

The Museum of Modern Art

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Ten films produced by Sam Spiegel between 1942 and 1962 will be screened by The Museum of Modern Art Film Library from February 20 through March 12. Film showings are daily in the Museum Auditorium: Sunday through Friday at 2 and 5:30 p.m., Thursdays again at 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays at 11:30 a.m., 3 and 5:30 p.m.; unless otherwise noted. (Program attached)

The films to be shown were made in the United States by such outstanding directors as Julien Duvivier, John Huston, Elia Kazan, David Lean, Joseph Losey, and Orson Welles. Sam Spiegel has made his films slowly and chosen subjects in which he has a personal interest. His productions are melodramas, thrillers, and adventures, with usually a serious level in which some comment is made on the nature and condition of man.

TALES OF MANHATTAN, an Omnibus film of 1942, is comprised of half a dozen separate episodes connected by the riches-to-rags story of an expensive tailcoat, from penthouse to sharecroppers' home, and the effect of the coat on the various individuals who happen to find it in their possession. Duvivier directed the entire films, although each episode has its own distinguished writers, including Ben Hecht and Ferenc Molnar, and a cast of famed actors. The last story, with its all-Negro cast, although it caused some controversy 20 years ago, was approved by the NAACP as a more honest picture of the southern rural Negro than usually had come out of Hollywood.

WE WERE STRANGERS (1949), a curiously ironic film today, is a graphic melodrama of the 1933 Cuban revolution against corrupt dictatorship. It was fashioned by John Huston from an episode in Robert Sylvester's "Rough Sketch" into one of the finest examples of directorial suspense and psychological ferment in modern motion picture realism.

THE AFRICAN QUEEN (1951), with a script by John Huston and the late James Agee, based on the C. S. Forester novel about a private incident of war against the Germans in Africa in 1914, stars Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn. Director
(more)

Huston set the story of the endurance and heroism of simple people in a mood of low comedy, which begins by robbing human beings of their natural dignity and ends by making their hardships seem trivial. It is virtually a two-character story about an amusingly ill-matched couple trying to get along in a wilderness emergency.

Among the other films to be shown are ON THE WATERFRONT (1954), Spiegel's outstanding and stirring social document on conditions among New York longshoremen; SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER (1959), based on the Tennessee Williams play; and THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI (1957) and LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (1962), both directed by David Lean.

Sam Spiegel, who was born in Poland in 1903 and educated in Vienna, began his motion picture career in 1930 working for the German branch of Universal making films for European distribution. He became an independent producer of European films in 1937 and came to the United States in 1938. He produced TALES OF MANHATTAN (1942) and THE STRANGER (1946) for RKO, and then organized his own production company in 1948, Horizon Pictures, which produces films for distribution by Columbia and United Artists, among others.

Stills and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Linda Gordon, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. Circle 5-8900.