



CINEMATECA DE CUBA

Annual Report

1985

Film acquisition

A total of 102 features and 70 documentaries of international production were acquired this year, while the domestic film industry donated us 6 features, 43 documentaries, 8 animation films and 48 newsreels of recent production.

Restoration and revision

During this term 15138 reels in 35mm and 714 reels in 16mm were revised, while 274 reels in 35mm were given full restoration work in the workshops of our Preservation Department. A total of 1240 circulating prints were lent for cultural or educational purposes. We are still lacking qualified personnel to fulfill satisfactorily the diverse preservation requirements of our rather extensive film collection.

Mainly through donations, and some purchases, 102 apparatuses and objects pertaining the origins and early periods of photography and film history were acquired this year. Most of them went through a very careful restoration work carried out by our specialists. Duplicates of some optical toys were produced, with amazing results, as they were necessary for the production of an educational film on film history which was made by the Ministry of Education film unit with the advise and full collaboration of the Archive.

Cataloguing and documentation

A thorough revision of the General Catalogue of the Cuban Film (1897-1985) was carried out this year. Several titles and corresponding data from the early production were added, as a result of the study and classification of an old package with documentation on the subject donated to the Archive by a private collector. A total of 2,310 data were introduced in the catalogue.

The staff in our Documentation Department gave service to 1168 outside users during this period, including 8 university students of art preparing their diplomas on film subjects. The Latin American Section of our Documentation Department continued to collaborate, very efficiently, in the organization and documentation of the Havana film festival, now in its 7th edition.

Theatre and TV showings

During this year 5034 showings were presented to archive audience in Havana (three or four daily showings all year 'round) and in other 14 regional theatres throughout the country (three or six showings a week, also all year 'round). Thru our weekly television program, called Cinemateca de Cuba in TV, broadcasted now every Tuesday evening, 48 features were shown to a nation-wide audience of about one million, according to surveys.

The most successful theatrical programs, according to our daily attendance records, were the following. February: an almost complete retrospective of Chaplin films; also the three part documentary made by the British TV called The unknown Chaplin, which was presented through our TV program in Cuban premiere by courtesy of Miss Geraldine Chaplin. March: The Swiss Film, organized with the collaboration of Pro-Helvetia. May: a Swedish Film Week, presented with the help of The Swedish Institute. July: The Other Face, a show of the independent American film, organized with the assistance of the Department of Film of the Museum of Modern Art (NY) and others; The Argentinian Film, presented with the help of the Argentinian Film Institute. September: The Finnish Film Week, organized with the collaboration of the Finnish Film Archive. December: Homages to Fernando Birri (Argentine) and Nelson Pereira dos Santos (Brazil), thru the kind assistance of Cinemateca do MAM (Rio), Embrafilm and Messrs. Birri and dos Santos.

International relations

The Director of the Archive attended FIAF's 41st congress held in New York in April 1985, where he was re-elected by the General Assembly, firstly, as a member of the Executive Committee, and then he was appointed a Vice President of the Federation by the newly elected Executive Committee. He was also named a member of the Working Group organizing FIAF's 50th anniversary activities to be held in Paris in 1988.

Within the frame of our own 25th anniversary, the Cuban archive hosted, for the first time, in February 1985, the yearly meeting of directors of film archives from socialist countries, with the attendance of colleagues from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, DDR, Hungary, Korea, Poland, Soviet Union, Vietnam and Nicaragua as a guest. Multilateral and bilateral agreements of collaboration were arrived at and relaxation activities included touring around lovely Spanish colonial Havana, swimming in the Caribbean and dancing in huge 'under the stars' Tropicana cabaret.

Profiting from the hospitality of Havana's 7th Latin American film festival (Dec. 2-16, 1985) and the same as in the last 6 previous years, The Cuban archive also hosted a meeting of Latin American archives with the attendance of colleagues from Argentina, Brazil (Rio & Sao Paulo), Ecuador, Mexico (Filmoteca & Cineteca), Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela (Merida) and Pedro Chaskel. As a result of long meetings the recently founded Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Archivos de Imágenes en Movimiento (CLAIM) was enlarged, and enriched, through the joining of many other archives either as full members or as observers. Likewise, many multilateral and bilateral agreements of collaboration were settled. It was specially emphasized the necessity of further strengthening links of cooperation with FIAF members and the Federation itself, as well as the maintenance of the assistance from UNESCO which we all consider to be of the utmost importance for the development and even the survival of our archives.

Through the kind assistance of nearly one hundred international cultural institutions, namely FIAF members, we were able to present, in December 1985, in Havana's National Museum of Fine Arts, a huge retrospective (1895-1985) of the international film poster, comprising 700 posters from 52 countries. Special admiration arose the fascinating collection of early French posters received from Bois d'Arcy, for which we thank very much Mr. and Mrs. Frantz Schmitt.

The director of the archive traveled to London in June as a guest of the British Council to discuss the organization of a British film retrospective intended to tour around Latin American archives in 1986. He availed of the opportunity to visit the premises of the National Film Archive, thanks to the very kind and personal courtesy of Mr. David Francis. He also visited the British Film Institute and the National Film Theatre. The friendly and efficient collaboration of Mr. Francis in this project was conclusive and we want to express our appreciation for it once more.

The director of the archive and our head of documentation, Miss Teresa Toledo, attended the Rio de Janeiro film festival in November as guests both of the festival and of Cinemateca do Museo de Arte Moderna. They also attended a meeting of Latin American archives, organized by Cinemateca do MAM, which proved to be very profitable and amiable, amidst the setting of this most beautiful and exciting town. Despite the unusual length of this meeting, the discussion of many subjects had to be continued in Havana, only a few days later, as mentioned above. The Havana meeting proved to be also quite lengthy.

Cinemateca de Cuba gave also this year a major contribution to the success of Havana's film festival (Dec. 2-16, 1985) through the organization of a variety of relevant film events and the provision of basic documentation of the films shown and biofilmographical notes on many of the filmmakers and other participants. As in previous years, the Director of the archive was appointed a Vice Director of this festival.

The archive's 25th anniversary

The central activities of our anniversary took place during February. They comprised a gala premiere of Chaplin's *A King in New York*, not seen in Cuba for the last 40 years or so, followed by a retrospective of his films. An expo of 30 serigraphies on Chaplin's films and life, designed by the Swedish artist Ture Sjölander in 1973, including a portfolio autographed by Chaplin's own handwriting, and donated to the archive by Miss Geraldine Chaplin, was presented in an art gallery next corner to the archive. A collection of 30 film apparatuses belonging to our film museum, which were recently restored, was shown in the lobby of our film theatre.

Five full television programs, ranging from 50 to 90 minutes each, were dedicated to our anniversary, including interviews with our staff, a visual tour illustrating our premises, commented fragments of outstanding films preserved by the archive, etc. Articles and news about the anniversary and on the archive work were also produced by the dailies, specialized magazines and over the radio. We availed of the opportunity to stress the importance of the work carried out by FIAF and its members in behalf of the knowledge and safeguarding of the audiovisual heritage of mankind and also in helping the developing archives around the world.

Héctor García Mesa
Director

February, 1986