

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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New Acquisitions from MoMA's Circulating Film Library:

For Immediate Release
September 1985

HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS
September 19 - October 10, 1985

The Museum of Modern Art's Circulating Film Library is launching its national distribution of **HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS**, a series of twelve documentary films made between 1972 and 1975 in the People's Republic of China by Joris Ivens and Marceline Loridan, with screenings from September 19 to October 10. This impressive historical document, which received its American premiere at the Museum in 1978, will be presented as part of **WHAT'S HAPPENING?**, an ongoing program of films of social and political relevance. The program will be held in the Museum's Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2 (complete schedule of films attached).

Shot during what turned out to be the last days of the Cultural Revolution, the series is a record of a unique period in a society based on the ideals of the collective and communal life. Given permission to film whatever they wanted in their attempt to record the Chinese people "as they see themselves," the filmmakers and their Chinese crew focused on the lives of ordinary people with a particular interest in the role of women in the new society. They edited the vast amount of footage to twelve hours of finished film and added an English commentary spoken in part by the late Joseph Losey.

William Sloan, librarian of the Circulating Film Library and organizer of the program, states, "Joris Ivens is one of the giants of documentary filmmaking. He has directed films concerning social and political issues for more than half a century. In 1972 when most people his age were thinking of retirement (he was then seventy-four years old), he began making **HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS**. This series is the magnum opus of Ivens's long career. Although the political climate has certainly changed in the last decade, much of the China portrayed in the films is similar to the China of today."

Ivens's connection with China began in 1938, when he made 400 Million. At that time he established a relationship with Chou En-Lai, who invited him back to China in 1958. During the 1960s and 1970s Ivens and Loridan visited China several more times, and the idea of making a film gradually emerged. When Chou En-Lai expressed interest in the project, **HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS** was begun.

The title of this series is adapted from the ancient fable retold by Mao Zedong of "The Foolish Old Man (Yukong) Who Removed the Mountains." Like Mao's fable, **HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS** concerns itself with the performance of an impossible task: the removal of the dead weights of imperialism and feudalism by the people of China.

Schedule for HOW YUKONG MOVED THE MOUNTAINS at The Museum of Modern Art,
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2:

Thursday, September 19, at 3:00 and 6:30 p.m.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE PEKING CIRCUS. Reveals the skill of the circus's acrobats. 16 minutes.

THE DRUGSTORE. An exploration of an experimental Shanghai pharmacy, where worker-community management is being established. 81 minutes.

Thursday, September 26, at 3:00 and 6:30 p.m.

THE FOOTBALL INCIDENT. A study of human interaction between a teacher and a disruptive student. 20 minutes.

AN ARMY CAMP. A look at the People's Liberation Army in Nanking and the communal spirit of its daily activities. 57 minutes.

Saturday, September 28, at 2:30 and 5:30 p.m.

THE FISHING VILLAGE. The lifestyle of a small coastal village in Shantung province. 102 minutes.

Sunday, September 29, at 2:30 and 5:30 p.m.

A WOMAN, A FAMILY. The working and family life of Kao Shu-lan, a welder and union official at a locomotive factory. 108 minutes.

Monday, September 30, at 3:00 and 6:30 p.m.

THE GENERATOR FACTORY. An in-depth account of worker-management relations at a Shanghai factory. 129 minutes.

Thursday, October 3, at 3:00 and 6:30 p.m.

PROFESSOR TCHIEN. The story of a university physics professor who was criticized by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. 13 minutes.

TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS. A film about Chinese myths and crafts and how they are passed from one generation to the next. 15 minutes.

THE OILFIELDS. A record of young workers who have volunteered to drill oil in a remote northern steppe region. 87 minutes.

Thursday, October 10, at 3:00 and 6:30 p.m.

REHEARSAL AT THE PEKING OPERA. Art, culture, and politics come together at the world-famous opera. 32 minutes.

IMPRESSIONS OF A CITY (SHANGHAI). A portrait of China's largest city. 60 minutes.

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The films may be rented by contacting the Circulating Film Library, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019; 212/708-9530.

For further press information and photographic materials contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art 212/708-9752.