

## NEDERLANDS FILM MUSEUM

### AMSTERDAM

Since the Nederlands Filmmuseum started his new activities in the new surroundings and beautiful building of the Municipal Museum (Museum of Modern Art) in Amsterdam much has been improved. The many members of Fiaf, who came to Amsterdam last year to attend the Fiaf Congress in our new home have been able to see how we were situated and what we are doing to build up our beloved work. We were happy to have our international friends together in our home and we certainly hope to have another Congress of Fiaf again within some years.

The situation of the N.F.M. has been improved thus, but generally spoken our possibilities of working are, *helas*, still limited. We are grateful to our Government, from which we get a small subsidy each year (f 10.000). Next year we expect to get a higher sum (f 20.000). We are also grateful to the Municipality of Amsterdam, from which we got the authorisation to remove to the Museum of Modern Art and to get three offices and a cinemahall for regular Filmmuseum private showings, only for our members (+ 2.000). But still much more can and has to be done. Our film collection, although with some excellent examples from the history of the film, is too small and the financial possibilities for our work are still too limited.

One of the new activities of our N.F.M. are the regular showings, each week two days, in our own Cinemahall in the new Museum. Last season, which was our first one, we gave 35 programs with more than 60 showings about all the aspects of the medium Film: The documentary Film, the puppet - and Cartoon Film, the experimental Film, the Film on Art, the Film history a series about the German film and its psychological and sociological background, some lectures by foreign film experts, like Miss Mary Seton's visit to us and her interesting lecture about Sergei Eisenstein, etc. etc. This season has been a great success, for us, but one heavy cloud of darkness is always above us and illustrates the limitations of our small institute: that is the lack of sufficient films for our own programs and those for our member film societies in the Netherlands (now 40). We are again extremely grateful to our colleagues of the British Film Institute (Mr. Lindgren) and the Cinemathèque Française (Mr. Langlois) in particular and to the other National Film archives - and Museums, who helped us so very often in lending us films. This - I am very sorry to say - is the only way up till now, through which we have been able to continue our difficult task. I understand however that this situation of lending films will be not possible for ever. Of course when our Filmmuseum will be able to lend out films to other members of Fiaf, this will be done with great enthusiasm and willing of being helpful, but our Museum is still too small to fulfill this task in comparison what other film-libraries are doing. I greatly recommend to the Fiaf Congress members to study this problem and urgent question and to try to find a solution, as I am convinced that not only our Filmmuseum is the only one with this disagreeable problem. For the general sake of the Film and for the better functioning of the many film archives this urgent problem needs a solution on an International base !

The Netherlands Filmmuseum needs films from different sources and countries for its own season programs and its member societies; this is one of the most important laws of life for the right of existence of a Film archive.

A second again important task is the preservation of the films. Owing to lack of money this so urgent task of our archive has been done very slowly and with very limited means. We could not build up a 35mm negatif prints library and as we were afraid of losing our films soon by showing them to the various cultural groups in Holland, we planned to do something in order to get negatives (duplicate negatives) of our most important films.

This we did by making 16mm negatives from our positive 35mm prints. And so we have already in possession 16mm negative prints of films as:

Ballet Mécanique - A propos de Nice - Un chien Andalou -  
Chapeau de paille d'Italie - Les deux timides - La passion  
de Jeanne d'Arc - La Chute de la maison Usher - La pluie  
and Le pont - La terre and L'homme à la caméra - Menschen  
am Sonntag - Faust - Films of Hans Richter and Oskar  
Fischinger - Fury - etc. etc.

The other tasks of our Museum are the documentation and inquiry Center, the stills Library (+ 5.000 stills) and the books-Library (+ 600) and the collection of periodicals.

With regards to the customs facilities we have been able to get a licence with which we can send out films to other film archives, immediately. This licence is meant for a certain amount of meters of films, f.i. 20.000 meters, and we are able then to send films, at any immediate request to other countries. There is one disadvantage in this new system. When the amount of meters has been used it takes a long time before we can get a new licence for another amount of meters and then the sending of films to other archives may find a considerable delay in transportation. This occurred recently with some films, which has to be sent out to Mr. Langlois (Marche des Machines), Mr. Buache (Birth of a Nation) and Mr. Lindgren (Ballet mécanique). The films delivered at the customs stayed there until the new licence came out. One very unhappy question was that the film Marche des Machines could not be find back and people are still trying to find out where this little film has been placed !

We will try to get a quicker regulation for getting the licences and then a solution for the immediate shipment of films to abroad will be in favour of the film-libraries. But I venture once again to recommend to the Fiaf members in trying to get a general and international customs-agreement, like Unesco is still planning to realise, for the free flow of Fiaf-member films to all Fiaf member countries! Apart from the new subsidy, we expect from our Government next year, we hope to get a grant from the Prince Bernhard Cultural Fund, for the preservation of only Dutchfilms, as the works of Ivens and Franken (who died some months ago), Ferno, Haanstra, De Haas, Vanderhorst, etc. etc.

The N.F.M. possesses also a great collection of very old short films (kind of news reels, which films come from the government and for which collection we hope to get a special subsidy in future, also for preservation purpose.) There are also plannings of getting better and bigger vaults to store up our films.

This new season we will form a community center for the Dutch film people in our Filmmuseum. The film people must have a special place where they can meet each other and where they can see their work and that of foreign colleagues.

The N.F.M. is very willing and anxious to continue its work and to work internationally together with the Fiaf members. I hope really that in the near future such can be done with still more strength and satisfaction, in favour of all our foreign film-libraries and of course also in favour of the medium Film, which has our most severe and particular attention.

October 1953

J. DE VAAL.

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Centre International pour la diffusion et d'information du Film d'Art -  
Amsterdam

Under this name the N.F.M. has formed, together with the Fifa and in close cooperation with the Fiaf and Unesco an International Centre for the films on Art in Amsterdam. The bureau of this Centre is at the N.F.M. and for the set up of this institution the "Centre" got, some months ago, a subsidy from Unesco of \$ I.800 - and a financial aid from our government of F 2.000. From the \$ I.800, \$ 900 are meant for the buying of copies of films on Art at costs of prints. One employee is already busy to form the international contacts, to do correspondence and to build up the documentation of all films dealing with the Arts. Up till now it is not quite clear how copies of all those films can be obtained and used. Arrangements have still to be made between Fiaf, Fifa, Unesco and the "Centre" at Amsterdam.

I ask the attention of all Fiaf members, who were already so kind to let us know which films on art they already possess and for which cooperation I am grateful, to this special subject. As the Fiaf Congressess at Cambridge and Amsterdam already decided to let each National film archive build up a specialised film-library - the N.F.M. at Amsterdam got the task of building up an Archive of the films on Art - I now like to recommend to the Fiaf Congress Meeting at Vence to discuss the problem of how to get copies of such films for the international Centre at Amsterdam and how to use these films internationally, in order to get more use of the films on Art in each country and therefore to stimulate distribution on a non-commercial base, giving satisfaction to the people who spent their money and energy on this special kind of filmmaking. In the month of August the Fifa had its annual meeting at Venice, but owing to the strike in France, it was

not possible to meet all the people together, so that a solution f.i. between Fifa and Fiaf could not yet be made. It is necessary that at the Fiaf Congress at Vence decisions of Fiaf will be made and that soon after this meeting real activity and cooperation from and with all Fiaf members will become true.

From Poland the "Centre" at Amsterdam got already a copy of a Film d'Art free of charge: The work of Master Stwo (sculpture), for which we are extremely grateful.

Also from Canada we got a gift, some films of McLaren, for which geste and cooperation we are again very grateful.

The "Centre" works but a few months and still needs much help. It has already now a dozen films on Art, a good documentation about films and addressess all over the world. Its waiting with great interest and eager for news and help from the Fiaf members.

It is worthwhile and very important to bring the Arts nearer to a greater public nowadays. And therefore there is no better way and medium than the Film.

October 1953

J. DE VAAL.

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