

The Museum of Modern Art

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SALUTE TO THE CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, MUSEE DU CINEMA

*Thirty-Five Rarely Seen Films From the Renowned Archive,
This Year Celebrating Its Sixtieth Anniversary,
Including Lost Works by Frank Capra, King Vidor, and Robert Bresson*

**October 3–29, 1996
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1**

On the sixtieth anniversary of one of world cinema's most venerated institutions, The Museum of Modern Art presents **SALUTE TO THE CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, MUSEE DU CINEMA**, an extraordinary retrospective of thirty-five rarely seen French, American, and German films from the Cinémathèque collection.

The series, which runs from October 3 through October 29, features restored prints of fiction and nonfiction films by such acclaimed directors as Frank Capra, Robert Bresson, King Vidor, William Dieterle, Germaine Dulac, and Max Ophuls, among others—many of them films that were previously thought lost.

Jean Saint-Geours, President, and Dominique Païni, Director, of the Cinémathèque will introduce the opening night screening, the American premiere of the restored version of Frank Capra's *The Matinee Idol* (1928), a charming comedy/melodrama not seen in New York since its original release nearly seventy years ago.

Other rediscovered treasures in the series—in some cases legendary works that cinephiles have waited their whole lives to see—include Robert Bresson's first film, the comedy *Les Affaires Publiques* (1934); Georges Franju's first work, *Le Métro* (1930), a short film co-directed

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by Henri Langlois; a striking silent work, *Le Diable dans la Ville* (1924), by the incomparable Germaine Dulac; King Vidor's *The Family Honor* (1920), a melodrama set in the Deep South; Max Ophuls's *Yoshiwara* (1937); and Frank Borzage's *The River* (1928).

The series also includes three unusual recent films: *Les Mauvaises Fréquentations* (1967), directed by Jean Eustache and starring Jean-Pierre Léaud; *La Cicatrice Intérieure* (1971) by Philippe Garrel, featuring Nico; and *Préambule au Cinématographe*, a Cinémathèque production on the motion picture pioneer Etienne-Jules Marey.

Among the other celebrated filmmakers in the series are the French directors Sacha Guitry, Anatole Litvak, Jean Rouch, Jean Epstein, and Maurice Tourneur; Americans Alan Hale, William S. Hart, and Mitchell Leisen; and the German directors G. W. Pabst, Willy Otto Zielke, Richard Oswald, and William Dieterle.

One of the earliest associations dedicated to the protection and preservation of film, the Cinémathèque Française was founded in Paris in September 1936. Under Henri Langlois, the institution's director from its inception until his death in 1977, the Cinémathèque grew into one of the world's great film archives, developing an ambitious screening program that, particularly in the postwar era, influenced countless filmmakers and critics.

The Cinémathèque owes a significant part of its mythic status to Langlois, a larger-than-life figure who combined a prescient understanding of the need for film preservation and an enduring passion for world cinema. The institution has lost none of its intelligence and enthusiasm since Langlois's death and its continuing work in the areas of preservation and restoration, for example, remain exemplary and inspiring.

SALUTE TO THE CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, MUSEE DU CINEMA

acknowledges these contributions to cinema culture and points up the longstanding collaborative

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relationship between the Cinémathèque and The Museum of Modern Art. Along with the British Film Institute and the Reichsfilmarchiv, they were the founding members of FIAF (Fédération internationale des archives du film). Founded in 1938, FIAF is now a global consortium dedicated to the preservation and protection of film and film history.

Including restored prints of rare American and German as well as French films, this landmark series also recognizes the Cinémathèque's firm commitment to the restoration and preservation of orphaned and lost films, regardless of their country of origin—a position that has sparked some controversy in France.

Today the Cinémathèque française's film archive holds 23,000 titles and is engaged in an active preservation program. The Cinémathèque presents more than 1,200 screenings each year, as well as Cinémemoire, an annual festival of rediscovered and restored films. It also publishes books, catalogues, and a biannual magazine devoted to film aesthetics, and is responsible for the operation and administration of the Musée du cinéma, a spectacular collection of film paraphernalia.

SALUTE TO THE CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, MUSEE DU CINEMA is sponsored by Société Générale, with support from the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York. The Department of Film and Video is also grateful to Bernard Martinand and Claudine Kaufmann of the Cinémathèque française's film archive for their invaluable advice and assistance. The exhibition was organized by Dominique Païni, Director of the Cinémathèque française, and Laurence Kardish, Curator and Coordinator of Film Exhibitions, Department of Film and Video, The Museum of Modern Art.

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YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO PRESS SCREENINGS FOR

SALUTE TO THE CINEMATHEQUE FRANCAISE, MUSEE DU CINEMA

PRESS SCREENINGS WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

IN THE WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

This extraordinary series, which runs October 3-29, salutes the Cinémathèque française on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary by presenting thirty-five rarely seen French, American, and German films from the venerated archive. The opening night films (October 3) will be introduced by Jean Saint-Geours, president, and Dominique Païni, director, of the Cinémathèque.

Press Screenings: Wednesday, September 18

10:00 a.m. *The Matinee Idol*. 1928. USA. Frank Capra. With Bessie Love, Johnnie Walker.

French intertitles, with live translation. 65 min. Lost until recently, this engaging comedy/melodrama was described by *Variety* on release as "a picture a good organist can have a circus with." Bessie Love shines as the ingenue whose heart is broken.

11:15 a.m. *Le Métro*. 1930. France. Georges Franju, Henri Langlois. 8 min. Franju's first—it was fifteen years before he made another—and Langlois's only.

11:25 a.m. *Les Affaires Publiques*. 1934. France. Robert Bresson. In French, synopsis provided. 24 min. Bresson's first film, extremely rare, and a zany comedy to boot.

11:50 a.m. *The Family Honor*. 1920. USA. King Vidor. With Florence Vidor, Roscoe Karns. Tinted Print. French intertitles, with live translation. 70 min. Considered lost until recently, Vidor's sixth film explores the life of a "ruined family" in the American Deep South. A superb melodrama with numerous virtues, not least of which is its treatment of African-American life at the time.

For more information, or to RSVP to these screenings, please call Graham Leggat at 212/708-9752.

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