

# The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



PRESS SCREENINGS

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## MEXICAN FILMS BY FERNANDO DE FUENTES TO BE SCREENED AT THE MODERN

15 films by FERNANDO DE FUENTES (1894-1958), Mexico's most important and influential director of the 1930's and 1940's, will be screened at The Museum of Modern Art beginning Thursday, September 13 and running through Thursday, October 4, 1979. This marks the first exhibition in an English-speaking country of the work of de Fuentes who is almost unknown outside Mexico.

The films which will be shown with English subtitles were selected by Adrienne Mancía, Curator of Film, and are presented in cooperation with the Cineteca Nacional of Mexico.

"De Fuentes embraced classical film genres," explains Adrienne Mancía, "but his filmography reveals that he also initiated and refined other genres that were important to the development of Mexican cinema: the drama of the 1910 Revolution, the family melodrama, rural comedy, the horror film. He was also interested in adapting literature to the screen and was fascinated by the theme of the 'femme fatale'. Examples of these will be seen in this presentation."

"De Fuentes' most ambitious work," she continues, "is his early trilogy set against the background of the Mexican revolution: PRISONER NO. 13 (1933), EL COMPADRE MENDOZA (1933), and LET'S GO WITH PANCHO VILLA (1935). His emphasis is not on the Revolution itself but on the individual dramas set in motion by the turbulent events of the times." EL COMPADRE MENDOZA, considered his masterwork, offers sober moral and psychological perspective to the drama of the Revolution. The film was cited by noted film theorist and historian, Georges Sadoul, as "one of the best Mexican films during the years 1932 to 1942, a rich period in Mexican cinema."

De Fuentes established María Félix as a star in DONA BARBARA (1943); teamed Dolores del Río and Arturo de Córdova in JUNGLE FIRE (1945);

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brought Tito Guízar into his most charming performance in ALLA EN EL RANCHO GRANDE (1936); and worked with another popular Mexican singer Jorge Negrete, in THAT'S HOW THEY LOVE IN JALISCO (1942). His THE WOMEN COMMAND (1938) is said to be strangely similar to Renoir's LA CHIENNE (1931) and Lange's SCARLET STREET (1945). De Fuentes also worked with the great art director Edward Fitzgerald and the great Mexican cinematographers Gabriel Figueroa and Alex Phillips.

Film showings are free to the public with Museum admission or membership. The film program is made possible in part by public funds from The New York State Council on the Arts and by a grant from The National Endowment for the Arts.

The de Fuentes film schedule is attached.

8-29-79

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For additional biographical information, film notes and press screenings, contact Earl Hatleberg, (212) 956-7294, The Department of Public Information, Luisa Kreisberg, Director. The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York, 10019