

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 58

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RECENT MEXICAN FILMS AT MUSEUM

Fourteen feature films and four shorts reflecting a recent resurgence of originality in the cinema of Mexico will be presented from July 11 through July 29 at The Museum of Modern Art. This cycle, organized by Adrienne Mancía, Associate Curator of Film, is the first substantial sampling of new trends in Mexican film to be shown in New York.

Mexico has a well-established film industry which reached its peak of international prestige during World War II when it was the only Spanish-language film industry receiving Allied support. Since that time, stiffer international competition, trade union exclusivity which kept new talent out of the industry, and monopolistic practices of producers led to a decline in quality and quantity.

In recent years a number of filmmakers have attempted, with the increasing encouragement of government, to revitalize the film industry. "These filmmakers vary in age and background, and their films differ widely in style and theme," according to Adrienne Mancía. "They are united in the sense that they are attempting to give a new authenticity to Mexican productions, to open up the industry to fresh themes, to look more closely and coolly at their own roots and traditions, to arouse, hopefully, international interest in a cinema that is growing in stature thanks to their efforts."

In the forefront of these filmmakers is Arturo Ripstein, 30-year-old son of a film producer. Three features and two shorts by Ripstein are included in the program. One of these, "Castle of Purity," based on the true story of a man who kept his family locked in their home for 18 years, was hailed by The New York Times as "extraordinary and haunting....a remarkable film" when it was

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shown at the Museum in its New Directors/ New Films series in April. Ripstein's most recent film, "Holy Office" (1974), just shown at the Cannes Film Festival, and an earlier picture, "The Children's Hour" (1969) are also included in the program.

Another leading filmmaker is Luis Alcoriza, who emigrated from Spain to Mexico at the end of the Spanish Civil War. Alcoriza began his cinema career as an actor in 1940 and turned to screenwriting in 1946, after which he collaborated with Luis Bunuel on a number of films. His film "The Mexican Way" (1971) is set at the finish line of an automobile race, where a group of people settle for the night while waiting for the conclusion of the event. This amusing comedy of manners is the first Mexican film to examine a particular cross-section of Mexican society, lower-middle-class tradespeople and small shopkeepers, whose varied behavior is laid bare during a night of eating, drinking and aimless flirtation.

Three documentaries are included in the program. "Living on Credit" studies the living conditions of peasants in the hemp-producing regions of the Yucatan, where hard work for little pay produces a marketless product which rots in warehouses. "Against Reason and By Force," filmed in Chile immediately after the overthrow of the Allende government, includes an interview with the leader of the junta, rare footage of the funeral of poet Pablo Neruda, and dramatic material revealing the anger and anguish of Allende's supporters. "The Shout" concerns the student protests in Mexico that began shortly before the 1968 Olympic games and in which many were killed.

Other pictures in the program are "Change," Alfredo Joskowicz' portrayal of the uneasiness of young Mexicans who have not found their society responsive to their needs and desires; "Nest of Virgins," by Alberto Isaac, the story of a

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pretended holy man and miracle-maker of the 1920s; "The Barefoot Eagle," directed and written by and starring Alfonso Arau, a comedy depicting an exploitative social order; Alberto Bojorquez' "Months and Days," the story of a 16-year-old woman who leaves her home in search of freedom and independence; Gustavo Alatrisme's "Victorino," about a poor ranchero who gets involved in a robbery, becomes wealthy, but uses his money for the benefit of the people of his village; "Take It as You Want It," a fictional response to the events of 1968 made by Carlos Gonzalez Morantes, a student of the University Film School; and "Reed: Insurgent Mexico," a portrait of the American journalist John Reed, author of "Ten Days That Shook the World," and his radicalizing experiences in Mexico during the revolution there.

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* SCREENING NOTICE -- All screenings, 4th fl. projection room, 21 W. 53 St. *

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* The Children's Hour. (65 min.) Monday, July 8, 2 pm and Wed, July 10, 4:15 pm *

* Holy Office. (131 min.) Monday, July 8, 3:15 pm and Wed, July 10, 2 pm *

* Nest of Virgins. (99 min.) Tuesday, July 9, 2 pm *

* Living on Credit. (84 min.) Tuesday, July 9, 4 pm *

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The schedule of New Mexican Cinema follows; all films in Spanish with English subtitles unless otherwise indicated.

Nest of Virgins. 1972. By Alberto Isaac. With Alfonso Arau. 99 min.
Thur, July 11, 8:00 and Sat, July 13, 3:00

Change. 1971. By Alfredo Joskowicz. 95 min.
Fri, July 12, 2:00 and Thur, July 18, 5:30

Reed: Insurgent Mexico. 1971. By Paul Leduc. Based on the book by John Reed. 110 min.
Sat, July 13, 5:30 and Mon, July 29, 2:00

Living on Credit. 1969. By Gustavo Alatrisme. With the community of Citikabchen, Yucatan. 84 min. Sun, July 14, 5:30 and Thur, July 18, 8:00

Castle of Purity. 1972. By Arturo Ripstein. With Claudio Brook. 114 min.
Mon, July 15, 2:00

The Children's Hour. 1969. By Arturo Ripstein. 64 min.
Mon, July 15, 5:30 and Thur, July 25, 5:30

The Barefoot Eagle. 1967. By and with Alfonso Arau. 93 min.
Tues, July 16, 5:30 and Sat, July 27, 3:00

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Short films: Frida Kahlo, 1970, by Marcela Fernandez Violante, 13 min; Beauty, 1970, by Arturo Ripstein, 15 min; Exorcismos, 1971, by Arturo Ripstein, 10 min; Ayautla, 1972, by Jose Roviroza Macias, 10 min.
 Wed, July 17, noon; Thur, July 18, 2:00; Wed, July 24, noon; Thur, July 25, 2:00
The Shout. 1968. By Leobardo Lopez Aretche. Documentary by students of the University Center of Cinematographic Studies. 120 min.
 Wed, July 17, 2:00 and Mon, July 22, 2:00
Months and Days. 1971. By Alberto Bojorquez. 95 min.
 Fri, July 19, 2:00 and Sat, July 27, 5:30
The Mexican Way. 1971. By Luis Alcoriza. 104 min.
 Sat, July 20, 3:00 and Sun, July 28, 5:30
Holy Office. 1974. By Arturo Ripstein. With Claudio Brook, Daina Bracho. 131 min.
 Sun, July 21, 5:30 and Thur, July 25, 8:00
Take It as You Want It. 1969. By Carlos Gonzalez Morantes. 85 min.
 Mon, July 22, 5:30
Victorino. 1973. By Gustavo Alatriste. No English subtitles. 85 min.
 Tues, July 23, 5:30 and Fri, July 26, 2:00
Against Reason and by Force. 1973. By Carlos Ortiz Tejeda. Documentary on Chile. French subtitles. 50 min.
 Wed, July 24, 2:00 and Mon, July 29, 5:30

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 Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Special Projects Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019.
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