

The Museum of Modern Art

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DONALD RICHIE NAMED VISITING FILM CURATOR AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART APPOINTED BY WILLARD VAN DYKE, DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM

A new policy of inviting guest film curators to The Museum of Modern Art was announced today by Willard Van Dyke, Director of the Department of Film. Mr. Van Dyke named Donald Richie as the first curatorial appointment of this kind, and he will assume his duties immediately for a period of one year. Mr. Richie is an author, film critic and writer, a film-maker, and a recognized authority on Japanese film.

The idea of having a visiting curator in the Department of Film, said Van Dyke, emanates from the university system. We expect in this way to enhance our collection of films from the Far East and other countries, in addition to enlarging our research material and developing film programs for international exchange.

Richie, the first such appointment made by Van Dyke, has lived in Japan since 1954, served as correspondent there for Variety, and also acted as film critic for The Japan Times. He has written three film books "The Films of Akira Kurosawa," "The Japanese Movie, an Illustrated History," and "The Japanese Film," the latter co-authored with Joseph L. Anderson. Besides these works, Richie has made dozens of experimental films and several of feature length. "War Games," made with a cast of fourteen children, was written, directed and photographed by Richie. He also edited the picture and is responsible for its musical score. The film won an award at the Melbourne Film Festival.

"A Couple" is another film written, directed and edited by Richie, and filmed in Tokyo. It tells of the love affair between an older foreign woman and a younger Japanese man, and employs the stream of consciousness technique found in "Last Year at Marienbad" and other Alain Resnais films.

A more recent film of Richie's is "Nozoki Monogatari," described as "a comedy about voyeurism and its consequences, with pop music, taken from 'The Hollies,' filmed in the parks and streets of Tokyo."

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Richie has also written two novels, translated Kabuki plays, edited the letters from Japan of Rudyard Kipling and Henry Adams, and written a travel book on "The Land and People of Japan." He is also the author of an art book, "The Erotic Gods," and has compiled a book of 19th-century humor because of his interest in American literature. He has lectured on American literature at Waseda University (Tokyo), and when the Kabuki toured this country in 1960, he was its narrator and translator.

Born in Ohio in 1924, Richie attended Antioch College for one year and then entered the U.S. Maritime Service, serving in the Pacific for four years. He was film critic of the Pacific Stars and Stripes. In 1949 he returned to the States to complete his education at Columbia University, graduating in 1954. During his undergraduate years he experimented with abstract, fantasy, documentary and animated film. He made his first film at the age of 17.

Richie has programmed several retrospective film showings at festivals around the world: the Mizoguchi Retrospective at Cannes; the Kurosawa Retrospective at Berlin; the Japanese Film Show at New York's Museum of Modern Art; the Ozu Retrospective Tour of Europe; the Japan Underground Cinema Tour of America; and the American Experimental Cinema Tour of India.

Mr. Richie will program special film showings for the Museum while he is in the States, said Mr. Van Dyke, who also pointed out that a retrospective program of American films from the Museum collection, will be selected by Mr. Richie to be shown in Japan next year when the new wing of Tokyo's Museum of Modern Art opens.

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.