

# The Museum of Modern Art

*After Alice, Beyond Lois: Mining the Archive with the Women Film Pioneers Project*

October 27–November 7, 2023

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of Columbia University Libraries' [Women Film Pioneers Project](#) (WFPP), a digital publication and film archival resource, MoMA presents a selection of films written, produced, directed, edited, photographed, colored, and titled by silent-era women filmmakers. Launched as an online-only platform in October 2013—with two celebratory film programs at MoMA dedicated to U.S. serial queens—WFPP was developed twenty years prior by feminist film scholar Jane M. Gaines, who first envisioned the project as a multi-volume book series. Since then, and thanks to the tireless work of its contributors, editors, library colleagues, and many graduate student research assistants (as well as international archivists and curators), WFPP has published articles on the careers of over 300 women—and counting!—who worked behind-the-scenes during cinema's first few decades.

This series, which encompasses shorts, features, and fragments from many different international film archives, mirrors WFPP's global scope and interest in the diversity of women's creative output during the silent film era. Through cross-national thematic connections and juxtapositions, the series brings together animation, experimental cinema, documentary, and commercial fiction film from Japan, China, Tunisia, Argentina, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Italy, France, the Czech Republic, Germany, Russia, Georgia, England, Scotland, and the United States. Because the films of Alice Guy-Blaché, Lois Weber, Dorothy Arzner, Germaine Dulac, and Asta Nielsen, among others, have become more widely available to the public in recent years, this 15-program series aims to expand visibility around other women artists—some familiar names, most lesser-known—as well as to spotlight new archival discoveries and recent restorations, less familiar titles, and rarely screened films. Drawing primarily from the published essays on WFPP, this series puts just a small sampling of the richness of women's contributions to early cinema on view. Highlights include *Brides of the Frontier* (1943), the only surviving film directed by Japanese filmmaker Tazuko Sakane; *Las Naciones de América* (1927), presumed lost until 2021, made by Argentinian documentary filmmaker Renée Oro; and *Adam a Eva* (1922), a cross-dressing comedy scripted by Czech actress Suzanne Marwille.

*Organized by Kate Saccone, Guest Curator, and Dave Kehr, Curator, Department of Film.*

## SCREENING SCHEDULE

***Her Anniversaries***. 1917. USA. Directed by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew [Lucille McVey]. Screenplay by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew, based on an idea from Helen Duey. With Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew. 35mm print from the Library of Congress. 10 min. Stage and screen actress Lucille McVey became (the second) Mrs. Sidney Drew in 1914, inaugurating a period of close collaboration with her husband at Vitagraph, Metro Pictures, and then their own production company, V.B.K. Film Corporation. The couple excelled at writing, directing, and starring in light domestic comedy shorts like *Her Anniversaries*, which finds humor in the tension between a middle-class wife with too many milestones to celebrate and a husband who can't remember any of them. After Sidney Drew's death in 1919, McVey produced,

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directed, and wrote several more films on her own (*Bunkered*, *Cousin Kate*, *The Stimulating Mrs. Barton*), all of which are sadly considered lost today. She died in 1925 at the age of 35. ***The First Year***. 1926. USA. Directed by Frank Borzage. Screenplay by Frances Marion, from a play by Frank Craven. With Matt Moore, Kathryn Perry, John Patrick, J. Ferrell MacDonald, Carolynne Snowden. 35mm print from The Museum of Modern Art. 80 min. One of the most well-known names in this series, Frances Marion was an influential and powerful figure in early Hollywood, known for her collaborations with actress-producer Mary Pickford, among several other women. A prolific screenwriter, Marion wrote the rarely screened *The First Year* soon after the hugely successful *Stella Dallas*. This Fox comedy follows Matt Moore and Kathryn Perry as a young Midwestern couple struggling to survive the inevitable disappointments and disillusionments of the first year of marriage. The film's centerpiece (as it was on the stage) is an extended dinner scene in which the young couple try to impress a big-city visitor (J. Farrell MacDonald) with their refined manners and sophisticated cuisine—a sequence handily stolen by the pioneering African American actress Carolynne Snowden, despite only being given the stereotypically limiting role of the inexperienced maid.

**Oct. 25, 7:00 T2; Nov. 3, 7:00 T2**

***Zew morza (The Call of the Sea)***. 1927. Poland. Directed by Henryk Szaro. Screenplay by Stefan Kiedrzyński. Produced by Maria Hirszein. With Maria Malicka, Jerzy Marr, Nora Ney. 4K digital restoration by the FilMOTEKA Narodowa. DCP. Polish intertitles; English subtitles. 125 min. Once described as “a tireless fighter for a brighter future of Polish film,” Maria Hirszein studied economics in Germany before returning to Poland and joining the Leo-Forbert studio in 1924 as a co-owner. In 1926, she bought Forbert's shares and became the sole owner of the company, which she eventually renamed Leo-Film. Produced a year after she took control, the stylistic *Zew morza* has been called Poland's first maritime film, and it showcases the importance of the country's access to the coastline following its independence after World War I. Featuring members of the Polish Navy and the Maritime Air Division, portions of the film were shot on location at the Gdynia, Gdańsk, and Puck harbors. Part romance, part crime adventure, the patriotic *Zew morza* follows Stach (Jerzy Marr), a miller's son who joins a ship's crew as a boy and returns a betrothed young man, only to find his childhood friend Hanka (Maria Malicka) is now a beautiful woman. At the same time, he and a nautical invention he is developing become ensnarled in a gang's nefarious activities.

As head of Leo-Film, Hirszein nurtured young talent—Jewish herself, she actively hired and collaborated with Jewish artists, like director Henryk Szaro—and oversaw all aspects of production. Under Hirszein's leadership, Leo-Film made films in both Polish and Yiddish (the latter being a specialty of the former Leo-Forbert studio). A cofounder of the Polish Film Producers' Union in 1927, among other industry activities, Hirszein ran Leo-Film until the outbreak of World War II, and is believed to have been killed during either the Nazi siege of Warsaw in 1939 or in the Warsaw ghetto in 1942.

**Nov 2, 7:00 T1; Nov. 10 3:30 T1**

***A Lady and Her Maid***. 1913. USA. Directed by Bert Angeles. Screenplay by Beta Breuil. With Florence Radinoff, Norma Talmadge, James Morrison. DCP from Eye Filmmuseum. Dutch intertitles; English subtitles. 13 min. The ladies get the last laugh in this one-reel Vitagraph comedy, scripted by Beta Breuil, about two “ugly ducklings” and the man who rejects one of

them. According to the trade press, *A Lady and Her Maid* was the fourth entry in Breuil's "Belinda" series, which she wrote specifically for young actress and eventual producer Norma Talmadge. Breuil (née Elizabeth Donner Van der Veer, or Vanderveer, in New York City) only worked in the scenario department at Vitagraph for three years, from 1910 to 1913, first as an assistant and eventually as department head. While there, she mentored other scenario writers such as Catherine Carr and Doris Schroeder. Breuil moved on to freelance and other contract work after that, and archival research carried out by former WFPP project manager Maria Fosheim Lund links her to Eastern Film Company, North American Film Corporation, and Mirror Films. Reportedly having entered the film industry out of financial necessity as a two-time widow, Breuil's life and career after the late 1910s remain a mystery.

***The Boatswain's Mate***. 1924. England. Directed by H. Manning Haynes. Screenplay by Lydia Hayward, from a short story by W. W. Jacobs. With Florence Turner, Johnny Butt, Victor McLaglen. 35mm print from the British Film Institute. 24 min. A stage and film actress turned screenwriter, Lydia Hayward excelled at populist and middlebrow literary adaptations, and her rich body of work deserves continued attention today. Her career in the British film industry spanned from 1920 to 1942, and she collaborated closely with three filmmakers in particular during the silent era: H. Manning Haynes at Artistic (1921–24); Will Kellino at Stoll (1924–26); and Dinah Shurey, England's only woman director at the time, at Britannia Films (1926–29). Unfortunately, all of the titles Hayward wrote for Shurey are believed to be lost. However, many Hayward gems do survive, such as *The Boatswain's Mate*, which she made with Haynes. This comedy stars Florence Turner (whose own directorial effort *Daisy Doodad's Dial* also appears in this series) as a self-sufficient pub owner who does not need protecting, much to the surprise of the ex-boatswain who wants to marry her (and who hires an ex-soldier to pretend to burgle the "frail, weak little woman" so that he can save the day).

***Moral (Morality)***. 1928. Germany. Directed by Willi Wolff. Produced by Wolff, Ellen Richter. Screenplay by Wolff, Robert Liebmann, Bobby E. Lütthge, loosely based on a play by Ludwig Thoma. With Richter, Jakob Tiedtke, Ralph Arthur Roberts. 4K digital restoration by the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum and the Filmoteca Valenciana, from an original negative and Spanish release print. DCP. German intertitles; English subtitles. 82 min. Austrian film actress and producer Ellen Richter was a major highlight of the 2021 edition of *Le Giornate del Cinema Muto*, the occasion for her first career retrospective and the rediscovery, restoration, and exhibition of some of her surviving films. Making its New York premiere here, the restored *Moral* is an excellent entry into Richter's filmography, a delightful comedy in which the film camera becomes one woman's tool against male hypocrisy. Richter plays beautiful touring showgirl Ninon d'Hauteville, who is forced to stop performing onstage thanks to a small town's stuffy "morality society," comprised of a group of middle-aged men. At the reigning monarch's request, she stays in town and begins giving piano lessons to his son in her apartment, where, one-by-one, the lascivious members of the morality society also show up for lessons. Written and directed by Richter's husband and longstanding collaborator Willi Wolff, and produced by her company Ellen Richter-Film GmbH, *Moral* also features glimpses of many real-life 1920s performance acts, including Lawrence Tiller's Original Empire Girls. Overall, Richter starred in approximately 70 features of various genres in Germany between 1913 and 1933, producing 30 of them from 1920 onward. She made the transition into the sound era, but her film career was cut short

by the rise of the Nazi Party. Richter and Wolff, both Jews, left Germany, eventually settling at 7 Park Avenue in New York City, where Richter became a US citizen in 1946.

**Program 108 min.**

**Oct. 26, 4:00 T2; Nov. 4, 7:00 T2**

***Las naciones de América (The Nations of America)***. 1927. Argentina. Directed, written, produced, shot, edited, and titled by Renée Oro. Digital restoration by the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales. Spanish intertitles; English subtitles. 35 min. North American premiere. An educational cinematic tour around South America with Argentinian filmmaker Renée Oro at the helm, the documentary *Las naciones de América* was made to promote peace and mutual understanding within South America. Originally focused on various customs, industries, and rural and urban sights in such countries as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, the film

incorporated footage Oro had shot previously during other productions both locally and abroad. After the film premiered in Buenos Aires in September 1927, Oro would often return to it, adding more material and changing the content, continuing to screen versions of the film into the 1930s. In the surviving incomplete version and accompanying fragments, which were discovered in 2021 at the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales in Buenos Aires, we see, among other things, urban architecture and coffee farming in Brazil; art, festivities, and the natural beauty of Chile; and new railway production in Argentina as well as glimpses of noted dignitaries and Oro herself. With this discovery, INCAA archivists have begun to research Oro's career as an independent filmmaker (and distributor of her own films), tracing her debut to the 1922 documentary *La Argentina*, which she brought to Europe and toured around Argentina. Oro also made political documentaries in Chile on behalf of the Chilean government from 1923 to 1925, returning to Argentina to work after Chilean President Arturo Alessandri's resignation. She spent the rest of her career in her home country, making documentaries for the government and various provinces, including for the far-right dictator José Félix Uriburu. By 1939, she had set up a production company to make fiction films of national import, planning to start with a biopic of former Argentinian president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Her last known foray into cinema, the film was never completed.

***Stato de Santiago del Estero (The State of Santiago del Estero)***. 1927. Argentina. Directed, written, produced, shot, edited, and titled by Renée Oro. Digital restoration by the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales. Italian intertitles; English subtitles. 12 min. Many of the films that Renée Oro made in Argentina not only screened nationally but also internationally at various world's fairs. For example, *Stato de Santiago del Estero*, which was discovered alongside *Las naciones de América* at INCAA in 2021, was a promotional documentary for the province of Santiago del Estero in Argentina. It was sent to the International Trade Fair in Milan in 1927, which explains the Italian intertitles. After a delightful opening title sequence, the film, also incomplete, offers a more serious and didactic overview of the region and its forestry industry.

***Kaitaku no Hanayome (Brides of the Frontier)***. 1943. Japan. Written and directed by Tazuko Sakane. New 35mm print from the National Film Archive of Japan. In Japanese; English subtitles. 21 min. Considered to be Japan's first female director, Tazuko Sakane began working in film in 1929 as Kenji Mizoguchi's assistant. While several films she made with Mizoguchi remain extant—e.g., *Taki no shiraito (The Water Magician)*, for which she served as editor and assistant director—only one film credited to her as director and writer

(and likely editor) is known to survive today. Produced by the Manchuria Film Association, *Kaitaku no Hanayome* is a propaganda sound film made to combat a labor shortage in the then Japanese-occupied region of Manchuria (a colonial name for what is now Northeast China) by enticing Japanese women to move there and become farmers' wives. It was one of several films that Sakane made focusing on female viewers as part of the educational branch of the company, which she joined in 1942 in an attempt to advance her career—a reminder of the complex and difficult ways that imperialism and colonialism can intersect with female concerns and women's film history. After Japan's defeat in 1945, Sakane, avowedly apolitical, stayed in the region at what became the Communist-run Northeast Film Studio, training young Chinese filmmakers. She returned to Japan in 1946 but was unable to find work as a director due to the national industry requirement that she have a college degree. She continued working, however, as Mizoguchi's assistant (again), and then as a freelance screenwriter until her death in 1971. *Kaitaku no Hanayome*, which shows some signs of wear, has remained largely inaccessible to audiences outside of Japan and is screening theatrically in the US for what is likely the first time.

**Program 68 min**

**Oct. 28, 4:00 T2; Nov. 1 7:00 T2**

***Mädchen am Kreuz (Woman on the Cross)*.** 1929. Germany. Directed by Jacob Fleck, Louise Fleck [also known as Luise]. Written by Ludwig Fritsch, Marie-Louise Droop [uncredited]. Produced by Liddy Hegewald. With Evelyn Holt, Valerie Boothby, Wolfgang Zilzer, Fritz Odemar. Digital restoration by Filmarchiv Austria. DCP. German intertitles; English subtitles. 77 min. Directed by Austrian husband-and-wife filmmaking team Jacob and Louise Fleck, the German drama *Mädchen am Kreuz* centers on a bookseller (Fritz Odemar) and his daughter (Evelyn Holt), a young student with a bright life and future who suffers tragically after she is raped by a local man (Wolfgang Zilzer). The Flecks' compact film presents both beautiful, celebratory moments and dark, tragic scenes with an effective, and affecting, touch. Before marrying Jacob and moving to Germany in 1924, Louise worked with him in Austria-Hungary, along with her first husband, Anton Kolm. There, she directed and wrote numerous films and cofounded several production companies in Vienna. Louise's career in Germany ended in the 1930s; due to Jacob being Jewish, the couple was briefly interned at Dachau and Buchenwald in 1938, before escaping to Shanghai, where they made several more films. (They returned to Vienna in the 1940s.) Digitized and restored in 2019 as part of the archival recovery of Louise's oeuvre—which features many films about social issues like abortion, rape, and impotence—*Mädchen am Kreuz* also represents the work of two other women: the film was backed by Hegewald-Film GmbH, a production company run by cinema owner turned producer and distributor Liddy Hegewald; and it was co-scripted, according to some archival sources, by writer Marie-Louise Droop, who also worked as a director and producer during the silent era.

**Oct. 28, 7:00 T2; Nov. 4, 4:00 T2**

***Monsieur et Madame sont pressés (In a Hurry to Catch the Train)*.** 1901. France. Directed by Ferdinand Zecca. Digital restoration by Filmoteca de Catalunya, from a hand-colored nitrate print attributed to the workshop of film colorists Élisabeth and Berthe Thuillier. DCP. 2 min. Until 2020, early cinema scholars and historians of film color only knew about Élisabeth Thuillier, a widow who ran her own photographic and then film-coloring company in Paris. (Georges Méliès reportedly outsourced the hand-coloring of his films to the firm

from approximately 1897 to 1912.) Thanks to extensive archival research by WFPP contributors Stéphanie Salmon and Jacques Malthête, we now know that Élisabeth's daughter, Berthe, was also a film colorist and worked closely with her mother, taking over the company after the latter's death in 1907. The Thuilliers' firm reportedly employed approximately 200 female colorists and also handled much of the color work for other companies, including Pathé—which produced this delightful trick film about a couple's swapping garments—from at least 1898 until around 1911 or 1912.

***Adam a Eva (Adam and Eve)***. 1922. Czechoslovakia. Directed by Václav Binovec. Written by Suzanne Marwille, based on a story by Jarmila Hašková. With Marwille, Marta Fričová. DCP from Národní filmový archiv. Czech intertitles; English subtitles. 72 min. By the time she wrote the screenplay for *Adam a Eva*, a loopy and queer cross-dressing comedy in which she plays identical twins Adam and Eva, Suzanne Marwille was a highly regarded Czech film star known for playing passionate, tragic women. This film centers on the mischievous twins—played as children by Marwille's daughter Marta—who, as teenagers, cause much confusion when they each pretend to be the other after a young doctor starts admiring Eva. In Marwille's playful performance, gender is shown to be thoroughly a construct. *Adam a Eva* is one of several films that Marwille wrote for herself in 1921–22. (The other surviving titles are *Černí myslivci* and *Irčin románec I*, in which she also plays a cheeky young girl.) After a short time performing in German films from 1922 to 1925, Marwille returned to the Czech industry and acted in several more films, including both silent and sound movies made by her third husband, noted Czech director Martin Frič, whom she reportedly often advised and helped even after she retired. In 1931, she joined the ČEFID, a Czech film co-operative that worked with cinemas and local production and rental companies to ensure capital for domestic films.

**Oct. 27, 7:00 T2; Nov. 2, 4:00 T2**

***Hell-Bound Train***. 1930. USA. Written and directed by James Gist, Eloyce Gist. Digital restoration from a 16mm print preserved by the Library of Congress. DCP. 50 min. With a shared passion for religion, self-taught husband-and-wife filmmakers James and Eloyce Gist made at least three silent films for African American church communities that they brought around the country. Pairing the screenings with sermons, the Gists used cinema as an evangelizing tool. In *Hell-Bound Train*—which Eloyce reportedly rewrote, re-edited, and partially reshot after her husband filmed it—we move train car by train car as they dramatize various sins of the Jazz Age, such as dancing, drinking, and gambling. An impish devil accompanies our trip to hell. Although *Hell-Bound Train* has received some visibility in recent years thanks to Kino Lorber's *Pioneers of African-American Cinema* box set and a brief stint on the Criterion Channel, this film, one of the few surviving silent films by an African American woman, is still frequently missing from theatrical programs dedicated to early women filmmakers, perhaps due to its low production values and deeply moralizing agenda. The film features a recorded score composed and performed by Dr. Samuel Waymon.

**Oct. 26, 7:00 T2; Nov. 5, 4:00 T2**

***Ain el Ghezal (La fille de Carthage; The Girl from Carthage)***. 1924. Tunisia. Directed by Albert Samama Chikli. Screenplay by Haydée Samama Chikly. With Samama Chikly, Hadj Hadi Jebali, Belgasse ben Taïeb, Ahmed Dziri. 35mm print from the Archives françaises du film du CNC (Bois d'Arcy). French intertitles; English subtitles. 19 min. Unfortunately, only a

short fragment from the beginning of *Ain el Ghezal* survives today. These scenes, which also show signs of decomposition and deterioration, set up an impossible romance between a young Tunisian woman named Ain el Ghezal (Haydée Samama Chikly) and a local teacher (Ahmed Dziri). “I wrote this story,” Haydée later claimed, “to show how badly women were treated when they were just sold off with an arranged marriage into a man’s world.” In the surviving fragment, we see such a transaction between Ain el Ghezal’s father (Hadj Hadi Jebali) and the son of a rich sheik (Belgasse ben Taïeb) that decides her fate. The film reportedly ended with the tragic death of the couple at the hands of the sheik’s horsemen after the two escape on Ain el Ghezal’s wedding day. Haydée Samama Chikly was the daughter of Tunisian-Jewish filmmaker and photographer Albert Samama Chikli, whose career is now receiving renewed attention thanks to the Cineteca di Bologna and Il Cinema Ritrovato. Haydée also wrote the screenplay for her father’s 1922 film *Zohra*, in which she starred, and had a small role in Rex Ingram’s *The Arab* after the production came to shoot in Tunisia. According to WFPP contributor Ouissal Mejri, Haydée edited and hand-colored some of her father’s films as well.

**‘A Santanotte (The Holy Night).** 1922. Italy. Directed, written, produced, and edited by Elvira Notari. Based on a song by Eduardo Scala, Francesco Buongiovanni. With Alberto Danza, Rosè Angione, Eduardo Notari. Digital restoration by the Cineteca Nazionale, from prints preserved at Cineteca Nazionale and George Eastman Museum. DCP. Italian intertitles; English subtitles. 60 min. Long championed by the WFPP editorial team and contributors, and by feminist film scholars more broadly, Elvira Notari is a vital part of Italian cinema history. From a milliner to a film colorist to a maker of short nonfiction films alongside her husband, Notari eventually became the head of her family’s production house in Naples, called Dora Film after her daughter. Under the banner of Dora Film—which had its own studio, laboratory, and acting school—Notari not only wrote, directed, edited, and produced films (shot by her husband and regularly featuring her son, Eduardo), she also distributed them, most notably to Italian immigrants in the US. Dora Film of America even had an office at 729 Seventh Avenue in New York City. Dora Film eventually closed in 1930, and only a few films made by Notari survive today, including ‘A Santanotte, which has been seen by some as a comment on the violence of a patriarchal culture. Like much of Notari’s work, this somber yet passionate melodrama has musical origins and is based on a popular Neapolitan song of the same name. Rosè Angione plays Nanninella, a working-class waitress who must provide for her alcoholic father. In love with Tore (Alberto Danza), she ultimately sacrifices herself in marriage to Carluccio (an unnamed acting student from Dora Film) in order to save Tore from being accused of her father’s murder.

**Oct. 31, 7:00 T2; Nov. 5, 1:00 T2**

**Baby ryazanskie (Women of Ryazan; The Peasant Women of Riazan).** 1927. USSR. Directed by Olga Preobrazhenskaya, Ivan Pravov. Written by Olga Vishnevskaya, Boris Altschuler. With Emma Cesarskaja, Raisa Pužnaja, Kuz’ma Jastrebyckij. DCP from Eye Filmmuseum. Russian and Dutch intertitles; English subtitles. 68 min. Arguably less well known today than her Soviet female contemporaries like Esfir Shub and Elizaveta Svilova—although they, too, are often still overshadowed by the men around them—Olga Preobrazhenskaya trained at the Moscow Art Theatre before making her film acting debut in 1913. A popular film actress, she directed her first film, *Baryshnya-Krestyanka*, in 1916. After the Revolution, she served as an assistant director to Vladimir Gardin and taught acting at the film school Goskinoškola (now VGIK). She began collaborating with one of her

students, Ivan Pravov, and they worked together on a number of films into the late 1930s, including Preobrazhenskaya's most famous film, the hugely successful *Baby ryazanskie*. Set in a rural Russian village in 1914, just before the start of World War I, this visually striking and rhythmic silent melodrama follows two women, Anna (Raisa Pužnaja) and her sister-in-law Vasilisa (Emma Cesarskaja). While Anna suffers tragically after her violent, domineering, and traditional father-in-law (Kuz'ma Jastrebitskij) rapes her, Vasilisa asserts herself as part of the new social order. Although it's a fairly accessible film, *Baby ryazanskie* has not been screened in New York nearly enough recently, and co-screenwriter Olga Vishnevskaya's life and career requires further research. This version, from Eye Filmmuseum, is a distribution copy from the 1980s, circulated by the Dutch feminist film distribution company Cinemien.

**Oct. 29, 1:00 T2; Nov. 7, 7:00 T2**

***The Girl Spy Before Vicksburg***. 1910. USA. Directed by Sidney Olcott. Screenplay by Gene Gauntier. With Gene Gauntier, Jack J. Clark, Robert Vignola. DCP from Eye Filmmuseum. Dutch intertitles; English subtitles. 14 min. Gene Gauntier, who reportedly gave a young actor named D. W. Griffith his first directing assignment at Biograph, was a prolific actress and important early screenwriter. (Her script for the 1907 *Ben Hur* eventually led to a suit against the Kalem studio from the book authors' estate, establishing the precedent for securing film rights to material under copyright). In *The Girl Spy Before Vicksburg*, part of Kalem's Girl Spy series, Gauntier plays a young woman named Nan who, dressed as a boy, performs numerous risky stunts in order to complete her mission for the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Her character is both a thrilling forerunner to the intrepid serial queens of the later 1910s and, like Johnnie Gray (Buster Keaton) in *The General*, a complex figure in US cinema's history, one that reminds us of the long-standing currency of white supremacy in this country. After her tenure at Kalem, during which her unit made films in Ireland, Egypt, and Palestine, Gauntier formed the Gene Gauntier Feature Players Company in 1912, returning to Ireland to make several more films. When her company disbanded in 1915, following changing distribution practices, she signed a contract with Universal and moved to Hollywood but could not carve out a career in the standardizing industry. She moved to Sweden permanently in 1922. Gauntier's memoir, *Blazing the Trail*—an unpublished manuscript of which is held in MoMA's collection—not only recounts her work as an actress, screenwriter, and producer, but also serves as key documentation of the early US film industry.

***Kajastus (The Dawning)***. 1930. Finland. Directed by Carl von Haartman. Screenplay by Gerda Hintz. With Aarne Leppänen, Elsa Segerberg, Helge Ranin, Gunnar Wallin, Anielka Elter. DCP from Kansallinen Audiovisuaalinen Instituutti. Finnish intertitles; English subtitles. 83 min. The last completely silent feature film made in Finland, *Kajastus* mixes recent political history with romance. The drama opens in 1899, when Nicholas II of Russia signed the February Manifesto coercively taking control of Finland, and ends in 1905, when the manifesto was repealed. In between, it follows Oscar and Louise Cederström (Gunnar Wallin and Elsa Segerberg), siblings embedded in the Finnish Nationalist movement (along with their neighbor, played by Aarne Leppänen), and their cousin Gustaf (Helge Ranin), a member of the Russian military whose visit, and love for Louise, complicates everything. Also present is their vengeful maid (Vivan Cravelin) who, spurned by Oscar, reports the siblings' resistance activities to Russian officials and a visiting countess (Czech actress Anielka Elter) who's in love with Gustaf. While some contemporary critics felt the film was more detached than fervently patriotic, there is no denying how its explicit calls for freedom



from Russian oppression unfortunately still have parallels today. With its large crowd sequences, striking cinematography by Frans Ekebom and Eino Kari, and costumes by fashion designer Jenny Kuosmanen of Salon de Mode, *Kajastus* is also an engaging and stylish drama. It is the first and only film produced from a screenplay by the little-known Gerda Hintze, a pharmacist in Helsinki who would later occasionally write for magazines. (A second, unproduced screenplay written by her remains, tantalizingly, in the Finnish archive.)

**Oct. 29, 4:00 T2; Nov. 7, 4:00 T2**

***Phil for Short***. 1919. USA. Directed by Oscar Apfel. Screenplay by Clara S. Baranger, Forrest Halsey. With Evelyn Greeley, Hugh Thompson, Jack Drumier, Ann Eggleston, John Ardizoni. Digitized in 2K from a 35mm nitrate print preserved at the Library of Congress. DCP. 82 min. After disguising herself as her nonexistent twin brother to escape an unwanted marriage, Evelyn Greeley's feisty Damophilia (or "Phil," for short)—a lover of Sappho and ancient Greek dance—meets a Greek professor (Hugh Thompson) who also happens to be a self-proclaimed woman hater. Back in a dress, she becomes his assistant and playfully throws his professional and personal life off balance. Cowritten by Clara S. Baranger, who is remembered today as a close collaborator and wife of William deMille, this delightful comedy anticipates many of the later romantic screwball comedies of the 1930s. Baranger began her career as a journalist in New York City before transitioning into scenario writing in the mid-1910s, eventually joining World Film Corporation in 1918 and then Famous Players-Lasky in 1921. After her retirement from the film industry in the 1930s, she taught screenwriting at the University of Southern California School of Cinema Arts and penned *Writing for the Screen* in 1950. *Phil for Short*, which shows some scratches and other signs of age, has garnered more visibility this year thanks to the 2022 *Cinema's First Nasty Women* boxset, a partner project of WFPP.

**Oct. 27 4:00 T2; Nov. 1, 4:00 T2**

***Daisy Doodad's Dial***. 1914. England. Directed, produced, and written by Florence Turner. With Turner, Larry Trimble. 35mm print from the British Film Institute. 9 min. Florence Turner, aka "the Vitagraph Girl," left America for Britain—after success as a film actress—in 1913, forming Turner Films in collaboration with director Larry Trimble. There, she produced, wrote, and starred in a number of films, including *Daisy Doodad's Dial* (which she also directed), before returning to the US in 1916. (Turner, who never regained her previous level of fame, would return to Britain, appearing in several more films there, such as *The Boatswain's Mate*, also in this series, before going back to America in 1924.) In the comedy short *Daisy Doodad's Dial*, a longstanding favorite among the WFPP editorial team, Turner's elastic countenance—she was a noted mimic and facial contortionist—is the star of the show as she plays a wife competing against her husband (Trimble) in an amateur face-making contest.

***Lev livet leende (Live Life Smiling)***. 1921. Sweden. Directed by Pauline Brunius. Screenplay by Brunius, Lars Tessing. With Olof Winnerstrand, Frida Winnerstrand, Palle Brunius. DCP from the Swedish Film Institute. Swedish, Finnish intertitles; English subtitles. 25 min. When his wife urges grouchy Mr. Vinner to "live life smiling" like Douglas Fairbanks, his grin in public leads to a variety of misunderstandings. Director-screenwriter Pauline Brunius was a noted stage actress and theatrical entrepreneur before she began appearing in films in 1920—her debut, *Thora van Deken*, has been restored by the Swedish Film

Institute—the same year she wrote her first script (*Gyurkovicsarna*). Between 1920 and 1924, Brunius made several comedy shorts about the Vinnars, all starring married performers Olof and Frida Winnerstrand. *Lev livet leende* is the only one to survive in complete form today. Although Brunius remained active in the cinema, both in front of and behind the camera (*Falska Greta*), into the 1930s, she is more often remembered as the first female director of Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre, a position she held from 1938 to 1948.

***Manden uden fremtid (The Man without a Future)***. 1916. Denmark. Directed by Holger-Madsen. Screenplay by Harriet Bloch. With Valdemar Psilander, Clara Wieth. DCP from the Danish Film Institute. Danish intertitles; English subtitles. Approx. 50 min. Danish screenwriter Harriet Bloch wrote this comedic romantic Western—which she later claimed as a personal favorite—at the request of one of the biggest Danish film stars of the time, Valdemar Psilander, who dreamed of playing an American cowboy. Bloch, who preferred to work as an independent freelance writer so she could stay at home and manage her familial and domestic duties, is estimated to have written 150 screenplays between 1911 and the late 1920s (although some were never made). She mostly wrote original stories, predominantly for Danish film companies like Nordisk, scripting 10 films for Psilander alone, as well as for studios in Germany (e.g., *Der Gang in die Nacht*) and Sweden (e.g., *Kärlek och Journalistik*). She reportedly learned the rules of cinematic storytelling by regularly going to the movies, and was inspired to pick up screenwriting after seeing the 1910 *Afgrunden*, starring actress-producer Asta Nielsen. In *Manden uden fremtid*, which takes a humorous approach to the cross-class romance plot, Bloch gives Psilander the chance to play the boisterous and unpolished Percy Fancourt, a ranch hand with no future in the eyes of socialite Grace Dremont (Clara Wieth) and her millionaire father (Oscar Stribolt), who comes into some money of his own.

**Oct. 30, 4:30 T1; Nov. 6, 7:30 T1**

***Das ornament des verliebten Herzens (The Ornament of the Lovestruck Heart)***. 1919. Germany. Written and directed by Lotte Reiniger. Animated by Reiniger, with assistance from Carl Koch, Berthold Bartosch. 4K DCP from Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum. 4 min. While the work of well-known German animator Lotte Reiniger is far from inaccessible today—especially her frequently screened feature *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*—this new digital version of *Das ornament des verliebten Herzens* is part of an exciting recent restoration project around her early shorts carried out by the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum. *Das ornament des verliebten Herzens*, the first film she made on her own after animating sequences for other directors, is a romantic ballet about a man and a woman who come together, part, and return again. It is an evocative example of Reiniger's delicate hand-manipulated paper silhouette animation, which stemmed from a childhood interest in shadow theater. For many of her films, Reiniger led a small team of fellow animators and collaborators, including her husband Carl Koch, each filling different roles such as camera operator and special effects, while Reiniger not only created the stories, but also constructed the storyboards and cut out and moved the figures. Notable for her long transnational career in both silent and sound industries—her emigration from Germany and eventual settlement in London a result of the rise of the Nazi Party—Reiniger is also remembered today as the inventor of an early version of the multi-plane camera.

***Xixiangji (Way Down West)***. 1927. Directed by Hou Yao, assisted by Pu Shunqing. Screenplay by Pu Shunqing, from a play by Wang Shifu. With Lim Cho Choi, Li Dan-Dan, M.

C. Noo, T. K. Kar. DCP from Eye Filmmuseum. French intertitles; English subtitles. 59 min. Much of the work by early Chinese female directors, producers, or screenwriters, including Xie Caizhen, Yang Naimei, Helen Wang, Hu Ping, and Fan Xuepeng, is unfortunately considered lost today. *Xixiangji*, scripted by social-activist playwright turned screenwriter Pu Shunqing, who also acted as the film's (uncredited) assistant director alongside her husband, only survives in an incomplete French distribution version (released as *La Rose de Pu Chui*) that was likely edited for European audiences. Based on the well-known ancient Chinese story *Romance of the Western Chamber*, this romantic drama follows a young scholar (T. K. Kar) who stops at a monastery on his way to an exam and falls in love with a young woman (Lim Cho Cho), staying there with her maid (Li Dan Dan), mother (M.C. Noo), and younger brother. When a local bandit storms the monastery with his soldiers, the mother promises her daughter's hand to the man who can beat the bandits. The scholar uses his intellect to hatch a plan, eventually aiding in the safeguarding of the monastery by a friend's army. Although a later post-battle scene with the scholar dreaming about personally fighting the bandit feels out of place—alongside some probable missing scenes (e.g., the couple meeting at night with the help of the maid)—this version of the film is not difficult to follow. And from the beautiful use of color and attention to detail in the sets and costumes to the various special effects and the moments of humor, *Xixiangji* is a well-crafted drama and romance. Pu continued to write screenplays until around 1930; she eventually became a lawyer and ran (unsuccessfully) for public office in China.

**Oct. 30, 7:30 T1; Nov. 6, 4:30 T1**

***Handë: Das Leben und die Liebe eines Zärtlichen Geschlechts (Hands: The Life and Loves of the Gentler Sex)***. 1928. Germany. Directed by Stella F. Simon, Miklos Bandy. 35mm print from The Museum of Modern Art. German intertitles. 13 min. Stella F. Simon was a widowed mother of three when she moved to New York City to study photography at the Clarence H. White School of Photography from 1923 to 1925. A year later, she went to Berlin to study filmmaking, where she encountered both the modernist photography movements associated with Bauhaus and the German cinematic avant-garde. In this experimental short, which Simon made with the German-Hungarian artist Miklos Bandy (although not credited as co-director, she has been recovered as such in recent years), a ballet of human hands weave, wave, undulate, and caress. A complex abstract film with a hint of a three-act melodramatic love triangle—there's a "he" and a "she," a coquettish flirt, another male, a party where all four are present, an attempted suicide, and a reconciliation—*Handë* is evocative and sensual, and has been reread through a feminist lens by scholars such as WFPP contributor Jennifer Wild. The film's recorded modernist score, by Marc Blitzstein, was added in 1936 at the request of RCA and MoMA, where the film screened at least twice (in 1936 and 1939) in honor of the Museum's new Film Library, run by British film critic and curator Iris Barry. Simon continued to work as a still photographer into the 1940s; this is her only known film experiment.

***Soleil et ombre (Sol y sombra; Sun and Shadow)***. 1922. France. Directed by Musidora, Jacques Lasseyné. Screenplay by Musidora, from a short story by Maria Star. Produced by Musidora. Edited by Nini Bonnefoy. With Musidora, Antonio Cañero, Simone Cynthia, Paul Vermoyal, Miguel Sánchez. 4K digital restoration by the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, from two 35mm prints at the Cinémathèque française. DCP. French intertitles; English subtitles. 43 min. Though she is remembered primarily for portraying Irma Vep in the serial *Les Vampires*, Musidora's work behind the scenes is finally obtaining some visibility, thanks

to the San Francisco Silent Film Festival and the Cinémathèque française. Screening for what is likely the first time in New York City, the restored version of *Soleil et ombre*, although slightly incomplete, is a renewed reminder of Musidora's multifaceted career, not only as a talented actress, but also as a director, producer, screenwriter, and, later, as an archivist at the Cinémathèque française. The second of three films created by Musidora set entirely in Spain (another film, *Vicenta*, was at least partially set there), *Soleil et ombre* was shot on location in Andalusia. It follows a tragic love triangle between a bullfighter (Antonio Cañero, a real-life bullfighter and Musidora's off-screen lover), a local peasant girl named Juana (Musidora), and a flirtatious foreign tourist (also Musidora). At once a stark drama and a historical document of bullfighting in action (in scenes that can be difficult to watch today), *Soleil et ombre* was edited by Nini (Eugénie) Bonnefoy, whose life and film career requires further research.

**Oct. 31, 4:00 T2; Nov. 4, 1:00 T2**

**Buba.** 1930. USSR. Written and directed by Noutsia Gogoberidze. English intertitles. DCP. 37 min. Filmed in the Ratcha region in Northern Georgia, *Buba* (the name of the mountain village) was the second of three films directed by Georgian filmmaker Noutsia Gogoberidze before her career was cut short by Stalinist purges. Weaving Socialist ideology with careful attention to both the region's natural grandeur and the remote villagers' daily life and work, this visually striking and rhythmic propaganda documentary is the result of a collaboration between Gogoberidze and avant-garde artist David Kakabadze, who served as the production designer. In 1937, Gogoberidze's husband was executed for being an enemy of the people, while she was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in exile. Her three films were banned, and she was unable have a film career when she returned, eventually working in the lexicography department at the Linguistics Institute in Tbilisi. Although often hailed as the "mother of Georgian cinema"—her daughter, Lana Gogoberidze, and granddaughter, Salomé Alexi, are also filmmakers—Noutsia still remains relatively unknown today compared to Soviet contemporaries like Alexander Dovzhenko, Sergei Eisenstein, and Mikhail Kalatozov.

**A Crofter's Life in Shetland.** 1931. Scotland. Directed, written, produced, photographed, edited, and titled by Jenny Brown. Title effects by Barbara Scott. Digital preservation from the National Library of Scotland - Moving Image Archive. 63 min. Capturing a cyclical year in the lives of the men and women (and the birds and animals around them) who farm, fish, and sustain themselves on the Shetland Islands, the northernmost region in the United Kingdom, this engaging documentary portrait is filled with pathos, humor, and intimacy. Jenny Brown, known later as Jenny Gilbertson, was a self-taught amateur filmmaker from Glasgow who made several films in the region, eventually marrying a local crofter and making a life there (she died in Shetland in 1990). *A Crofter's Life in Shetland*, like her short documentaries made in the following years—*In Sheep's Clothing* and *Scenes from a Shetland Croft Life*, for example—displays a genuine interest in observing and recording the daily, often gendered, labor of the region's inhabitants. Barbara Scott, whose work in film and connection to Brown remains a mystery to the WFPP editorial team, is credited with the playful intertitle visuals.

After making *A Crofter's Life in Shetland*, Brown screened it for John Grierson, who was not only a fan—he reportedly called her "a real illuminator of life and movement"—but also encouraged her to invest in a professional camera and to make a more dramatized documentary (eventually resulting in *Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric*). Grierson also later

purchased five of Brown's short Shetland documentaries for the GPO Film Library. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, Brown made a few more documentaries, including one in Canada with filmmaker Evelyn Spice (*Prairie Winter*), but primarily raised her children and worked as a teacher. She resumed her filmmaking career in the late 1960s, making, for instance, documentaries that focused on remote Inuit communities in Canada.

**Oct. 28, 1:00 T2; Nov. 3, 4:00**

*All film descriptions by Kate Saccone.*

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