

## The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
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### SCREEN PLAYS: FROM BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD, 1920 - 1966

June 30 - October 3, 1995

A major retrospective of Hollywood films adapted from the Broadway stage opens at The Museum of Modern Art on June 30, 1995. **SCREEN PLAYS: FROM BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD, 1920 - 1966** presents more than 100 films that drew their commercially and critically successful plots and characters, and their talented actors, writers, and directors from Broadway. The series, which continues through October 3, features such Broadway actors as George Arliss, the Barrymores, Shirley Booth, Marlon Brando, Ina Claire, John Garfield, Julie Harris, Helen Hayes, Judy Holliday, the Lunts, Fredric March, Sidney Poitier, Otis Skinner, Laurette Taylor, and Mae West re-creating on film the roles that made them stage legends.

While the relationship between the Broadway musical and the Hollywood musical is well-established, this exhibition spotlights the relationship between the Broadway play and the Hollywood film. Since the beginning of the studio system, Hollywood has sought plays that could be adapted into so-called prestige films, adding a patina of class and sophistication. The retrospective places particular emphasis on films made from plays produced by the Theatre Guild, the Group Theatre, and the Playwrights' Company, since many members of these companies made lasting contributions both on Broadway and in Hollywood.

Highlights of the series include Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne in the only film they made together, *The Guardsman* (Sidney Franklin, 1931; play by Ferenc Molnar); Anna Magnani in the film version of *The Rose Tattoo* (Daniel

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Mann, 1955), the play Tennessee Williams wrote for her (although the part was played by Maureen Stapleton on stage); and Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson, and Jason Robards, Jr. in the uncut version of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* (Sidney Lumet, 1962).

Among the many rediscoveries is the Warner Bros. melodrama *Five Star Final*, the 1931 Mervyn LeRoy film (play by Louis Weitzenkorn) starring Edward G. Robinson. The mystery genre, a staple of the stage during the 1920s, is represented by *The Bat* (Roland West, 1926; play by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Avery Hopwood) and its 1931 remake, *The Bat Whispers*, shown in its original wide-screen version, as well as *The Cat and the Canary* (Paul Leni, 1927; play by John Willard).

Rare screen tests include those of Katharine Hepburn for *The Animal Kingdom* (Edward H. Griffith, 1932; play by Philip Barry), John Barrymore for *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (William Keighley, 1942; play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart), and members of the Group Theatre, including Elia Kazan.

Other finds include the original version of *Holiday* (Edward H. Griffith, 1930; play by Philip Barry), starring Ann Harding and Mary Astor, and *The Greeks Had a Word for Them* (Lowell Sherman, 1932; play by Zoë Akins), with Ina Claire, Joan Blondell, and Madge Evans as goldiggers.

**SCREEN PLAYS: FROM BROADWAY TO HOLLYWOOD, 1920 - 1966**, organized by Joshua Siegel, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Film and Video, and William S. Kenly, a film and theater historian, is made possible with the support of The Billy Rose Foundation and The New York Times Company Foundation.

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For further information, film stills, or a list of video cassettes available for screening, contact Samantha Graham, Film Press Representative, Department of Public Information, 212/708-9752.