
SHORT FILMS PROGRAMME 1

During the first six months of 1953, Henri Langlois presented 77 showings of shorts at a rate of three per day. This unprecedented principle of programming consisted of showing cinema as a 'whole', creating a link between films without any obvious connection in order to give rise to a new vision in the spectator.

Physiologist and doctor, Étienne-Jules Marey made a large number of chronophotographs on glass then on celluloid, representing human and animal locomotion. In 1963, at the Palais de Chaillot, Henri Langlois organized the first exhibition of his work. Lucien Bull and Pierre Noguès, Marey's two primary disciples, gave La Cinémathèque française apparatuses, archives, and 416 original films. 'The duality of Marey's images can be troubling. Owing to their beauty and mystery, they captivate today's general public, which in general knows nothing about the problems raised by the physiology of movement. Owing to their significance and *raison d'être*, they fascinate current physiologists and biomechanics. Marey already played on this ambiguity in his time: he strove to make increasingly astonishing images in order to surprise the scientific world and the public. Was his programme not-to 'see the invisible'? A few years later, this headlong rush towards the spectacular was going to engender the industry of the seventh art¹.'

The movements of Johnny Huggins and Catherine Hessling performing Charleston steps are intensified by the speeding up and slowing down that is accentuated by the jerky, and already provocative, rhythm of these choreographies, emanating a mad spontaneity and energy. Jean Renoir had just made *Nana* (1926), and the film was a box-office flop. His partner, Catherine Hessling, suggested his shooting *Charleston Parade* with the American dancer Johnny Huggins, on tour in France with his troupe at that time, using the last film trims from *Nana*. Thanks to staging that plays principally on the black and white contrasts, the film shows their dancing talents to advantage.

The couple in *Balançoires* (*Swings*) gets carried away by powerful sensations at a funfair. When a fakir proposes revealing 'the truth for 10 cents' to the two nonchalant young people, the world round them suddenly turns into a sinister nightmare marked by poverty, illness and death. Shot in 1928, this little-known film by Noël Renard is a gem of avant-garde cinema. The fairground offers the ideal setting for technical prowess and optical games, and the speed and movement of the attractions and the milling crowd are increased tenfold by the wild editing. The deafening, troubling universe of the fair becomes dark depending on the point of view and perspectives adopted.

With a flood of music and colours, *Rainbow Dance* concludes this programme, which had featured only silent pictures up until now. An advertisement for the General Post Office, shot in experimental fashion on black and white film with the Gasparcolor process, *Rainbow Dance* advocates a musical use of colour that controls movement and gives Rupert Doone's dancing silhouette a real presence that is, at the same time, purely abstract. Len Lye's avant-garde films, rarely projected at the time, were presented as much as possible by Henri Langlois in the framework of projections at Le Cercle du Cinéma.

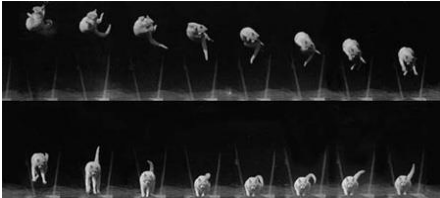
¹ Laurent Mannoni, *La restauration des bandes chronophotographiques Marey*, online catalogue of the Cinémathèque française's restorations and duplications.

THE FILMS OF THE SHOWING « SHORT FILMS PROGRAMME 1 »

Running time : 58 min.

Chronophotographs /Bandes chronophotographiques

France, 1894 – 3 minutes



Photography and editing: Étienne-Jules Marey

Cat trot, fall and turn-around, end of fall after turn-around.
The strips were duplicated then digitized, restored and 'reanimated' at the Neyrac laboratory in 1995.

Charleston Parade / Sur un air de Charleston

France, 1926 – 23 minutes



Direction : Jean Renoir

Script : Pierre Lestringuez et André Cerf

Production: Néo-Films

Photography: Jean Bachelet

Cast: Catherine Hessling, Johnny Huggins.

In 2028, an African scientist lands in a devastated Paris that has reverted back to a wild state. He crosses paths with a native who teaches him a 'primitive white peoples' dance'.

Restored in 2005 from a duplicate (without intertitles) established by Langlois. Intertitles were restored thanks to the script and a print preserved at Belgium's Cinémathèque Royale.

Balançoires

France, 1928 – 29 minutes



Direction and script : Noël Renard

Assistant director : Roland Six

Production : Omnium Français du Film

Set : Christian-Jacque

Cast : Hubert Daix, Valentine Gragowska, Josette Perdriat, François Viguiet, Huguette Doré, Roland Six, Robert Mérim

At a funfair, a fakir transports a young couple into a sad, dismal world. **Preserved in 1996 from a nitrate negative.**

Rainbow Dance

United Kingdom, 1936 – 3 minutes



Direction: Len Lye

Production: GPO Film Unit

Producers: Basil Wright and Alberto Cavalcanti

Photography: Jonah Jones

Music: Rico's Creole Band

Dancer: Rupert Doone

Advertisement for the General Post Office, experimentation on links between music and colours in Gasparcolor.