

The Museum of Modern Art

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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN SCREENWRITERS TO HOLLYWOOD FILMS FROM THE SILENT TO THE STUDIO ERA CELEBRATED IN A 35-FILM SERIES

*The Powerful Women of Early Hollywood:
Frances Marion and Her Circle*
January 19–February 17, 1998
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1

Although Frances Marion was the most prolific of Hollywood's pioneering scenarists, writing more than two hundred films from 1916 to 1946, she was but one of several women who achieved success and recognition as a screenwriter in American cinema's first half-century. Beginning January 19, this group of women, which includes Anita Loos, Jeanie Macpherson, June Mathis, Bess Meredyth, and writer/director Lois Weber, and Marion herself, are celebrated in a thirty-five-film series at The Museum of Modern Art titled *The Powerful Women of Early Hollywood: Frances Marion and Her Circle*.

As well as being good friends, the women writers in the series sometimes collaborated professionally, shaping roles for well-known actors such as Mary Pickford, Anna May Wong, Marie Dressler, ZaSu Pitts, Gloria Swanson, Greta Garbo, John and Lionel Barrymore, Rudolph Valentino, and Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.

In no way limited to writing "women's pictures," these talented screenwriters authored a broad range of comedies and adventure dramas in the silent films of the 1910s and 20s, and, adapting to the advent of talkies, continued to pen popular scripts in a variety of genres well into the 1930s.

Their work is represented in this exhibition with a selection of Marion's films—including *Back Pay* (1922), *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), and *Lightnin'* (1925)—as well as

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such gems as Anita Loos's *Down to Earth* (1917), Jeanie Macpherson's *The Ten Commandments* (1923), Lois Weber's *Too Wise Wives* (1921), Bess Meredyth's *A Woman of Affairs* (1929), and *Ben-Hur* (1926) by Meredyth and June Mathis.

The Powerful Women of Early Hollywood: Frances Marion and Her Circle was organized by Mary Lea Bandy, Chief Curator, Department of Film and Video, and 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), recently listed as one of the best 100 books of 1997 by the *Los Angeles Times*; and to Warner Bros./Turner Entertainment Co., George Eastman House, The Library of Congress, and UCLA Film and Television Archive.

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You are cordially invited to the press screenings for

***The Powerful Women of Early Hollywood:
Frances Marion and Her Circle***

Wednesday, January 7, 1998

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2, The Museum of Modern Art

- 11 a.m.** *Don Juan*. 1926. USA. Alan Crosland. Screenplay by Bess Meredyth. With John Barrymore, Mary Astor, Warner Oland. Dawn of Sound print. Print and music track restored by UCLA Film and Television Archive. 110 min.
- 12:45 p.m.** *A Woman of Affairs*. 1929. USA. Clarence Brown. Screenplay by Bess Meredyth. With Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, Lewis Stone. Dawn of Sound print. Courtesy Warner Bros./Turner Entertainment Co. 90 min.

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Members of the press: To RSVP to these press screenings, or for more information or stills, please contact Graham Leggat at 212/708-9752 or graham_leggat@moma.org