

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
September 1994

FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION **JEAN RENOIR**

DATES October 22 - November 27, 1994

ORGANIZATION Organized by Laurence Kardish, Curator, Department of Film and Video, The Museum of Modern Art, in association with the Cinémathèque française, Paris, and Interama, New York.

CONTENT A complete retrospective of the extant work of the late Jean Renoir (1894-1979), one of cinema's great masters, is being presented in commemoration of the centenary of his birth. The thirty-seven works in the exhibition include thirty-five films by Renoir; a 1993 BBC documentary about the filmmaker by David Thompson; and the United States premiere of *Un tournage à la campagne* (*Filming A Day in the Country*). Twenty-three of the works by Renoir have been drawn from the Museum's film archives. Many of the remaining titles are from the Cinémathèque française, Paris, and Interama, New York.

The son of Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Jean Renoir's oeuvre presents many problems for critics and scholars. Although some believe that Renoir's work can be divided into periods, others argue that no matter where Renoir worked -- France, the United States, or India -- his films should be viewed as an indivisible whole. However, there is no disagreement about the integrity of Renoir's films; his works are unfailingly humane, psychologically acute, and bursting with visual and aural moments that propel the narratives. The filmmaker's genius lies, in part, in his seemingly effortless ability to represent life in its rich inconstancy.

The program opens with *Une partie de campagne* (*A Day in the Country*), the adaptation of a Guy de Maupassant story that remains one of Renoir's most popular works. Although the filmmaker began shooting this film in 1936, it was not completed and released until 1946. This year, the Cinémathèque française, which stored the negatives, has edited the unused footage, in narrative sequence, into a

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study film. This eighty-minute work, titled *Un tournage à la campagne*, premiered during the Cannes Film Festival's Renoir Centennial in May 1994 and accompanies the screening of *Une partie de campagne* in this program.

Other highlights include a new 35mm print of *La bête humaine* (1938), which previously was only available in the United States in 16mm; and a spectacular Technicolor print of *The River* (1951), made from the original negative.

Additionally featured are Renoir's earliest works -- four silent films starring his wife, Catherine Hesling, made between 1924 and 1928 -- as well as his last film, *Le petit théâtre de Jean Renoir* (*The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir*) (1969). Also shown are *La nuit du carrefour* (1932), described by Jean-Luc Godard as "the best French thriller ever made," and two of Renoir's most famous works, *La grande illusion* (*Grand Illusion*) (1937) and *La règle du jeu* (*The Rules of the Game*) (1939).

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For further information or film stills, contact Christine Dietlin, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9752.