

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
December 1990

SELECTIONS FROM A HISTORY OF AMERICAN CINEMA: THE SILENT YEARS

December 14, 1990 - January 15, 1991

An exhibition of American silent films opens at The Museum of Modern Art on December 14, 1990, in conjunction with the publication of a multi-volume series, *A History of American Cinema* (Charles Scribner's Sons/Macmillan). The authors of the first three volumes, titled *The Silent Years*, have organized a program of films illustrating the periods covered in their respective works.

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The authors and exhibition organizers, Charles Musser, film historian and filmmaker; Eileen Bowser, curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art; and Richard Kozarski, senior curator, American Museum of the Moving Image, introduce the opening program on December 14 at 6:00 p.m.

In December, the program covered by Charles Musser's Volume 1, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*, presents some of the first films ever made, including Thomas Edison's *Blacksmith Scene* (1893) and Sigmund Lubin's *Beheading a Chinese Prisoner* (1900). The program highlighting Eileen Bowser's Volume 2, *The Transformation of Cinema: 1907-1915*, features D.W. Griffith's Biograph shorts, Civil War films, and Keystone/Mack Sennett shorts. In January, Richard Kozarski's Volume 3, *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture, 1915-1928*, is highlighted by such silent

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classics as D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916), Charles Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* (1925), and F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927).

The exhibition was produced in cooperation with the American Federation of the Arts, the International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House, and the Library of Congress.

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For complete schedule, further information or film stills, contact Sarah Eaton, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.