CELEBRATING CENTENARY OF JOHN WAYNE’S BIRTH, MoMA PRESENTS SCREENINGS OF CLASSIC AND SELDOM-SCREENED FILMS FEATURING THE ICONIC ACTOR

Exhibition Includes Screenings of Films Spanning 37 Years, Including The Big Trail, Restored by MoMA, as well as The Searchers, El Dorado, and She Wore a Yellow Ribbon

John Wayne Centenary

June 20–30, 2007
The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

NEW YORK, May 25, 2007—The Museum of Modern Art presents John Wayne Centenary, a six-film retrospective of selections from the collection celebrating the 100th anniversary of the iconic actor’s birth. The exhibition is presented June 20–30, 2007, in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters and includes such films as The Searchers (1956), El Dorado (1967), and She Wore a Yellow Ribbon (1949). Also included is The Big Trail (1930), restored by MoMA and a rarely screened trailer for The Hurricane Express (1932).

Several of the films will be introduced by Kevin Stoehr, professor, Boston University; project director, John Ford Center, Portland, Maine; and coeditor of the forthcoming anthology John Ford in Focus: Essays on the Filmmaker’s Life and Art. The exhibition is organized by Charles Silver, Associate Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art.

John Wayne (American, 1907–79), has proven to be one of the most durable American stars in the history of film. Wayne, born Marion Michael Morrison on May 26, in Winterset, Iowa, spent time at the University of Southern California on a football scholarship before arriving in Hollywood. There he met director John Ford, who cast him in several films such as Stagecoach (1939), Fort Apache (1948), She Wore a Yellow Ribbon (1949), Rio Grande (1950), and The Searchers (1956). Over the course of their careers Wayne and Ford came to define—and, in Wayne’s case, to personify—the Western.

Wayne’s collaborations with Ford and Howard Hawks established bodies of work unsurpassed for solidity and cohesion in American cinema. Decades after his first starring role in Raoul Walsh’s The Big Trail (1930), Wayne’s legend had become so grand that the best of his later films were monuments fashioned to various aspects of his myth. The final film in the exhibition, Hawks’s El Dorado (1967), provides a mellow and sublime elegy about aging in a West that had grown old, echoing Sitting Bull’s lament upon his surrender: “A warrior I have been. Now it is all over. A hard time I have.”

This centenary celebration also features three more of Wayne’s defining films with Ford, including arguably the two most beautifully photographed Westerns ever made, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon and The Searchers. Wayne also starred in much of the patriotic cinema that emerged from the United States during and beyond the cold war period, such as the WWII drama
“They Were Expendable” (1945). During the 1960s, Wayne went on to direct a handful of films that accommodated his revisionism and strident political beliefs.

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The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday
Museum Adm: $20 adults; $16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; $12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)
Target Free Friday Nights 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Film Adm: $10 adults; $8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. $6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)
Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street
Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

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JOHN WAYNE CENTENARY
SCREENING SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 20

In a chapter of Walsh’s autobiography titled “Columbus Only Discovered America,” the director recounts plucking Marion Michael Morrison out from under John Ford’s wing, renaming him after General Mad Anthony Wayne, and giving him his first starring role. The film, gorgeously shot in the experimental widescreen Grandeur process, has the equally gorgeous young Wayne lead a wagon train on the Oregon Trail. Despite a tendency toward awkwardness, the young Duke manages to exude sufficient grace and authority to make one wonder why it took Ford a decade to rediscover him in Stagecoach (1939). 121 min.

In one of his finest performances, Wayne plays retiring Captain Nathan Brittles in this second film of Ford’s great Cavalry Trilogy (with *Fort Apache* [1948] and *Rio Grande* [1950]). Reunited after only a year with Dru, his *Red River* (1948) costar, Wayne at forty-two is already an older man, uncertain about his future and looking back on his past. The film’s retirement ceremony is pure Ford, and one of the great moments in film history. The Remingtonesque Technicolor landscapes of Monument Valley are unforgettable. 103 min.

Preceded by trailer for **The Hurricane Express.** 1932. USA. Directed by J. P. McGowan, Armand Schaefer. 5 min.

**Friday, June 22**

8:30  **They Were Expendable.** 1945. USA. Directed by John Ford. Screenplay by Frank W. Wead, based on the book by William L. White. With Robert Montgomery, Donna Reed. Ford returned from his very active and triumphant service in WWII to film this account of the American defeat in the Philippines. Montgomery plays a real-life PT boat pioneer, while Wayne, who managed to avoid active duty (to Ford’s long-standing chagrin), plays Montgomery’s lieutenant. 135 min.

**Saturday, June 23**

2:00  **She Wore a Yellow Ribbon.** See Wednesday, June 20, 8:30

Preceded by trailer for **The Hurricane Express.**


Frequently cited as one of the greatest films ever made, Ford’s epic affords Wayne his most complex characterization in Ethan Edwards. Embodying the great contradictions of American mythology, Wayne’s portrayal contains echoes that resound from the era of James Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking novels to the present day. In this film, the mature Wayne—cranky, irreverent, revengeful, and relentless—established much of his persona for the rest of his career. 119 min.

**Monday, June 25**


This last collaboration between Wayne and Ford is a sweet, leisurely, and mellow film representing a kind of nostalgic evocation of their lives and careers together. Ford, suffering from declining health and depression, uses Wayne for a final foray into the lighter films of his youth. 109 min.

Preceded by trailer for **The Hurricane Express.** 1932. USA. Directed by J. P. McGowan, Armand Schaefer. 5 min.

**Wednesday, June 27**

This last great Hawks film forms a kind of coda to the era of classic Hollywood. It is, in a sense, a remake of *Rio Bravo* (1959), but it is perhaps the best and most deeply felt remake in film history. The aging Hawks and Wayne (like Wayne and Mitchum in the film) had “traveled some together,” and their professionalism in spite of the debilities of old age make *El Dorado* the elegiac equal to Ford and Wayne’s *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962). 126 min.

8:30  *The Big Trail*. See Wednesday, June 20, 6:00

**Thursday, June 28**

5:45  *Donovan’s Reef*. See Monday, June 25, 8:30  
      Preceded by trailer for *The Hurricane Express*.  
      *(Introduced by Kevin Stoehr).*

8:15  *They Were Expendable*. See Friday, June 22, 8:30  
      *(Introduced by Kevin Stoehr).*

**Friday, June 29**

6:00  *The Searchers*. See Saturday, June 23, 4:30  
      *(Introduced by Kevin Stoehr).*

**Saturday, June 30**

6:30  *El Dorado*. See Wednesday, June 27, 6:00