

FIAF, 1986  
Annual Report of THE FILM DEPARTMENT  
George Eastman House, Rochester, N.Y.  
U.S.A.

ACQUISITIONS

The collections grew by approximately 125 titles or items, many of them 16mm non-theatrical subjects.

PRESERVATION

Active preservation copying of the motion picture collection has been a part of this Museum's film priorities since the early 1970s. A special feature of the Museum's film acquisitions since the late 1940s is the safeguarding of early motion pictures produced during the turn-of-the-century and the ensuing years until 1950. Most of these films are not in other collections. Many are the product of early American studios.

Preservation priorities are decided upon the basis of three factors: 1) deterioration status, i.e., is a film likely to survive another grant cycle without substantial further deterioration?, 2) historical and aesthetic value as determined by the archival and curatorial staff of the Film Department, 3) contemporary scholarly interest in a given title and/or viewing requests received and interest expressed in a title.

An unusual aspect of the Museum's 1986 preservation project was that 25% of our preservation work was printed on low-fade color stock to preserve the authentic, vivid color toning of the original film materials.

Twenty five titles were preserved and included:

THE BLACK OXEN (1923), released by Associated First National Pictures, directed by Frank Lloyd. Cast: Corrine Griffith, Conway Tearle, Clara Bow. The intertitles had been separated from the original picture negatives and they were re-integrated into the preservation material.

THE CRAB (1917), produced in the U.S. by Triangle-Ince studios, directed by Walter Edwards, supervised by Thomas H. Ince. Shot on location in Norwalk, California. Cast: Thelma Salter, Frank Keenan, Ernest Butterworth. Extensive damage to the intertitles in the original nitrate material required their restoration. Many new intertitles were step-printed from individual frames while others were typeset and photographed for inclusion in the completed preservation material.

SALVATION NELL (1921), released by Associated First National, directed by Kenneth Webb. Cast: Pauline Starke, Joe King, Evelyn C. Harrington, Edward Langford, Matthew Betz. From an original nitrate negative.

WORLD WAR I - PLANES AND CAMP LIFE (circa 1918) Title supplied. Actuality footage.



MACISTE IN HELL (1924), produced in Italy, directed by Guido Brignone. Contains English intertitles. One of a series of Maciste mythological films produced during 1914 - 1928. The popularity of these films caused the lead actor, Bartolomeo Pagano, a former Geonese dockworker, to adopt the stage name, "Maciste." The film contains scenes which take place in Hades and exhibits stunning use of color toning.

THE SLUMS OF BERLIN (1925), produced in Germany, directed by Gerhard Lamprecht. Contains English intertitles. From an original color-toned nitrate positive. An early social-realist film depicting working class life in Berlin during the 1920s.

During 1986, NYSCA funds enabled IMP/GEH to copy 19,722 feet of nitrate motion picture film. Including the necessary pre-print master copies, the 35mm acetate footage generated was 40,987 feet and 1,550 feet of 16mm footage was also printed.

Total film preservation activity during calendar year 1986, including the titles enumerated above, involved copying 99,010 feet of nitrate, 35mm film and 5,023 feet of 16mm film to produce 209,873 feet of 35mm acetate film and 11,824 feet of 16mm.

Film preservation projects of the Museum are directed and carried out at the Museum in Rochester, N.Y. For the actual copying, the Museum utilizes the services of a laboratory in New Jersey which has specialized for the last forty years in the printing of shrunken and difficult-to-print film originals. The completed, preserved film copies are stored in the Museum's air-conditioned, humidity-controlled acetate film vault in Rochester.

#### CATALOGING - DOCUMENTATION - RESEARCH

Two inventories of the film collection were produced from the computerized data base. Titles were updated, entries corrected, and discussions held about ways to use the computer data to best advantage. Visits to the collection for research, learning, and viewing by individuals increased dramatically to 111, up 77 from last year. Film classes held at the Museum were attended by 962 people. Screenings for groups with special film interests drew 3,776. The six regular Dryden series attracted a general audience of 21,008 and the Senior Citizen Matinees drew 22,522 viewers. From the total of over 230 screenings during 1985, there were 178 public screenings held using only films from the collection. These screenings were attended by 30,353 people.

## FILM SHOWINGS

## Exhibition: Use of the Collection

Exhibition activities during 1986 responded to the Museum's need to support its first capital campaign and heighten the awareness and visibility of the film collection. Visits to the collection for research, learning, and viewing by individuals numbered 120, up nine from last year and up 79 from the year before. Film classes held at the Museum were attended by 585 people. Screenings for groups with special film interests drew 7,802, an increase of 4,026. The large increase is due to the use of film by visiting students from high school through the college level and the use of films by organizations that visit George Eastman House for meetings. The regular Dryden series, including the two week run of SHOAH, attracted a general audience of 20,087. Visiting filmmakers drew 2023 viewers, up 978 from last year. The Senior Citizen Matinees drew 23,012, up 490 viewers. From the total of nearly 320 public screenings held during 1986, there were 151 that used films from the collection. These screenings were attended by 32,793 people, up nearly 2,500 from 1985.

## Film Showings, Reformatting the Dryden Screening Programs

The exhibition goals of the Film Department are to program films unavailable in Rochester, provide public access to unique film materials in the Film Department's collection, present film series that illustrate approaches by filmmakers to filming problems and issues, and present films of special interest to specific audiences.

In September both the regularly scheduled Dryden Theatre film series and its accompanying publicity were reformatted in order better to reflect the broader interests of the Dryden Theatre constituency and to serve the public at large with a wider selection of film subjects. In the new format there is less concentration on specific themes and more emphasis on contemporary domestic and foreign independent features, retrospectives of film directors and screenwriters, and films from the George Eastman House Film Collection. Each series presents a number of genre films, a broad selection of documentaries, and scheduled visits by filmmakers.

Programs for 1986 included:

Thematic Series - Films chosen from genres, foreign national film production, film arts and crafts, and acting and directing



contributions. In this category during 1986 we programmed BREAKING THE STEREOTYPE:BLACKS IN FILM, MARILYN:THE COMEDIES (7Jan.-21Feb.); AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND, A TRIBUTE TO FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT (2May-28June); VIENNA, BERLIN, BUDAPEST TO HOLLYWOOD (8July-22Aug.)

Special Archive Screenings - Little known or rare films from the George Eastman House Archives were featured during 1986 in the series called FROM THE ARCHIVES (3Mar.-28Mar). Other GEH archive titles were regularly shown during many other Dryden series. For example, of particular interest was the screening of LET MY PEOPLE LIVE (1938), a recently rediscovered and preserved GEH title directed by Edgar G. Ulmer shown during the BLACKS IN FILM series.

Visiting Filmmakers Programs - During 1986 the intention of this series of programs was to bring filmmakers to Rochester with their films to allow audiences a chance to see their work and discuss it with the creators. One emphasis this year, during a critical capital campaign, was to include some higher profile independent film creators as visitors. Another was to illustrate documentary film form.

This year the visiting filmmakers were: Bill Woodberry with BLESS THEIR LITTLE HEARTS; Joe Sedelmaier with a demonstration reel of commercial films; Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton with films of the Long Bow Project: SMALL HAPPINESS and ALL UNDER HEAVEN; David DiFrancesco, special effects innovator with excerpts from YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES, STAR TREK 2, THE WRATH OF KAHN, and RETURN OF THE JEDI; Barbara Margolis with ARE WE WINNING, MOMMY?; Rob Nilsson with ON THE EDGE; Ken Burns and Buddy Squires with THE SHAKERS:HANDS TO WORK, HEARTS TO GOD and THE STATUE OF LIBERTY; D.A. Pennebaker and Richard Leacock with EDDIE SACHS and COMPANY; and Mason Adams with F/X. Some of these speakers/filmmakers were jointly funded through cooperative arrangements with other exhibition sites in Rochester.

Special Screenings/Film Events - Important because they raised the public's consciousness of the Museum's film collections during a critical fundraising year, was an increase in the number of special screenings and film events highlighting this year's film exhibition programming. These included:

A two week run of Claude Lanzmann's SHOAH, supported jointly by the Museum and Rochester's Jewish Community Federation and Jewish Community Center.

A special screening of WAY DOWN EAST with a visit and introduction by Lillian Gish, the participation of the Film Department of The Museum of Modern Art, the help of the Eastman Dryden Orchestra rehearsed by director Donald Hunsberger of the Eastman School of Music, and orchestral direction during the screening by Gillian Anderson of the Music Division of the Library of Congress. Ms Anderson reconstituted the original score for the film.

A book signing by John Mueller, author of a recent book on the films of Fred Astaire, with a screening of the film SWING TIME.

A book signing and screening by film book author Leatrice Gilbert Fountain, daughter of the actor John Gilbert and Leatrice Joy, with a screening of the Garbo/Gilbert film, QUEEN CHRISTINA.

Hosted the 28th annual Rochester International Amateur Film Festival called, "Movies on a Shoestring."

Senior Citizen Matinees - This popular weekly event programmed forty-nine weekly screenings on Thursday afternoons.

#### PUBLICATIONS

The Department produced screening guides for each of the six regular Dryden Theatre series. This year several posters for some of these series were also printed.

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Film Department loans were made to four members of FIAF and to thirteen cultural organizations in the United States.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

The Film Department of George Eastman House and the Film Department of The Museum of Modern Art in New York City (MoMA) continued a joint distribution project. In this project George Eastman House creates preservation materials from nitrate film titles in its collection while MoMA generates 16mm distribution materials from these titles and adds them to its Circulating Film Library. By years' end thirteen titles were in distribution and joint plans were made to increase the number of titles in the GEH collection available from MoMA. In addition to serving on planning committees for the Museum's new building and goals, staff energies have gone into the improvement of cataloging of the collection, rearranging collection and office space, encouraging individual and community use of the collection, preparing new preservation plans, and the usual, but demanding, teaching and scholarly activities at the University of Rochester and elsewhere.

The Film Department supplied fourteen films, many still pictures, and introductory material for the American Federation of Arts exhibition, "Before Hollywood."