

The Museum of Modern Art

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A THIRTY-FILM RETROSPECTIVE CELEBRATES ONE OF EARLY HOLLYWOOD'S MOST TALENTED SCREENWRITERS

**Series Highlights Frances Marion's Role as a Central Figure
In an Extensive Community of Creative Women
Working in Hollywood from the Teens through the Forties**

***Frances Marion and Her Circle, Part One*
June 23–July 20, 1997
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1**

One of early Hollywood's most talented and successful screenwriters, Frances Marion worked with many of that period's best-known directors and was a friend and confidante of some of its greatest stars, for whom she wrote key roles. Beginning June 23, The Museum of Modern Art will present *Frances Marion and Her Circle, Part One*, a retrospective of thirty films for which Marion wrote original stories, adaptations, scenarios and intertitles, or screenplays.

(Part Two of this program, which includes short and feature-length silent films by Marion and her female contemporaries, is scheduled to be presented in winter 1997–98.)

The series, which ends July 20, includes classic and rarely seen work by directors such as Frank Borzage, Clarence Brown, George Cukor, Edmund Goulding, George Hill, Henry King, Victor Seastrom, Maurice Tourneur, and King Vidor. Among these are the two films for which Marion won Academy Awards, *The Big House* (1930) and *The Champ* (1931), for story and screenplay, respectively.

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Marion wrote more than 150 produced films from 1916 to 1946, in a range of genres from comedy to melodrama, romantic interlude to gangster and boxing story. As well as penning some of this era's most distinctive works, and enjoying a remarkably long career, she had a knack for making friends with well-known, creative women. Mary Pickford, Marie Dressler, Marion Davies, and Lillian Gish were all members of the Marion circle, and she also wrote scripts for Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, Rudolph Valentino, Ronald Colman, Wallace Beery, and John and Lionel Barrymore. She was well known, in addition, for her collaborations with other writers, including close friend Anita Loos, with whom she co-wrote *Blondie of the Follies* (1932) and *Riffraff* (1935).

"Frances Marion is one of Hollywood's most interesting talents," says Mary Lea Bandy, Chief Curator, Department of Film and Video, who organized the series. "Her beauty could have secured her a career in front of the camera, and she proved adept at directing as well. Instead, Marion found her way as a writer. With clarity and a sharp wit, she shaped original scenarios and adapted novels, collaborating with her beloved actress friends and top directors to create strong, unusual pictures that were as hugely successfully as she was."

Frances Marion and Her Circle, Part One is made possible with the generous support of Ira Resnick. Special thanks to Cari Beauchamp, author of *Without Lying Down: Frances Marion and the Powerful Women of Early Hollywood* (Scribner, 1997), and to The Library of Congress, UCLA Film and Television Archive, and Warner Bros./Turner Entertainment.

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For photos or for more information, please call Graham Leggat at 212/708-9752. For more information on other Museum programs, visit our Web site at www.moma.org.

You are cordially invited to press screenings for

Frances Marion and Her Circle, Part One

Monday, June 9

The Museum of Modern Art

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

- 11:00 *The Wind*. 1928. USA. Victor Seastrom. Scenario by Frances Marion; based on Dorothy Scarborough's novel. With Lillian Gish, Lars Hanson, Montagu Love. Courtesy Turner Entertainment. Silent. 88 min. A masterpiece of the silent era, this engaging and moving melodrama is one of Gish's finest roles.
- 12:30 *Dinner at Eight*. 1933. USA. George Cukor. Screenplay by Frances Marion and Herman J. Mankiewicz, with dialogue by Donald Ogden Stewart; based on the play by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber. With Marie Dressler, John Barrymore, Wallace Beery. Courtesy Turner Entertainment. 113 min. This classic film about New York society, full of vintage MGM stars, features wonderful performances by Jean Harlow and Marie Dressler.

**TO RSVP TO THESE SCREENINGS
PLEASE CALL GRAHAM LEGGAT AT 212/708-9752.**