

WOMEN AND THE
SILENT SCREEN VI

June 24 - 26, 2010

Bologna, Manifattura delle Arti, Via Azzo Gardino 65





Women and the Silent Screen VI

an International Conference and a Film Retrospective

Bologna, 24 – 26 June 2010
Manifattura delle Arti, Via Azzo Gardino 65



SIXTH WOMEN AND THE SILENT SCREEN CONFERENCE:

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Many thanks to: Pia Brancadori, Rita Bertoncini, Luca Caminati, Christina Jobe, Elena Ezechielli, Ouissal Mejri, Masha Salazkina, Silvia Vacirca

Printed by Il Profumo delle Parole

Women and the Silent Screen VI : Prologue

More than one decade after its inception in 1999, the Women and the Silent Screen conference appears in very good shape. Its mission of researching the memory of forgotten women of the past – their lives, their careers and desires, within a thoroughly modern environment, such as the film industry was perceived to be at the time – is more lively than ever.

Much has been learnt throughout this decade thanks to the work of dozens of international researchers. We learnt that the traditional representation of early cinema as a place where women only existed to be looked at through the camera lens is greatly misleading. We now know that women were numerous in all fields of film production, from screenwriting to direction, to technical and managerial responsibilities. We also learnt that many figures we were accustomed to think of as just actresses were in fact much more than “just divas,” being fully in control of several aspects of their films’ production. We learnt that women’s remarkable accomplishments during the silent era came in parallel with an unprecedented uprising of female agency in the social, economic and political arenas, while an ever increasing number of women gained access into the working sphere and joined the feminist movement. So we learnt that a new generation of women workers, who were then discovering the pleasures of the screen in the “red velvet seats” of film theatres, played a decisive role in shaping the forms and contents of silent cinema. Far from being simply instrumental to filling gaps in the conventional narration of cinema’s history, all these new understandings are producing a major paradigmatic change in both the theory and methodology of film historiography.

Finally, and perhaps more importantly, we discovered that such truly thrilling emergence of feminine genius at the onset of the 20th century was not confined within certain national boundaries, but reached out across the world’s cinemas. From North to South and from East to West, we found forgotten figures still waiting for recognition and new stories waiting to be told. The transnational existence of women in silent cinemas, the synchronic phenomenon of their becoming visible across the globe, is mirrored in the contents of this conference, which are contributed by researchers from all five continents. But clearly, the reverse is also true: cinema’s women of the past have become transnational precisely at the moment when a transnational network of researchers began becoming operative thanks to this conference. As with its five previous convocations (Utrecht, Santa Cruz, Montreal, Guadalajara, Stockholm), the 2010 WSS conference aims to celebrate the talents and the accomplishments of past women, so as to recover their memory for today’s women. But in so doing, it naturally becomes a celebration of present women – of their research accomplishments, of their ingenuity in approaching subject matters that often require extreme dedication and complex archival investigation, of their collective talents in building up networks of transnational dialogue and cooperation.

We thank the Women Film History International and all supporting academic and cultural institutions for allowing this to happen once again.

Monica Dall’Asta and Cristina Jandelli



Asta Nielsen in Die Filmprimadonna (1913)
Image retrieved from: filmarchive.at



*Cleo Madison, from Cleo, the Craftswoman,
"Photoplay," January 1916*

Sixth Women and the Silent Screen Conference

24, 25, 26 June 2010
Laboratori DMS, Via Azzo Gardino 65/a

Plenary Sessions: Auditorium Hall

Parallel Sessions: A Auditorium Hall
B Theatre Hall
C Multimedia Lab

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

8:45 am / **Conference Registration and Check-in**

9:15 am / **Plenary Session: Welcome Addresses**

9:45 am / **Plenary Session: Keynote Address**

- Christine Gledhill (University of Sunderland), *Reframing Women in British Cinema Culture of the 1910s and 1920s: Some Problems and Issues*

10:45 am / **Coffee Break**

11:15 am - 1:15 pm / **Panels 1A, 1B, 1C**

1A The Sound of the Silents I / Panel Moderator: Amy Sargeant (University of Warwick)

- Jane Gaines (Columbia University), *Wordlessness*
- Tami Michelle Williams (University of Wisconsin), *Eurhythm or the Sound of an Arabesque? The Musicality of Gesture and Bodily Expression in Germaine Dulac's Early Silent Films*
- Kim Tomadjoglou (Library of Congress), *Music and Images in the Cinema of Elvira Notari*
- Lauri Piispa (University of Turku), *Screen Actresses and the Stanislavsky System of Acting in Russian Cinema of the 1910s*

1B Problems in Historiography / Panel Moderator: Virginia Wexman (University of Illinois)

- David Mayer (University of Manchester), *Griffith's Female Underlings or Independent Achievers?*
- Philippe Gauthier, André Gaudreault (Université de Montreal), *Alice Guy and the Transition from Kine-Attractography to Institutional Cinema: The Example of The Birth, the Life and the Death of Christ*
- Susan Potter (University of Auckland), *The History that Will Be: Lesbian Cinematic Representation Before Cinema*
- Margaret Hennefeld (Brown University), *Leni Riefenstahl's The Blue Light and the Politics of Hyper-Visibility*

- Mark Lynn Anderson (University of Pittsburgh), *Her Reputation Precedes Her, or The Impossible Films of Vera, Countess of Cathcart*

1C Case Studies in Gender Film Criticism / Panel Moderator: Victoria Duckett (University of Melbourne)

- Meryl Shriver-Rice (University of Miami), *Silent Leading Women: Female Agency and the Construction of Masculinity in Lois Weber's The Blot*
- Veronica Pravadelli (Università Roma Tre), *Lois Weber's Uneasy Progressive Politics: The Articulation of Class and Gender in Where Are My Children?*
- Laura Evelyn Horak (University of California, Berkeley), *"A Most Charming Boy": The Appeal of the Female Boy in US Silent Film*
- Johanna Schmertz (University of Houston-Downtown), *"Who Dressed A.B. Like a Girl?" Leatrice Joy's Performances of Gender in The Clinging Vine (1926)*

1:15 pm / **Lunch**

2:45 pm - 4:20 pm / **Panels 2A, 2B, 2C**

2A Movie Fan Scrapbooks: New Resources for Writing Women's Cinema History / Panel Moderator: Mark Garrett Cooper (University of South Carolina)

- Richard Abel (University of Michigan), *Edna Vercoe's Scrapbook "Romance with the Movies" (1914-1915)*
- Maj Eimers (Universiteit Utrecht), *Who Is This Fan?: Fandom and Fan Identity as Seen through the Works of a Lil Dagover and Henny Porten Fan*
- Leslie DeBauche (University of Wisconsin), *Movies in the Lives of American Girls: Interrogating the Evidence Found in High School Memory Books*
- Jennifer Horne (Catholic University of America), *Scrapbook as Public Sphere: The Women's Club Year in Review*

2B Screenwriters / Panel Moderator: Giuliana Muscio (Università di Padova)

- Maria Fosheim Lund, Livia Bloom, Daniela Bajar (Columbia University), *Behind the Typewriter: The Role of Women in the Development of the Screenwriting Profession*
- Claus Tieber (University of Salzburg), *Mary Pickford as Written by Frances Marion*
- Chiara Tognolotti (Università di Firenze), *Marie Epstein as a Scenarist: A Case Study*

- Micaela Veronesi (Associazione Italiana per le Ricerche di Storia del Cinema), *Woman, Wife, Screenwriter: Renée de Liot and the Screenplay in the Silent Era*

2C Stardom and Masochism / Panel Moderator: Veronica Pravadelli (Università Roma Tre)

- Robert L. Singer (CUNY Graduate Center), *"From Boudoir to Street": Naturalism and the Suffering Female in International Silent Cinema*
- Kerry L McElroy (Concordia University), *Starlets to Secretaries: the Suicide Gesture in the Silent Era*
- Valeria Festinese (Università Roma Tre), *Masochism in/and Italian Diva Films*
- Elena Ezechielli (Università di Bologna), *Sickness Becomes Woman: Divas and Love-sick*

4:20 pm / **Coffee Break**

4:45 - 6:30 pm / **Panels 3A, 3B, 3C**

3A Women of Chinese Cinema / Panel Moderator: Richard Abel (University of Michigan)

- Menghsin C. Horng (University of California Berkeley), *Voiceless Smiles and the Limits of Gesture in Shanghai Silent Film*
- Cristina Colet (Università di Torino), *Ruan Lingyu: Star of Chinese Cinema*
- Funing Tang (University of Miami), *Ambivalence of the Camera: The Representation of the Female Body and Identity in Chinese Silent Cinema of the 1930s*
- Xiqing Qin (Chinese National Academy of Arts), *Pearl White and the New Female Image in Chinese Silent Cinema*

3B The Sound of the Silents II / Panel Moderator: Jennifer Horne (Catholic University of America)

- Elena Mosconi (Università Cattolica di Milano), *Feminine Stars and the Cultural Heritage of Opera in Early Italian Cinema*
- Victoria Duckett (University of Melbourne), *The Italian Tradition of bel canto in Early International Cinema*
- Jennifer Fleeger (Catholic University of America), *Metropolitan Women: Geraldine Farrar and Marion Talley Silence Opera on Screen*
- Amy Lawrence (Dartmouth College), *Bruised and Confused: Helen Morgan on Stage on Screen*

3C Not Just Divas I / Panel Moderator: David Mayer (University of Manchester)

- Elena Dagrada (Università di Milano), *Eleonora Duse, Grazia Deledda and the Others: A Women Contribution in the Country of Melodrama*
- María A. Camí-Vela (University of North Carolina), *Women, Bullfighters and Identity in Spanish Silent Cinema: Musidora (1889-1957)*
- Hugh Munro Neely (Mary Pickford Institute for Film Education), *A Studio of Her Own: Women Producers at First National, 1918-1928*
- Dolores McElroy (Columbia University), *Nazimova's Salomé: Silent Monument*

7:00 pm / **Dinner**

9:00 pm / **Screenings - Cinema Lumière**

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

9:15 am, **Panels 4A, 4B, 4C****4A New Women and the Modern / Panel Moderator: Rosanna Maule (Concordia University)**

- Jan Olsson (Stockholms Universitet), *The Reinvention of the Cosmopolitan Heroine: Dimitri Buchowetski's Contribution to Swedish Silent Cinema*
- Patrick Keating (Trinity University), *Lighting Garbo: Modern Photography and the New Woman*
- Jaakko Seppälä (University of Helsinki), *Distant Dreams: Flapper Movies and Finnish Film Culture*

4B Filming the Ethnic Difference / Panel Moderator: Emma Sandon (Birkbeck University)

- Isabel Arredondo (SUNY Plattsburgh), *The Commercial Value of Indo and Afro-Colombian Bodies: Romelli's Gold Platinum (1937)*
- Nina Cartier (Northwestern University), *Somethin' Just Ain't Right: Quareness as a Paradigm for Probing Narration in Early Black Cinema*
- Katherine Groo (University of Aberdeen), *Native and Narration: Josephine Baker and the Cinema of Métissage*

4C Stardom and Fashion / Panel Moderator: Ester de Miro (Università di Genova)

- Mila Ganeva (Miami University, Ohio), *The German Diva Brigitte Helm as a Fashion Icon of the 1920s Stardom*
- Mary Desjardins (Dartmouth College), *Fading Stars and the Ruined Commodity Form: Star Discourses of Loss in Fan Magazines, 1914-1929*
- Anke Brouwers (Universiteit Antwerpen), *If It Works For Mary...: Advice from America's Sweetheart*

10:30 am / **Coffee Break**11:00 – 11:45 am / **Plenary Session**

- Astrid Söderbergh Widding and Sofia Bull (Stockholms Universitet): Presenting *Not So Silent: Women in Cinema Before Sound*, Proceedings of the 2008 WSS Conference
- Mariann Lewinsky (Cineteca di Bologna) and Bryony Dixon (National Film Archive), Elif Rongen-Kaynakci (Eye Film Instituut Nederland): Presenting *Forze irresistibili*, a DVD on early comic actresses and suffragettes

11:45 am / **Panels 5A, 5B, 5C****5A Professions I / Panel Moderator: Astrid Söderbergh Widding (Stockholms Universitet)**

- Sofia Bull (Stockholms Universitet), *"She Has a Sense of Humour": Alva Lundin's Erotikon Art-Titles*
- Tom Paulus, Vito Adriaensens (Universiteit Antwerpen), *Little Girls in Empire Dresses: The Influence from Women Children's Book Illustrators on Early Art Titles*
- Federico Pierotti (Università di Firenze), *Colouring the Figures. A First Survey on the Relations Between Working Women and Hand Colouring in Italy*

5B Acting as Creation / Panel Moderator: Mariann Lewinsky (Cineteca di Bologna)

- Sawako Ogawa (Waseda University), *More Woman than a Woman: Oyama's Femininity and Actress's Modernization in 1910s Japanese Film*
- Nancy Irela Nuñez (Cineteca Nazionale), *Sources and Creation in Francesca Bertini's acting*
- Stella Dagna (Università di Pisa), *Homage to the Female Creator: Maria Gasparini and La Ribalta*

5C Not Just Divas II / Panel Moderator: Patricia Welsch (Bowdoin College)

- Michele Leigh Torre (Southern Illinois University), *Alexander Khanzhonkov and His Queens of the Screen*
- Ana Maria Pessoa dos Santos (Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa), *Carmen Santos and the Starlight*
- Emiliana Losma (Centro Studi e Documentazione Pensiero Femminile), *Rediscovering Bianca Virginia Camagni*

1:00 pm / **Lunch**

2:45 pm / **Panels 6A, 6B, 6C**

6A Creating and Critiquing Hollywood's New Women / Panel Moderator: Jennifer Bean (University of Washington)

- Hilary Anne Hallett (Columbia University), *Re-reading Hollywood's First Sexual Scandal: Virginia Rappe, New Western Women, and the Bohemian Movie Colony*
- Shelley Stamp (University of California, Santa Cruz), *Exit Flapper, or Lois Weber's Critique of Jazz Age Hollywood*
- Anne Morey (Texas A&M University), *School of Scandal: Alice Duer Miller, Scandal, and the New Woman*
- Vicki Callahan (University of Wisconsin), *"Not Even a Word of Farewell – Only a Smile": Melancholic Endings and Wistful Musings on the Demise of Mabel Normand and the New Woman*

6B Studies in National Cinemas / Panel Moderator: Giacomo Manzoli (Università di Bologna)

- Begoña Soto Vázquez (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos), *How to Research the Exception. The Power of the Unknown, Women and Spanish Silent Cinema*
- Donna R. Casella (Minnesota State University), *Women and Nationalism in Indigenous Irish Filmmaking of the Silent Period*
- Ouissal Mejri (Università di Bologna), *Women in Egyptian Silent Cinema: the 1920's Pioneers*
- Sheila Schvarzman (Universidade Anhembi Morumbi), *Moviegoing in São Paulo in the 1920s*

6C Analyzing and Theorizing Films / Panel Moderator: Elena Dagrada (Università di Milano)

- Astrid Söderbergh Widding (Stockholms Universitet), *Looking at Herself: Cinema as Dream Screen – Le Mystère des Roches de Kador*
- Althea Wasow (University of California, Berkeley), *Freud, Marx, and Fräulein Else: The Psyche, the Social, and the Problem of Unrepresentability*
- April Miller (University of Northern Colorado), *Our Delinquent Daughters: Reforming Adolescence in Cecil B. DeMille's The Godless Girl and G. W. Pabst's Diary of a Lost Girl*

4:20 pm / **Coffee Break**

4:45 – 6:30 pm / **Panels 7A, 7B, 7C**

7A Asta Nielsen / Panel Moderator: Karola Gramann (Kinothek Asta Nielsen)

- Martin Loiperdinger (Universität Trier), *The Emergence of the Star System in Germany, 1911: Asta Nielsen, Monopolfilm, Audience Attraction, and Investment*
- Jennifer M. Bean (University of Washington), *"Drawn Across the Sea": Asta Nielsen in America, 1912-1914*
- Annette Förster (Utrecht Universiteit), *Asta Nielsen's (Re-)turn to the Stage in the 1920s: A Paradox or a Consistent Choice?*

7B Excentric Bodies / Panel Moderator: Christine Gledhill (University of Sunderland)

- Amy Sargeant (University of Warwick), *However Odd: Elsa Lanchester*
- Laraine Porter (British Silent Film Festival), *A Lass and A Lack: Women and Comedy in British Silent Cinema*
- Kristen Anderson Wagner (University of Southern California), *Silent Comediennes and "The Tragedy of Being Funny"*
- Marzia Ruta (Università di Bologna), *Lea Giunchi: The Story of a Lost Comical Body*

7C Professions II / Panel Moderator: Drake Stutesman (New York The Women's Film Preservation Fund)

- Viktoria Paranyuk (Columbia University), *Riding Horses and Writing Scripts: Josephine Rector at Essanay*
- Bethany Czerny (Columbia University), *Fade In: Rediscovering Katharine Hilliker Through Choices in Historical and Digital Research New Resources*
- Kerrie Welsh (Tisch School of the Arts), *Living Out Loud: From Silent Cinema to Baltimore Punk Rock, An Oral History of Alice Stringer (1912-1999)*

7:00 pm / **Dinner**

9:00 pm / **Screenings - Cinema Lumière**

SATURDAY, JUNE 26

9:15-11:15 am / **Panels 8A, 8B, 8C**

8A Cinephilia / Panel Moderator: Shelley Stamp (University of California, Santa Cruz)

- Rosanna Maule (Concordia University), *Women's Cinephilia and the Reframing of Female Subjectivity in Film*
- Ansjé van Beusekom (Universiteit Utrecht), *A Female Touch or a Role Model? Dutch Film Critic Elisabeth de Roos and the International Film Avant-garde*
- Nathalie Morris (British Film Institute), *"Opportunities for Women": British Film Publicists*
- Clare Watson (University of East Anglia), *"The Feminine Touch": Elsie Codd and Transnational Film Journalism*
- Luca Mazzei (Università Roma Due), *The Smartest Spectator: Angelina Buracci and Italian Cinema of the 1910s*

8B Socio-political Issues / Panel Moderator: Mark Lynn Anderson (University of Pittsburgh)

- Alison Margaret Griffiths (CUNY-Baruch College), *Women, Prisons, and the Silent Screen*
- Martin F. Norden (University of Massachusetts), *Alice Guy-Blaché, Rose Pastor Stokes, and the Birth-Control Film That Never Was*
- Patricia Welsch (Bowdoin College), *In the Family Way: Early Female Stars and Parenthood*
- Madeleine Bernstoff (Universität der Künste Berlin), *Women on Strike: The Figure of the Suffragette in Silent Comedies*
- Dunja Dogo (Università di Siena), *The Image of an Old Revolutionary in Soviet Propaganda: Vera Figner and the Women's Liberation Movement in The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty*

8C Representations / Panel Moderator: Annette Förster (Utrecht Universiteit)

- Luciana Correa de Araujo (Universidade Federal de São Carlos), *Movie Prologues: Cinema, Theatre and Female Types on Stage at Rio de Janeiro Cinelandia*
- Shelleen Greene (University of Wisconsin), *Cabiria's Masters and Slaves: Race, Libidinal Investment and the New Roman Empire*
- Lucia Di Girolamo (Università di Firenze), *Sirens: Female Images and Roles in Neapolitan Cinema*

- Jana Ostyn (Universiteit Antwerpen), *Female and Formal Ambiguity in the Serial Queen Melodrama: Fatal Test Case for Feminist Film Theory?*
- Lynne Elizabeth Bond (Southern Illinois University), *Rescue Me: The Filmic Beginnings of the "Damsel in Distress" in Pirate Films through 1926*

11:15 am / **Coffee Break**

11:45 am / **Plenary Session: Keynote Address**

- Heide Schlüpmann (Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main), *An Alliance Between Theory and History*

12:45 pm / **Lunch**

2:15 pm / **Plenary Session: New Interrogations, New Archives / Panel Moderator: Jane Gaines (Columbia University)**

- Giuliana Muscio (Università di Padova), *Multiple Sources for Women's Film History*
- Mark Garrett Cooper (University of South Carolina), *Amateur Filmmaking Amidst the Institutions, the Case of Claudia Lea Phelps*
- Yiman Wang (University of California, Santa Cruz), *The Lady Vanishes: On the Archive Drive for a Feminist Ethnic Cinema*
- Aimee Dixon (Metropolitan Museum of Art), *The Historiography of Early African-American Filmmakers*
- Kay Armatage (University of Toronto), *The Archive Gone Viral*

4:20 pm / **Final Remarks: Monica Dall'Asta (Università di Bologna), Cristina Jandelli (Università di Firenze)**

4:35 pm / **Coffee Break**

5:00 - 6:00 pm / **Women and Film History International Society Meeting**



Lea Giunchi in Lea si diverte (1912)
Courtesy of Eye Film Instituut Nederland

Sixth Women and the Silent Screen Retrospective

24, 25 June, 2010, 9:00 pm
Cinema Lumière, Via Azzo Gardino, 65/b

THURSDAY, JUNE 24

L'ITALIA S'È DESTA (Italy has awakened, IT, 1927)
Dir., sc.: Elvira Notari. Cast: Gennariello. Prod.: Dora Films (Naples). 35mm. 175 m (9' at 18 f/s). Tinted and toned. From: Cineteca Nazionale. No intertitles.

This fragment is compilation of sequences from the lost film of the same title put together by its main interpreter (and Notari's son), Gennariello. It is a stunning example of the skill and virtuosity in coloring techniques (from tinting and toning to handmade coloring) that characterized production at Elvira Notari's Neapolitan company, Dora Films.

NOBILTÀ DI RAZZA, NOBILTÀ DI CUORE (Blood's nobility, heart's nobility, IT, 1915)
Sc., cast: Maria Bermudes. Prod.: Fiat Film (Rome). 35mm. 760 m (40' at 16 f/s). Tinted. From Cineteca Nazionale. Italian intertitles.

Recently rediscovered at Cineteca Nazionale, *Nobiltà di razza, nobiltà di cuore* was mistaken for a long time with another film similarly titled and was absent from all Italian silent movies catalogues. It was written, interpreted – possibly even directed – by Maria Bermudes, also known as Maria Rosa Bermudez. Hardly anything has come to light about Bermudes: she is listed as an actress in some adventure films in 1914, and a newspaper article in 1915 claims she was the owner of a studio, Fiat Film, in Rome. *Nobiltà di razza, nobiltà di cuore* mixes comedy and drama, narrating the story of Mary (Bermudes), a poor girl

who becomes a movie actress. Filmed in Rome, the movie depicts the city as a modern environment, full of possibilities, where dreams can come true. Among the images of the glories of Rome – and the quite funny representation of cinema production, its typical character and clichés – the film also shows images of two tragic historic events: Avezzano earthquake, January 1915, and Tiber River flooding, February 1915.



Elvira Notari, L'Italia s'è desta (1927)
Courtesy of Cineteca Nazionale

A FOOL AND HIS MONEY (USA, 1912)
Dir., sc.: Alice Guy. Cast: James Russell. Prod.: Solax. 35mm. 240 m (13' at 16 f/s). B&w. From Library of Congress.

One of the earliest productions ever made with an all-black cast, this one-reel film was fortuitously re-discovered inside a truck during an estate sale. *A Fool and His Money* narrates the misadventures

of Sam Jones, a humble but honest worker who falls in love with frivolous Lindy Williams, the daughter of a prosperous public porter. Sam is rejected and loses the girl of his dreams to a wealthier rival, Bill Johnson, but he finally wins Lindy's affection when he comes into possession, by pure chance, of a small fortune. The romance, however, turns out to be short-lived. Just before the engagement, Johnson and his accomplice Slick Mr. Tighe invite Sam to a poker game, where they cheat and rip off all of his money. As a result, the inconstant Lindy leaves Sam once again. While it was promoted to the white audience as a "satiric comedy dealing with the pretensions of colored folks" ("The Moving Picture World," October 5, 1912), the film is essentially a morality tale that teaches: he who aims to a social uplift (given as legitimate, regardless of skin color) must avoid easy short cuts.



Alice Guy, A Fool and his Money (1912)
Courtesy of The Library of Congress

UNMASKED (USA, 1917)
Dir., sc. and cast: Grace Cunard, Francis Ford. Prod: Bison. 35mm. Ca. 245 m (13' at 16 f/s). Tinted. From George Eastman House.

One of the most popular queens of American serials, Grace Cunard formed a well-assorted and quite productive professional team with Francis Ford (John's brother), writing and co-directing all the films and serial episodes they interpreted together at Universal. This short is a rare sample of their early collaboration. First released in a two-reel version (now presumably lost) in 1913 as *The Black Masks*, it was shortened and reissued in 1917 as a one-reeler under a new title, *Unmasked*. In their films, Cunard and Ford typically pursued each other, continuously exchanging their respective roles (though Cunard was particularly inclined to cast herself as a mundane, gentlewoman thief). Rich in close-ups and witty situations, *Unmasked* narrates the sympathetic adventures of two rival thieves.

THE PURPLE MASK (USA, 1917)
Dir., sc. and cast: Grace Cunard, Francis Ford. Prod.: Universal. 35mm B&w. From Library of Congress.

Ep. 11: The Garden of Surprise (reel one). Ca 200 m (11' at 16 f/s).

Ep. 12: The Vault of Mystery (reel one) 186 m (10' at 16 f/s).

In a 1916 interview Francis Ford explained: "Miss Cunard and I are an ideal team. We even work out the story together. Sometimes one of us, sometimes the other, has the original idea, and then she usually



Grace Cunard (Lady Raffles) and Francis Ford (Detective Kelly),
in *The Return of Twins' Double* (1914), from "Motion Picture Magazine," May 1914



Grace Cunard (left) and Francis Ford (right)

puts it into scenario form. She can dream scenarios. We play into each others' hands. She is a very capable director herself, you know." Cunard's narrative fantasy in the making of her films is well represented by the role she writes for herself in *The Purple Mask*: that of a female Robin Hood, a young heiress who chooses to act under disguise (wearing a black costume and a purple mask) to avenge "the cause of the oppressed" and "levy on the rich to give to the poor," even to the point of breaking the law. Francis Ford plays the detective who chases her but does not really want to catch her; he is fascinated by her uncommon personality and by the chasing game itself.

FRIDAY, JUNE 25

ÉTABLISSEMENT PATHÉ (The Pathé Factory, FR, 1902)

Prod.: Pathé. 35mm. Ca. 30 m (2' at 16 f/s). Tinted. No intertitles. From Cineteca di Bologna.

An early promotional film from the company's catalogue, *Établissement Pathé* contains precious footage showing women at work at Pathé's new Vincennes factory. In 1902, what was initially only a family enterprise grew into the dominating presence in the French market. Women, with their minute craft, contributed to the success.

WORK AND WORKERS OF DENTON HOLME (GB, 1910)

Prod: North of England Film Bureau. 35mm. 90 m. (4' at 16 f/s). B&w. No intertitles. From BFI National Film Archive.

Street scene in front of a factory at Denton Holme, in Cumberland: male and female workers, and children. We can picture the cinema and cinema-goers of 1910 in similar mould, with an innate sense of fun and companionship.

ZHENSCHINA ZAVTRASHEGO DNYA (A woman of tomorrow, RUS, 1914)

Dir.: Pyotr Chardynin. Cast: Vera Yureneva, Ivan Mozzhukin. Prod.: Kanzhonkov. 35mm. B&w. 795 m (45' at 16 f/s). Tinted. Dutch intertitles. From Eye Film Instituut Nederland.

Nora Alsen is a very competent and dedicated family doctor, whose patients never call on her in

vain. She is also a renowned feminist, who gives lectures about equal rights for women. Her fiancé Robert Hartung feels neglected by Nora's unlimited dedication to her work and begins a secret affair with Nelly, a lunchroom waitress. While Nora is still making plans to marry Robert, Nelly gives birth to his child. As Nelly does not recover well, Nora – who is an expert gynecologist – is called up to heal her. This unexpected confrontation with the truth forces Nora to reconsider her priorities in life. Vera Yureneva (who is perhaps better known for her stage career) gives a very strong interpretation of this role, specially written for her by her husband Aleksandr Voznesensky, also a famous playwright and screenwriter in Russia. This is the first part of a three-episode film produced by Kanzhonkov, of which only part I and II seem to be extant.



Vera Yureneva in *Zhenschina zavtrashego dnya* (1914)
Courtesy of Eye Film Instituut Nederland

LA DOCTORESSE (The lady doctor, FR, 1910)
Dir.: Georges Monca. Cast: Mistinguett, Charles Prince (Rigadin). Prod.: Pathé - S.C.A.G.L. 35mm. 120 m (6' at 16 f/s). B&w. English intertitles. From BFI National Film Archive.

La Doctoresse is one of the numerous, sprightly comedies from the early 1910s featuring Mistinguett, the celebrated star of French music hall. A young female doctor works hard to heal her patients to the detriment of her married life. The neglected husband seeks distractions to forget his domestic problems with some charming female acrobats. When, during an acrobatic stunt, he breaks his leg, his wife suddenly reappears to help him after all. Thus the busy doctor has to make the choice that only women ever face: love or a career?

LE SORELLE BARTELS, (The Bartels sisters, IT, 1910)
Prod.: Cines. 35mm. 74 m (5' at 16 f/s). B&w. No intertitles. From Cineteca di Bologna.

New graceful acrobatic exercises from the Bartels sisters.

LEA E IL GOMITOLO (Lea and the ball of wool, IT, 1913)

Cast: Lea Giunchi. Prod.: Cines. 35mm. 97 m (5' at 16 f/s). Tinted. German intertitles. From Cineteca di Bologna.

A lovable mischievous girl of Italian silent cinema, Lea Giunchi was the leading actress of an exceptionally popular comic series released by Cines in the early 1910s, which listed more than forty titles between 1911 and 1914 (among them the now lost *Lea femminista*). Throughout the whole series, her character acts as a volcanic,

insubordinate force that is able to turn any obstacle into a game. A sort of feminist manifesto, *Lea e il gomitolo* illustrates Lea's vain efforts to be a good girl as in her parents' dreams. Before leaving her at home alone, they demand her to quit reading her beloved books and get back to her knitting work. Lea reluctantly complies, but the ball of wool is lost and her attempts to find it are disastrous. Lea bustles around in a frenzy, breaking, disassembling, or overturning everything she touches. Back from their walk, her parents are forced to recognize they would be better off leaving her to her books.



Lea Giunchi in *Lea e il gomitolo* (1913)
Courtesy of Cineteca di Bologna

LA RIBALTA (The stage, ITA, 1913)

Dir.: Mario Caserini. Sc.: Arrigo Frusta. Cast: Maria Gasperini, Febo Mari, Oreste Grandi, Mario Voller Buzzi, Ercole Vaser. Prod.: Ambrosio (Turin). 60m (3' at 16 f/s). Tinted. From Cineteca di Bologna.

This fragment offers the quite disturbing ending

scene of a lost melodrama set in the theatrical milieu: a noblewoman (Maria Gasparini) is driven to step on the stage by her lover, a theatrical actor (Febo Mari). At first she does it just for fun, but later her surprising talent makes the man jealous of her success. In the end she dies, enacting her most dramatic suicide scene in front of the camera, under her lover's own direction.

LES DEMOISELLES DES PTT (Young ladies of the PTT, FR, 1913)

Dir.: Raoul d'Auchy. Cast: Suzanne Grandais. Prod.: Gaumont. 35mm. 201 m (10' at 16 f/s). Tinted. Dutch intertitles. From Eye Film Instituut Nederland.

Oscar Sanzatoux is a womanizer, who loves flirting with young ladies in public. One day he follows a beautiful worker of the post office. Pretending to pick up his correspondence, he goes to the office only to chat with her. He even sends himself empty envelopes to have an excuse to see her. But Suzanne and colleagues are not fooled by his tricks and decide to turn the tables on him. Suzanne Grandais (1893-1920) started her career in 1911 at Lux and Éclair, but soon became Gaumont's most sparkling star. After featuring in many films directed by Leonce Perret and Louis Feuillade, she started her own company, 'Les films Suzanne Grandais' in 1914. Despite her immense popularity between 1910-1920, Suzanne Grandais is hardly remembered today, perhaps partly because of her untimely death in a car accident, at just 27.

ZHENSCHINA ZAVTRASHEGO DNYA, Part II (A woman of tomorrow, RUS, 1915)

Dir.: Pyotr Chardynin. Cast: Vera Yureneva. Prod.: Kanzhonkov. 35mm. 600 m (30' at 18 f/s). B&w.

No intertitles. From Gosfil'mofond.

Thanks to our colleagues at Gosfil'mofond in Moscow we are able to screen the surviving (incomplete) copy of *Zhenschina zavtrashego dnya* Part II, a 1915 sequel in which Mozzhukin is no longer in the cast: doctor Anna Vetskaya (Nora Alsen in the Dutch version) moves in with her former husband's lover and their little daughter, defends a dissertation, and proposes to a man. As remarked by film critic Vitol'd Akhramovich in the "Teatral'naya Gazeta" (no. 45, 1915), the modern heroine portrayed by Yureneva in this film perfectly embodied the expectations of emancipation many female workers were harboring in pre-revolutionary Russia, at a time when the women's liberation movement was in full development.

TILLY AND THE FIRE ENGINES (GB, 1911)

Dir.: Lewin Fitzhamon. Cast: Alma Taylor and Chrissie White. Prod.: Hepworth Manufacturing Company. 35mm. (56 m, 3' at 16 f/s). B&w. No intertitles. From BFI National Film Archive.

Alma Taylor and Chrissie White began their acting careers when they were very young at the Hepworth Manufacturing Company and soon became two winning leads in British cinema. The Tilly Sisters's films were very popular both in Britain and abroad (as in Germany, where the characters were renamed Lotte and Mitzi), particularly because of their subversive treatment of the feminine figures. Here they are shown while accomplishing one of their famous mischievous deeds, stealing a fire truck and taking it for a joy ride.



Portrait of Alma Taylor,
Private Collection



Mary Pickford,
Image retrieved from: commons.wikimedia.org



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