

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JEAN GRÉMILLON, PIONEERING FRENCH POETIC-REALIST DIRECTOR, TO BE SUBJECT OF MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE

November 21–December 21, 2014

PRESS SCREENINGS:

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1:30 p.m.: *La petite Lise* & *Gueule d'amour*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2:00 p.m.: *Lumière d'été* & *La Ciel est à vous*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12 (TITLES AND TIME TBA).

Astoria, New York, November 4, 2014—The iconoclastic French director Jean Grémillon (1901–1959) may be little remembered outside of his native country, yet has slowly emerged to be recognized as one of the titans of pre-New Wave French cinema. His lyrical films, including *Le petite Lise* (1930), *Dainah le métisse* (1932), and *Gueule d'amour* (*Lady Killer*) (1937, starring Jean Gabin), simultaneously predicted and transcended 1930s French “poetic realism.” His films produced during the German occupation, *Remorques* (1941, written by Jacques Prevert and starring Jean Gabin), *Lumière d'été* (*Light of Summer*) (1943), and *Le Ciel est à vous* (1944), are widely considered his masterpieces. From November 21 through December 21, 2014, Museum of the Moving Image will present a major retrospective of Grémillon with 12 features and 8 short films, including the titles noted above as well as very rarely shown works from the silent-into-sound period and Grémillon’s post-war features and documentary shorts.

Almost all of the films (except two) will be presented in imported, archival prints—several from the Institut Français, as well as other French archives. The series is presented with support from the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

“For American audiences, Jean Grémillon is certainly one of the least-known great French directors,” said David Schwartz, the Museum’s Chief Curator. “Not only are his films largely unavailable in this country, he was always a difficult director to pin down, with films that are at once dreamlike and avant-garde, yet rooted in documentary realism.”

Jean Grémillon left his native Normandy with the ambition to be a composer, but while working in the orchestra pit as a silent film accompanist, he fell in love with movies. A documentarian first and last, he combined a dedication to real-life detail with a passion for flamboyant artifice—only one of the many contradictions that defined his

personality. He was also a lover of liberty who made his greatest works during the German occupation, and a populist who chafed at working in industrial filmmaking, ending his career making shorts about the fine arts.

Highlights among the documentary shorts Grémillon made after the war include ***June 6th at Dawn*** (1945), a retelling of the story of D-Day through the words of eyewitnesses and experts, for which Grémillon returned to his native Normandy (November 30, December 7) and ***André Masson et les quatre éléments*** (1958) (December 14), Grémillon's last completed work before his death in 1959, a reflection on the paintings of Masson which is among the director's greatest achievements.

About Institut Français:

As an agent of French cultural diplomacy, operated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Institut Français today is a unique brand in France and 96 other countries. Outside France, it promotes artists, ideas, works and industries, while facilitating artistic exchanges and cultural dialogues. The Institute Français is notably active in the promotion and cultural distribution of French films abroad, through a network of the instituts français and Alliances françaises and over 300 main partners worldwide. Its programs contribute to the non-commercial distribution of recently produced French films and the presentation of its main figures and younger generation as well as to the promotion of film classics and to the wider dissemination of knowledge about film. The Institut Français also participates in the promotion of world cinema with Fabrique des cinémas du monde during the Cannes Film Festival, the Cinémathèque Afrique, and the aid scheme Aide aux cinémas du monde managed jointly with the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC).

About Museum of the Moving Image:

Museum of the Moving Image(movingimage.us) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In its stunning facilities—acclaimed for both its accessibility and bold design—the Museum presents exhibitions; screenings of significant works; discussion programs featuring actors, directors, craftspeople, and business leaders; and education programs which serve more than 50,000 students each year. The Museum also houses a significant collection of moving-image artifacts.

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SCHEDULE FOR 'JEAN GRÉMILLON,' NOVEMBER 21–DECEMBER 21, 2014

Screenings will take place in the Sumner M. Redstone Theater or the Celeste and Armand Bartos Screening Room at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue in Astoria, and are included with paid Museum admission and are free for Museum members at the Film Lover level and above unless otherwise noted. For information about Museum membership and to join, visit <http://movingimage.us/support/membership>.

This schedule is also posted online [here](#).

All films are directed by Jean Grémillon. All films are in French with English subtitles (with the exception of *L'Étrange Madame X* on December 7).

Lumière d'été (Light of Summer)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 7:00 P.M.

1943, 109 mins. 35mm. With Madeleine Robinson, Paul Bernard. Arriving at a remote mountaintop hotel in Provence, Parisian Michèle is involved in a love triangle with a worker and an aristocrat whose neighboring castle will be the scene of a show-stopping costume ball. *Lumière d'été* is one of the defining masterworks of French cinema during the occupation.

Gardien de phare (The Lighthouse Keepers)

With live musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2:30 P.M.

1929, 66 mins. Digital projection. With Paul Fromet, Geymond Vital. A young man and his father are maintaining a lighthouse off of the Brittany coast when the son begins a descent into insanity—kept from shore by a raging sea, the lighthouse becomes their prison. Grémillon combines on-location exteriors with Andre Barsacq's dizzying sets to build a harrowing subjective experience of encroaching madness.

La petite Lise

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 4:30 P.M.

1930, 78 mins. 35mm. With Pierre Alcover, Nadia Sibirskaja. The seedy, downbeat tale of a freed convict who returns to Paris to look after his daughter, Lise. A favorite of director Leos Carax, Grémillon's "talkie" debut is a bold, difficult experiment, made just months after the first French sound films but already featuring innovative sound design.

Gueule d'amour (Lady Killer)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 7:30 P.M.

1937, 90 mins. 16mm. With Jean Gabin, Mireille Balin. Lucien, a legionnaire renowned for his way with women falls hard for Madeleine (Balin, reigniting the sexual tension with Gabin, her *Pepe le Moko* co-star), a woman who makes his working-class head spin with her sophistication and makes his heart beat faster by shunning his advances. Gabin, famed for his unflappable cool, gives a performance of naked desperation.

Dainah la métisse

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 3:00 P.M.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 3:00 P.M.

1932, 51 mins. 35mm. With Habib Benglia, Charles Vanel. On a transatlantic ocean liner, an elegant black magician is forced to watch with chagrin as his wife, "Dainah the Mulatto," flirts with fellow passengers, including a suspicious, subliterate engineer, Michaud. When Dainah disappears the next day, both men fall under suspicion. A richly strange, haunting work. Preceded by **Chartres** (1923, 13mins, restored 35mm)

Remorques

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 5:00 P.M.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5:00 P.M.

1941, 85 mins. 35mm. With Jean Gabin, Michèle Morgan. André, a tugboat captain who specializes in bringing vessels in distress safely into port, goes out one storm-tossed night and fishes up Catherine, a young woman who drives a wedge between him and his sick wife.

Remorques is perhaps the most powerful manifestation of Grémillon's career-long fascination with the primal force of the sea.

June 6th at Dawn (Le Six juin à l'aube) and other short films

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 3:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 6:00 P.M.

1945, 43 mins. 35mm. In the aftermath of Operation Overlord, Grémillon returned to his native Normandy to retell the story of D-Day through the words of eyewitnesses and experts—the calm before the storm, the fury of battle, and the hard, unsung work of providing humanitarian aid in its aftermath. Preceded by **Les Charmes de l'existence** (1950, 22 mins, 16mm) and **Les désastres de la guerre** (1951, 20 mins).

L'Étrange Monsieur Victor

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 5:30 P.M.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 3:00 P.M.

1938, 99 mins. 35mm. With Raimu, Pierre Blanchar, Viviane Romance. Victor is a Jekyll & Hyde shopkeeper who moonlights in underworld trade. The walls dividing his double life crack when he commits a murder and allows another man to be jailed for the crime. Grémillon breaks down the walls between naturalism and stylization, integrating scenes from the docks of Toulouse with sets constructed at the Ufa studios in Berlin.

L'Étrange Madame X

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 6:00 P.M.

1951, 91 mins. Digital projection. **In French with no English subtitles.** With Michele Morgan, Henri Vidal. A chambermaid in a loveless marriage with a publishing magnate falls in love with a handsome young carpenter and gets pregnant. The extremely rare *L'Étrange Madame X* has an uncharacteristically high polish, and is possessed of an otherworldly sensual intimacy.

***Please note: While a film print is not available for *L'Étrange Madame X*, the Museum will still screen this film in digital format, due to its rarity, but it will not be shown with English subtitles.**

Le Ciel est à vous

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2:30 P.M.

1944, 105 mins. 16mm. With Madeleine Renaud, Charles Vanel, Jean Debucourt, Raymonde

Vernay. A petit bourgeois couple is united in a common goal; Thérèse wants to break the solo long-distance flying record for women, and Pierre, a mechanic, is devoted to helping her, even as her passion becomes increasingly all-consuming and dangerous. This luminous film was Grémillon's biggest box-office hit.

Pattes blanches (White Paws)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 5:00 P.M.

1949, 102 mins. 16mm. With Fernand Ledoux, Paul Bernard. The sexpot Odette arrives in a fishing village in Brittany and stirs up a dangerous rivalry among the local menfolk, while her innkeeper husband remains wholly ignorant of his wife's shenanigans. *Lumière d'été*'s Bernard returns to the role of decadent provincial aristocrat.

L'Amour d'une femme

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 5:00 P.M.

1954, 103 mins. 35mm. With Micheline Presle, Massimo Girotti, Gaby Morlay. On Ouessant, a small island off the Brittany coast, a female doctor must deal with the prejudices of the insular villagers whom she hopes to help, and of the Italian engineer whom she loves. This radiant, deeply melancholy swan song offers further evidence of Grémillon's protofeminist concerns.

Grémillon: Postwar Shorts

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 7:30 P.M.

Grémillon never returned to his popular primacy in the postwar period, but this perfectly suited a filmmaker who was loathe to repeat himself, and in his remaining years he dove into the expressive outlet of the short film, largely concentrating on the process of artistic handicrafts. Films include ***Alchimie*** (1952-54, 7 mins), ***La Maison aux Images*** (1955, 18 mins, 16mm), ***Haute Lisse*** (1956, 16 mins), and ***André Masson et les quatre éléments*** (1958, 21 mins 35mm), Grémillon's last completed work before his death in 1959, a reflection on the paintings of Masson which is among Grémillon's greatest achievements.

Maldone

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 6:00 P.M.

1928, 81 mins. 35mm. With Charles Dullin, Genica Athanasiou. Wealthy Olivier Maldone prefers the working-class life and the carefree company of gypsy girl Zita, but his brother's death forces him to take up the heir-apparent life. Grémillon combines an impressionistic approach to landscape with startlingly modern editing, psychological acuity, and class consciousness.

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Wednesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Holiday hours:** The Museum will be open 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 11 (Veterans' Day); Monday, December 29; and Tuesday, December 30. The Museum will be closed on Thursday, November 27 (Thanksgiving); Wednesday, December 24; and Thursday, December 25.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Tickets for regular film screenings are included with paid Museum admission and are free for members at the Film Lover level and above.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID;

\$6.00 for children ages 3–12. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free. Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance online at movingimage.us.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

Membership: <http://movingimage.us/support/membership> or 718 777 6877

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and located on the campus of Kaufman Astoria Studios. Its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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