

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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Film

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART TO CIRCULATE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILMS

The San Francisco Museum of Art will become the West Coast center for circulating motion pictures from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, beginning September 1954, it was announced in New York and San Francisco yesterday by the Boards of Trustees of both institutions. Under the new agreement, which aims at cutting transportation costs for organizations on the West Coast, 16 mm prints of 34 programs of motion pictures from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art will be circulated by the San Francisco Museum of Art to schools, colleges, universities and film study groups in California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona, Hawaii and Alaska. The films will be available from the San Francisco Museum on exactly the same terms and conditions which govern the use of the Film Library's motion picture collection by educational institutions today.

Films to be deposited with the San Francisco Museum, and made available through it to Western educational institutions and groups, consist of the 34 programs regarded by the Film Library as basic to an understanding of the history of motion pictures. They have been selected from the following circulating series: "A Short Survey of the Film in America"; "Memorable American Films"; "The Film in France"; "The Film in Germany"; "The Work of D.W. Griffith"; "The Russian Film"; "The Films of Douglas Fairbanks"; "Forty Years of American Film Comedy"; and four special short programs, "Great Actresses of the Past"; "Theatrical and Social Dancing in Films"; "Georges Melies"; and "A Short History of Animation." Additional films will be deposited in the San Francisco Museum from time to time.

The decision to ask the San Francisco Museum to be the Film Library's West Coast center was made by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library Advisory Committee, whose members are: Eric Johnston, Chairman; J. Cheever Cowdin, Ned E. Depinet, John Marshall, Jr., Robert Rubin, Jack Cohn, Stanton Griffis, Erwin Panofsky, Spyros Skouras, and Harry M. Warner.

In announcing the new plan, John Hay Whitney, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art and president of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, said:

"When, in 1935, the Museum of Modern Art founded its Film Library, one of our principal purposes was to make it possible for students to gain access to the materials of scholarship in the field of the motion picture, so that the history of

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motion pictures could be studied and enjoyed. In order to do so it was necessary to restore to the screen the recognized motion picture masterworks, together with many films of historic, sociological, or civic interest. By special arrangement with the motion picture industry, the Film Library was permitted to acquire and circulate among educational institutions and study groups programs of films of the past, which now have been shown at more than 2100 institutions, and which have been studied by such eminent practitioners of the art itself as John Houston, Frank Capra, Robert Flaherty, Anatole Litvak, Lillian Gish and many others.

"Today, nineteen years after the Film Library's foundation, a generation of students has grown up who are familiar not only with current films and film-making but with the whole half-century and more of the history of this characteristically American art. The Film Library's circulation of its programs has, however, labored under increasing difficulties in recent years. Since its circulation center is in New York City, the transmission of prints to institutions in the Far West has occupied an undue amount of travel time, some prints being for practical purposes out of circulation for more than a month when booked to the West Coast; moreover, shipping expenses from New York to the Pacific Coast have proved prohibitive for some institutions, when added to the rental fee which is charged for Film Library programs in order partially to maintain this service. Accordingly, Miss Margareta Akermark, Circulation Director of the Film Library, travelled to the West Coast early in 1953 to investigate the possibility of arranging for a depository from which the Film Library's basic program could be circulated to institutions in the region. As a result of discussions conducted during her trip, the San Francisco Museum of Art offered to undertake this service, and in the interval the two museums have worked out the agreement which we are announcing today.

"We are particularly happy that the long-standing co-operation between the San Francisco Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in the fields of painting and sculpture is now extended to the field of the youngest of the arts, the motion picture."

Announcing the agreement in San Francisco, Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley, director of the San Francisco Museum of Art, said:

"When the Museum of Modern Art circulating film programs were first shown here at the Museum in 1937, the response was extremely enthusiastic, and we were thus among the first museums in the country to take advantage of the Museum of Modern Art's new services. From that time on we adopted the principle that films have their place in modern art. There is no doubt that showing the Museum of Modern Art's historic films established our own future film activity - such as sponsorship of

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"Art in Cinema" - on a sound foundation and contributed here to the development of the concern for the creative film and for the film of high quality for which the city has become known. After this long association and this recognition of the aid that the Museum of Modern Art Film Library has been to our own growth in film knowledge and experience it is very gratifying for this Museum to embark upon a closer co-operation with that organization. We look forward to aiding our colleagues in the West - film enthusiasts like ourselves - to easier enjoyment of the benefits we have known in our use of the Film Library. In so vast a country such a local depository is a logical development - indeed a practical necessity. We expect to prove its usefulness by increasing the service to old subscribers and extending the same opportunities to new ones because of our proximity and our intimate knowledge of the West."
