

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1993

CARTE BLANCHE 1: SELECTED BY PIERRE RISSIENT

October 22 - November 11, 1993

The Museum of Modern Art introduces **CARTE BLANCHE**, an occasional series of film programs selected by guest curators who are experts in various areas of film appreciation and study. For the initial presentation, French cinéaste Pierre Rissient presents works of his choice. On view from October 22 through November 11, 1993, **CARTE BLANCHE 1: SELECTED BY PIERRE RISSIENT** comprises twenty-eight films that Rissient finds significant, including extraordinary works which have not been seen in New York for many years, if at all, and films Rissient helped introduce in Europe.

Rissient is a filmmaker, film-festival advisor, film programmer, and film press strategist who helped establish the critical reputations of filmmakers like Jane Campion, Clint Eastwood, and Chen Kaige. He has also worked to promote the films of directors from the East, such as Lino Brocka, Hou Hsiao Hsien, and King Hu, and to draw attention to such neglected masters of cinema as Mehboob Khan from India and Gregory La Cava from the United States.

CARTE BLANCHE 1 features rarely-seen work by blacklisted American filmmakers, including Joseph Losey's *M* (1951), which opens the program, and John Berry's *He Ran All the Way* (1951), starring John Garfield, and *Tuesday in November* (1945), a short documentary on democracy in a small town. Other highlights include Campion's *Peel* (1986), a short which won the Golden Palm

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award in Cannes, and silent films from Germany, such as Hanns Schwarz's *The Wonderful Lie of Nina Petrowna* (1929) and Fritz Lang's *Harakiri* (1919), based on *Madame Butterfly*.

Pierre Rissient was born in Paris in 1936 and spent the war years with his grandparents in a country village. When he returned to Paris in 1945, he attended the Lycées Carnot and Pasteur while going to film screenings at one of the city's first art-house cinemas.

At a garage managed by his father, Rissient met the film director Henri Decoin and became his assistant. Rissient went on to serve as second assistant director to Claude Chabrol on *Les Cousins* (1959) and first assistant director to Jean-Luc Godard on *Breathless* (1959). On the Avenue MacMahon, he programmed the MacMahon cinema, focusing on the films of his "Four Aces" -- Fritz Lang, Joseph Losey, Otto Preminger, and Raoul Walsh. He also distributed films and shepherded American films, including iconoclast Samuel Fuller's *Shock Corridor* (1963), through their local premieres. Using his press savvy, Rissient helped change critical opinion on Losey's *The Servant* (1963) from negative to enthusiastic before its Paris opening.

As a filmmaker, Rissient wrote and directed two features, *One Night Stand* (1977) and *Cinq et la Peau* (1982), and two short films. In 1992 he completed *Mehboob's Anthology*, a compilation film celebrating the achievements of Mehboob Khan, which is included in the program.

CARTE BLANCHE 1: SELECTED BY PIERRE RISSIENT was organized by Laurence Kardish, curator, Department of Film and Video.

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For further information or film stills, contact Barbara Marshall, film press representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752. No. 59