Museum International

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Cinema museums and archive

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Scene from Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times*.
Photo: © Roy Export Co. Est.

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Part of the first exhibition in the Optical Room of the Museum of the Moving Image; it was designed to disorientate visitors and make them aware of the early optical illusions of the pre-cinema period.
Photo: © MOMI London.

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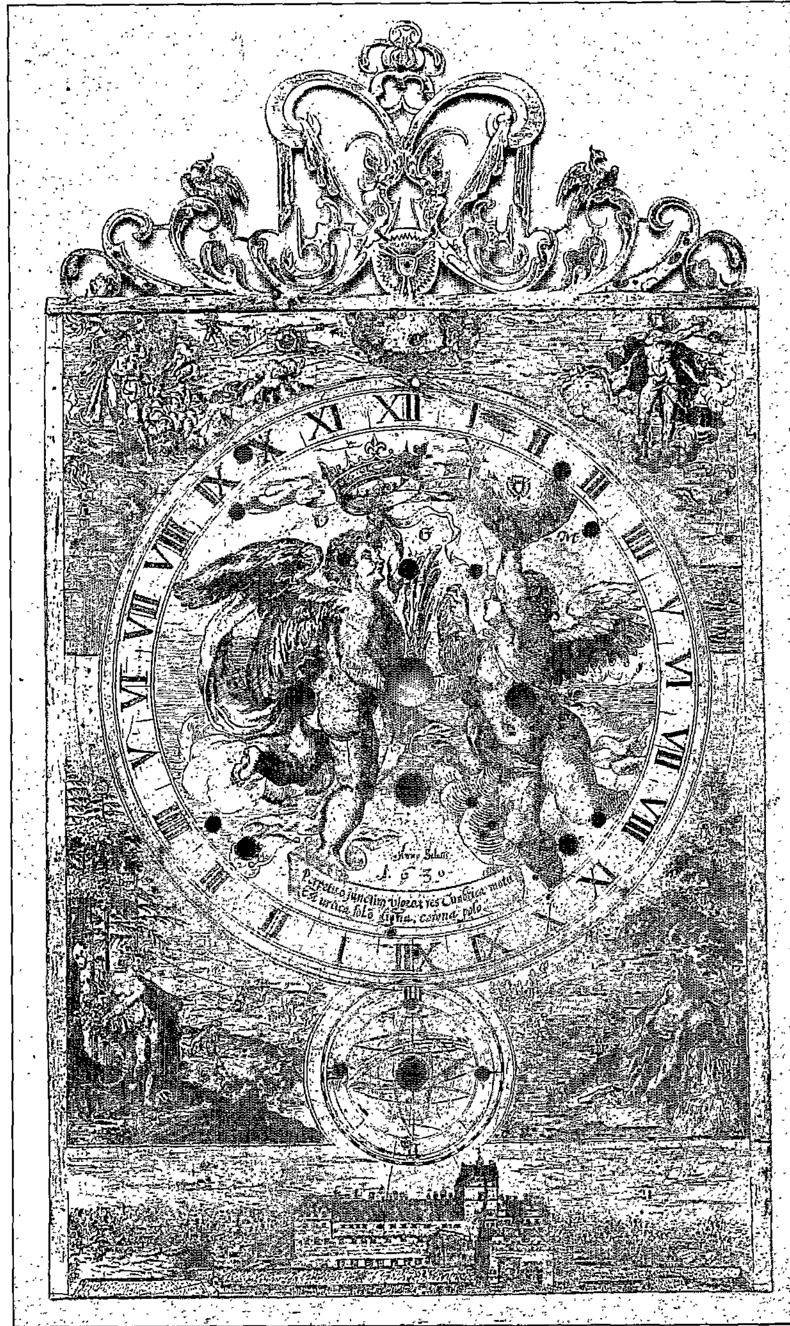

STOLEN

Antique clock face, dated 1639, of elaborately engraved gilded copper, featuring two cherubs in the centre of the dial and figures personifying the elements in the four corners of the face; stolen from a museum in Copenhagen (Denmark) in September 1993. (Interpol Copenhagen – Reference 13-292-93-bph)

Photo by courtesy of the ICPO–Interpol General Secretariat, Lyons (France)

Editorial

On 22 March 1895, Louis and Auguste Lumière presented to the Paris public an invention they called the cinematograph. Considered by the Lumière brothers as a 'scientific curiosity with no commercial possibilities', the new technique was to become the defining art of the new century. Embracing as it does all the other arts – painting, theatre, music, literature, photography – the cinema is, in the words of art historian Erwin Panofsky, the modern equivalent of the medieval cathedral: all members of the film team, from producer to director to technician to actor, work together, like the cathedral architect and the glaziers and stonemasons, with a single purpose in a joint endeavour.

The results of their labours have enchanted us all. Motion pictures are a constant source of wonder and revelation, an excitement from which we never recover. And yet this quintessential expression of the twentieth century is under serious threat. As pointed out by the Director-General of UNESCO in launching his appeal for the safeguarding of the international cinematic heritage on 2 November 1993 (see page 4), 'more than three-quarters of the perishable and highly inflammable nitrocellulose-based films made prior to the 1950s are lost for ever, while some 60 per cent of the cellulose-acetate films made after 1950 are threatened by a process of deterioration known as the "vinegar syndrome", which bleaches the image if they are not properly conserved. All the wealth of images captured in art films, features, documentaries, full-length films, shorts, popular-science films, newsreels, instructional and educational films, cartoons, etc., is in danger of disappearing for ever. *The cinema has to be saved.*'

For this reason, on the eve of the centenary of the birth of the cinema, *Museum International* pays homage to the cinema museums and archives dedicated to preserving and restoring the treasure of perishable moving images for generations to come. Throughout the world – from Brazil to Egypt, from Angola to Viet Nam – these institutions have become the caretakers of 'the memory of the twentieth century'. They deserve our support – and our gratitude.

A final word of thanks to Yves Laberge of Laval University in Quebec (Canada), whose limitless enthusiasm and knowledge of the cinema helped make this issue possible.

M.L.

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Appeal for the Safeguarding of the International Cinematic Heritage, Memory of the Twentieth Century

by Mr Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO

Under its Constitution, UNESCO is responsible for 'assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of . . . works of art and monuments of history and science', and devotes itself to fostering the action needed to safeguard them. The conservation and restoration of the international cinematic heritage entail special problems that private support and spontaneous gestures cannot by themselves resolve. It is accordingly considered necessary to look for answers to them through a partnership arrangement.

This is why, on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and of the Honorary Committee for the Celebration of the Centenary of the Cinema,

I solemnly appeal to the Member States of UNESCO to take appropriate legal, administrative and financial steps to set up or strengthen the structures that are essential for safeguarding the international cinematic heritage, such as film archives, film libraries, cinema museums and restoration laboratories. If this action is to be successful it will have to be carried out in consultation with the International Federation of Film Archives, the specialist international organization that embraces more than 100 such archives in 63 of UNESCO's Member States.

I invite cinema specialists and filmgoers to join their efforts to those whose task it is in every country to ensure that their national cinema is safeguarded, so as to make it possible to compile exhaustive filmographies.

I invite film producers, actors, directors, technicians and operators to join forces, as is already happening in some countries, and set up national foundations or associations to alert the public to the urgency of preserving the national and international cinematic heritage, collect private or public funds to help finance the restoration of the national film collection, encourage projects for creating copyright registration systems in countries where archives for the preservation of the cinematic heritage do not yet exist, and ensure that the national preservation practices introduced are consistent with the norms laid down by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).

I invite the photography, cinema, video and television industries, film producers and distributors and all industries concerned with cinema generally to participate generously in the national and international effort being made by associations and organizations to safeguard the cinematic heritage, by contributing to the creation of an international fund designed to defray the cost of film restoration and preservation work. This fund will be created in the FIAF and UNESCO.

I invite cinema and television film producers holding rights to films or successors in title to join in the safeguarding operation by participating in it financially or setting up appropriate restoration programmes; I also ask them to do their utmost to facilitate the distribution of restored films in commercial and non-commercial circuits by concluding agreements with film distributors and distribution agencies.

I invite film festivals all over the world to create a section in their programmes on 'films that have been saved' and to organize public showings with the co-operation of the International Council for Film, Television and Audiovisual Communication (IFTC).

I invite schools of film, television and the audiovisual professions to take appropriate steps, in conjunction with the International Liaison Centre for Film and Television Schools, to alert future professionals working in the film industry to the problems of conserving and safeguarding cinematic works.

I invite the industrialized countries to co-operate with the developing countries, so that the latter can successfully engage in research on their film production and ensure the training of conservation specialists through the requisite transfers of knowledge and technology.

In conclusion, I invite members of the international community, such as film critics, specialists, cinema-goers and others, to contribute in all appropriate ways to the movement to safeguard the cinema in conjunction with the national, regional and international bodies of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).

Federico Mayor

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A hundred years of cinema

Yves Laberge

Yves Laberge lives in Quebec where he was born. An active member of the International Association of French-Speaking Sociologists (AISLF), he is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Canadian Studies (AEC) and of the Board of Directors of the Franco-Canadian Association for the Advancement of Science (ACFAS). He has taught the history of cinema at Laval University in Quebec and contributed to various events related to the cinema for the Musée de la Civilisation of Quebec and for UNESCO's Office in Quebec City.

In 1995, the cinema will have accomplished its first century and the innumerable celebrations in its honour are all, it will be agreed, amply justified. Rare are the people who would dare to admit openly that they do not enjoy the cinema.

Admittedly, the cinema is 100 years old, which is considerable in relation to its astonishing development since the early years of silent films up to very recent technological developments and, at the same time, relatively little when compared with other art forms such as sculpture and music. But when we think about it, how old are the films that we can actually go to see at any given time? The commercial film networks, television, and video-cassette retailers and rental services mostly offer recent films and submit to passing fashions created by previews and productions that cause a stir because everyone talks about them and they are ultimately profit-making in the short term; as a consequence, films on showing tend to be relatively recent, too recent perhaps; and, furthermore, far too many worthwhile works do not cross geographical borders or historical eras as the distribution networks are not adequate enough or because they have not aged well.

Nowadays, in spite of the best will in the world, cinema enthusiasts who frequent commercial movie theatres often see what is inevitably only the tip of the iceberg in terms of cinema history. Seeing the latest hit is not enough to embrace the entire film world, a veritable open door on worldwide culture. More than 100 countries produce cinematographic works each year but how many of their films can we actually see? What should we do to have access to the innumerable productions from all these countries? Likewise, where else can we see animated films, avant-garde films, documentaries or former classics on the big screen? Naturally, movie theatres that specialize in what are called 'art films' or 'film cycles' still exist in some major cities and can therefore present, often with much passion and courage, period pieces and not always on account of their box-office success at the time or their potential success today. Alas, only a few major cities can claim such privileges.

For the love of the cinema

A considerable number of museums specializing in the cinema and some 100 or more film libraries around the world do exist. Their geographical distribution, however, varies enormously as most of them are to be found in Europe and there are very few in Africa and the Pacific. In this centenary year, it is fitting to pay tribute to these institutions that protect what could be termed a dream world, better known as the cinema. Naturally, the articles of this issue of *Museum International* do not claim to present all these various institutions, especially in view of the actual nature of their collections and their specific priorities. We have not, furthermore, attempted to investigate those which might seem more important or especially prestigious, which in any case would have proved both futile and virtually impossible to determine in a serious and objective manner.

Three specific priorities have guided our research and our choice of themes. First of all, we have endeavoured to give as much importance, if not more, to cinema museums as much as to film libraries, because films have brought into play the appropriate environment, a universe of specific objects and established patterns of behaviour. To make a simple distinction between them, let us observe that the former institutions accentuated the importance of arte-

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facts which have a more or less direct relationship with the cinema as cultural and social practices; and, for example, preserve the film sets and costumes, posters and photographs, books and magazines, souvenirs and archives, cameras and other projection equipment. Conversely, the main task of film libraries is to preserve copies and negatives and also to disseminate films of all kinds while avoiding, as much as possible, making any judgement as to the relative value of the works with which they have been entrusted. There will therefore be considerable reticence in eliminating a film under the pretext that it has become a work of a lesser value. Lastly, film libraries have the task of guiding researchers who wish to consult their archives.

We have also attempted, wherever possible, to describe the variety of various geographical and social contexts in order to highlight different approaches and appraisals. An eclectic course such as this will inevitably deprive us of portraits of several of the major European cinema museums, which, none the less, enjoy a worldwide reputation. It is our hope, however, that our readers and even specialists will discover within less well-established institutions other aspects of the field that will arouse their curiosity.

Finally, we thought it would be useful to present a few young institutions as, while we have the impression that the history of the cinema is relatively short, the history of cinema museums throughout the world is even shorter. The example of New Zealand provides adequate proof of this: its first national film library was founded in 1981, which might initially involve certain limitations but has nevertheless provided the opportunity of benefiting from the experience of other institutions of the same kind and, what is more, of advocating a specific course of action by giving pride of place to Oceania. Similarly, the case of the new Museum of the Moving Image in London demonstrates that a major metropolis can house a number of institutions all dedicated to the history of the cinema.

The belated emergence of early institutions

While the concept underlying early cinema museums was by no means new, it was some considerable time before films were actually welcomed into museums. Furthermore, special conditions were required in order to adapt to their capricious requirements, their extreme fragility and rapid ageing. It proved necessary, at one particular time, to dwell upon how films could be adequately preserved, as well as all objects related to them. Thomas Edison and the Lumière brothers are known, for example, to have preserved their negatives from the outset, but this was more to protect their copyright. Nevertheless, around 1929, the history of the cinema was disrupted by the advent of the talkies and, within the space of a few years, virtually no one was interested in silent films any more and no one bothered further about their possible destruction, all the more so as the nitrate film of the time was dangerously inflammable. In point of fact, the advent of the earliest institutions dedicated to the conservation of cinema dates back to the 1930s with the creation of national film libraries in Stockholm in 1933 and then in Berlin in 1934, followed by London, New York, Rome, Paris and Brussels. In 1938, a world organization was then set up, which still exists today, namely, the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), of which most film libraries and cinema museums throughout the world are members, with a view to promoting collaboration and exchanges.

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Many film libraries possess impressive collections of more than 10,000 titles and some of them, such as Gosfilmofond in Moscow, can boast of over 50,000 films, that is, more than anyone could ever hope to see in a lifetime! This amazing cinematographical heritage takes on vertiginous proportions, especially when compared with contemporary production, which is often entertaining, sometimes banal and rarely inspired. Notwithstanding the impressive heritage bequeathed by the leading film-makers of the past, we are regrettably unable to create in just a few years as many landmarks as in a whole century of cinema. Alternatively, however, if we neglect past works so promptly, we are likely to lose what matters most, as if libraries were, one day, to neglect the major classics of literature and to offer their readers nothing more than detective novels.

Films remain both eternal and ephemeral, sometimes unforgettable in our experience and yet often as fragile as they are fabulous. Even works of the 1960s have already been lost for ever. Furthermore, if we continue to dwell on the future of the cinema, which, in the late nineteenth century, was thought to be only short-lived, we may also wonder whether we have really made use of all the possibilities it has to offer. In addition to being a distinctive form of cultural expression and a significant social phenomenon, the cinema may also serve as a privileged tool in education. The time would therefore seem to have come to reassert the need for an authentic cinematographic education, that is, an introduction to the art of the cinema as such, and not merely a form of training in the use of the cinema as some sort of ancillary medium, in order to shed light on its origins, development, aesthetic forms and social role and thereby grasp the intrinsic importance of all the specific features that underlie the cinematographic art in each culture and each country. All peoples have their own method of relating their experience and perceiving the world through their films and it is this diversity that constitutes one of the treasures of the cinema. Is not the process of excessive commercialization which we are witnessing increasingly likely precisely to impose uniformity and standardization on one of the most original forms of collective expression?

The didatic role of museums

While this problem becomes more pronounced, the mission of cinema museums has yet to be fulfilled. One can but rejoice at seeing their number increase, even today. Nevertheless, quite a few of them have to contend with difficulties inherent in the artefacts they have to preserve, in addition to other problems specific to all museums. For instance, how should film-sets actually be stored? How should thousands of reels of nitrate film be preserved when they are likely to explode at the slightest shock, particularly when it is known that no other copy exists? What should be done to introduce the works of yesteryear to a new public accustomed to contemporary production standards?

Answers to these questions are to be found on a daily basis in the untiring and monumental endeavours of the film libraries and museums dedicated to the conservation of this vast fund of human experience that the cinema represents. We are quite conscious of the partial and inevitably incomplete nature of current museographical practices. Through these various representative portrayals, our aim has been to honour all of these museum institutions for their invaluable work and their true *raison d'être*, that is to say, the cinema, which is now celebrating its centenary. ■

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Guardians of the treasure: a moving-image archive in Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Jonathan Dennis

Merely thirteen years old, the New Zealand Film Archive has already made an international reputation for its innovative approach to meeting the needs of a bi-cultural country. Jonathan Dennis was the founder and first director of the Archive and is editor of several publications including Film in Aotearoa New Zealand. *In 1993 he was granted the Pordenone Film Festival's eighth Jean Mitry Award in recognition of his activities in safeguarding the silent-film heritage and in developing new philosophies for film archiving.*

In 1901 the Limelight Department of the Salvation Army from Melbourne, Australia, filmed the royal visit to New Zealand by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York on behalf of the New Zealand Government. The Salvation Army had quickly recognized the potential of this new medium, and they wrote at the time to the Premier of New Zealand to suggest that 'the negatives [of the royal visit film] could be placed among the archives of the history of the state so that at any future period the scenes which took place could be reproduced with the actuality of life and movement'. However, no archives existed at that time to receive the film and it was not until 1981 that a film archive was finally established in New Zealand.

This was late, already eighty-three years after the first films had been made in New Zealand. While the archive was safely modelled on the aims and objectives of older archives in Europe, North America and Australia, my aim was to create in New Zealand a moving-image archive which would be recognizably part of the South Pacific.

Starting a film archive thirty or forty years after most other developed countries had some advantages. I could start with a pretty clear knowledge of what I didn't want it to be like: there were plenty of models around the world that would have been inadequate or inappropriate to our particular situation. As we near the end of the twentieth century (and the centenary of cinema) many colleague institutions seem closer to nineteenth-century libraries or museums than repositories of our major contemporary form of cultural expression and communication.

On the New Zealand Film Archive's side was our size ('Stay small', I remember as seminal advice from a friend at one of the more venerable and weighty European archives), our flexibility and our independence. From the outset we were committed to the dual aims of preservation and accessibility. The guidelines and standards as set out by the International Federation of Film Archives were relatively straightforward. They state clearly enough what we should do as a film archive in the fields of preservation, cataloguing, and documentation. Access, however, was not so clearly defined. There is a widespread (and not undeserved) view of archives as passive rather than active, aloof and exclusive rather than accessible and welcoming. Access by anyone not archivally or institutionally literate is, if not discouraged, then certainly not always made easy. Traditionally film-archive access was provided only on-site to serious researchers, or through specialist programming of national film theatres or cinemathèques.

Our problem was that we didn't have an archive cinema at all, neither were there copies available of the repertory of established 'classics' to show. Film making in New Zealand was largely local, personal and irregular, based primarily on non-fiction works such as documentaries, newsreels and sponsored films. It was not until the late 1970s that the country could even begin to speak of having a film 'industry' which produced a regular stream of fiction features. The country itself consists of two main and a number of smaller islands in the south-west Pacific, with a total land area about the size of Ecuador or Italy. At the southern tip of the Polynesian triangle, it has a population of 3.3 million, 13 per cent of whom are Maori, the *tangata whenua*, or 'first people of the land'.

The institution I had helped create was still strongly rooted in its European and monocultural concepts and value systems. For a New Zealand film archive to survive, however, it was very clear it would have to turn this around.

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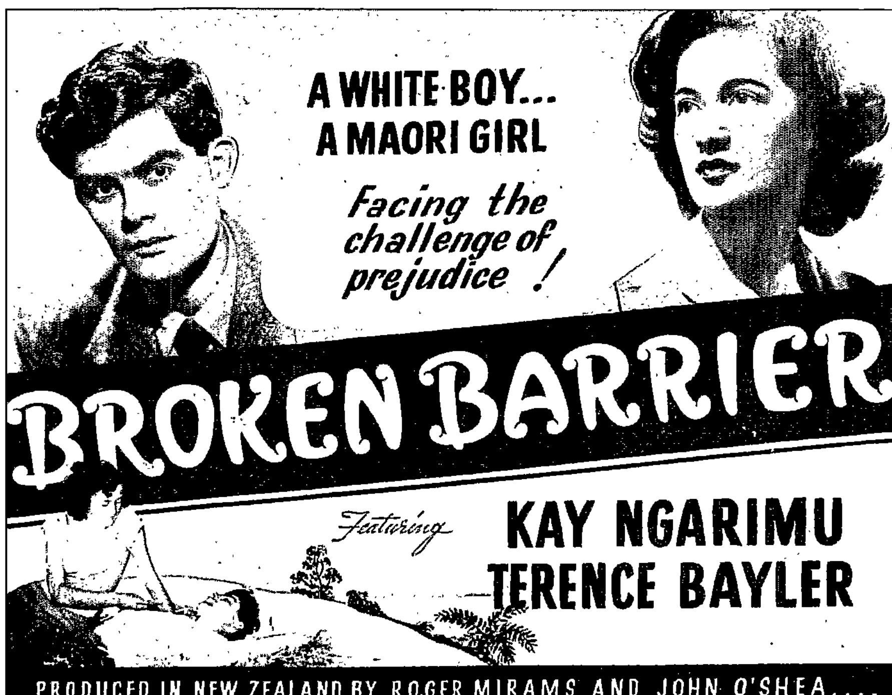

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Poster for the 1952 film, Broken Barrier.

We were aided in this process by a strong curiosity about the films this new archive was discovering or uncovering, and people, both Maori and Pakeha (those of European descent), wanted to see them. Many of the images that survived seemed to hold a special eloquence and still reflected just how personally films were taken by the people for whom they were made.

'Home movies' come home

What began almost by accident in 1983 came to be known as the New Zealand Film Archive's *Travelling Picture Shows.* These grew out of various preservation projects and eventually encompassed a way of returning and sharing the moving images in the archive's collections with people at local, regional and tribal levels. The archive had been invited to a small provincial city with copies of films made there around 1912. The response was immediate – people gathered to see them with an enthusiasm approaching that of when they were first made. The *Taranaki Herald* reported:

> It was quite evident that the local element in the programme was proving a big draw. . . . As scene after scene was unfolded before the audience, parents joyfully recognizing their own particular 'Jimmys' and 'Nellies' . . . gave vent to their feelings in little suppressed exclamations of satisfaction.

As preservation projects developed, wider invitations could be contemplated. After the rediscovery of a reel from a British-produced feature based on a popular Maori legend, *The Romance of Hine-Moa* (Gustav Pauli, 1928), made on location in the central North Island tourist town of Rotorua, people there expressed a strong desire to see it. Rotorua, with its geysers and boiling mud pools, combined with a strong local Maori community, was a convenient centre for many early film-making activities where Maori people were needed as exotic extras to enhance the scenery. A number of these early films had survived.

When I arrived in Rotorua there was a request from some of the local Maori elders to see the films I had brought with me in advance of the public screening. All the old people came, crammed into a little screening space, to see what I had brought. At the end they clearly would have been happy to watch everything all over again. I took some to a private home that night, to share with the family of someone who appeared in one of them. The same thing happened – we watched the films once, and then they wanted to see them all again.

By the time of the actual public presentation, in the requisitioned ballroom of a local tourist hotel, several hundred people had to be turned away. The response was astonishing. There was a terrific sense of excitement at being able to greet these images. It was as if a whole region's home movies had been returned. The occasion was deeply, enthusiastically and personally felt by both Maori and Pakeha alike.

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Photo taken by James McDonald during his filming expedition to the Whanganui River in 1921. The film, now called He Pito Whakaatui te Nohoate Maori te Awa o Whanganni/Scenes of Maori Life on the Whanganui River, *includes a similar scene showing the making of eel traps.*

The films were beginning to shape and change the archive's perceptions and methods of operating. To be a 'national' film archive was beginning to mean being responsible for offering balanced and equitable services far more widely than just in the city where the institution was based.

The changes became clearer over time and in turn offered new insights into the films themselves in ways that were more profound, more thought-provoking, more entertaining and richer than we could ever have imagined. The films were being given, as contemporary Maori film-maker Merata Mita puts it, 'back to the people, where, as I like to express as a film-maker, "the image taken from the people has been restored".'

The film archive went to particular lengths to engage in dialogues to ensure that material with indigenous content was seen by, and accessible to, those whose ancestors and lifestyle were the subject-matter. Whatever skills and qualifications I had in archiving, they had not necessarily prepared me well for dealing with living images. Initially this involved learning to regard these images not merely as documents, but as living objects with their own *wairua* (spiritual energy) and *mana* (authority, prestige, power).

The archive worked hard to take seriously the concepts embodied in its Maori name: *Nga Kaitiaki o nga Taonga Whitiahua* (the guardians of the treasured images of light). However it was clear after several increasingly turbulent years that really to fulfil its potential the archive would have to restructure itself. This entailed exploring with its various constituencies ways to make the archive's operations compatible with its bicultural aspirations without compromising acceptable archival standards or obligations.

The first step towards real change came with the development of a constitution in 1988 as the working document for the archive. This incorporated into the archive's policies and practices important principles regarding partnership, participation and protection for both Maori and Pakeha peoples. From this, it is hoped, real structural change can follow, allowing the archive properly to fulfil its role as *kaitiaki*, or guardian of the treasures placed in its trust. ■

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The 'house of collective dreams'

Dominique Païni

The first French film museum is due to open in Paris at the Palais de Tokyo, which used to house the National Photography Centre. Dominique Païni, director of the French film archive, the Cinémathèque Française, tells us here how appropriate that decision was.

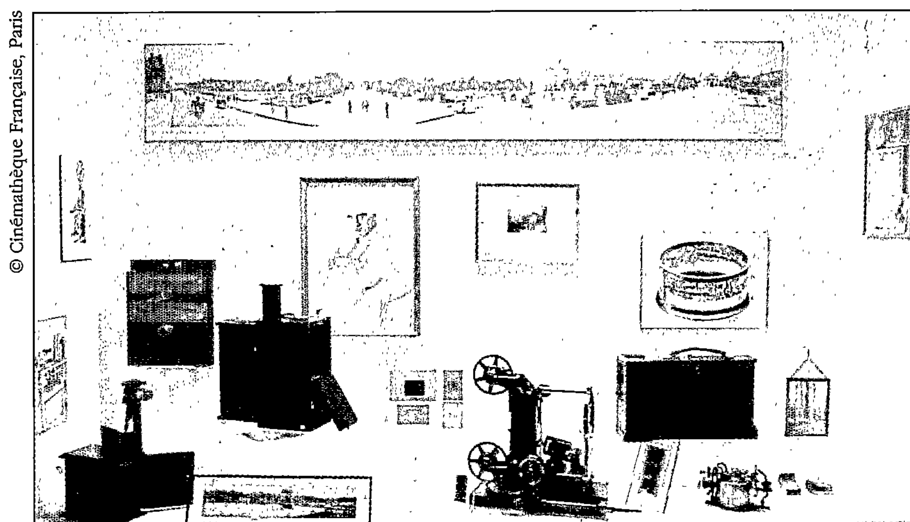
Dreams are the film-maker's stock in trade. Indeed, the cinematographic art was dreamt before it was invented – by Diderot, looking at the Fragonards on his visits to the 1765 Salon (letter to Grimm on the painting *Coresus Sacrifices Himself to Save Callirhoe*). Can a museum be imagined for such a dream? As yet, France still has no film museum capable of collecting, preserving and showing dreams and teaching the history of the major art of the twentieth century.

How far have we come since Langlois's first attempt at the Palais de Chaillot? The Cinémathèque Française, in fact film libraries in general, has a stormy sixty-odd-year history, marked by the jealously kept secrets of collections, fierce theoretical debate and the violently opposed personalities of the pioneers. The first stage began at the end of the 1920s when silent films gave way to the talkies. At stake was a sizeable chunk of cinema history which was in danger of being wiped out by industrial and commercial developments. Iris Barry in the United Kingdom and later the United States, and Henri Langlois in France, along with others, moved into action to preserve the silent classics.

The second stage came after the Second World War when the concern was no longer just to preserve but to demand recognition for film as art. In presenting the first major seasons of works by particular directors, Langlois started the trend towards the promotion of '*auteurisme*' and new critical attitudes and paved the way for the New Wave directors, who after studying the classics he had helped to reveal then went on to do otherwise.

The third stage is the present. Motion pictures are no longer the only leisure activity available to the public or their main source of images – images whose physical form (film must compete with videotape, videodisc and computer-generated pictures) and function (other media have taken on the task, in their own way, of reporting the 'news of the world') are now in the balance, at a time when the funding of cinema by television has modified its aesthetic. What then is being preserved in film libraries? One of the forms of the history of art, or the still living record of the origins of communication?

Film now benefits from heritage status, with preservation policies and legal de-



© Cinémathèque Française, Paris

A display in the Lumière Brothers Room showing various items of cinematographic equipment.

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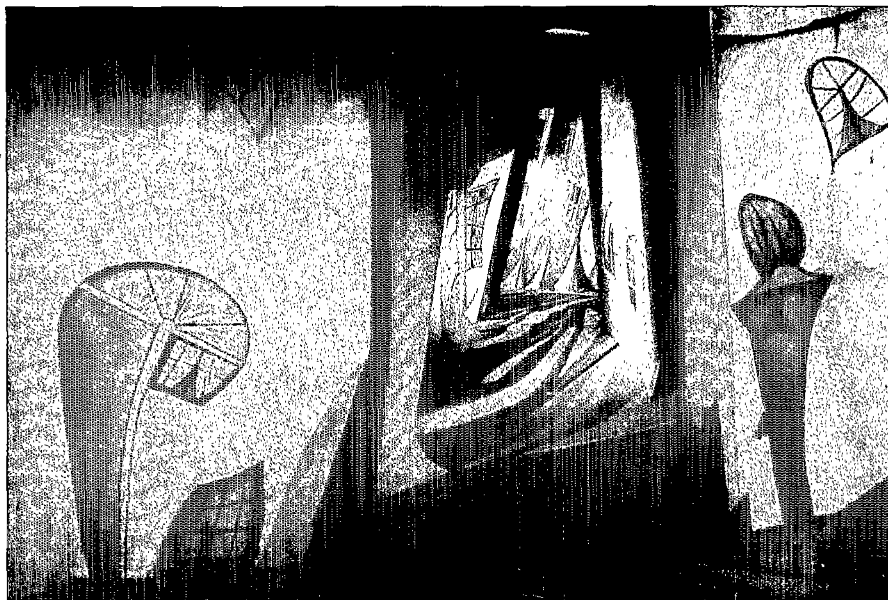

Décor of the film The Cabinet of Dr Caligari, *directed by Robert Wiene in 1920.*

posit. Aesthetic, philosophical and historical studies are made of it, which are gradually integrating it into the history of art. At the same time, film buffs can no longer, like cinema-goers of old, plot their way across a town, going from one cinema to another. This is mainly because there are fewer cinemas around, and those that remain are concentrated in the few areas with an active nightlife. Discovering films no longer means going on a romantic, labyrinthine journey. 'Early Christian-type' crypts like Ulm and Chaillot in Paris have lost their symbolic value even though the Cinémathèque Française has recovered its educational function in recent years.

But over and above all that, being a film buff no longer means what it used to. Film has ceased to be a counter-culture, held up against those symbols of establishment culture, the university and the museum. Now, cinema is on school syllabuses and the word '*cinémathèque*' has been taken over by cinema owners avid for cultural recognition.

This is not so radical a change as it might seem: film archives were indeed the direct descendants of modern museums, serving as places where common or garden objects are invested with an artistic aura. Putting together a season of films in some sort of meaningful sequence is not so far removed from the action of a Duchamp setting industrial objects (which include film) on a higher plane through the metonymic effect of the art collection, through the incorporation and contamination of the object in a museum.

A challenge to the age of individualization

Why then has the establishment of a genuine film museum always met with such stiff opposition? In the first place, because the artistically 'impure' status of film, its 'razzmatazz' (being part of show business), has resulted in a very belated awareness of the need to preserve it for its heritage value. This 'impurity' has also engendered a rather particular passion, that of the film buffs who, and this is the second reason, have shied away from official or monumental forms of expression. Film lore has tended to be a secret lore, smuggled out of the temples of the seventh art behind the backs of its merchants. Cinemas have long been a common stamping ground for lowbrow and highbrow audiences, and this has rendered the 'museologization' of the cinema superfluous.

Television and video are putting an end to this dual dimension of cinema-going: now we can all watch films in our own homes. Cinema has not escaped the great wave of individualization that marks the close of this century, destroying in one fell swoop a cultural diversity that was once gaining ground in a supposedly homogeneous public. That is why, in this age of individualization, the museum, Walter Benjamin's 'house of collective dreams', is part of the challenge facing the cinema.

Time, the very nature of the matter of film, is an additional complication in designing a museum for the cinema. How can time be exhibited? This is a question central to the development of a museography specific to the film-maker's art and dominates thinking about how to make the best of the whole

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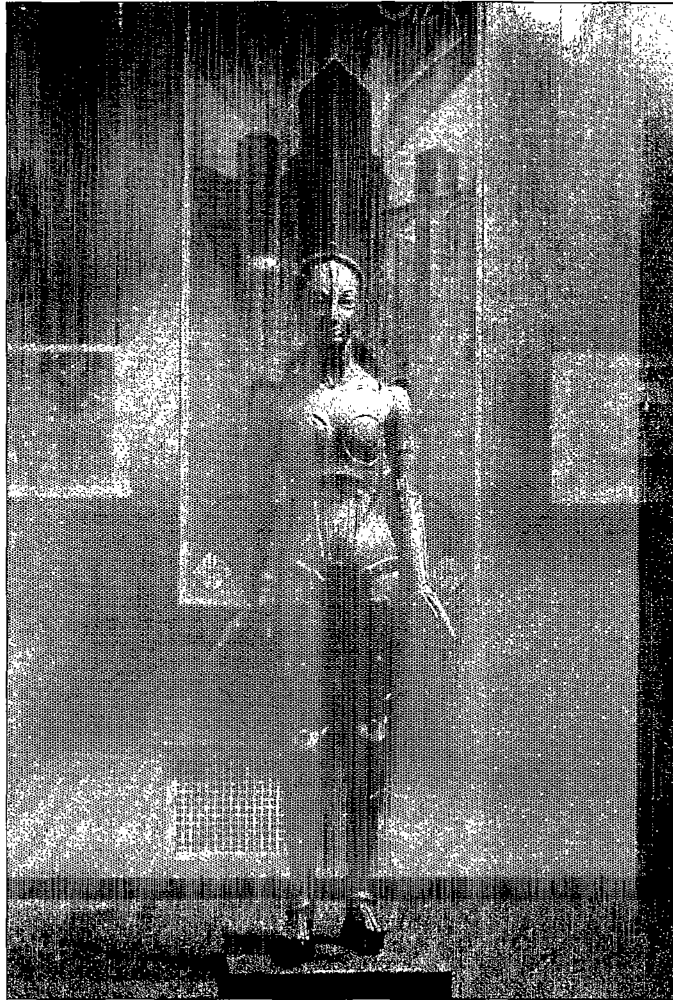
collection of the Cinémathèque Française, which does not consist of films alone. There are, for instance, the scroll paintings of Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling, Oskar Fischinger's gouaches, Duchamp's Rotoreliefs, the futurist gouaches of Survage, surrealist objects from Man Ray's films, Fox Talbot's prints, the drawings and serigraphs made by the Russian constructivists for propaganda films, countless posters, some drawn by the great actor Alain Cuny and some by Fernand Léger, set designs by Bilinsky and by Trauner, etc.

This is a deliberately random list, which must suffice until the general public can actually see the treasures that are currently stored in the Cinémathèque's inadequate warehouses, which any of the great museums of modern art would be proud to display. Indeed, recently museums have opened with a tenth of such a collection.

As long ago as 1961 Henri Langlois observed:

> The museum of cinematographic art is a museum not of a technology but of an art which, since 1909, has been at the meeting point and crossroads of all the artistic schools and disciplines. The items it contains have consequently been produced by some of the most prestigious names and movements in twentieth-century art: Picasso and Léger, Boldini and Marinetti, Survage and Viking Eggeling, Exter and Alexandre Benois, Man Ray and Salvador Dali, Cavalcanti and Siqueiros, Mallet-Stevens and Poelzig, Erik Satie and Prokofiev, German expressionism, of which the Cinémathèque possesses nearly 300 items, constructivism and maximalism of which the Cinémathèque owns the only collections outside the Soviet Union, Noh, kabuki, the popular art of the United States and pop art, not to mention the great film-makers.



© Cinémathèque Française, Paris

Robot from the film Metropolis, *directed by Fritz Lang in 1927.*

This substantive problem is compounded by others. There is the legal question of how to make acquisitions lawfully and without depending on other archives, and then there is the architectural question of how to encompass the history of an art that has condensed into 100 years aesthetic transformations comparable to those that have taken other arts several centuries.

In the current remodelling of the Palais de Tokyo, these are the essential challenges to be met in the run-up to 1995, anniversary year of an art of which France is the near-legendary powerhouse. ■

Note

This article first appeared in the newspaper *Le Monde* on 25 June 1993 under a different title. – Ed.

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Accent on conservation: the National Film Archive of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Pak Sun Tai

The National Film Archive of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made significant strides in applying a host of methods and techniques to preserve its more than 400,000 reels of film. Pak Sun Tai, director of the archive, explains.

The National Film Archive of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the country's only film archive, is housed in modern buildings with an overall capacity to preserve 700,000 reels.

A Film Archive was established in Pyongyang in February 1961, but lacked the necessary conservation buildings and equipment. As a result, films made in the country were kept in the individual production studios, while imported ones were stored by the import-export company.

Photo by courtesy of the author

Poster for the film A Flower Girl.

The country's leader, Kim Jong Il, inquired about the situation of the Film Archive and then took the initiative of creating a modern film archive as a global structure for film conservation. He declared that the originals of films were priceless state property, and that the work done to preserve film documents was of very great importance. He approved the plan for the construction of the Film Archive, attaching major significance to it, and even going on to choose the site for it himself in one of the best locations. He ensured that all construction costs would be borne by the state.

The buildings of the Film Archive now occupy a total surface area of 20,000 m^2, including the documentation section of 3,000 m^2 and an underground gallery of 660 m^2.

In 1961, the Film Archive was a corresponding member of FIAF. It became an observer at the twenty-ninth Congress of the latter in 1973, and was granted full membership in May 1974 at its thirtieth Congress.

The Film Archive, which is a non-profit-making institution, has no source of income. The state allocates an annual budget to it of 500,000 won ($250,000) for carrying out its activities, which are, *inter alia*, acquisition, preservation and external relations. Its primary purpose is to collect all kinds of films (artistic, documentary, scientific, etc.), conserve them in the long term and put them to rational use.

Its initial efforts were aimed at recovering the film documents produced in our country before and after the liberation, as well as during the war of liberation. During this latter period, many films were lost or burned and the documentaries made by war correspondents had disappeared without trace. It succeeded in recovering a

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large number of them by appealing to all the country's cinematographic institutions, and to film archives and entrepreneurs of foreign countries. It is now responsible for the copyrighting of all films made in the country, with the negative and a copy for archiving being deposited at the Film Archive on the completion of each film. In addition, the Film Archive actively collects films made in foreign countries, and, being a member of FIAF, has been able to obtain thousands of films through exchanges with its foreign counterparts. A new copy of each imported film is deposited with the Film Archive.

As a film museum, it puts its collections at the disposal of the general public. It possesses a cinema in town (600 seats) and four rooms in its own buildings (50 seats each) in which retrospective documentaries and other films are frequently shown. The Film Archive regularly loans out its collections to specialists and universities, at their request. Under the country's legislation, all loans are free.

Conservation suited to the country

The Film Archive has drawn on the successful experience obtained worldwide in the preservation of films to establish conservation conditions which are suited to the country, thus gaining much experience itself. It is proud of the fact that it has no nitrate films among the 400,000 reels in its collection. All the nitrate films were transferred to acetate reels in the mid-1970s, and each new nitrate film is transferred when it is received.

Technical personnel systematically measured the rate of change in image thicknesses over a period of fifteen years, and came to the conclusion that black-and-white films kept at a temperature of +12°C and relative humidity of 50-60 per cent and colour ones at a temperature of –5°C and relative humidity of 30-40 per cent would remain stable for over 100 years. The Film Archive established a unitary system of air conditioning in conformity with these standards. Twenty years of research on mildew led to the conclusion that, under present conservation conditions, anti-corrosion treatment was not required to forestall the growth and spread of fungi. Technical personnel created, and put in each place of conservation, a gauge for detecting any vinegar syndrome as soon as it started. When the gauges revealed any deterioration in a film, it was washed and repaired before being put back in storage. The formula for a new detergent has been completed. Research work aimed at safeguarding this twentieth-century heritage is still continuing.

The Film Archive staff, in the same way as people who work in the cinema throughout the world, are intent on celebrating the centenary of the cinema. In conjunction with the management of the Film Archive, they plan to organize a variety of national events:

In order to increase public awareness, the magazine *Korean Cinema* and other similar publications have begun to publish the programme of events, thus creating an appropriate social climate.

A retrospective view of the Korean cinema is to be organized in April and September 1994.

An international festival of the cinema of Third World countries will be organized in April 1995.

An exhibition of posters and photographs will be mounted to show the different stages in the development of cinema. ■

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Gosfilmofond: the film archive of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Y. Dmitriev

Despite political upheavals and economic stress, Russia's premier film archive has played a major role in safeguarding the country's inestimable cinematographic heritage. The author is Gosfilmofond's Deputy Director-General for International Relations and head of its Scientific Information Centre. He is active in the work of the International Federation of Film Archives and has written articles on the history of the cinema.

The government decree setting up Gosfilmofond, the Soviet state film archive, was signed on 4 October 1948, more than fifty years after the official 'birthday' of the cinema on 28 December 1895. Russia's main cinema archive is thus the child, or perhaps grandchild, of this great twentieth-century art form.

The establishment of Gosfilmofond was preceded by long arguments. First there were heated disputes with art specialists who made the collective nature of film-making and its industrial basis a reason for relegating the cinema to the secondary role of impartial chronicler of an ever-changing reality, or else illustrator of literary works. They contrasted the uniqueness of a painting, of which there is only one copy, with a film of which any number of copies can be printed. After these, many more material factors came into play. In the Soviet Union, the cinema was called upon to play a primarily ideological role and was directly influenced by current circumstances, the tastes of those in authority and the demands of the current political situation, so that what one day was thought to be essential soon came to be regarded as meaningless, harmful or even dangerous. The regime, which liked to cover its traces, looked with suspicion upon archives, whose main purpose was precisely to preserve records and 'evidence', albeit wrapped up in an artistic form.

The first timid attempts to set up a state film archive were made in the 1930s by members of the staff of the All-Union Institute of Cinematography, but despite their heroic efforts the paucity of the funds available and the suspicious attitude of the authorities prevented them from achieving anything worthwhile; they nevertheless deserve the credit for being the pioneers in this field.

The situation changed after the end of the Second World War. The film archives had suffered badly and had been dispersed throughout the Soviet Union. Space had also to be found to house the film taken as war trophies in Germany after the overthrow of the Nazi regime. The question of establishing an archive institution to be responsible for tracking down, restoring, printing and preserving film materials was put on the agenda, and this time neither the cultural nor even the ideological arguments were allowed to stand in the way. A first step in this direction was the decision taken at the highest level – which therefore had to be unswervingly carried out – that all film studios, film-hire offices, and related institutions and organizations should be obliged to submit the films in their possession to what was to become Gosfilmofond. It was at this time, in the first five to seven years of its existence, that the basis of its constantly growing collections was laid.

The 1948 decree made Gosfilmofond responsible for the conservation of feature films, including animated and popular scientific films, while Soviet and Russian documentaries and newsreels were brought together in a different archive.

Since its foundation forty-six years ago, Gosfilmofond, sited in the township of Belye Stolby, 50 kilometres from Moscow, has grown to become one of the world's largest collections. As a member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), it has working relations with similar institutions in dozens of countries. Beginning with a few hundred copies, it has increased its holdings to nearly 55,000 titles, including quite a number of cinematographic rarities which have been preserved only because for the staff members responsible for hunting the films

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The director V. Pudovkin with posters of his films.

down and looking after them this was not only a job but their main purpose in life. Whatever the changes in the political situation, the film archives consistently upheld the principle that the whole of the national film output, regardless of artistic value, should be preserved. It was not and could not be for any one person to make a selection and in his or her own name issue films with a passport to the future. In all the history of Gosfilmofond, not a centimetre of film was ever destroyed unless replaced by a full duplicate print.

One point of particular importance in the many international discussions concerning archive conservation has been the dispute over what should be done with films shot on inflammable nitrate stock. The great risk involved – the fact that such films can catch fire owing to negligence, or by spontaneous combustion if not properly stored – caused some researchers to begin insisting that old films, including the original negatives, should be destroyed. Other experts argued, on the contrary, that the originals were cultural treasures comparable to the incunabulae kept in libraries. Each side was right in its own way, and Gosfilmofond tried to find a solution after listening to both sides of the case. Some of the nitrate stock had nevertheless to be destroyed because of fear that the whole collection might go up in flames, but the original negatives were transferred to special storage areas for permanent conservation.

Reclaiming the past

One of Gosfilmofond's most important tasks is to produce the fullest possible master copies of all the films made in the country. Suffice it to say that, to take an example from the 1970s alone, after years of research carried out with the help of the Mosfilm studio, it was possible to put Sergei Eisenstein's masterpiece *The Battleship Potemkin* back together again, inserting frames that had been missing. The inserts were, of course, very small, but in the case of great works of art even the smallest scientifically justified modifications are important, not least because the absence of a few centimetres of stock can alter the whole rhythm of a sequence.

There is one phenomenon that is peculiar to the Soviet cinema or at least unfamiliar elsewhere. Some films, particularly those made in the 1930s and 1940s or even later, exist in several versions. They were merci-

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lessly truncated, re-edited or dubbed with the voices of different actors. This was not as a rule because, after a certain time, the film directors themselves thought a new version was needed. The motives for this were changes in the political situation in the country. The violence so successfully perpetrated against history by official propaganda led, in the case of the cinema, to ruthless pruning of the originals of several classic films. The examples are legion. First, depictions of Trotsky were excised, then those of Stalin and finally those of Khrushchev. The director Mikhail Romm re-edited his films *Lenin in October* and *Lenin in 1918* with his own hands, so as to avoid even the slightest mention of Stalin's participation in the October Revolution. When Beria's thugs killed the leading Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels, a short sequence in which he appeared was cut out of Grigoriy Aleksandrov's film *The Circus*. The list is a long one; these were not the most glorious pages in the history of Soviet cinema.

No one is entitled to pass judgement; the staff of Gosfilmofond have done, and continue to do, everything possible to restore the original versions of films, making use of miraculously preserved copies, including some obtained from their colleagues in FIAF. The history of this art form, however unpleasant it may have been, must be told to posterity as it was, and only posterity is entitled to pass sentence.

The list of Soviet films that were banned by the censors is also a long one. It would be wrong to think that most of them were films made in the 1960s and 1970s. The process began in the 1920s and continued uninterruptedly for more than fifty years. This dismal catalogue includes films by Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, Mikhail Kalatozov and Abram Roon, Marlen Khutsiev's *Illyich's Gate*, Aleksandr Askoldov's *The Commissar*, *A Bad Joke* by Aleksandr Alov and Vladimir Naumov, and many others. When, with the beginning of glasnost, the question of lifting

© Natalya Yakovleva, Gosfilmofond

Still photo from the film The Battleship Potemkin, *1925. Directed by Sergei Eisenstein.*

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the ban and issuing these films arose, it turned out that Gosfilmofond had preserved the vast majority of them, in the form in which they had been originally made, thus saving them from oblivion and destruction for the benefit of world culture. If anyone still had any doubts as to the need for film archives, they were then dispelled.

Celebrating the centenary

Gosfilmofond's international activities merit a separate chapter in its history. From the moment when it joined FIAF, it established contacts with many other film libraries and did everything possible to maintain its place in the international archive community. Even during the most difficult years of the Cold War, it kept up those contacts and did not allow political interests to affect the way it operated. Gosfilmofond sent over 10,000 copies of films to other members of the Federation and received several thousand copies in return from them.

Although films – Russian, Soviet or foreign – constitute the bulk of its holdings and the *raison d'être* of the institution, it also has collections of scripts, dialogue lists, posters, stills, publicity material and other cinematic artefacts. All its holdings are open to students, researchers, historians, directors, cameramen and artists. Gosfilmofond incontestably occupies a unique place in film-making today. There is hardly anyone connected with the cinema, whether an acknowledged expert, a budding scholar or simply a cinema-goer who regularly attends the Illyuzion cinemathèque in Moscow, who does not know and appreciate the work of Gosfilmofond.

The forthcoming centenary of cinematography is without exaggeration a red-letter day for the staff of film archives, thanks to whose hard work, knowledge and skill many thousands of films have been saved for posterity. Gosfilmofond approaches this centenary confident in the knowledge that it has carried out its basic task: it has built up a collection, preserved it and kept it together in spite of attempts to break it up. Much, however remains to be done. There may be small archives that have copies of Russian or Soviet films that were

© Natalya Yakovleva, Gosfilmofond

Poster by the constructivist artist Isaac Rabitchev for the film A Cigarette Pedlar Girl from Mosselprom, *1924. Directed by Yuri Zhelyabuzhsky.*

previously thought to be lost forever; they need to be retrieved. There are still difficulties in developing contacts with film archives in some countries; everything possible needs to be done to persuade them of the mutual benefit of exchanges. Unfortunately – and this is a permanent headache for Gosfilmofond – because of its economic problems Russia is not in a position to allocate the resources needed to build new, up-to-date storage facilities, to purchase specialized equipment and to introduce state-of-the-art technology for the conservation of cinema materials. And who knows when the situation will improve?

Life goes on nevertheless. On the occasion of the centenary of the cinema, Gosfilmofond hopes to be able to show some rare items from its collection. One of these is an unfinished film by the great director Aleksandr Dovzhenko, *Farewell America!*, a very curious relic of the late 1940s, the time of United States–Soviet confrontation. It may also be possible to restore another work that was banned by the censors, *Our Songs*, another unfinished film, by Sergei Vasilev, one of the directors of the celebrated film *Chapaev*. There are other similar projects. New filmographic manuals will be issued, and there will be special cinema and television screenings and exhibitions. Young Russian directors have started or are about to start compiling films on the basis of material kept in Gosfilmofond. These films will take a fresh look at the history of the cinema, at the traditional mythology of screen images and at the way in which artistic and ideological problems were thrashed out and resolved. We hope to make some unexpected discoveries and reach some original conclusions along the way. Particular emphasis is given in Gosfilmofond's plans to its participation in FIAF international cinema projects.

Although forward-looking, Gosfilmofond is in at least one respect conservative. It keeps its films on celluloid stock. Videocassettes and other modern material carriers of audiovisual information are used only as an auxiliary and not as a replacement for the original film materials.

Cine film as a means of preserving moving images may disappear in the future and give way to something else. In that case, Gosfilmofond will remain not only as an archive but as a monument to a great art, and its new staff members will not allow the precious celluloid footage, invaluable records of our times and documents of the cinematic art, to fade into oblivion. By helping film archives, in the same way as by helping libraries and museums, humanity is given another chance of immortality. ■

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The Museum of the Moving Image in London

Leslie Hardcastle

A newcomer to the museum world, the Museum of the Moving Image was an instant success. In 1992, only four years after its opening, it was crowned with the Grand Prix of the first Tourmusé Competition sponsored by the International Council of Museums and the Group of National Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations within the European Community. Cited for having broken new ground with its promotion and advertising and its special exhibitions, the museum has regularly maintained a place in the top ten London admission charging attractions. Leslie Hardcastle, curator of the museum, explains why.

The Museum of the Moving Image in London is now six years old and has attracted more than 2.5 million visitors. MOMI, as it has become known, has also been the recipient of seventeen awards, ranging from 'outstanding new tourist attractions' to international awards for 'cultural merit'.

The overall aim of the museum is to educate the widest possible audience in the history, production process and critical understanding of the moving image. This is achieved through a comprehensive policy of collection, conservation and display of moving-image artefacts within their social context.

The basis of MOMI comprises several overlaid chronologies: the development of film as an art form; the development of television as a major force in our lives; the development of the two respective technologies; and the background of the socio-political history of our times.

The museum was designed as an introduction to the study of the history and development of film and television and to satisfy the needs of both the knowledgeable and the uninitiated. A casual visitor seldom leaves the museum without being touched or influenced in some way.

MOMI is also an educational experience for the whole family. It attempts to maintain a unique balance between education and entertainment and has pioneered new ways of presentation and communication. It was always the intention of its creators that MOMI, despite its flamboyant style, should be a museum in the truest sense of the word. Despite some initial opposition, MOMI is now accepted as a museum by its peers and it works hard to retain that distinction.

Education is central to the purpose of MOMI and the Education Department concentrates on making a visit to the museum as meaningful and accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. Thousands of children and school groups visit the museum each year on their own initiative. The Education Department in its study rooms provides a pre- and post-visit service to about 1,200 formal education groups per year, involving a total of more than 35,000 schoolchildren and adults. The work of the department centres around the requirements of the National Curriculum and the provision of a broad range of educational activities that not only relate to media studies but also to other curriculum subjects, such as English, contemporary history, photography, biology, foreign languages and culture.

The multi-ethnic and social mix of London schools requires the MOMI education officers to cater for many different groups. They have been particularly successful in providing services for people with special needs, ranging from those with hearing difficulties to children with learning difficulties to those who are partially sighted or blind. The appeal of the Museum of the Moving Image to the latter group is at first amazing until it is realized that MOMI is a hands-on museum, with a great deal of relevant background sound; in other words, it is also a museum of experience and participation.

One of the many innovative features of the museum has been the use of specially trained actors to explain, demonstrate and involve visitors in the film and television process. Faced with the fact that the Local Government Licensing Department insisted that there must be at all times a certain number of staff on duty to evacuate 1,000 people in case of emergency, the decision was made that these staff members should

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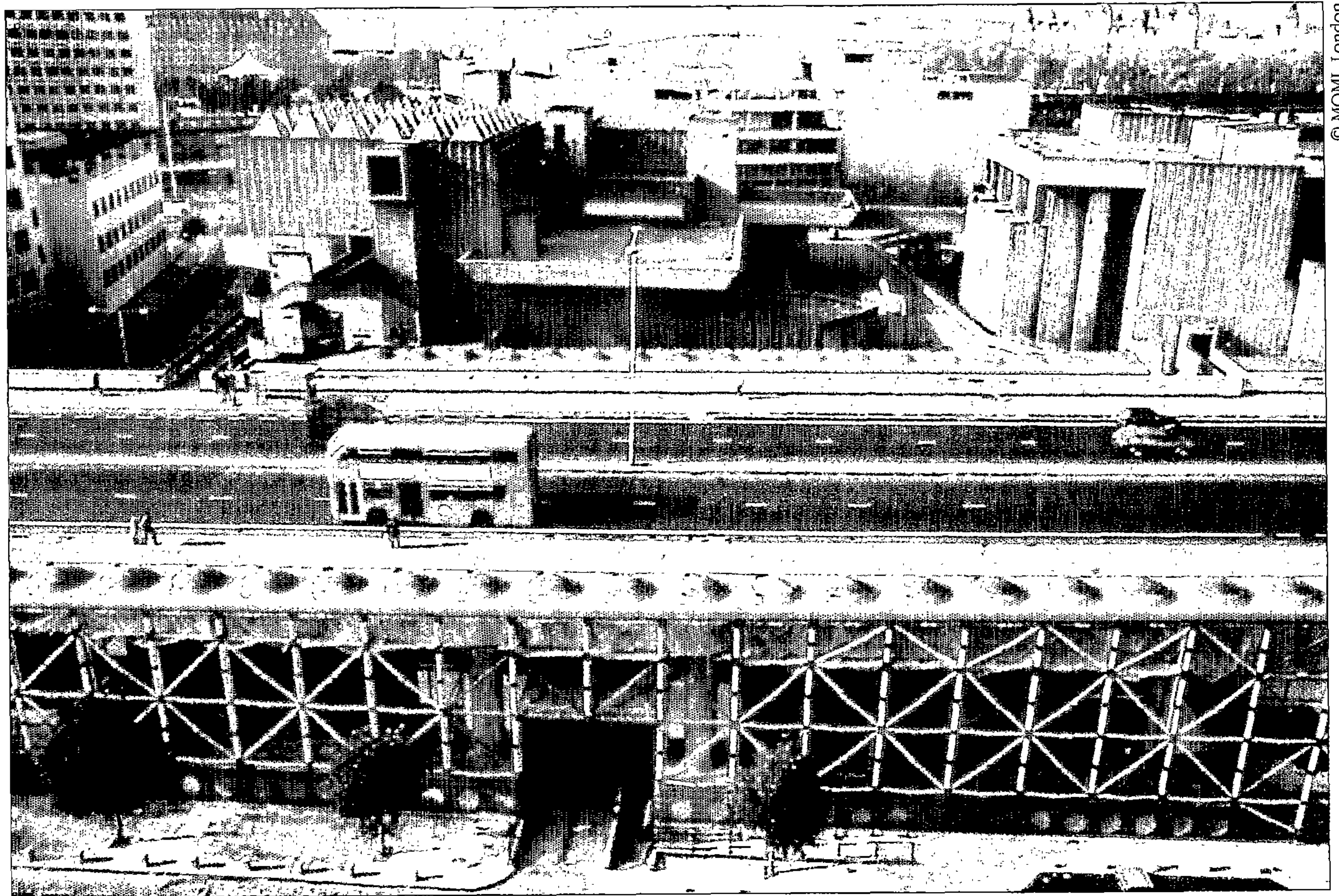
© MOMI, London

MOMI is built between Waterloo Bridge and an access road. The museum's roof is in fact the bridge road.

become part of the exhibit and should fulfil an educational as well as a security role. The Actors' Company is now a vital part of the museum's Outreach Programme, which involves a variety of educational work, from pro-active school visits to the production of educational videos based on the work of the museum. Ambitious plans exist to take MOMI on tour, comprising two ten-week tours of cultural centres throughout the United Kingdom as part of the Cinema Centenary celebrations.

'Nothing was left to chance'

MOMI shows how humanity has used moving images from the days of the Asian shadow plays of 2000 B.C. to the development of the cinematographic and electronic television images of the twentieth century. It explores concerns ranging from pre-cinema, the film as propaganda to television as a major force in our lives. As the story it tells is so vast, the use of icons is frequent: a carriage from a Russian agitprop train (*Cinema and Revolution*); a hand of enormous proportions with emerging ants (*Bunuel and the Avant-Garde*); to a full-scale replica of an Odeon cinema (*British Cinema and Cinema Architecture*).

The museum is laid out chronologically, with exhibits designed to satisfy three levels of appreciation: (a) the informed visitor; (b) the young visitor seeking an introduction to the history of film and television; and (c) the casual visitor who has no preconceived ideas about the subject.

The exhibits were designed according to a strict and detailed design brief, which anticipated how the museum would work, how the visitors would react and how the design should look. Nothing was left to chance and every effort and reaction has been anticipated or pre-planned. The design brief comprised thirty-three sections, which ad-

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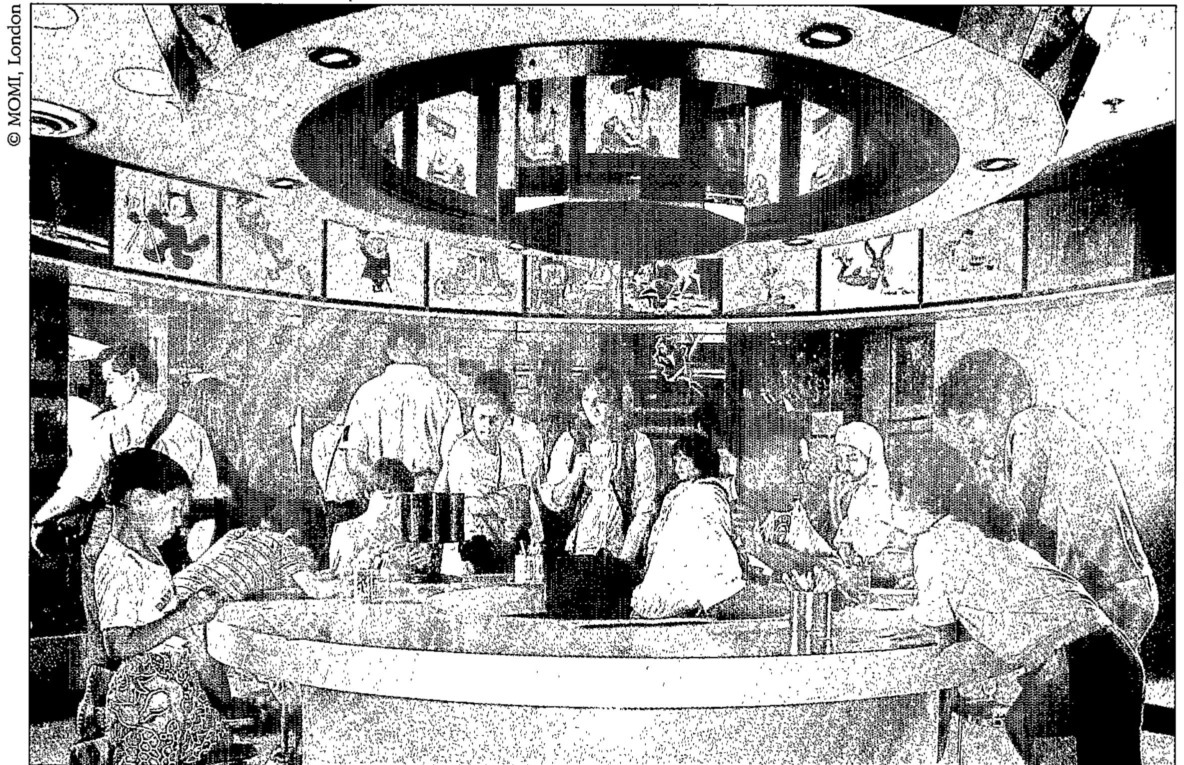
MOMI Catalogue, used at the time of the museum's 1988 launch.

dressed such key elements as flow patterns, exhibition rhythm, levels of appreciation, use of sound, guards as guides, content and display emphasis, languages used, duration of stay and videodisc usage.

As it is a Museum of the Moving Image, most exhibits contain an element of moving image – in fact, there are over 1,000 film and television extracts contained in the total exhibition area, the majority of which



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An exhibit describing various methods of animation encourages young visitors to make their own zoetrope strips.

are transmitted on laser-videodiscs from seventy-two laser-disc recorders. In addition, there are five 35 mm and two 16 mm film projections. Information is transmitted onto video monitors and skilfully absorbed into the design of each exhibit covering the period prior to 1952. It is only at that point that the visitor sees a television monitor overtly displayed. All technical appliances and services are controlled from a single control room, which is visible to the public and is an exhibit in its own right. The duty technicians work in full view of all visitors, as indeed the cinema projectionists do, behind a glass-walled projection box to the rear of the museum's cinema. A visit to the cinema is automatic as all visitors have to walk through it as part of the museum tour. They can see a programme of extracts from key film and television productions which runs on a continuous basis throughout the day. In the evenings, a different feature is shown in repertory every day as part of the 360 Treasures from the National Film and Television Archive series. These programmes form part of the 2,000 that include television programmes that are shown each year at the National Film Theatre, which occupies the adjacent archway forming part of Waterloo Bridge.

The museum architect, Bryan Avery, designed a building which astonishes many in the sheer quantity of space it captures beneath Waterloo Bridge. It also sports a 73-metre wall of movie images behind a vast sheet of glass, supported by a lacework of white painted steel – quite beautiful when the sun sparkles against it. MOMI has circular windows on the other side – large aluminium eyes that stare across to the Royal Festival Hall, the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Hayward Gallery, which together with the Royal National Theatre constitute MOMI's neighbours. There is a main deck with an undercroft of similar size (25,000 m^2) below and a mezzanine floor (288 m^2) above. The mezzanine holds a series of visiting exhibitions and special shows. The main deck holds the principal exhibition of forty or more exhibits which tell the story of film and television since the First World War. The undercroft contains exhibits covering earlier periods (all forms of images as far back as cave paintings) as well as housing the Wolfson Study Unit.

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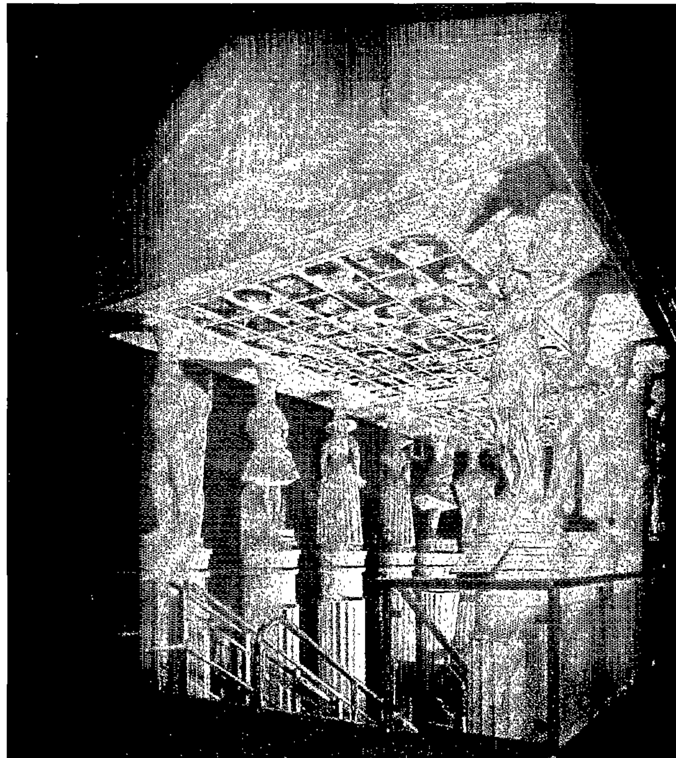
MOMI was financed entirely from private donations, the largest of which came from the late Sir Y. K. Pau, the Chinese shipping magnate, and Sir Paul Getty. The building cost £10 million and the exhibition £14 million. No contribution was received from any government source.

Focusing on the future

There are museums in the world which are concerned with pre-cinema toys or with the development of cinematography and television production, but MOMI is the only museum that attempts to relate the entire history of moving images. The story it tells is enthralling, important and relevant to the lives of the average citizen. It is a story to which most people can relate, the viewing of cinema and television images taking up such a considerable part of our leisure hours. In 1946, 1,635 million cinema tickets were sold in the United Kingdom; in 1993, the average 18-year-old will have viewed two years of television and video. For more than fifty years, our lives have been dominated by moving images. People's social background and political beliefs, their appreciation of others, sometimes their misconceptions of 'how things really are', are all influenced by what they see in the cinema and on the television screen, for 'seeing is believing'. Within the realm of moving images, misunderstanding and enlightenment go hand in hand.

The story continues to evolve. The impact on our daily lives of the moving images of the new video technology, fibre-optic cable-distribution systems, satellite television and other innovations remains to be fully understood. MOMI is concerned with the visual literacy of young people and their need to challenge and understand the origins of the technological revolution in transmission systems that will undoubtedly occur within the next decade. If this revolution in everyday communications proves to be as far-reaching as has been predicted, the effects on our lives could be startling. An opportunity to examine the possible direction and consequences, based on the existing knowledge of communications systems portrayed in the museum, is important and timely. A focus on the future based on analysis or understanding derived from past experience is arguably the most important aspect of the museum.

MOMI is the brainchild of David Francis, OBE, now of the Library of Congress, Washington (then curator of the National Film Archive, London); Leslie Hardcastle, OBE, curator of MOMI (then controller of the National Film Theatre, London); David Robinson (film historian); and Tony Smith, CBE, president of Magdalen College, Oxford (then director of the British Film Institute). The technology was supervised by Charles Beddow, MBE, and the exhibition designed by Neal Potter. It is supported by the resources of the British Film Institute and with contributions from others, especially film and television producers. ■



© MOMI, London

Temple for the Gods *is a transition exhibit covering the period between the First World War and the coming of sound which celebrates the great stars of the silent screen.*

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The movies at MOMA: the first cinema museum in the United States

Mary Lea Bandy

The Museum of Modern Art in New York set its sights on placing the most popular entertainment medium of the time in an artistic and educational context. Convinced that 'the only great art peculiar to the twentieth century' merited the same sound curatorial approach as other forms of artistic expression, the museum (known to all as MOMA) from the outset worked hand in hand with the pioneers of the American cinema. Mary Lea Bandy, formerly director of the Department of Film at MOMA, has been, since 1993, chief curator of its expanded Department of Film and Video. She has been curator of a number of film series, including one on the Cannes International Film Festival, and has co-edited Jean-Luc Godard: Son + Image, *New York, 1992.*

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a cinema museum in the United States, that is, a museum devoted exclusively to collecting original motion pictures and artefacts relating to their production and exhibition. In our vast nation, there are only three museums that collect and preserve original 35 mm film materials, and they are all museums of art: the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the International Museum of Photography, Rochester, New York; and the University Art Museum, Berkeley, California. The other major film archives are at the Library of Congress and the National Archive in Washington, D.C., and the University of California in Los Angeles. The principal collections and activities at these institutions are not related to film; they are divisions or departments of larger cultural and educational institutions. And this is what distinguishes the American approach to archiving cinema's history: we have developed regional and federal archives, which taken together hold the bulk of original materials of the American cinema, as well as an extensive sampling of international films. Additionally, we collect equipment and artefacts including photos, posters, publicity and production materials; so, too, does our newest partner in this effort to preserve our cinema heritage, the American Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, New York, but it does not collect original film materials.

The Museum of Modern Art's Film Library was unique in concept and content when it was established in 1935, and the story of its origin is, like the museum itself, glamorous and serious in equal measure. At that time in the United States there were no museum film programmes, no film festivals, repertory theatres, graduate schools of cinema studies, or twenty-four-hour television movie channels. There were, instead, lavish movie palaces playing the newest Hollywood sound films to more than 100 million people each week. The museum's first film curator, Iris Barry, wanted to make it clear that the work of the new Film Library would be 'first and foremost to create a consciousness of tradition and of history within the new art of film'. Its goal would be to present the world's most popular entertainment in an educational context, to 'assemble a collection of motion picture films suitable for illustrating the important steps historically and artistically in the development of motion pictures from their inception and making the said collection available at reasonable rates to colleges, schools, museums, and other educational institutions'.

This was a radical notion, indeed, and it proved possible to realize at the Museum of Modern Art because it fitted the vision of the museum's founding director, Alfred Barr. A 'modern' museum had been conceived both to bridge the gap between avant-garde artists and the public, and to promote the appreciation and understanding of the visual arts of the modern era. Alfred Barr had been influenced by his studies with art historian Charles Rufus Morey, who taught a course at Princeton University which focused on the principal medieval visual arts as a record of a period of civilization: architecture, sculpture, paintings on walls and in books, stained-glass windows. Barr applied Morey's medieval model to the twentieth century, and he in turn taught modern painting and sculpture, together with film, photography, music, theatre, architecture and industrial design. He also visited the Bauhaus at Dessau, Germany, where theatre, cinema, and photography were taught alongside the fine arts; it is the Bauhaus that is considered his model for the organization of the museum as a multi-departmental institution, including the so-called commercial and popular arts as well as 'fine' arts.

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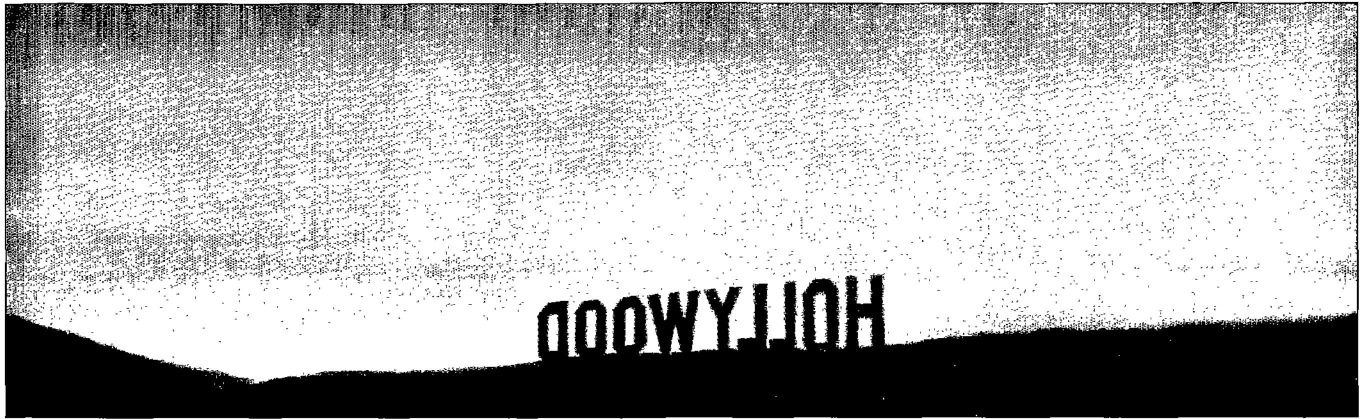

© Musée Saint Pierre Art Contemporain, Lyons (France)

Back of Hollywood, *1977, by Edward Ruscha. Oil on canvas.*

For the museum's opening exhibition, in November 1929, Barr organized a historical survey of four pioneers of modern art, Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat and Van Gogh. He developed an exhibition roster that included current as well as historical retrospectives of the art of Europe and America, and this became the structure of museum programmes for decades to come, and precisely that followed by Iris Barry.

In 1932 Alfred Barr commented:

> People who are well acquainted with modern painting or literature or the theatre are amazingly ignorant of modern film. The work and even the names of such masters as Gance, Stiller, Clair, Dupont, Pudovkin, Feyder, Chaplin [as a director], Eisenstein and other great directors are, one can hazard, practically unknown to the Museum's Board of Trustees, most of whom are very well informed in other modern arts. . . . It may be said without exaggeration that the only great art peculiar to the twentieth century is practically unknown to the American public most capable of appreciating it.

Convincing Hollywood

The exception to Barr's premise was John Hay Whitney, a museum trustee and prominent art collector, who had acquired a major interest in the new Technicolor film process and started a production company, Pioneer Pictures, whose principal producer was Merian Cooper, the producer of *King Kong.* In the mid-1930s he entered into a partnership with producer David O. Selznick, which would culminate three years later with *Gone With the Wind.* Whitney agreed to serve as chairman of the Film Library, and he sent Iris Barry to Hollywood to persuade industry leaders to donate films for the Film Library. He arranged for her to be received by Hollywood's nobility, at a reception at Pickfair, the famous home of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. She showed films and argued convincingly that movies should be deposited in a museum. Assuring the guests that the museum would not be commercially competitive, Barry pointed out that in 1935, film already had a brief (some forty years) but important history, and that 'unless something is done to restore and preserve outstanding films of the past and the present, the motion picture from 1894 will be as irrevocably lost as the Commedia dell'Arte or the dancing of Nijinsky'. She illustrated her point by showing a selection of films from 1896 to the then present, including *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), scenes from *The Gold Rush* (1925) and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), and a contemporary Walt Disney film of 1935, *Pluto's Judgment Day.*

Barry had secured donations from Paramount, Twentieth Century-Fox, Samuel Goldwyn, Warner Bros, Harold Lloyd and Walt Disney, with further donations to come from Columbia, RKO, Universal, Mary Pickford, Walter Wanger and Leon Schlesinger Productions for Méliès films. Charlie Chaplin and D. W. Griffith both refused (with help from Lillian Gish, Griffith would acquiesce two years later). In 1936 an agreement was worked out with Paramount and MGM, which most of

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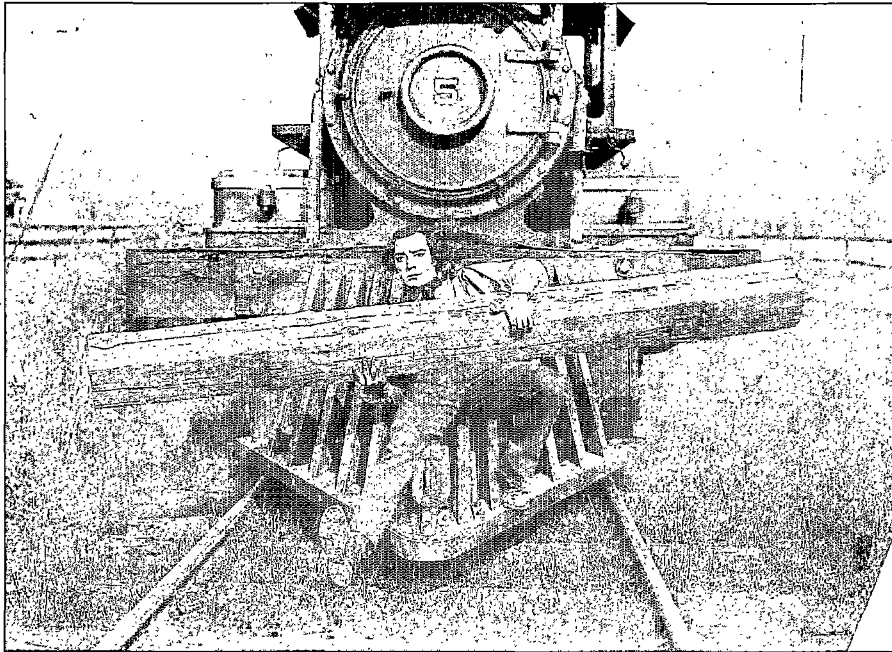

Photo by courtesy of the MOMA Stills Archive

The General. *1926. Directed by Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman and starring Buster Keaton, the film is a masterpiece of the golden age of silent film comedy.*

the major studios signed, that the Film Library might make prints, at its own expense, from negatives held by the companies, and that such prints could be used within and outside the museum for strictly educational use.

The importance of this principle cannot be overstated. Barry successfully had negotiated the equivalent of indefinite loans, and in some cases outright gifts, with the pioneers and practitioners of the American motion picture. It was a brilliant step, ensuring that the study of film history could be independent of commercial exploitation. For the first time, Hollywood producers would allow their films to be seen without charging a fee.

The Film Library was conceived like the other museum collections to be international in scope. In 1936 Barry travelled to London, Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow and Stockholm, meeting film archivists who were building collections and would exchange films. In Moscow, she met Sergei Eisenstein and acquired a selection of Soviet films. In Paris, in addition to acquiring a print of Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique*, she added films of Louis Lumière, Ferdinand Zecca and Emile Cohl, as well as avant-garde works of Marcel Duchamp, René Clair and others.

The year 1939 was a splendid year for Hollywood movies, capped by the December première of the wildly successful *Gone With the Wind.* That autumn the Museum of Modern Art opened its permanent home on 53rd Street in New York City, and launched the first daily film exhibition in the United States, in its new 450-seat cinema. The inaugural film programmes included *Georges Méliès: Magician and Film Pioneer* and *The Non-Fiction Film: From Uninterpreted Fact to Documentary.* Iris Barry was vitally concerned with placing D. W. Griffith in the museum context in these early days of the exhibition programme, having finally persuaded Griffith to donate to the Film Library his papers and negatives and prints of his features. In 1938 and 1940 she also acquired Griffith's Biograph films of 1908–14, part of a large collection found in a warehouse. She conceived a project to study the prints at first hand, then to show the films and write a monograph on Griffith's career. Barry had hoped to restore 'Griffith's fading fame and also to overcome the long-lived intellectual prejudice . . . that because Griffith worked for a vast audience and made (and lost) a vast amount of money, his achievement could not be classed with "real" art'.

What the Griffith project established was the curatorial apparatus for the medium of film: Barry demonstrated how and why he was a pioneer through the study and showing of works that had become unavailable in original form. The essence of curatorial work, which is the analysis and conservation of the object itself and its placement historically and critically through exhibition and publication, could have no finer paradigm than in the Griffith project.

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Pioneering principles

Barry's efforts were not immediately widely understood at the time. But she was doing what Alfred Barr had done in opening the museum in 1929 with an exhibit of modern, if not contemporary, masters: she was placing Griffith, a pioneer of a modern art, in context. That he seemed old-fashioned at that time, or since, was not the issue; she wanted the public to realize that because film's entire history falls within the period generally labelled 'modern', from the late nineteenth century on, the debate of modern versus contemporary becomes irrelevant. Griffith's development of narrative was no less worthy of study than the Cubism of Picasso, or the Fauvism of Matisse. Her pioneering efforts, and those of future curators of film at the museum, were key to the structuring of methodologies for film cataloguing, preservation, and education, which in turn became models for the field.

The Film Library was renamed the Department of Film in 1965, and was again changed in 1993 to the Department of Film and Video, to reflect its broadening role in both collecting and exhibiting the full spectrum of the 100 years of cinema, and the younger medium of video art. The collection today comprises more than 13,000 titles. Among its strengths are its holdings of American silent films, including productions of the Biograph, Edison, and Vitagraph companies, work by Griffith and Douglas Fairbanks, Buster Keaton and the slapstick comedy artists, and film-makers of westerns such as William S. Hart, Tom Mix, Will Rogers, and John Ford. Collections of American studio productions include holdings of Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros, RKO and David O. Selznick films.

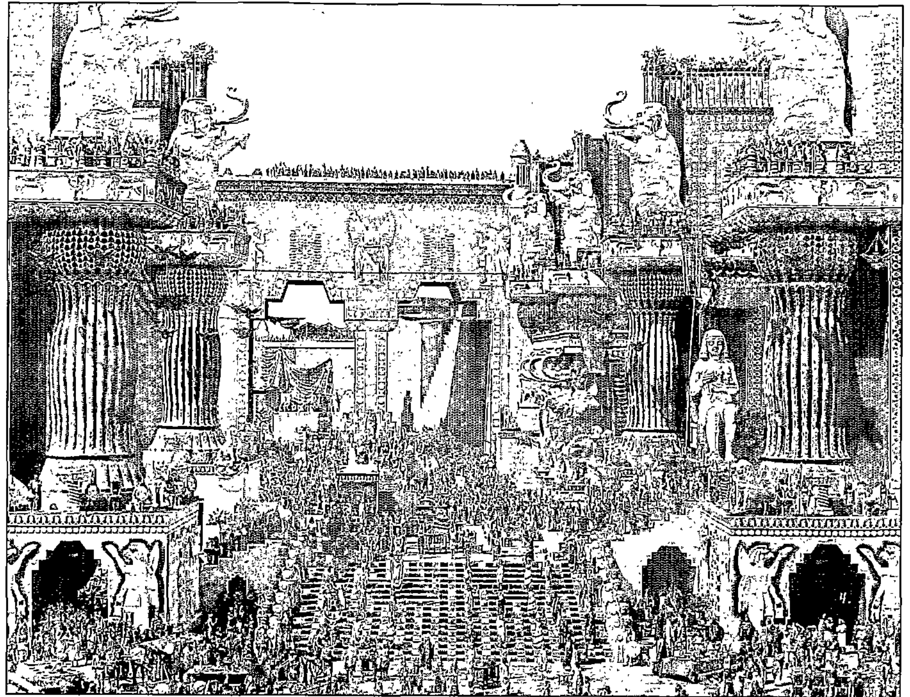

Photo by courtesy of the MOMA Stills Archive

'The Fall of Babylon' sequence from the film Intolerance. *1916. Directed by D. W. Griffith. The reconstruction of the original full-length version (over three hours long) was a collaborative effort between the Museum of Modern Art, which restored the film elements, and the Library of Congress, which reconstructed the orchestral score.*

The collection is distinguished as well by its holdings of international films. Through exchanges with members of the International Federation of Film Archives, the Museum has acquired Polish and Bulgarian films from the post-Second World War period, Czech films of the 1930s and new wave films of the 1960s, French films of the *nouvelle vague*, Italian films of the 1930s and 1940s, early Danish films, classic Japanese features, and Chinese films of the 1950s.

Experimental or avant-garde, animation and documentary films, particularly of the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Canada, enrich the archive. To complement our important collection of the American pioneers of film-making, we actively seek today to acquire films by film artists of the past half-century whom we consider to be significant. We have substantive holdings of the work of John Cassavetes, Martin Scorsese, Clint Eastwood, Stanley Kubrick, Stan Brakhage, Shirley Clarke, Hollis Frampton, Andy Warhol, each in his or her own way representing a direction taken by an 'independent' film-maker, whether working alone or within a film-studio structure.

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Photo by courtesy of the MOMA Stills Archive

Broken Blossoms. *1919. Directed by D. W. Griffith and starring Lillian Gish. The original film materials donated by Griffith to the Museum of Modern Art are being restored thanks to the generous support of the late Miss Gish.*

Reaching out to the public

We have continued our mission to provide films to schools, archives and festivals around the world, through our Circulating Film Library of 1,300 titles on 16 mm film. This collection, drawn from the museum as well as international archives and film production boards, spans the history of cinema, with emphasis on the international silent cinema, documentaries and experimental work. We are the only American museum or archive to distribute films, and we have recently added a selection of original video art.

Our film exhibition programme has continued since 1939 to present daily viewings, expanded to two cinemas, on themes such as studios, directors, producers, writers and actors, cinema of many nations, schools, genres. We collaborate with archives, studios, and national film boards around the world to organize and exchange programmes. Several series, which are a balance of historical and contemporary work, focus on particular developments throughout film history, to extend our celebration of the centenary of cinema throughout the 1990s. In 1993, we presented a tribute to the late Lillian Gish, for example, and we began the 1994 season with a survey of Gaumont, the world's oldest active film studio, and a retrospective of the career of Jeanne Moreau. In June 1994, we hosted a special seminar to identify the surviving films of the 1890s, organized by Domitor, an international society of early-cinema historians.

Our study centres acquire special collections of photographs, posters, screenplays and dialogue continuities, critical articles and reviews, publicity files, reference books, guides, periodicals, sheet music, set designs, animation drawings, correspondence and legal records. The collections include original papers donated by film-makers, such as the production records of D. W. Griffith and sketches of Sergei Eisenstein, as well as many treasures such as David Selznick's enormous scrapbook on *Gone With the Wind.* In all, a broad variety of documentation is acquired, catalogued, and made available, as is our film collection, to scholars, students, archivists and curators, critics and journalists, artists and directors, screenwriters and actors.

Our principal activity has always been, and remains, the acquisition and preservation of works that we believe to be important representations of the history and development of the art of the cinema. Of the thousands of short and feature films we have catalogued and preserved,

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we can give only a brief sampling. But suffice it to say that our work, and that of our archive and museum colleagues, is to keep our film heritage alive. Our knowledge and appreciation of the history of cinema has been broadened through study of such films as *The Great Train Robbery, A Corner in Wheat, Intolerance, Broken Blossoms, Tol'able David, Manhatta, Nanook of the North, The Covered Wagon, The General, Sunrise, Little Caesar, Que Viva Mexico!, It Happened One Night, Dodsworth, The Plow That Broke the Plains, Meet Me in St Louis, Notorious, My Darling Clementine, On the Waterfront* and *Empire*, of which original materials and prints are safeguarded at the museum. And should we not also keep an eye on today's major artists, for instance with our newest acquisitions of prints of *Unforgiven* and *The Age of Innocence*?

Our most ambitious project is the construction of a new Film Preservation Center, in the state of Pennsylvania, to provide the requisite temperature and humidity-controlled environment to enable these films to survive for hundreds of years. We have envied many of our European colleagues, whose archives as national film institutions receive major support from their governments, for example in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Switzerland, and who have consequently already built new vaults and have the staff they need to catalogue and preserve films. The American archives must continue the struggle to persuade the government and the public of the critical need to acknowledge cinema as the major new medium of the modern era, vitally important for the study of the art, the culture and the social and political events and movements of the entire twentieth century. In this regard, we celebrate the centenary of the cinema every day at the Museum of Modern Art. ■

Photo by courtesy of the MOMA Stills Archive

Nanook of the North. *1922. Directed by Robert Flaherty, this documentary was a re-creation of the Eskimo way of life and spawned a movement to depict people as themselves in their natural environment.*

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Creating a film culture: the National Film Archive of India

Suresh Chabria

The Indian cinema is one of the most flourishing in the world – and one of the most popular. More than 800 feature films are produced each year and many have enjoyed worldwide distribution and esteem. Conserving and protecting this extremely rich storehouse poses special challenges, which are described by Suresh Chabria, Director of the Archives.

It is well known that the Indian film industry has been the world's largest for several decades. What is less generally recognized is that India also has one of the most vibrant traditions of film-making which goes back at least to the end of the first decade of this century.

The Lumière films were presented in Bombay as early as July 1896, and within a few years touring and permanent cinemas and tent theatres exhibited hundreds of European and American films all over India.

Photo by courtesy of the author

Poster for the film Pather Panchali, *directed by Satyajit Ray in 1955.*

However, a combination of political, historical and economic factors prevented an indigenous film industry from emerging before 1910. In general, participation in the modern sectors of the economy by Indians at the turn of the century was no more than a couple of decades old and that, too, was limited and rather tentative. Naturally, notwithstanding numerous actualities shot by keen local amateurs, Indian entrepreneurs confronted with the new medium of film initially preferred to distribute the finished product imported from abroad.

Fascination with the imported medium of film and the rising sense of nationalism and anti-colonial sentiment first fused in the mind of D. G. Phalke. He consciously and single-handedly founded the Indian film industry as part of the *swadeshi* movement (the nationalist programme of self-reliance) between 1910 and 1913. The rest is history.

While imported films dominated at the box office until the arrival of the talkies in 1931, Indian silent cinema, like its counterparts in so many other countries, successfully created its own identity and mass following. Its staple was the wholly Indian genre and form of the mythological; but the influence of Western films led in the 1920s to the rise of the hugely popular social and stunt films with their flashy male stars and glamorous heroines.

With the coming of sound and the large-scale application of studio methods and economics of film-making, the Indian film industry finally came into its own. The audience showed a distinct and irresistible preference for films that spoke and sang in one of its own numerous languages. The Indian film industry was thus perhaps the first to be wrested from foreign control, albeit with the all-important exception of manufacturing film equipment and the raw stock itself.

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Ever since then film has remained an inseparable part of India's public life. In its hold over the average Indian's imagination it can only be compared with some of the traditional forms inscribed with ancient legends and myths which intermingle with the religious and folk festivals and the daily life of the people.

I have begun this article on the film archive with a short résumé of the early decades of Indian film history to highlight two difficulties which affect its work to this day.

First, much of our rich film heritage has perished since it coincided with the latter part of the colonial period and in the absence of self-rule India was not able to create the structures that were required to protect the long-term physical survival of the films.

Second, and more insidiously, while it reaped huge profits and actively participated in the creation of our national ethos, the Indian film industry was a victim of the general colonial psychology of inferiority and lack of self-esteem. For there seems to be no better explanation besides these two reasons for the fact that so much of Indian cinema up to 1950 was allowed to vanish completely.

It is true that factors like nitrate decomposition, climatic stress and the negligence of purely commercial-minded film producers and laboratories also wreaked incalculable havoc. But to our mind, the deepest causes were the lack of control over our governmental and administrative machinery before 1947 and the film industry's inferiority complex about the technical and artistic standards of our cinema.

Constraints and achievements

Thus, when a national film archive was finally set up in 1964, it had an extremely difficult task cut out for it to salvage what had survived of the foundations of Indian cinema with the meagre resources which the newly-independent Indian state could spare for this purpose, and also, with the same resources, to set about acquiring and preserving contemporary and future productions of a highly popular and prolific film industry, which still acted as if it were totally oblivious to the evanescence of the film medium.

In the mid 1950s the NFAI was first planned by the Government of India as a national film library to acquire important films for record purposes. But soon the diverse and specialized tasks of such a film library came to be realized – that it must not only be a collection of films but also a preservation agency. Thus the concept of a national film library was extended and developed into the concept of a fully fledged film archive.

From its modest beginnings in 1964 (when it was housed in small sheds with make-shift vaults in the premises of the Film Institute of India, Pune), the NFAI has today grown in stature and experience to be counted among the leading film archives of the world and has since 1969 been a full member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF). More importantly, it has managed to salvage and preserve several landmark films of the first five decades of Indian cinema. This was largely due to the government's initiative in setting up the archive, the hard work and dedication of its founders and the role of a few stalwarts of the film industry such as J. B. H. Wadia, B. N. Sircar and others, who believed in the need for film preservation and deposited their personal collections with the NFAI.

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Still photo from the film Chandrasena, *directed by V. Shantaram in 1935.*

Photo by courtesy of the author

In its new building complex which was opened in January 1994, NFAI finally has its own film vaults designed according to international film-preservation standards, a reasonably well-equipped preservation department, a well-stocked book and periodical library and a cataloguing, research and documentation centre which contains a precious collection of cinema posters, stills and other ancillary material. The archive now also has an auditorium for the public screening of films from its collection.

Amongst the treasures of the NFAI's film collection are the surviving fragments of the films of D. G. Phalke, the silent films of Himansu Rai and Franz Osten, a representative number of films of the great film companies and studios of the 1930s and 1940s such as the Prabhat Film Company, New Theatres, Bombay Talkies, Minerva Movietone, Wadia Movietone, Gemini and others. Equally important are the archive's holdings of the great independent banners which emerged after the collapse of the studio system in the late 1940s, such as those created by Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, A. R. Kardar, L. V. Prasad and B. Nagi Reddi. Alongside examples of the mainstream cinema, excellent prints of major works of the *auteurs* of new Indian cinema such as Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Mani Kaul, G. Aravindan, Kumar Shahani, Shyam Benegal and others are also preserved by the archive.

The NFAI also has a very large collection of ancillary material such as cinema posters, stills, song booklets, folders and disc records and audio cassettes relating to every period of Indian cinema. But due to the shortage of funds and adequate staff the archive was unable to acquire a sufficient number of artefacts such as annotated original scripts, sets, costumes, and pre-cinema and other antique film equipment. For example, the magic lantern and hand-painted slides of the Patwardhan Bros are the only major example of pre-cinema equipment available in the archive. One of the most cherished projects of the archive is to convert its former premises at the Jayakar Bungalow into a museum of Indian cinema.

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Acquisition policy

With annual national production in India mounting to more than 850 feature films and an equally large number of shorts, newsreels and documentaries, the NFAI is compelled to be selective in its acquisition. In addition, there is no legal deposit system, and there is the perennial shortage of funds. The result of these factors is that we have less than 10 per cent of the national film production preserved at the NFAI.

The main criteria for acquisition framed by NFAI's Advisory Committee are as follows.

First, the archive should acquire all available Indian films of the pre-1955 period, since most of these films are on nitrate base and have already been destroyed. As such, there is no point in making a selection from whatever has survived from this period.

Second, as regards the post-1955 films the NFAI must acquire the following:

- national and state award-winning films;
- all films which have been popular at the box office;
- films shown in international film festivals and the Indian Panorama section of the International Film Festivals held in India;
- all films financed/produced by the National Film Development Corporation and the erstwhile Film Finance Corporation;
- film adaptations of well-known literary works;
- films representing different genres of Indian cinema such as the mythological, historical, social and family dramas, stunt films, children's films and so on;
- newsreels, documentaries and short films produced by private and official agencies;
- selected foreign film classics including the works of major film-makers of different countries and representing various national styles and genres.

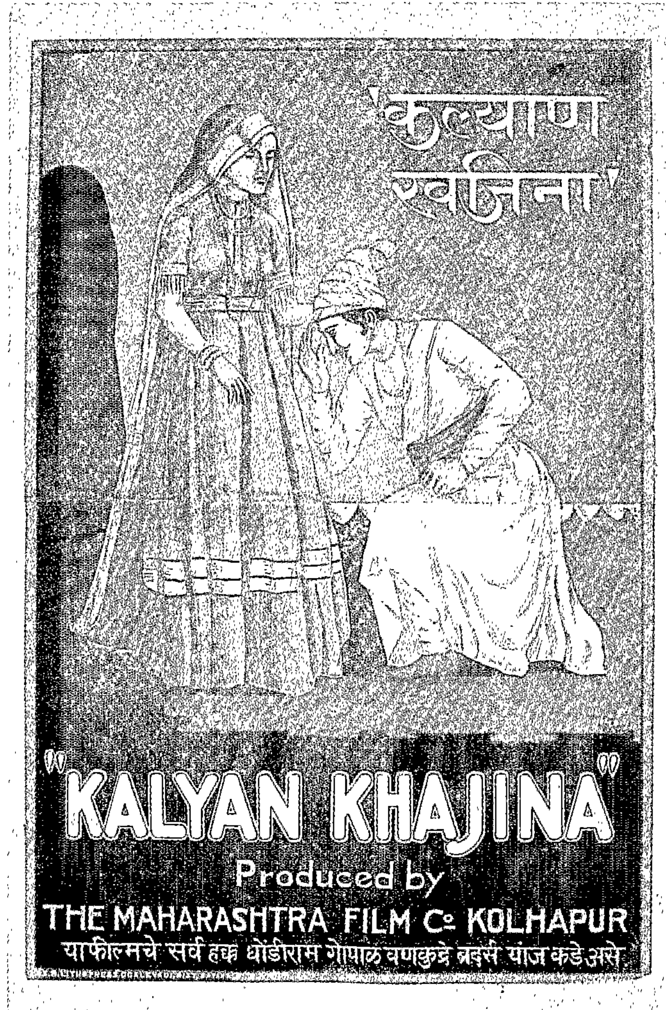

Photo by courtesy of the author

Poster for the film Kalyan Khajina, *directed by Baburao Painter in 1924.*

Also, under the Indian Cinematograph Act, censored portions of films exhibited in India are deposited with the archive by the Central Board of Film Certification. All this material awaits zealous researchers who can catalogue it and unscramble the chequered history of Indian censorship in relation to changing Indian social mores and values. Perhaps, it has been more useful to

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have the deposit of over 20,000 film scripts by the CBFC, since the films relating to a large number of these have vanished.

One of the special features of the NFAI is that by its constitution it has been entrusted with the task of disseminating film culture all over India. This may probably be considered a quaint notion by some but it is an article of faith with us. For this purpose, NFAI has acquired a large number of foreign films by purchase or exchange from other archives. These are regularly shown in the NFAI's own premises to researchers, film-makers and others, and are also loaned to the Film Institute for its academic programmes. We also frequently loan viewing copies from our collection – both Indian and foreign – for joint screening programmes to film societies and educational and cultural organizations all over the country. Small 16 mm distribution libraries located in Pune and the NFAI's regional offices in Calcutta, Bangalore and Thiruvananthapuram provide similar services to scores of organizations interested in showing films as a part of their regular programmes.

For almost two decades the NFAI has been conducting an annual Film Appreciation Course of five weeks' duration in Pune in which participants belonging to various walks of life and professions from all over India are exposed to the best of Indian and world cinema. Some of the major topics taught during the course are the basics of the film medium, cinema as an art, film history, film theory and the relationship of cinema to other arts. The archive also conducts shorter courses on similar lines at various other centres in the country. These courses have evoked a tremendous popular response and contributed in a genuine sense to the spread of awareness of the need to have an analytic framework in which to view and study films in our cinema-saturated culture.

Celebrating the centenary

As far as the celebration of the cinema centenary is concerned, film-heritage screening programmes and retrospectives, exhibitions on the history of cinema, several publications and a seminar on Indian film studies and theory are planned over the next two years to stimulate and renew thinking about the importance of film preservation and studying the role and influence of the moving image on contemporary society.

To sum up our mood on the eve of the cinema centennial, we have achieved a lot so far, but there is much more to be done and we look forward to facing all the challenges of the next century of cinema. ■

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The International Federation of Film Archives: a 'United Nations of moving images'

Robert Daudelin

No dossier on cinema archives and museums would be complete without paying homage to the role of the International Federation of Film Archives. Robert Daudelin, President of the Federation, provides a brief look at the activities and achievements of this exemplary non-governmental organization.

Film libraries, film archives, museums of the cinema or moving images, whatever their individual names may be, these places are all devoted to the conservation of images and their diffusion: in other words, to preserve and to show. And, irrespective of their origin and status, these institutions are all members, in one capacity or another, of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).

FIAF was founded in 1938 by a group of collectors/archivists/cinema enthusiasts who already represented a certain degree of internationalism (London/Stockholm/Berlin/Paris/New York). Today it encompasses over 100 archives on all continents, including three in Africa, thirteen in North America, sixteen in South America, nine in Asia and three in Oceania.

FIAF resembled a private club when it first came into being, but can now be likened to a United Nations of moving images whose annual General Assembly is supplemented by historical and technical symposia which are attended by delegates from all over the world. Created at a time when the idea of the film archive was still relatively new and found expression in very few institutional structures, FIAF established aims for itself which are as appropriate today as they were over fifty years ago: first, to promote the preservation of films as works of art and historical documents; second, to promote the creation and development of film archives in all countries; third, to facilitate the collection and international exchange of films and documents relating to cinematographic history and art for the purpose of making them as widely accessible as possible; and, finally, to develop co-operation among members.

The members of FIAF are independent non-profit-making institutions which are devoted to the study of the history and aesthetics of the cinema, and whose services are available to the general public. Their principal task must be the acquisition, preservation and cataloguing of films and documents relating to the cinema. In addition to these crucial activities, without which no film archive can be worthy of the name, the member institutions of FIAF are all places for promoting and diffusing cinema art and culture: film-shows, symposia, meetings, exhibitions, publications all provide the loci for the usual functions of a film archive.

FIAF itself, which is the first to benefit from the varied experience of its members, has produced numerous technical publications (*Manuel des archives du film, Preservation and Restoration of Moving Images and Sound, Glossary of Filmographic Terms, The Usage of Computers for Film Cataloguing*, etc.) which are indispensable reference works for new archives as well as for older ones. The many seminars organized by FIAF over the past twenty years have also resulted in a number of publications. Titles such as *L'influence du cinéma soviétique sur le cinéma mondial, Rediscovering the Role of Film Archives: To Preserve and to Show, Cinema 1900–1906: An Analytical Study* depict some of the subjects dealt with in these publications. Lastly, FIAF publishes the bilingual (in English and French) *Journal of Film Preservation* which concerns the activities of film archives throughout the world and also devotes appropriate space to historical essays, technical reports and critical reviews of specialized works.

FIAF was founded on the idea of the conservation of the world's cinematographic heritage, and is the framework in which meetings and discussions are held by all those who are campaigning for the survival of cinematographic works. In 1993 alone, over 90,000 titles (short and full-length films) were added to the collections of the member archives of

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FIAF. During this same period, some 20 million metres of film were 'examined' and 'treated' by the technicians of these same archives and detailed – and frequently computerized – catalogues were established for 200,000 films. Again, in 1993, twenty member archives of FIAF began or concluded the construction of scientifically designed conservation depots (with monitoring of their temperature and relative humidity) for the long-term preservation of films and, in most cases at present, videotapes.

In addition to this fundamental task of preserving cinema works, film archives from the beginning began carrying out a genuinely museum-type activity: the projection of films in which the work of the film director is dealt with in the same way as that of a painter in a museum, subject to comparisons (for example in the context of a historical, national, stylistic, or thematic cycle) and, more particularly, situated in the general framework of the production of the film director concerned during a retrospective view. This was an initial breakthrough in this direction.

Since very early on, the showing of films has been coupled with exhibition activities. Brussels and Copenhagen, Paris and Rochester thus established museums, or at least exhibition rooms, in which old equipment, costumes, miniature models and various types of drawings and documents narrate the technical, aesthetic and social history of the cinema.

More recently, London has offered us the Museum of the Moving Image, a prominent centre for the celebration of moving images which, by its very success, poses the burning question of cinema museography. With the subsequent creation of the Museums of New York and Dusseldorf, in particular, and the plans announced by Madrid, Montreal, Lyons and Lisbon, to name but these, the question of the organic link between archives and museums – or, better still, of the museum function, strictly speaking, of film archives – now assumes unquestionable relevance and urgency.

At its annual General Assembly, in spring 1993, FIAF organized an initial workshop on the subject of cinema museums. It brought together thirty or so participants from some twenty countries, belonging to all the regions of the world, who took initial stock of the various questions and approaches which characterize this rich subject. The question of 'museums' now forms a permanent aspect of the work programme of FIAF, and an Executive Committee member is personally in charge of the dossier. This concern led to such concrete results as the participation of two Executive Committee members in the symposium held in Dusseldorf in 1993, the publication of texts in the *Journal of Film Preservation*, the introduction of the subject on the agenda of the General Assembly of Bologna (April 1994) and the extension of the terms of reference of the FIAF Programming Commission to include the subject of museums.

In the broader sense of museum activity or the more restricted sense of the exhibition, the question of cinema museums, and more generally of moving images, forms part of the fields of reflection and activity of FIAF. The centenary of the cinema is an appropriate occasion for pursuing this reflection and ensuring the harmonious development of the projects to which it should give rise. ■

Note

The Permanent Secretariat of FIAF is located at 190 rue Franz Merjay, 1180 Brussels, Belgium, who can provide information on the worldwide movement of film archives and assistance in creating new archives.

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A model of private philanthropy: the Fernbank Museum of Natural History

Lee Kimche McGrath

Despite the recession in the United States and a fall in charitable donations, a new $45 million financial success story called the Fernbank Museum of Natural History opened in Atlanta, Georgia, on 5 October 1992. The largest museum of natural history to be built in the United States since the 1930s, Fernbank is expected to attract more than 1 million visitors a year by 1995. Lee Kimche McGrath describes how a donated tract of forest was transformed by private contributions and community support into a major museum achievement. The author is president of a firm specializing in international cultural communications; she served as the first director of the Institute of Museum Services and of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, and was the assistant director of the American Association of Museums.

The Fernbank Museum's successful fund-raising drive has followed the classic American model of private philanthropy. The 15,000 m^2 museum, the largest in the south-eastern United States, has been built with funds raised entirely through the private sector, and will be a self-supporting institution.

Historically, in other countries, Church and state have shouldered the primary responsibility for preserving, maintaining and restoring cultural properties including museums. This has evolved into direct government support. By contrast, in the United States, wealthy individuals, in most cases the captains of commerce and industry, have traditionally footed the bills for culture. Some 90 per cent of the $125 billion donated to American charities during 1990 came from individual donors.

The seminal idea for the Fernbank Museum came in 1917 when a young woman named Emily Harrison wrote to her parents suggesting that the forested tract they owned in Georgia should be used as a school in the woods. Miss Harrison wrote: 'Gradually I had come to feel that Fernbank was too big and too beautiful for [one] family['s] consumption. . . . The best thing to do with it would be to put it into the lives of children.'

In 1938, Miss Harrison sold the core 28 hectares of the property for $35,000 to Fernbank, Inc., a group of conservation-minded citizens which registered the organization as a not-for-profit corporation a year later. For decades youth clubs came to the forest for day camping and other educational activities. But Miss Harrison was not content. She wanted a teaching facility, and she wanted to preserve the forest, already threatened by encroaching development.

Three visionary individuals emerged: Dr Robert B. Platt, a botany professor at Emory University; DeKalb County Superintendent James Cherry; and Fernbank's Chairman, W. A. Horne. Seeing opportunity where others saw only problems, these three leaders negotiated a unique agreement. The DeKalb County Board of Education would purchase 6.5 hectares of the forest and build a science centre; the remaining woods would be leased by the board for educational purposes.

The Fernbank Science Center opened in 1967. Today, in addition to classrooms and laboratories, the centre boasts a planetarium and an observatory which are open to the public as well as students. The centre serves approximately 400,000 students annually, out of a total of more than 800,000 visitors of all ages. But, it wasn't enough.

From science centre to new museum

Even while they were building the science centre, Fernbank educators dreamed of a new and larger institution which would reveal the mysteries of the earth – the Fernbank Museum of Natural History. They 'dreamt' with the right people. Fernbank has consistently applied one of fund raising's most important principles: people give to people, not to projects.

In 1964, Cherry met with Boisfeuillet Jones, then president of the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, to secure funds for the Science Center. (As a young man, Robert Woodruff, founder and chief executive officer of the Coca-Cola Company, rode horseback through the Fernbank Forest with his wife Nell Hodgson whose family owned the property adjacent to Fernbank.) Jones asked Cherry what Fernbank really wanted to

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do. Two weeks later Fernbank educators presented Jones with a sketch of the property that included a botanical garden, an aquarium and a natural history museum. 'The museum seemed the most important thing to us, so we quietly started giving them money,' Jones is reported as saying.

Over the years the Woodruff Foundation has donated more than $13 million to Fernbank, Inc. And in 1979 Jones introduced Fernbank to Rankin M. Smith, the owner of the Atlanta Falcons (the city's professional football team) and the former chairman of the board of the Life Insurance Company of Georgia. The result was a devoted benefactor who soon joined Fernbank's board, and a $1.25 million donation which turned the dreams into plans for the new museum.

In 1984 Dr Kay Davis, a former physics, biology and mathematics teacher who was serving as the science centre's administrative co-ordinator, was named to direct the museum. She assembled an international advisory panel of eighteen experts, including representatives of the Smithsonian Institution and the Franklin Institute. The panel defined the ideas that would become the Fernbank Museum of Natural History. It had to be unique; it had to be a one-stop destination for tourists; and it had to use Georgia as the stage from which to tell the story of natural history.

The Fernbank Museum is the first natural history museum in the United States to be built based on a storyline rather than an existing collection. In its permanent exhibit, *A Walk Through Time in Georgia*, visitors stroll through re-creations of the state's landform regions – its mountains, plateaux, valleys, swamps and coastal areas. Adjoining Earth Development Galleries – such as a two-storey dinosaur hall – feature videos, high-definition television (HDT) projection, soundtracks, interactive computers and other items that explain how Georgia's geography mirrors the evolutionary stages of the earth.

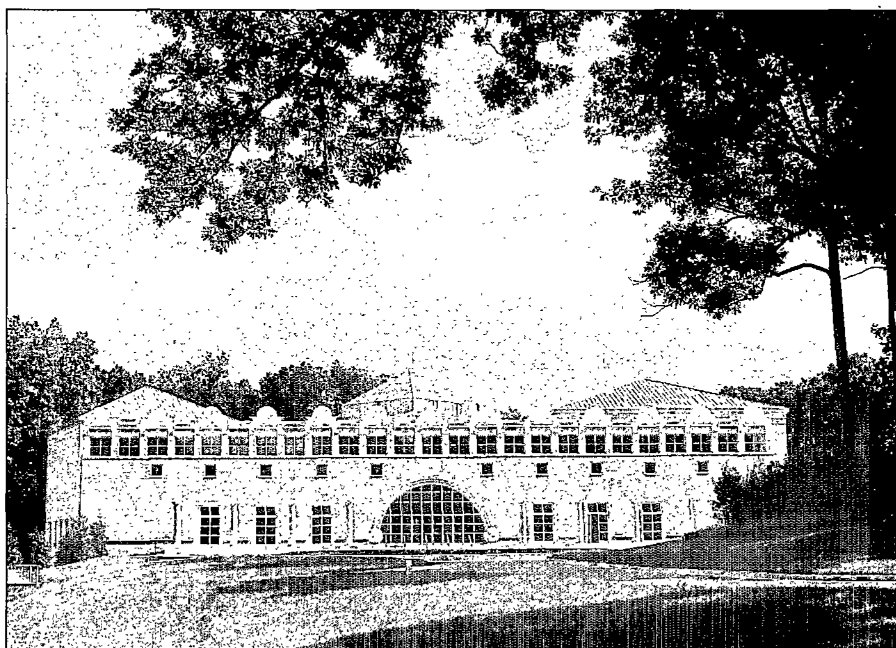

Photo by courtesy of the author

The entrance to the Fernbank Museum of Natural History was designed by architect Graham Gund to blend in with the existing Druid Hills community.

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Community support translates to funds

Building community support was crucial if the trustees were to secure funds. The tasks fell respectively to then chairman Robin Harris and vice-chairman Rankin Smith. Harris, a former state representative with an impeccable conservationist's pedigree, brought widespread respect to his position. That was vital. The Fernbank property is located in Druid Hills, an elegant, prosperous neighbourhood. Residents were livid over a recent state transportation project because they felt the government had ignored their concerns. Contemporary newspaper reports state that neighbours feared that Fernbank would become 'the green monster that ate Druid Hills'.

For more than four years, Harris met with the Druid Hills Civic Association involving them directly in the planning of the new museum and agreeing to meet all of their conditions.

Boston architect Graham Gund, an art collector and gardener with a reputation for environmental sensitivity, was selected to design the new Fernbank Museum. His design won the neighbours' support. Fernbank 'was a model of how to deal with neighbourhood groups' according to newspaper reports.

This congenial relationship created a base of public support for Fernbank. It also brought the new museum extensive, positive publicity which broadened the awareness of the facility among potential funders and helped convince them that Fernbank was a sound investment.

While Harris met with the community, Smith began to work the 'old boys' network'. He had to convince Atlanta's business leaders that – even though the new museum was six and a half kilometres from the centre of Atlanta and in a separate county – Atlanta would benefit from increased tourist revenue and the further enhancement of its growing reputation as a major cultural centre in the south-east.

Smith's role exemplifies an important rule for fund-raisers: Peers should solicit peers. Because he was their peer, Smith could approach wealthy patrons, the heads of Atlanta's major corporations and foundation presidents to secure their support. Nevertheless it wasn't always easy. As Smith says: 'You have to keep digging to find out who unlocks the doors.'

Smith used every connection he had. He approached local, national and international corporations which were doing well in spite of the recession and those that had vested interests in tourist dollars. And, recognizing that a recession does not impact all organizations equally, Smith approached foundations, whose endowments gave them a relatively stable source of funds.

The trustees debated various revenue sources to augment the fund-raising efforts. With Fernbank, Inc., being a nonprofit corporation, it could issue tax-exempt bonds. Harris favoured this approach. Bonds could provide cash immediately through attractive long-term financing that would be repaid by the future revenues of the museum.

The Fernbank staff were convinced that the museum could be self-supporting. They maintained that the combination of admission fees, memberships, tickets for the theatre, contributions and special functions would provide more than enough income to cover operating and maintenance expenses plus debt service for the proposed $20.7 million bond issue.

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But convincing bankers that the museum could support itself proved to be a difficult task. The credit markets had begun to tighten as a result of the savings and loan débâcle in the United States, a falling real-estate market, and the realization that many of the leveraged loans of the 1980s were headed for serious trouble. Local bankers wanted to see the project scaled back significantly. They did not think the bond issue could be repaid.

In May 1989, after several failed attempts with commercial banks and investment bankers, Fernbank hired Merchant Capital Corporation, a regional investment banking firm, as its financial adviser. A detailed business plan and loan proposal was developed, and Arthur D. Little, an international management consulting firm, was hired to conduct a feasibility study to determine the museum's ability to repay the proposed debt.

The study analysed factors including Fernbank's potential market, support base, financial viability, and its business and marketing plans. Completed in October 1989, the report concluded that the museum would attract more than 1 million visitors annually, and that by 1995 it could add as much as $100 million per year to the city's revenues. The report projected long-term annual revenues of approximately $7.3 to $8.9 million and annual costs of roughly $4.8 to $5.9 million, which would allow approximately $2.5 to $3 million for debt service and expenses. Little's study confirmed the claims made by Fernbank's staff – the museum could support itself and repay its debts – but the study was more persuasive because the conclusions were made by an independent third party.

Armed with a thorough business plan, Little's study and pledges totalling more than $11 million, Merchant was able to secure a commitment from Barclays Bank PLC to provide a letter-of-credit to secure $11 million of the proposed $20.7 million bond issue. Barclays' offer was contingent upon local Atlanta banks providing the remaining sum in letters-of-credit.

Persuading local banks was an uphill battle because they had rejected the project a year earlier and because the financial community had become very cautious. Smith's connections were crucial as was his willingness to address the banks' specific concerns. He worked with Gund to scale the project back in ways that would not harm the museum. Then, Smith and Davis told the bankers that any further cuts would result in the facility being less than world class. In fact, they would jeopardize the museum's ability to generate the necessary revenues.

Through a persistent and well-organized effort, the Atlanta banks began to change their opinion. Eventually six local banks committed for an $11 million participation in the needed letter-of-credit facility – $1 million more than required by Barclays.

During this same period, Smith, along with other board members and Fernbank's staff, continued his successful fund-raising effort and secured pledges totalling more than $18.5 million. In May 1990, Merchant sold $20.7 million worth of bonds, which will be repaid over a twenty-year period with a fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent.

With total funds raised approaching $40 million, the Fernbank Museum project was on firm financial ground and finally on its way to becoming a reality.

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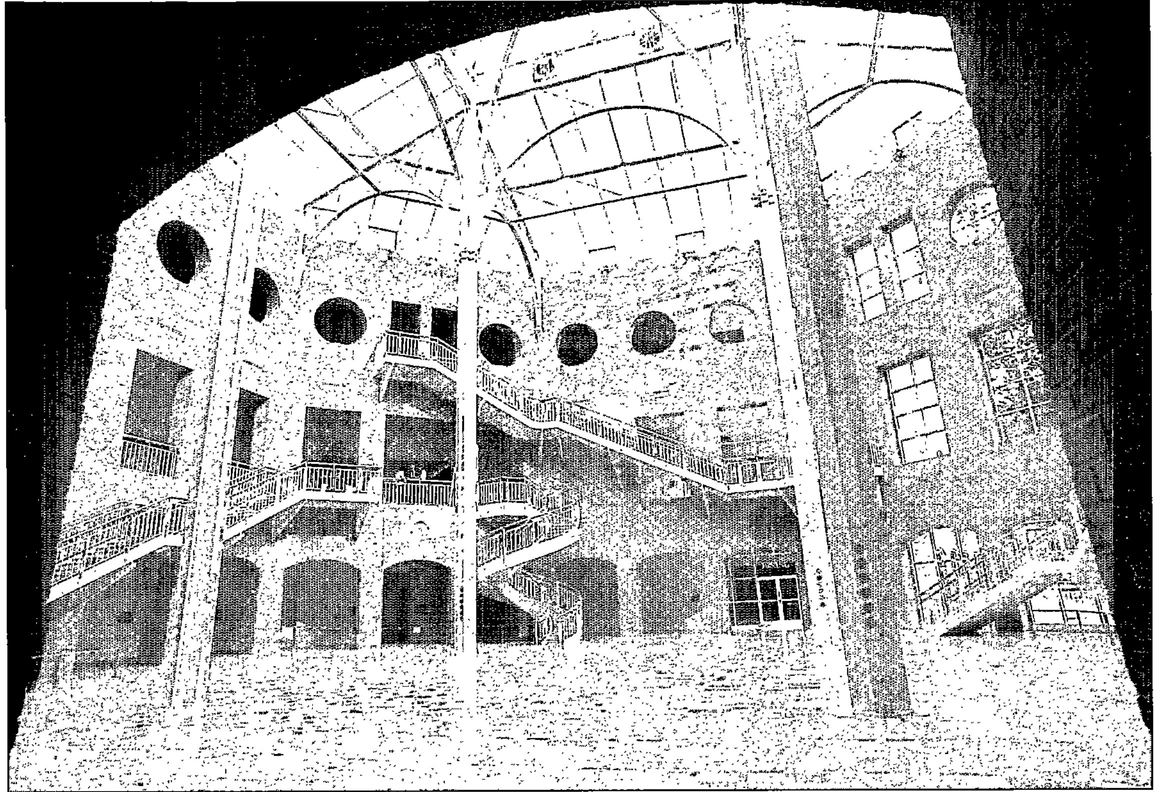

Photo by courtesy of the author

The 26-metre-high Great Hall is tiled with limestone from the Solnhofen Quarry in Germany. The tiles contain fossils that are 150–180 million years old.

'Set your sights high'

Smith's success in fund-raising illustrates two other key points: set your sights high – it is as easy to raise $1,000 as $100 – and maximize your efforts. Smith sought large donations. Most of the approximately $24.3 million that Fernbank has raised in private contributions has come from roughly forty-five individuals, corporations and foundations. The impact of individual contributions was greatly enhanced through an extensive matching grant programme which secured more than $5 million.

With the Fernbank Museum now open, fund-raising will continue to play an important, though diminished, role. The museum's projected annual budget is $7.2 million. Ninety per cent is expected to be generated from the museum's revenue sources, and 10 per cent will come from fund raising.

More than 15,000 visitors flooded Fernbank during opening week, and 600 memberships were sold, The museum's popularity and financial future appear secure. But there are other signs of its promise.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute has awarded the museum and science centre a joint, highly competitive grant of $250,000. The funds will be used to develop a four-week intensive programme for educationally disadvantaged students from the inner city and rural school districts.

Fernbank is also on the cultural forefront. Committed to teaching natural history through art as well as science, Fernbank hosted, as part of its grand opening, a major exhibition of art inspired by the rain forests.

Atlanta's Committee for the 1996 Olympic Games chose Fernbank to host the Cultural Olympiad's inaugural art exhibition from Norway in February 1993. The exhibition was part of a two-week festival which launched a four-year plan of international exhibits, festivals and other events to pave the way for the 1996 Olympic Games.

Miss Harrison's dream of a school in the woods has evolved, thanks to the private support for a worthwhile public institution, to become a classic model of private philanthropy. ■

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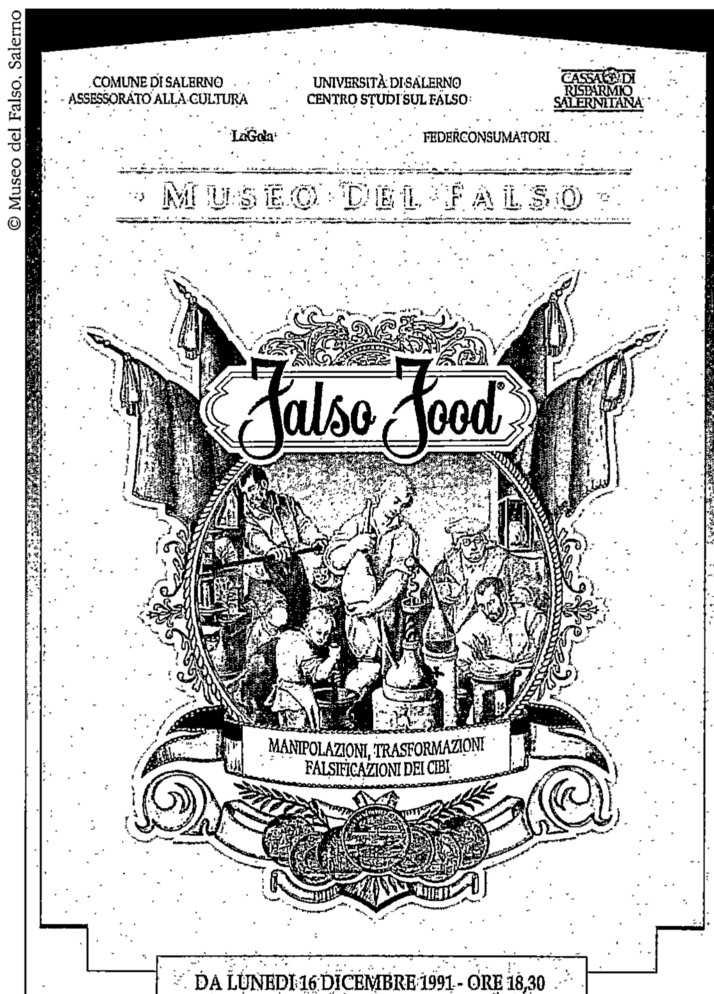
A real museum for fake objects: the Museo del Falso

Laura Colby

In Salerno (Italy) a new museum is dedicated to the serious study of counterfeit objects that are a growing phenomenon in our everyday lives. The author is a freelance journalist based in Paris.

The museum's ochre façade looks like carefully restored and painted stone. But on closer inspection, one can see that one corner of the façade is loose and curling, almost as if it could be peeled off like a piece of pasteboard.[1]

In front is a stone tablet inscribed in Oscan characters, used by the tribe that inhabited this southern Italian region in the fifth century B.C., before the Romans came. But when translated, the inscription reveals no ancient wisdom, just a phrase by Professor Salvatore Casillo, *circa* A.D. 1991: 'It's not possible to ask the truth to be beautiful rather than ugly, or vice versa; falsehood, on the other hand, can assume any aspect, infamous or sublime.'



© Museo del Falso, Salerno

Poster for the exhibit on food forgeries.

Professor Casillo is the mastermind behind the Museo del Falso, an institution studying and exhibiting fakes and counterfeit objects that are part of our everyday lives. The museum was opened in 1991 with funds from the city of Salerno, the University of Salerno and a local savings bank, and has since housed exhibitions on counterfeit silver, detergents and, most recently, food.

A professor of industrial sociology who focused on entrepreneurship, Professor Casillo came across hundreds of examples of entrepreneurs who went into illegal business, sometimes with brilliant ideas 'that made you wonder what they could accomplish in legitimate business,' he says.

He decided in 1988 to found a study centre on the phenomenon, called the Centro Studi sul Falso (Forgery Study Centre), attached to the University of Salerno. Its members include fellow professors from the university who are sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, archaeologists, art historians and legal experts, all of whom had come across the trend in their own research.

The study centre serves to allow experts in different fields to exchange ideas and information about various types of forgeries they have run across and to conduct joint research.

The idea of the museum, the professor says, was an outgrowth of the study centre, a way of attracting attention to the problem outside academia, and urging institutions, manufacturers and consumers to take action to combat the problem. In its short existence the museum's exhibits have already sparked official investigations and, according to Professor Casillo, a change in at least one Italian law.

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'Forgeries and forgers have always been active throughout history,' says Professor Casillo. 'But it is only in recent years that forgeries of a series of manufactured products have become widespread and assumed characteristics that make them not only an economic menace but also a danger to the safety of mankind.'

Walking along the crowded main promenade of Salerno, a sunny port about 50 km south of Naples, he stops in front of a street vendor. The man has laid out neat rows of the usual sunglasses and leather belts bearing false designer insignias but alongside them is a new counterfeit product – a cellular phone. The phone looks like the real thing, which has become the 'in' accessory for Italian businessmen in the past couple of years, but it doesn't actually work. None the less, it enables the status-conscious with only about $20 to spend to create the impression that they are important enough to own such a phone.

Most of us think of forgeries as fake watches, jewellery or designer clothing. But forgeries have expanded along with technology in recent years to include chemical products, medicines, fertilizers, electrical equipment, spare parts such as brakes for cars and even aeroplanes. All of these forgeries can present obvious danger to human life. The use of desktop publishing, with its increasingly sophisticated software, has also led to an explosion in financial fakes such as stock certificates and savings bonds.

But companies that make the real products are very reluctant to draw consumers' attention to the problem, according to Professor Casillo. They fear that admitting that some of the products on the market bearing their names are forgeries will cheapen their image.

As a result, when the professor decided to create a museum to draw attention to the problem of forgery, he received little co-operation from the companies most often victims of forgeries, and which should have an interest in combating the problem. Individual corporations have also shied away from helping to fund the museum or specific exhibits.

But because of the track record of his Centro Studi sul Falso at the local university, he was none the less able to get the city to donate an old building for the museum and to obtain local sponsorship.

So far, his main sponsors have been the Cassa di Risparmio Salernitana (Salerno Savings Bank) and the city authorities as well as the university. He is looking for other sponsors to help defray the museum's operating costs, but says it is likely they will be businesses such as banks whose products cannot be forged, rather than luxury or consumer-goods producers.

'Almost anyone can counterfeit almost anything'

The museum building, donated by the city, had been a garbage depot for much of this century, but before that it had a long and glorious history. It stands on the site of the medieval walls that encircled Salerno in the second half of the eighth century – Longobard artefacts were discovered during the renovation of the building for the museum. Ironically, local legend also has it that an early forgery was committed on the site: as part of a peace pact with an emissary of Charlemagne, the local prince Grimoaldo agreed in A.D. 788 to demolish the fortifications surrounding Salerno. He did demolish the existing walls, but at the same time built new walls further back, making them higher and stronger and the

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© Museo del Falso, Salerno

Two examples of forged food products.

city more protected than ever from attack. The museum building was part of this second set of walls.

By the seventeenth century, the walls were partly destroyed and what is now the museum had become a communal oven, or *forno*, used for baking bread and the ubiquitous local pizza. It was downgraded to a garbage depot in the present century.

Although the building today is neat and its interior freshly painted a pristine white, the decoration and layout are spartan in order to keep operating costs low. The museum is essentially a large open room with a small loft which serves as an office for the museum's only employee, a part-time secretary.

Downstairs, its walls are lined with a series of glass cases displaying false products. Printed placards explain the displays and direct the visitor through the exhibits. In one corner, a video recorder runs a cassette showing interviews with experts giving more details about the theme of the exhibit. A few rows of chairs are placed in front of the large colour-television screen. Printed copies of the research are also available.

There is no permanent collection at the museum, and individual exhibitions, which generally last a few months, are funded in part by interested organizations. The recent exhibition on food forgeries, for example, had support from *La Gola*, an Italian food magazine, and Federconsumatori, an Italian consumer organization. Opening hours are fairly short: three half-days a week after the first week an exhibit is open, plus private visits for groups and schools by appointment.

As for the theme of the museum, Professor Casillo shrugs off the idea that the proximity of Italy's counterfeiting capital – Naples – may have helped give rise to the idea.

'It doesn't just happen in Italy, it happens everywhere in the world,' he says. 'The problem of falsification is the problem of the future. With advanced electronic equipment available easily today, almost anyone can counterfeit almost anything.'

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He cites in particular the inexpensive colour laser printers that run with personal computers, engendering hundreds of desktop counterfeiters who can produce authentic looking labels at very low cost.

The recent exhibit entitled *Falso Food* included some startling examples of this. There was false wine, containing methanol; a 'Moët et Chandon champagne' made in Naples; 'extra-virgin' olive oil made by adding chlorophyll to far-cheaper sunflower oil; and a ring of counterfeiters who replaced labels on jars of foods like Nutella and Kraft mayonnaise with new ones once the date of expiry for recommended use had passed. (The ring was uncovered when spoiled food landed a whole family in hospital.)

From Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands, powdered milk protein for animal use, which is eligible for European Community payments, was exported bearing labels that falsely claimed it was suitable for human consumption, and made into products such as cheese in the export market, bringing a higher price.

Professor Casillo says the Italian carabinieri's special health-inspection squad each year sequesters around 900 billion lire ($850 million) of products in Italy alone, but not everything on exhibit was illegal; there were also products such as caffeine-free coffee, alcohol-free beer and cholesterol-free eggs – all foods that are not really what they claim to be.

The *Falso Food* exhibit closed at the end of the summer, held over four months longer than the originally scheduled closing due to strong popular demand.

For the future, an exhibit is being prepared on false talismans such as crystal balls and good-luck charms. 'There has been increasing insecurity of our rational world in recent years,' says Professor Casillo. 'Many people try to take refuge in magic. The theme of our exhibit will be that these talismans actually do work for those who believe in them.'

Other exhibits are in the works on false archaeological artefacts, historical falsehoods such as false television news, and counterfeit watches.

In the autumn of 1992 an exhibit called *False Industries* was opened. This included a look at companies that are fronts, products that are never sold. It is a phenomenon that is particularly widespread in Italy, where government aid to help areas like the depressed south seeks to create industry. The exhibit showed it often creates mere phantoms. ■

Note

1. Since this article was written, the museum has moved to new quarters on the campus of the University of Salerno. – Ed.

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Deaf guides in French museums

Béatrice Derycke

In July 1989 the Association Art Visuel International des Sourds (International Association of Visual Art for the Deaf) was founded in France for the purpose of setting up a three-year training course for the deaf in the history of art. Supported by the Musée du Louvre, the Direction des Musées de France, the Fondation Crédit Lyonnais and the municipality of Paris, the association has broken new ground in opening up the world of museums to deaf visitors. The author was one of the guiding spirits behind this initiative, the first of its kind in the world.

The idea behind the creation of an international association for visual art for the deaf can best be described as an attempt to turn a dream into a reality. For initially it was just that: my dream of young deaf children visiting museums where works of art would be presented to them in their own language – sign language – by museum guides who were themselves deaf.

For me, this feature was and remains of key importance: contact with deaf adults who possess special knowledge can give deaf children a sense of their own worth and help them to see themselves later playing an active role in the cultural world and thus in society. When this dream turned into reality in September 1990 at a lecture given at the Louvre as a practical exercise forming part of the training course, to a group of children from a school in La Rochelle, I must say it brought a lump to my throat, so rarely do we have a chance to see our dreams materialize before our very eyes.

It was also a pivotal moment for us all at the time: it gave us renewed strength to carry on. For from start to finish, the undertaking has been far from easy – despite the support of Michel Laclotte, director of the Louvre – but the results are indescribably rewarding.

Innovation and persuasion

A fully custom-built bilingual teaching method had to be devised, but first people had to be 'persuaded' of its utility, persuasion being the key to all action, especially innovative action.

After all, why are deaf people needed to present works of art to other deaf people in museums? 'They can read!' is what I was told time and time again. But reading alone is not enough. Having a catalogue or display card as the sole introduction to a painting or sculpture is woefully inadequate for a deaf person. It is inadequate for anyone but doubly so for the deaf, who must struggle to understand a language that, when all is said and done, is not their natural form of expression.

In countries the world over the deaf learn a spoken language that is referred to as their mother tongue but is in reality one they have to learn. The language that comes naturally to them is signing: a visual language in which they express themselves by moving their hands in the air.

Over the past few years, through the mass media and films (particularly the film *Children of a Lesser God*), we have witnessed a growing fascination for signing on the part of those who can hear, and it is perhaps for this reason that the deaf have felt a heightened sense of responsibility for their language and a desire to study it properly and enhance it. The eight deaf museum guides who have been trained will help to enhance it: over the past few years they have conducted systematic research on the vocabulary of art history.

Sign language, as used by deaf museum guides, will thus enable the deaf to do something they have never before been able to do: go around museums at their own pace, reacting spontaneously to each work of art and asking questions directly of the guide, therefore taking part in an aesthetic dialogue and no longer being relegated to the passive role of receivers.

And this with – most importantly – the benefit of their own 'cultural references', which allow them a perspective all their own and can reveal new aspects of some paintings. How often have non-hearing-

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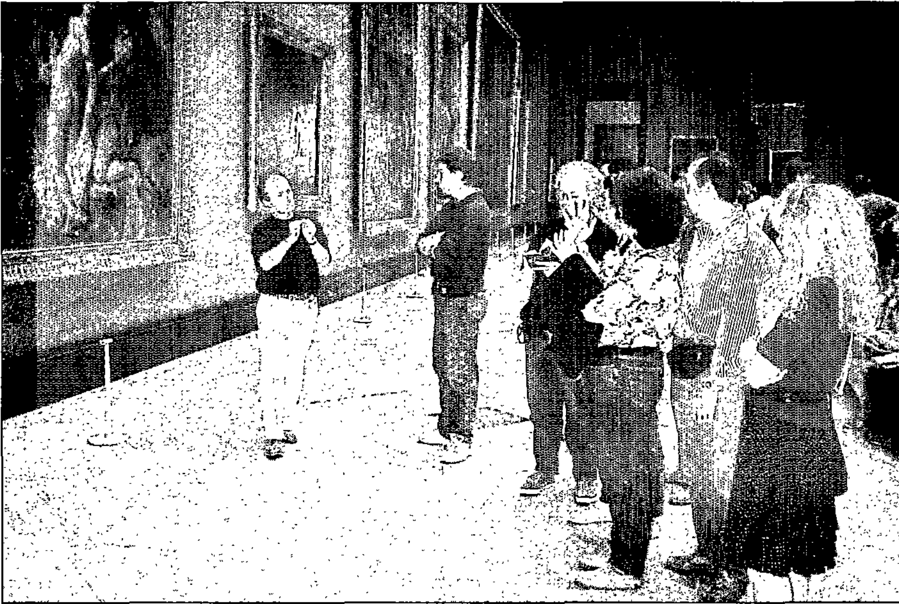

Lecturer J. P. Perbost explains La Mort de Sardanapale *by Delacroix to a group of deaf visitors to the Louvre.*

impaired museum guides who participated in our training course been surprised by remarks and personal interpretations of our trainees that opened their eyes to new dimensions in paintings they had seen hundreds of times before!

Deaf visitors from other countries, who in the past have had little motivation to visit museums, will now be able to take time to discover and contemplate the wealth of our artistic heritage. Sign language, by dint of its international character, will make this possible. A number of groups – some of them from countries as geographically and culturally diverse as Sweden, the United States and Japan – have already had an opportunity to visit our museums.

It is also significant that a number of foreign museum curators encountered at international conferences such as the ICOM Congress in Quebec have expressed enthusiastic interest in our project. We sincerely hope that these curators, together with any other individuals or groups who may be interested, will lend their support to the development of this new medium of communication in museums – sign language.

The newly acquired deaf visitors will thus be afforded an opportunity to become completely integrated into the hearing museum public, who may well, once they have got over their surprise, show an interest in getting to know the deaf visitors better. Another interesting point is that sign language itself has something to contribute to the museum environment, as it is by definition an aesthetic gesture. What could be more lovely than the combination of beautiful things and graceful gestures?

What lies ahead?

Thus far, eight deaf people in France have been trained to serve as museum guides: to be cultural intermediaries between the museum world and the deaf community, which has as a result gained renewed enthusiasm for art in general.

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Most importantly, as a result of the French Ministry of Culture's recognition of deaf museum guides' competence to work in the same capacity (i.e. with the same rights and responsibilities) as their hearing colleagues, an integration process has been activated and must at all costs be sustained in the years to come.

It is with this in mind that we are currently discussing the feasibility of training young deaf students in courses given by the École du Louvre, using special facilities such as interpreting equipment.

In order to diversify and expand our action we are also continuing to work in co-operation with other cultural bodies such as the French Caisse des Monuments Historiques et des Sites, for which we are currently developing a specialized year-long training course. However, it is essential as well for deaf officials to be appointed within museums, or even the state cultural ministry, in order that the most appropriate structures be developed for this small but nevertheless real segment of the public.

Here, of course, we are referring specifically to the situation in France, but the same is true for other countries, where we have observed similar deficiencies; indeed, we did not meet a single deaf official at any of the international cultural events we attended.

I believe that one of the strongest claims – if not the very strongest – of all disabled people is the right to empowerment rather than assistance. It is my fervent hope that through informative journals like *Museum International* this claim will be heard and understood. For, within the framework of the new Europe that is being formed and of the new, better and – we hope – more humane world ideally awaiting us in the new millennium, the deaf must be allowed to play their full part.

As I have had the opportunity to observe over the years I have spent with them, the deaf have not only a specific character of their own but also something to offer, and we should allow them to share it with us. ■

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Training restorers in Russia

Galina Klokova

Galina Klokova is a highly qualified art restorer who graduated from the Department of Art Theory and History at the Ilya Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in St Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). She worked for many years at the All-Russian Art Restoration Centre (the Igor Grabar Centre) in Moscow. At present, she is the head of the restoration department of the 1905 Arts College in Moscow.

Before the mid-1960s there was no provision for the training of restorers at state level in Russia. Young people who had studied the arts or art criticism went to work in a museum or in one of the major restoration workshops where they learnt the restorer's skills under the guidance of an experienced craftsman. Essentially what they learnt was restoration techniques and they received no serious theoretical grounding.

Russia's first restoration departments were established in secondary colleges, the first in 1965 at the 1905 Arts College in Moscow, and another a year later at the Vladimir Serov Arts College in St Petersburg. Shortly afterwards, two higher-level educational institutes began to provide training for restorers. These were the Stroganov Institute of Industrial Art in Moscow and the Ilya Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in St Petersburg. The length of study today is five years in secondary arts colleges and six years in higher-level institutes of art. Restorers are trained in the following areas of specialization: easel painting in tempera, easel painting in oils and monumental art.

Those wishing to study in the restoration department of a college or institute must sit an examination in academic drawing and painting in accordance with the requirements laid down for entrants to secondary or higher educational institutions, and also be successful in a competition. Subsequently, a considerable amount of attention is given to academic drawing and painting in the study programme for restorers. The required subjects in both colleges and institutes include: materials technology, chemistry, biology, museum stocktaking and storage, methods of technical and technological research, history of the arts and iconography. Two special subjects related to restoration work are studied from the outset. Towards the end of their course, the students themselves decide which of the two interests them more and carry out a graduation project in the special subject which they have chosen.

Since the 1960s, there has been a system in Russia for certification of restorers. This is done by a special commission composed of the country's leading restorers and art critics, who cover all types of restoration (before the dissolution of the USSR, the commission was attached to the Ministry of Culture of the USSR; now it comes under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Russian Federation). Restorers are assigned to the third, second, first or top category for a particular area of specialization on the basis of the degree of difficulty of the work which they have carried out independently.

The function of the secondary arts colleges is to train restorers in the third or lowest category. Restorers at grade-three level must be fully competent in conservation methods. They must be able to disinfect exhibits and exterminate insects in them and should be familiar with the rules for keeping records of restoration work. The curriculum is also based on these requirements. Much time is allotted to teaching the trainees how to consolidate gesso and paint, to remove non-persistent dirt from a base, to carry out very simple operations for gluing together the panels of a base and making good the loss of wood on icons. They also learn how to correct canvas distortions, put in edges, consolidate priming coat and paint, repair torn canvas and old under-frames and remove non-persistent dirt from pictures. Students are trained to restore monumental art first of all on test pieces which they themselves have produced. They make a base, apply a layer of plaster to it and paint on to the plaster a first layer using fresco technique. Above that ➧

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they put oil paint and then a final layer of size colour. When the work is complete, the piece is purposely damaged in a variety of ways and exercises on methods of consolidating the plaster and paint are carried out. Initial training in the removal of paint is also carried out on these test pieces.

The conservation skills acquired during the academic year are consolidated and extended during a summer session of practical work. Restorers of easel painting (icons and pictures) are given practical training in major museums while restorers of monumental art work in buildings under the supervision of experienced restorers.

The senior classes in art colleges provide a general idea of more complex restoration processes. Icon restorers learn how to remove darkened drying oil from well-preserved icons, to replace minor losses of primer and to apply simple retouches and protective coats.

After being orally examined on their theses, graduates may receive from their college's restoration committee a recommendation for admission to a particular category, which they must then submit to the examination board responsible for issuing certificates.

In art institutes, students likewise work only on the conservation of icons and pictures during the first three years of their six-year course. In the fourth year they start to specialize and study in depth the type of conservation work which they themselves have chosen. Future restorers not only learn how to remove darkened drying oil but also the many layers of paint which are frequently encountered on Russian icons. Greater use is made than in art colleges of various methods of pre-restoration investigation, such as X-rays, infra-red and ultraviolet examination, analysis of the priming coat, pigments and surface. Icons with extensive losses are retouched. The same applies to the restoration of pictures. Students learn to work with paintings not only on canvas but also on card, wood and metal. Complex techniques are learnt for thinning coats of lacquer and for making good and retouching areas of painting with major losses. Pictures and icons have to be

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Galina Klokova teaching icon restoration to third-year students of the 1905 Arts College in Moscow.

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copied using the original techniques and materials. A full restored work and a copy of it are submitted as the student's graduation project. When they leave their institute, graduates may apply for inclusion in category two.

Systematic education in restoration work is in its early days in Russia and there are many problems that have not yet been solved. The experience of the last thirty years or so has demonstrated the inadvisability of training restorers at art schools, where priority is attached to the development of the students' own creative potential, whereas the restorers' task is to renounce their own creativity and concentrate on saving works created by others. There is a basic contradiction in relation to drawing and painting lessons. In all art schools they are the main subjects, whereas in the study of restoration they must be downgraded to the status of auxiliary subjects, giving pride of place to chemistry, physics and biology. A solution might be to establish special restoration schools where restorers would be trained to work not only on pictures, icons and murals but also on graphics, books and works of applied art. There is a huge demand for such specialists and there is nowhere at present where they can be trained. There is also a problem of teaching staff. It is extremely difficult to persuade a qualified restorer to work in an educational establishment where salaries are extremely low and the responsibilities considerable. The restorer is, after all, entirely responsible for the quality of the restoration work carried out by his students. The shortage of teachers means that it is impossible to start training restorers anywhere except Moscow and St Petersburg. Restorers for regional and district museums are trained in the old way, learning on the job in the large restoration workshops. Quality control of the restoration work carried out in provincial towns is limited and depends to a great extent on the chance arrival of an expert. Restorers in the provinces are cut off from their professional milieu and there is often only one restorer for the entire region. Trips to Moscow or St Petersburg are rare because of the distances involved. All this necessarily has an effect on the quality of restoration work. There are very few grade-one or top-grade restorers in the provinces.

Russia is extremely rich in architectural monuments, easel paintings, works of applied art and drawings. It is the restorer's task to preserve this wealth. The modern restorer is required to possess not only virtuoso technical skills but also the ability to carry out a comprehensive investigation of a work. It is only possible to decide on the optimal method for restoring each individual work by combining all the conclusions of chemical, biological and physical research. The restorer must also be familiar with the historical period in which the picture, sculpture or embroidered cloth was made. All this knowledge can be acquired only in a special educational institution with a planned system for the study of the relevant subjects. ■

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Thoughts on museology in Spain: an open letter

Aurora León

Aurora León is a household name in the Spanish-speaking museum world. Her 1978 book, El museo: teoría, praxis y utopía, *is now in its sixth edition and is considered indispensable reading for the museum profession. Yet far from pleasing her, this situation has led her to raise serious questions as to the vitality and relevance of museums in Spain (and elsewhere). In the following open letter to museologists, she sets out her concerns.*

I believe in efficacy and the need for commitment to progress in museum activities. Having set down this statement of principles, I will come straight to the point of my letter. The review *Museum International* most obligingly agreed, at my request, to include an article on the situation of museums in Spain. Although I am not a museologist, the subject is of such concern to me that I am sending you this SOS.

Please let it be clear from the outset that my thoughts stem mainly from my bibliographical experience. My book *El museo: teoría, praxis y utopía* was prompted by the glaring lack of publications about museum matters in Spanish. Since I teach the history of art, I have to visit museums and, out of museological curiosity, to observe the inoperative dulness of the motley multitude already decried by Kandinsky. I confess that, were I in any other profession, I should seldom darken the door of a museum. And I admit this without shame but with a twinge of remorse. No one needs reminding that Spain is itself a great museum boasting a historical and artistic heritage of the highest order, with superb buildings, outstanding collections and some services that have been markedly improved, to be sure, but from which I have still not managed to squeeze enough goodness.

In the foreword to my book, I asked readers to shed their comfortable myths, pointing out to them the puerile acceptance of 'the rift between the ideas, emotions and sensations of art and those of life', dedicating the work 'to that anonymous group that does not yet go to museums, or that swarms through the galleries disappointed and uneasy'. I also cautioned against 'petrifying in these lines a body of museological doctrine serving as a vademecum for future professionals or specialists'. Convinced of the power of a book but shunning any bibliographical fundamentalisms, I believe that its function is to raise doubts, stimulate new points of view, encourage further study of the subject-matter, and push ahead in our universe of ideas in order to make life more rewarding. I believe that the author's explicit wishes should be respected, but they are not. The 'Aurora León' is a museological catechism in Spanish universities and a daily sleeping pill or tranquillizer for would-be museum curators. The complacency of long-suffering readers is proverbial. My desire that other – updated! – studies should replace mine is very strong, and my perplexity at such a lack of response is boundless.

I recently had occasion to express my views in the appropriate place, the Ministry of Culture, which kindly invited me to take part in a round table on 'the profession of museologist', as part of a series of lectures for new museum curators and assistants. When I began to apologize for having inflicted the printed word on them, they were a little embarrassed. For we are saddled with the accursed myth of a book culture! And I went on to set out my thinking on the points I had been asked to cover: (a) museology and museum professionals; (b) the past, present and future of the profession; (c) museology training in Spain; and (d) the role and characteristics of the museologist.

I began by congratulating the new civil servants and expressing the hope that the novelty of their status would not expose them to the tenacious virus of officialdom, exhorting them to make sure that such a creative profession remained a constant stimulus in their daily lives. I said I was surprised at the title of the session and uncertain whether to hold forth on a profession that did not exist in Spain, or whether to offer practical proposals on how to introduce it. I provided some

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clarification of the current confusion between 'museology' and 'museography'. To you, who are in no need of definitions, I would just point out that the former is a science unknown in this country, whereas the latter is museum experience, which is excellent in some exceptional cases, ineffectual in most, and, otherwise, downright harmful. Regarding museum professionals, I mentioned the two factors behind the grave inefficacy and obstructionism in the running of museums, that is, the excessively pyramid-shaped and outdated hierarchy of management and the dire lack of museologists. While the rigid structure makes for professional dysfunction, lack of co-ordination, dissatisfaction and various shortcomings, the end result is that there are no museologists, which amounts to a sort of scientific blockage in a world moving relentlessly towards specialization. I therefore stressed the urgent need to establish a body of museologists.

I went on to the second point, wondering what profession we were talking about, since specialists from very diverse scientific disciplines who work in museums lay claim to this supposed profession. Why can we not have the sensible humility to be what we are and respect others for being what they are or should be?

The 'mausoleum approach'

I spoke of the past, stressing that the mausoleum approach – and if it persists today, this is because museology as a science is not practised in museums – has enabled history to be preserved and has left us an invaluable legacy that can be given a spark of life only if we tackle the work with constantly fresh and open ways of seeing and thinking. Only in the critical interpretation that we may make of the exhibit from our position in the present can we find the response to its *raison d'être:* its vitality and topicality. Otherwise it is doomed to perish in shiny showcases or on its portion of wall. The point is that I do not believe in radical fundamentalism severing tradition from innovation. Without the tentative preoccupations and aerodynamic experiments of Leonardo da Vinci, there would be no supersonic flight today. As to the present, museum policy wavers between emphasis on the spectacular aspects, well-intentioned but inadequate voluntary activity, and an improvisation dictated by the lack of strictly museological objectives. The contrast between reality and desire is called tragedy, but observing and identifying reality and then failing to act is the stuff of melodrama. And as I am not given to endless moaning, I must acknowledge that our museums have for about the last decade been better provided for. But the rejuvenation manifestly achieved tends to go hand in hand with the mistaken notion that they are thriving. Between a rough-and-ready clean-up operation and palpable beauty there is the same gap as between modernization and progress. The future? I did not venture any possible scenarios or disasters. All I offered was a proposition, which is the need for mental receptiveness on the part of the authorities in co-ordination with the staff, a conviction that the museum must grow from below and not from above, and the need for searching analysis of the specific role of the museologist, who should normally ensure that it matches the present requirements of society.

Museological training in Spain is virtually orphaned, both institutionally and academically. Of that there can be no doubt. Or at least I would not want to lull you into the belief that my book and the more or less sagacious and stimulating things taught in university in this discipline (in many faculties the subject is called museography)

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come as a substitute for genuine learning in the matter. The bibliographical spectrum of recent years suggests that no research, or too little, has been focused on museology itself, even though branches of it ('science of communication', pedagogy and architecture, essentially) do much to throw light on those aspects to which specialists have been the most attuned. This feebleness seems to me to be a matter of the utmost consequence, and it is never amiss to call for a qualitative increase in theoretical publications on museum matters since, apart from an intellectual fecundity of which we stand ever in need, this would also express a scientific concern for knowledge that would not only obviate unnecessary effort, extra cost or shameless deterioration but would also make for a refreshing reinvigoration of museum structures for the benefit of all of us. I have an emphatic proposal to make right away, which is the establishment of a state-run national school of museology to turn out new generations of museologists with one or two years of specialist studies behind them. I am sorry to disappoint you with a suggestion that obviously has nothing very bold about it, but here in Spain it would indeed be a novelty.

Finally, I turned to the role and characteristics of the museologist, whose basic task differs substantially from that of the other museum staff. I wanted to be quite clear on this point, first on account of the specific character of the 'museum ideologist' and, second, to reassure staff that their duties would in no way be eroded. The museologist's role would focus on theoretical study of the various elements that go to make up the museum – which even makes it unnecessary for him or her to be physically present in the institution – and on maintaining contact with the staff in order to plan museum activities from the infrastructure angle. If the limits of the action of each professional were properly understood, and if something were done about the obduracy of directors, together with acceptance of the voice of museologists as a necessary factor and true respect for their professional qualifications, the museum would have a more impressive and entertaining image, its operation would be more effective and dynamic, and its results would reflect the dialogue-oriented and interdisciplinary attitude of the accord linking those involved in the project and its finalization.

The museologist, I believe, must revitalize the museum by supplying the knowledge and the assumptions that stem from an improved approach to the museographic phenomenon, and through direct contacts with the various professionals (director, curators, architect, cultural activities organizer, manager, etc.) who, with their respective know-how and experience, put into practice the findings arrived at. Why is it so difficult to accept this recipe for harmony between the museologist and the museum staff? The blindness of the latter stems from the fear of forfeiting a say in what they regard as their private preserve. Without questioning what they know about museums, I have no doubt that they are well-schooled in the history of absolute monarchies, for they adopt the '*l'état, c'est moi*' posture. Hence an executive-style takeover of the duties of the museologist, who obviously becomes a superfluous figure.

I think there are two essential attributes that need to combine in such an execrated professional: a first university degree and the diploma delivered by the School of Museology. In addition to these basic requirements, the museologist must have sound theoretical and practical knowledge of museum practice both at home and abroad. Membership of ICOM and a sub-

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scription to *Museum International, inter alia,* would ease the inescapable task of keeping abreast of museological progress. And while cynics may rush to decry what I am about to say, the museologist's humanistic training must foster imagination, boldness and even fearlessness. 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained,' is the name of the game, as reflected in the ability to think up and make workable something new, different and original. That professional ethic would become the art of making possible what is necessary.

Museums: not merely a showcase

My turbulent exposition thus ended, counter-arguments rained in from the members of the panel, all belonging to the Ministry of Culture. Some made their points well, although one of them proclaimed apocalyptically: 'There won't be any School of Museology for the foreseeable future.' And another did not argue at all but vented his spleen first by questioning the existence of the profession of museologist, secondly, by claiming that 'there's no such thing as museology, just accumulated museum experience,' thirdly, by pontificating that 'revolution nowadays is the path to isolation', and finally, by winding up with: 'Let anyone who wants to do research get out of museum work.'

I answered him point for point. First, casting doubt on a profession that not only exists but has a proud record in all the developed countries is not a sound Socratic exercise, but the masking of a reality that one does not wish to acknowledge, other than through hybridisms. And sciences today are interdisciplinary, which is not to deny any of them their specific conceptual and methodological profiles and their own body of knowledge. And with regard to back-up sciences, the museum director is the person to seek back-up from museology. Secondly, my rebuttal of the new negation of the science of museology was that it well and truly exists and, like any science, derives from testing and proving facts so as to build up its own body of doctrine. But to leave the matter there, without interpreting those facts, is skin-deep compliance that has no regard for structure. And suspect compliance, to boot. Thirdly, this is an appropriate point of view for anyone clinging to power; but, not being so inclined, I believe that once a revolutionary, always a revolutionary. This is especially true of those in charge of science and culture. And, finally, museum directors must be ambassadors of the science and culture amassed in their centres. I therefore find the pronouncement just about as mean-spirited as can be, since the museum is not a showcase displaying what happens to be currently in fashion but, among other functions, a research and study centre both for those working there and for visitors. And the latter role will emerge greatly strengthened if the exhibits, in addition to mere overhead or side lighting, are bathed in the glow of intellect and imagination. And, as distinct from specialists outside the museum, such illumination is provided by those familiar with the exhibits on a daily basis.

I sought the views of the new curators, with their first degree in prehistory and history of art and as yet unmindful of their lot. How accustomed they are to this abasement of the arts professional! Even so, I was on the lookout for some hint of disquiet in them, some chink in their assurance opened up by the logical fear of treading the virgin tract of professional experience, some fleeting glimpse of intellectual wavering over the exercise of the profession, some moral discomfiture at this rarefied air, some glimmer of dismay at being summoned as jacks of all trades and

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hence possibly masters of none. Nothing of the sort. Nor was I struck by any unbridled passion of youth as they mouthed the assertion that they had been trained as 'curator-museologists'. A flash of doubt assails me. After all, I may be the academic mother of their delusions fossilized into absolute certainties. 'Do you think that because you have read my book you know about museology?' The unwelcome reply: 'Of course!' had an unexpectedly cathartic effect that made me yell: 'Open the windows and let everyone hear that I abominate *El museo: teoría, praxis y utopía* by Aurora León.'

Off they all troop quite smugly. I am left with the sensation of something unfinished that goads me. I feel the need to let some air into the whole set-up and spread my thinking to broad sectors engaged in the museum field, seeing that the situations to be found are not peculiar to Spain, that it is urgent to carry on denouncing museum shortcomings with intellectual, ethical and political defiance, that the intellectual involved in museum matters must be alerted to the absolute necessity of subjecting the purpose of the museum to scrutiny, and finally, that it is necessary to be aware of the rift that exists between universities and museums, together with the resulting ills and sequels. I remember something that Friedrich said: 'Go on inventing rules, you arid, dried-up slaves of routine! The herd will praise you for the crutches you hand it, but those with inner strength will deride you.' So I now ask you what you think about this, and I thank you for bearing with me. Answer me and I shall hear you out unflinchingly. If you think that my book has provided such crutches and is partly to blame for this situation regarding museums, I shall take it off the market. I believe in museology. ■

Note

Museum International welcomes readers' responses to Ms León's open letter. – Ed.

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Museum – Museums

The new vogue for museum architecture can sometimes shift the emphasis away from the heritage itself, which the architecture is supposed to set off to advantage, and is thus a matter of some concern for museologists. These new monuments are in fact our heritage of tomorrow, but it is not always easy for the visitor to perceive that the exhibits and their setting form an alliance, which should, if possible, be a felicitous one.

The *Museum – Museums* lectures at the Louvre in Paris highlight the differences in the very concept of what constitutes a museum. Indeed, this diversity is not so much a matter of architecture and content; rather, it expresses the history, culture and outlook of each individual country. Hence our interest in it.

The museums and cultural centres of the Japanese architect Itsuko Hasegawa, the Yad Vashem Museum (Israel) and the Galerie de l'Évolution du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (Paris) each have their own particular way of relating to the heritage. Lectures on these subjects were delivered in the autumn of 1993.

Itsuko Hasegawa and Architectural Landscape Design

Even the name of the Hasegawa agency is significant and makes no secret of what it aims to achieve: 'As if to compensate for the massive destruction of nature and the cities, the extremely consumer-orientated Japanese society has become increasingly dependent on mass media to simulate a new artificial environment.' All its work originates in a vigorous critique of Japanese society, the brutal urban transformations after the Second World War, the obsession with technology and the impact of pollution. It aims to combat all this by observing three broad rules:

1. To find elsewhere the harmony that humanity has lost by destroying nature; faithful to the eastern concept that human beings are a part of nature, it sees 'architecture as a second nature'.

2. To devise projects in partnership with users, as opposed to the centralized, standardizing and reductionist concept of culture in a country where 'people imitate one another'.

3. To link computer-aided design systematically to traditional design methods and to the manual construction of models, like a cybernetic extension of the body.

The museums and temporary exhibition halls designed by Hasegawa in Japan are based on these principles: rethinking the cosmic cycle; bringing together the environment and daily life; and encouraging children to use their

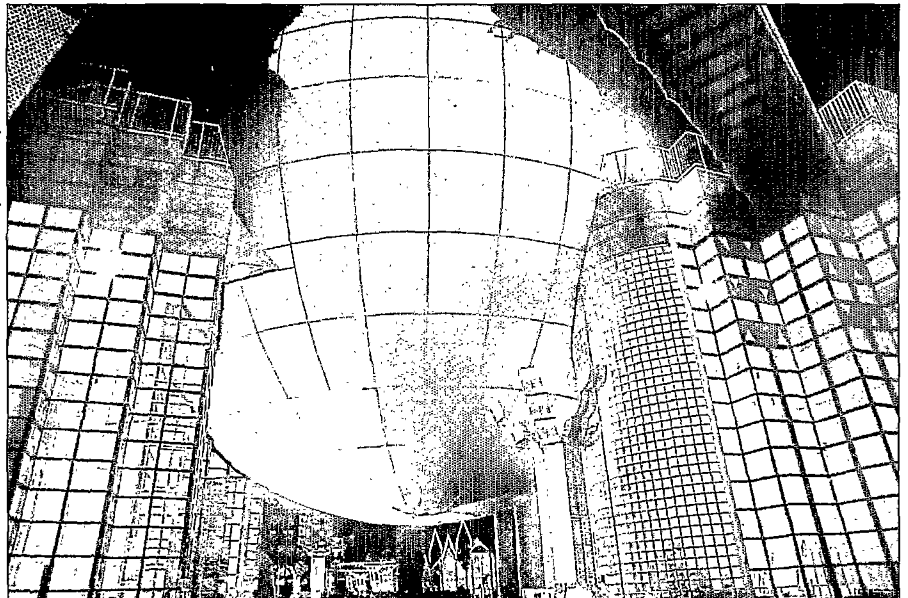

Photo by courtesy of the author

The theatre of the Shonandai Cultural Centre by Itsuko Hasegawa, using spheres that suggest a futuristic, cosmic environment.

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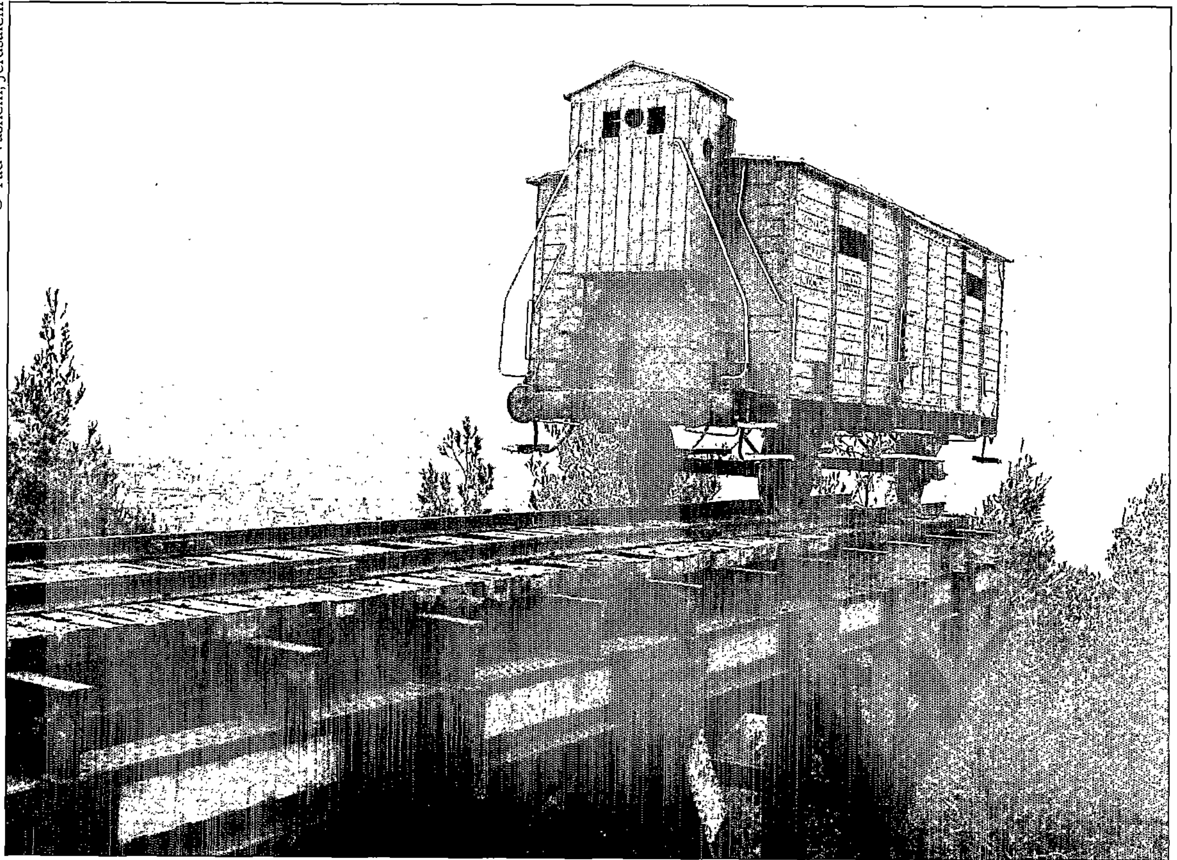

© Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

Auschwitz cattle wagon on exhibit at the Yad Vashem Museum.

imagination. These are the intentions behind the Shonandai Cultural Centre (built in 1989 in the northern part of the town of Fujisawa). Footpaths and a river wind their way through natural and landscaped gardens, which are interspersed with large domes reminiscent of the solar system and housing auditoriums. In Oshima Machia, a town of 10,000 inhabitants, in the north of the country, the Picture Book Museum is designed to preserve the culture of the *Ehon*, or picture books, and to encourage the creativity of both adults and children in this field. The climate there is very cold and it snows in winter. It is as important to create the impression of a protective building as it is to incorporate in it the fairytale world of a snowy landscape. The building is not intended to be monumental, and works like a 'village green' where exchanges take place, with a theatre, a library, assembly halls and exhibition rooms. Further south, in view of Mount Fuji, among the orchards of Yamanashi Prefecture, the Museum of Fruit is gradually taking shape: an indoor and outdoor organic farming area, which will combine greenhouses, workshops and libraries in a vast complex of rounded shapes resembling various kinds of seeds scattered on the ground ('the chaotic shape of a flying fruit seed').

As Hasegawa has pointed out, very often these 'museums' have no collections beforehand and the art form to which they refer is in fact an 'art of living'.

The Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem

The Yad Vashem Museum is in total contrast to the foregoing in many respects, notably in the tragedy which it commemorates, and in the monumental and opaque style of its construction erected as a memorial to the millions of European Jews who were killed. Yad Vashem, situated on Har Hazikaron overlooking Jerusalem, is in fact the museum of the Holocaust. *Yad* means memorial, and *shem* is a reminder of every individual victim. The museum contains works of art and paintings by children created in the ghettos and in

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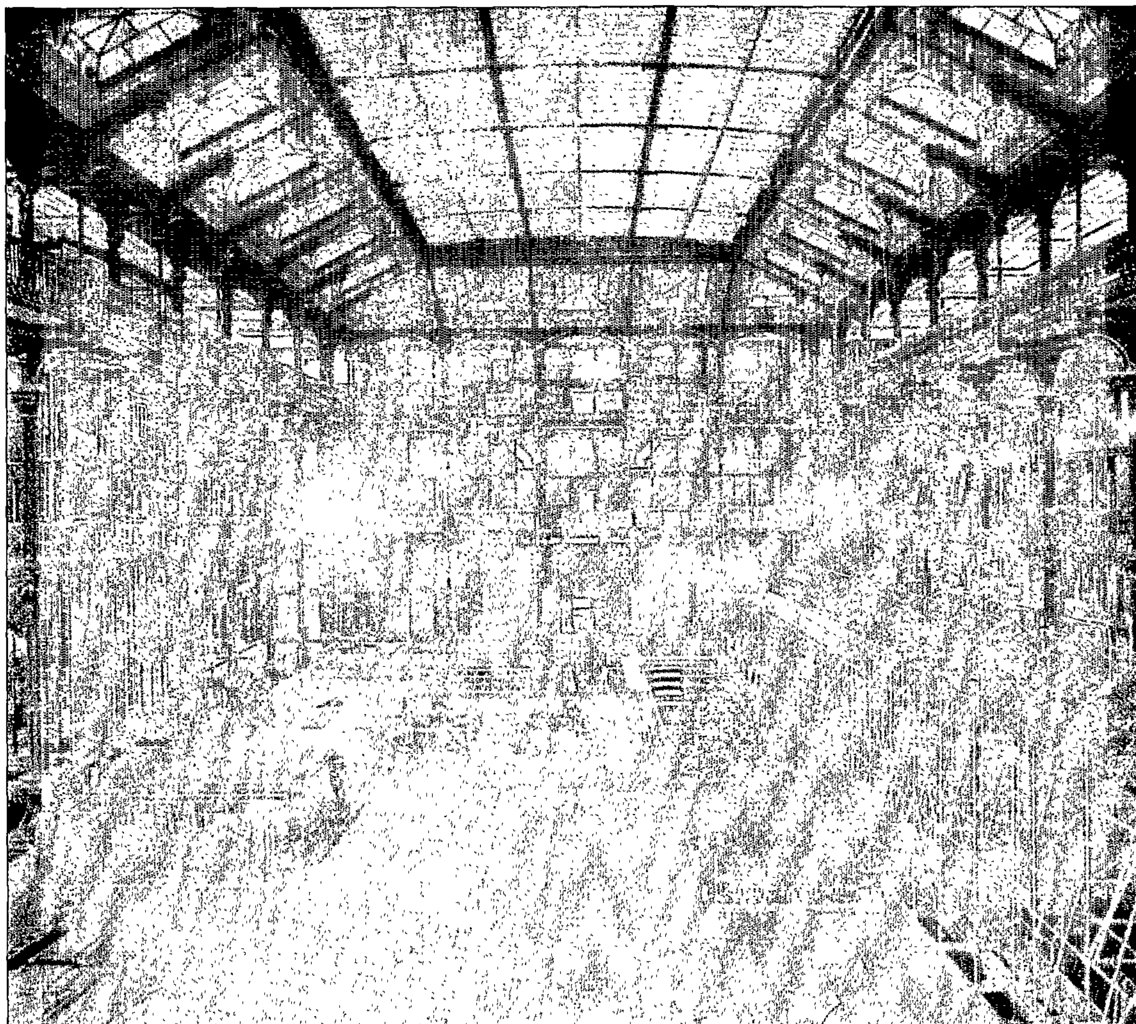

The Galerie de l'Évolution, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

the camps. It also exhibits later works by survivors and artists. The photographs are all deliberately in black and white, and they are accompanied by ritual objects from communities which were wiped out. In a kind of crypt, austere stelae stand, silently displaying the names of 5,000 Jewish martyrs. Outside, small white upright stones are a memorial to the murdered children. Yad Vashem is a 'site museum' comprising several buildings, a natural cave and an old Auschwitz cattle wagon, situated along an artificial valley on the hillside.

The museum was founded in 1953, but largely renovated in 1992. Renovation work is still going on and the museum is being extended underground, emphasizing the deliberate feeling of oppression that it creates.

Avner Shalev, the museum's curator, makes a point of mentioning the distinction drawn by the French historian Pierre Nora between memory and history: memory is alive – as the pain still endured today by the victims of the Shoah goes to show – whereas history is a reconstruction of the past. The Yad Vashem museum raises two problems: how to preserve this vivid memory so that its testimony will never lose its impact, for when memory slips into history, it loses its salutary virulence. At the same time, while this visual reminder of the Jewish tragedy has great emotional force, it also brings to mind, now that this people have fortunately regained a homeland, the current tense cohabitation of two communities sharing the same territory – tension which has not yet been relieved by the start of an official peace process.

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The Galerie de l'Évolution – Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris

Here, the aim is to restore and modernize one of the finest examples of an iron-frame construction (built between 1880 and 1887). It is a place which has nourished the dreams of generations of children and adults, on account of both the fabulous stuffed animals and the magical building housing them. A hundred years later, the winners of an architecture competition for the renovation of the Grande Galerie (1987), Paul Chemetov and Borja Huidobro, after the spectacular removal of specimens of all sizes, stripped the building down to its foundations. Their task presented three difficulties: how to exhibit scientific objects and concepts, the technical constraints of the building, and the alliance of old and new forms and materials. The museographical project that was adopted, drawn up by the prefiguration section planning unit led by Michel Van Praët, a professor at the museum, falls into three main sections: the various organisms and their habitats, evolution, and *Homo sapiens* as a factor in evolution. The area was divided into three, to accommodate the permanent exhibition, the temporary exhibitions (underground, where the excavations revealed magnificent brick arcatures supporting the slim cast-iron columns) and the cultural and educational activity centre. Attending as carefully to this symbolic building as to the collections, Chemetov described the work undertaken as follows:

> Make a feature of the open galleries, which will be devoted to developing the themes of evolution, transfer everything which requires natural light to the periphery, and faithfully restore the former bird gallery, converting it into a reliquary of extinct species, presented in antique display cabinets; this reorganization allows all the temporary exhibition halls to be transferred underground, and linked to the technical facilities of the zoological depository. The whole of the central area becomes a practicable floor, giving greater effect to the presentation of the metaphorically marine below-stage area by adding a terrestrial upper area crossed by a procession of all the large stuffed animals. Whales float over ocean depths, their powerful skeletons contrasting with the huge pillars of the old foundations. . . . The restored glass roof, which remains covered, as the direct rays of sunlight are harmful to the conservation of rare specimens, is a controlled source of light conveying the changing light and shade of the passing days.

It is theatrical (the scenography is by René Allio, film-maker, who is also responsible for sound effects and the adjustment of the glass roof according to the time of day), it is designed on strict scientific and museographical lines (Van Praët/Huidobro), and it preserves the character of the old building. In the Galerie de l'Évolution, too, dreams and poetry will by no means be out of place.

Report by Mathilde Bellaigue of the Laboratoire de Recherche des Musées de France

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Professional news

Museums Association of the Caribbean

The Museums Association of the Caribbean (MAC) has recently established its headquarters in Barbados. With the help of a grant from the Organization of American States, the MAC Secretariat aims to become an information centre for museum workers within the region. A major project now under way, in co-operation with the Caribbean Conservation Association, is the creation of a Directory of Museums of the region. MAC also publishes a lively, information-packed quarterly newsletter in English and Spanish; a French edition is in the planning stage.

For further information:
Museums Association of the Caribbean,
P.O. Box 112,
GPO Bridgetown (Barbados)
Tel: (809) 426-9635
Fax: (809) 429-8483

Restoration and conservation

Restoration 93, held in Boston, Mass. (United States) in December 1993, established itself as the largest preservation event ever held in North America. More than 7,600 visitors from across the United States and Canada and from as far afield as Ecuador, Italy and Australia came to view the wide variety of products and services from over 250 exhibiting companies. The success of the event has prompted *Restoration*'s organizers to schedule the event on an annual basis. The next *Restoration* in North America will take place on 26–28 February 1995 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston; the 1994 exhibit is scheduled for 12–14 October in Amsterdam (see *Museum International*, No. 181 – Ed.). Commenting on the results of *Restoration 93* and plans for *Restoration 95*, Show Director Steven Schuyler said, 'We are very pleased with the outcome of our first show. . . . The strong response from the market-place has shown that a comprehensive commercial and educational forum like *Restoration* is needed, and not just for the North American market. Preservation, like the environmental movement, is becoming an increasingly global concern. That is why we will see even more exhibitors from abroad at *Restoration 95* and a closer collaboration between our North American and European advisory boards in creating special educational programmes in 1995.'

For further information on *Restoration 95*:
E. Glew International,
Ten Tower Office Park,
Woburn, MA 01801 (United States)
Tel: (1.617) 933.9055
Fax: (1.617) 933.8744

Restoration, De-restoration, Re-restoration . . . is the theme of the fourth international symposium to be organized by the Association des Restaurateurs d'Art et d'Archéologie de Formation Universitaire in Paris in October 1995. The symposium will address such questions as: when and why one should intervene on an object that has already undergone treatment; what criteria should be used in making such a decision; comparing the approaches and motivations of the various professionals responsible for national heritage; identifying alternative solutions, new research fields and new approaches; and suggesting an ethical framework as a guideline for professional conduct.

For further information:
ARAAFU 1995 Symposium,
c/o Marianne Moinot,
175 rue du Temple,
75003 Paris (France)
Tel: (33.1) 48.94.36.56

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Master's degree in museology in Amsterdam

The Reinwardt Academy, the only full-time training centre with a Bachelor's degree programme in museology in Europe, is launching a Master's degree programme in September 1994. The new programme will be taught in English and will be open to graduates of all recognized universities throughout the world. It will consist of six basic courses covering management, registration and documentation of collections, conservation, education and communication, visitor surveys and exhibition design. Two co-ordinating and integrating courses in theoretical museology and methodology form the backbone of the programme. Each of the courses has a course load of 200 hours, bringing the total course load in the first year to 1,600 hours; the final stage of the Master's degree programme consists of a written thesis estimated at about 800 hours. Full-time enrolment may begin either in September 1994 or February 1995. Founded in 1976 as Western Europe's first professional college of museology, the Reinwardt Academy was merged in 1987 with a number of related colleges into the Amsterdam School of the Arts.

For further information:
Amsterdam School of the Arts,
Department of Museology,
Reinwardt Academy,
Dapperstraat 315,
1093 BS Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
Tel: (31.20) 6926338
(31.20) 6922111
Fax: (31.20) 6925762
(31.20) 6926836

New publications

Museums and Interactive Multimedia, No. 20 (1993), 436 pp. US$50. Proceedings of the second International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums held in conjunction with the sixth International Conference of the Museum Documentation Association in Cambridge (United Kingdom), 20–24 September 1993.

Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums, No. 14 (1991), 340 pp. US$50. Proceedings of the first International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums held in Pittsburgh (United States), 14–16 October 1991.

Interactivity in American Museums, by Stephanie Koester, No. 16 (1993), 120 pp. plus supplement. US$30. Research report based on interviews with American museum professionals.

These three recent Technical Reports may be purchased from Archives and Museum Informatics, 5501 Walnut Street, Suite 203, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-2311 (United States). (Orders outside the Western Hemisphere should add US$10 for shipping each title.)

International Exhibition Guide. Published by Parama, Paris, 1994, 610 pp. (Bilingual: English/French). FF580 (shipping charge: FF38 for France; FF55 for Europe). Available from Provinciales, 33 rue de Faubourg Saint-Antoine, 75011 Paris (France).

This first comprehensive guide of European exhibitions presents a selection of 350–400 museums in 21 countries and provides a preview of 1,200–1,500 exhibitions scheduled for 1994/95. A veritable 'landscape of exhibitions', the guide allows for systematic comparisons through its thematic, alphabetical and chronological indexes; it also explains how to lead a group of visitors and organize a cultural trip, and provides information on museum opening hours, facilities and services, translations in foreign languages, audio-guiding systems available and other practical details.

museum international

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