

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## JAPANESE ANIMATORS ON VIEW IN SPECIAL 3 DAY SHOW

The Museum of Modern Art will present a unique three-day program devoted to Japanese animated films never before seen in the United States on Thursday, January 6, Friday, January 7, and Saturday, January 8. The program consists of thirteen animated films that were presented at the International Festival of Animation at Annecy, France, and features three leading exponents of the art of animation in Japan: Yasuji Murata, represented by six films made between 1924 and 1929; seven works by Noburo Ofuji, one as recent as 1956; and several others by Wagoro Arai, a former dentist in a small town, who made animation his hobby until his work was given professional recognition.

This program of pioneer Japanese film animators was organized by Adrienne Mancina, Associate Curator in the Department of Film, with the cooperation of the National Film Center in Tokyo, the Japan Film Library Council, and the Japan Society in New York. The program, which presents an important area in the history and development of animation, will travel to many institutions in the United States and Canada after its New York showing.

The first animated Japanese film appeared around 1913. By the '20s, animation in Japan had become the "eighth art," subject to two major influences; Japanese prints and American cartoons. Most of the Japanese who worked in the medium were then considered "animalists" and the films they made were frequently peopled by monkeys. Monkeys, in fact, even play a role in "Octopus Bone" made by Murata in 1927, though in 1928, intrigued by mischevious frogs, Murata made the prize-winning "A Frog is a Frog" and in 1929 he created "The Two Worlds" a Japanese version of La Fontaines' "The Cicada and the Ant." In his films Murata worked with monkeys, pigs, bats, and ducks; no animal was too insignificant to be within his artistic domain.

Also represented on the program is Noburo Ofuji, who entered silent films

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