrical poem called a fable of urbania.

The Machine in Film programs were selected by Margareta Akermark, Associate Director of the Film Department. Each Wednesday at noon throughout the run of the exhibition (February 9) films reflecting various attitudes toward the mechanical age will be shown.

The initial film, "The Claw," deals with those unseen forces its creator, Kirchheimer, calls "the visionaries," builders who are less interested in the human result of what they make than they are in the process itself. The process, or thing, in this instance, is building - the creating of an ever greater monumentality. "The builders wreck everything in their willful mania to build and civilize," said Mr. Kirchheimer.

"The Claw" is a terrifying machine that reduces buildings to rubble. "It need only to graze a wall and six storeys fall." In its wake it takes the stone sculptures and ornaments found on some of the older buildings in the city. These stone faces slowly crumble to the chant: "must what is done be undone - done and undone - done and redone."

Manfred Kirchheimer who filmed "The Claw" has worked as director,

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cameraman and editor for the past 15 years. Among his films are "The Sun and Richard Lippold;" "Colossus on the River;" "Haiku;" "Essay on Death;" "In Search of Hart Crane," and "Marked for Failure." He was also co-writer and film editor on the documentary "Open Heart Surgery."

On the same program with "The Claw," the Museum will present other films reflecting the influence of the machine: "Daybreak Express" (1954) by D.A. Pennebaker; "Skyscraper," directed by Willard Van Dyke and Shirley Clarke (1958); "Breaking it Up at the Museum," a filmic version by D.A. Pennebaker of Tinguely's Homage to New York, the self-destroying machine which destroyed itself March 17, 1960 in the Museum's Sculpture Garden.

The following Wednesday at noon, December 4, the Machine in Film program, made available through the courtesy of the National Film Board of Canada, will consist of:

"Pen Point Percussions & Loops" by Norman McLaren. 1951 (9 min.)

"Day After Day" Directed and edited by Clement Perron. 1962 (28 min.)

"Paul Tomkowicz - Switchman" Directed by Roman Kroitor. 1954 (10 min.)

"Romance of Transportation" with Animation by Wolf Koenig and Robert Verall. 1953 (10 min.)

This program and the films chosen to follow, Miss Akermark pointed out, will complement the Museum's exhibition of paintings, sculpture constructions, drawings and prints that manifest modern living with the machine. The film-maker reveals an awareness of the machine both as an encroachment on society and as an enhancement and as a form of excitement.

On December 11 the Wednesday at noon program will include:

"La Naissance du Cinema" (1947)

Directed by R. Leenhardt.

A history of the pre-screen scientific developments, and advances in animation techniques. Commentary in French. 40 min.

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"Onesime Horloger" (1912) by Jean Durand. 8 min.

"Rontgenstrahlem" (Moving X-Rays) (1937)

Directed by Martin Rikli.

The discovery of X-rays by Rontgen and how they are generated and used for medical purposes in engineering and in the treatment of works of art. Commentary in German. 15 min.

The next Wednesday, December 18, the film program at noon will have additional machine inspired films. The program follows:

"The Conquest of the Pole" (1912)

by Georges Melies. 18 min.

"Possibilities of War in the Air" (1909)

Directed by Charles Urban for the Warwick Trading Company, London 6 min.

"The Birdmen" (1967)

Produced by the Rank Organization for the Royal Aeronautical Society in England. 10 min

"The Airscrew" (1940)

Produced by Arthur Elton for the Shell Oil Company. 21 min.

"Rhythm" (1957)

A one-minute commercial made by Len Lye for the Chrysler Corporation.

On January 1st a special holiday program, suitable for families, was chosen by Miss Akermark. The Program includes:

"Calder's Circus" (1955)

Produced by Carlos Vilardebo.

Photographed by Andre Bac. Alexander Calder giving a performance of his famous miniature circus to friends in France. 19 min.

"Steamboat Willie" (1928)

by Walt Disney. 8 min.

"Rail" (1967)

Produced by Edgar Anstey for British Railways, Directed by G. Jones, music by W. Josephs. 14 min.

"Mickey's Choo-choo" (1929) by Walt Disney. 8 min.

"Toccat for Toy Trains" (1957)

by Ray and Charles Eames. Music by Elmer Bernstein. 14 min.

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. 245-3200.