

The Museum of Modern Art

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FELIX THE CAT



Felix the Cat and his creator Otto Messmer will be honored with two special programs of their cartoons at The Museum of Modern Art on Sunday, April 25 at noon and 3:00 p.m. Messmer will be present at the 3:00 screening. The programs will be repeated on Monday, April 26 and Tuesday, April 27 at noon.

Felix the Cat, created in 1921, became one of the most popular screen figures of his time, rivaled only by Chaplin, and it has been estimated that at one time three quarters of the world population either had seen him or knew him by name. His creator, however, has remained virtually unknown. The rights to the character belonged to Pat Sullivan, owner of the studio where Felix was created, and Sullivan's name alone appeared on every Felix film. Only now, with the Museum's special programs and another running from April 20 through April 25 at The Whitney Museum of American Art, is Otto Messmer finally beginning to receive the recognition he deserves. Messmer is 83 and lives in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Among the films which will be shown in the Museum's program are "Felix in Comicalamities," "Felix Woos Whoopee," and "Felix Dopes It Out." The two 70-minute programs have been selected by Mark Langer. All showings will be accompanied by piano music by William Perry.

The liveliness and unique humor of the Felix cartoons have been recognized and appreciated ever since he first appeared. Felix was one of the first cartoons whose appeal was based not only on its gags, but on a continuing development of its main character. Marcel Brion of the Academie Francaise wrote of Felix in 1928, "He has escaped the reality of the cat; he is made up of an extraordinary personality."

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