

MIAP Alumna Discovers Missing Metropolis Footage

by Zack Lischer-Katz

A 16mm film of Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*, held in the archives of the Museo del Cine in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has been found to contain missing footage once thought lost forever. MIAP alumna and new director of the Museo, Paula Felix-Didier, hearing many anecdotes about a suspicious 'long version' of the film somewhere in the Museo's collection, investigated the mysterious film. Examining the film on a rewind table, Paula started to notice frames of the film that she had never seen before. It

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MIAP Receives Grant From the Academy to Preserve Paul Sharits Films

by Mona Jimenez / Associate Director, MIAP Program

As the result of a recent grant from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, MIAP students will be given a unique opportunity to contribute to the preservation of the works of Paul Sharits, an important figure in American avant-garde filmmaking.

The Academy Foundation announced a grant of \$10,000 to MIAP for the 2008-2009 academic year through their Academy Internship Grant Program. The grant will fund two semester

internships at Anthology Film Archives, one each for first and second year students.

The focus of the internships will be works by Sharits that were created for theatrical, or single screen projection. John Passmore, in his second year of MIAP, has been selected for the fall internship, and will be undertaking collection assessment, cataloging, and prioritization of the film titles for preservation. Anthology Film Archives, an international center for the preservation, study and

Congratulations Class of '08!

by Alicia Kubes/ Administrative Coordinator, MIAP Program

MIAP would like to congratulate the members of the class of 2008 on successfully completing the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program, and their many accomplishments!

This May, the graduating students submitted final thesis projects that included:

- A guide to moving image file formats for digital archives.
- A look at the Filmmaker's Cooperative in NYC and current trends in 16mm distribution.

- An examination of the artist interview as a tool for preserving time-based media artworks.

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MIAP Receives \$788,000 Grant from IMLS

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John Passmore, MIAP '08

exhibition of film and video, has been a partner with MIAP since the program's inception in 2003. The Academy Internship Program, part of the Institutional Grants Program, supports student internships in professional film organizations, meeting Foundation goals of enhancing relationships between the public and the film industry and deepening the appreciation of film as an art form and a vocation.

Dispatch from the Hirshhorn

by Jeff Martin / MIAP 2005

At this writing, I'm about to wrap up the year-long postgraduate research fellowship I've been (serving? working on?) here at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC. It has been an illuminating experience in more ways than one.

I was a bit hesitant about accepting the fellowship, given the well-publicized troubles the Smithsonian has been going through of late. Happily, down here in the basement of the Hirshhorn I found a congenial and functional workplace. I work under the supervision of the Chief Conservator, who is also the head of Collection Management. Luckily, the various departments within Collection

Management, (Conservation, Registrar, Photography), work together closely and well, and also collaborate extensively with Exhibits and Curatorial.

And what has said work entailed, you ask? It's involved a very straightforward survey of the time-based art in the permanent collection, 40-odd works in all, primarily single-channel video but several film projections and multi-screen installations. I have also worked closely with conservators and registrars to develop new policies and procedures for time-based artworks-for acquisition, purchase, cataloging, and loans. What's been interesting is finding ways to adapt extant workflows and procedures to fit the needs of

time-based art. In other words, I'm not reinventing the wheel or creating condition report forms from scratch, but instead creating supplemental documentation.

I have also helped codify the work of the extant Committee on Time-Based Works, which consists of representatives from all the departments mentioned above, who meet to review proposed acquisitions and point out potential causes for concern, or possible unanticipated costs.

For example, Exhibits is on the lookout for things like equipment requiring frequent maintenance, or gallery requirements that aren't feasible in this building. I'm

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Disaster Planning and Recovery Workshop

by Yvonne Ng / MIAP 2008

This past February, MIAP students participated in an all-day workshop on Disaster Planning and Recovery led by Kara van Malssen (MIAP '06). Kara has been involved in drawing attention to the issue of disaster preparedness for moving image and sound collections since she was a student in the MIAP program, serving as the principle researcher on a project funded by NYU's Center for Catastrophe Preparedness and Response to examine the experiences of collecting institutions and individuals affected by Hurricane Katrina. Her master's thesis was entitled "Disaster Planning and Recovery: Post-Katrina Lessons for Mixed Media Collections."

The workshop aimed to make participants aware of the risks to cultural collections and to review the components of successful disaster response, salvage and recovery. Designed as a resource not only for students, but also for archivists, individuals and organizations working with materials of personal, cultural, or financial value, the workshop provided practical advice on writing and improving disaster plans, as well as on how to reduce risks and to mitigate the effects of disasters when they happen.

The day began with a comprehensive presentation on the basics of planning for both short- and long-term disasters. We learned



about methods for assessing risks, ways to minimize potential damage via proper storage, and what supplies and resources to have ready in advance of a disaster. We were also

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IMLS Awards \$788,00 to MIAP Program

by Alicia Kubes

The MIAP Program has received \$788,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as part of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program. This three-year grant aims to increase the number of trained moving image professionals in libraries by providing intensive work experience for MIAP students and graduates, and through extensive discussions with library professionals about the current state of professional positions for moving image specialists.

NYU is one of 31 institutions this year that received grants from this program, totaling \$20.3 million. This program, first announced by Laura Bush in 2002, is a result of a

federal initiative to strengthen the library profession.

The IMLS grant will provide funding for a series of semester and summer internships for MIAP students and several one-year, post-graduate fellowships. The American Museum of Natural History will host the first fellow while the New York Public Library will host the first group of interns.

Circulating and archival collections in libraries hold some of the most culturally significant audiovisual artifacts. Despite substantial developments in best practices for film, video, and audio preservation, moving image collections in libraries remain neglected. Those few libraries that do have preservation departments,

rarely employ moving image preservation specialists.

Through meetings and interviews with library and archive professionals, MIAP will address the various challenges faced by moving image preservation specialists today and identify the obstacles to creating new professional positions, and in the process, develop solutions to address these obstacles. The results will be shared with the preservation community and the public through MIAP's website and an associated blog.

Lost Metropolis Footage

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became rapidly clear that this print contained material found in no other copy of the film.

After the initial flop of the big-budget sci-fi epic in Germany, producers stripped the film of roughly a quarter of its running time, before sending it into wide distribution. Apparently, an uncut copy of the film was sent to Argentina for distribution, eventually making its way into the hands of a collector who left the film to the Museo del Cine. This print contains nearly all of the missing material, and one would expect a re-restoration of the film in its nearly complete glory.

There may be some controversy over how best to match the new footage with the current restoration, as the extant material consists of a 16mm negative with a considerable amount of mechanical damage, and will likely not match perfectly the quality of the most recent restoration. There has also been some debate over the practice of multiple restorations on the same work. While it is clear that the canonization of 'key' cinematic works has the downside of directing considerable resources away from lesser-known works, the upside is that high profile film



restoration projects can potentially give needed publicity to smaller archives.

It is hoped that this newly discovered Metropolis footage will raise awareness among government officials and the general public about the benefits of funding archives and the merits of scholarship and technical research, and the Museo de Cine will garner new attention and sources of revenue for preserving the cinematic history of Argentina.

Have Something to Share with Students, Faculty, and Alumni?

Contact Zack Lischer-Katz at zlk203@nyu.edu to be included in our next newsletter

Orphans of New York

by Dan Streible

The 6th Orphan Film Symposium successfully entered its NYU era, with more than 300 people from 18 nations assembling at the Cantor Film Center, March 26-29, 2008. "Orphans 6" (as the attendees affectionately call it) focused on the theme of 'the state.' As with past symposia, professionals from a variety of fields intermixed: archivists, scholars, preservationists, curators, artists, documentarians, students, museum directors, educators, producers, distributors, librarians, researchers, foundation officers, technologists, musicians, critics, consultants, collectors, and projectionists.

This truly eclectic group of minds and voices enjoyed a program of rediscovered films from across the world. From the NYU Libraries alone (thanks in large measure to the Double R Foundation), we were able to see newly preserved work that included newsreel footage shot during the Spanish Civil War by Catalan anti-fascist forces (introduced by the doyen of Spanish film historians and repatriated to the Filmoteca Española); *Nos maisons d'enfants* (France, 1949), a Yiddish-language film sponsored by the Jewish Labor Committee; and a sampling of video holdings from the Fales Library, part of a partnership with SAMMA Systems. We also got a sneak preview of the Tamiment Library's rediscovery, a missing reel from the storied labor film *The Passaic Textile Strike* (1926), which the Library of Congress is preserving.

Opening night was a special event, in which Orphans celebrated the work and life of



one of its own. The New Orleans-based filmmaker Helen Hill was working on rescuing her own Katrina-flooded films when she was killed in 2007. In the ensuing 14 months, NYU MIAP worked with Helen's family, Colorlab, BB Optics, Harvard Film Archive, the Center for Home Movies, Haghefilm, and the University of South Carolina to preserve and print all of Hill's surviving animated and experimental 16mm films, as well as several Super 8 home movies. It was very rewarding to see the dozens of individuals involved in this project, along with dozens of Helen's family and friends, and a large group of symposiasts, come together in New York City to watch an evening of films inspired, produced, or promoted by Hill. These included her first student film at Harvard, *Rain Dance*, which MIAP '07 students preserved with our film preservation instructor Bill Brand, and New Orleans home movies saved with grants from the Women's Film Preservation Fund (thanks to Dwight Swanson and Katie Trainor) and the Maxine Greene Foundation. And there was a wow finish: unbeknownst to everyone, Helen's parents

brought *The House of Sweet Magic*, a Super8 tabletop animation she made at age 11, which was thought to have been destroyed in the flood.

Space does not allow me to do justice to the many other films and presentations seen

at Orphans 6. Should I tell you about Bill Morrison's trailer that compiled footage from those films? The premier of two National Film Registry titles, the home movies *Think of Me First as a Person* (1960-75) and *Our Day* (1938)? Or the debut screenings of the restored *La Venganza de Pancho Villa* (1934) and Sam Fuller's very first work *V—E +1 May 9, 1945*?

Or shall we just cut to Orphans 7? The 7th Orphan Film Symposium is set for April 7 – 10, 2010. In an exciting development, the symposium will take place at the Library of Congress's new, state-of-the-art National Audio-Visual Conservation Center. NYU Cinema Studies remains the convener and planner, of course, but the LOC has generously offered free use of its deluxe theater and technical services. MIAP students and faculty are already at work for 2010. Track us at www.nyu.edu/orphanfilm.



Sam Fuller's WWII 16mm Footage

MIAP 2008 Accomplishments

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- Feasibility of initiating preservation programs within small arts organizations with audiovisual material (with a special focus on the The Flaherty/International Film Seminars).

- Preservation analysis and a grant proposal to preserve the 8mm experimental films of Mike and George Kuchar, in collaboration with Anthology Film Archives.

- An exploration of silent home movies as historical documents, focusing on how they are organized and synthesized by historians and researchers.

In addition, MIAP students have been involved in the following important projects this year:

- Two MIAP graduates have joined a collaborative \$8million project to preserve public television. Representing NYU and the Tisch School of the Arts, the graduates will be working with PBS, WNET, and WGBH on researching the sustainability of a digital repository for public television material.

- The students worked with MIAP Adjunct Bill Brand (of BB Optics) to preserve six films by Hollis Frampton. The National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF), awarded \$20,000 to MIAP to fund the preservation of these films from the series called HAPAX LEGOMENA. The Museum of Modern Art, the repository for Frampton's films, was also a partner in the project. The films will debut in November as part of MoMA's annual film preservation festival "To Save and Project."

- A class project led students Yvonne Ng, Lisa Fehsenfeld, and Jude Kiernan to the discovery and subsequent preservation of several 35 mm nitrate shorts documenting

civic life in New Jersey during the 1930s. Working with the film lab Colorlab and other members of the preservation community, the students saved an important historical record that would otherwise have been lost. The students presented their research and the films at the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) annual conference and at the Orphan Film Symposium.

- The MIAP class participated in the first-ever World Day for Audiovisual Heritage, established by UNESCO to raise international awareness of the challenges faced by archivists and others in saving the world's audiovisual heritage from being lost. The students collaborated with Bobst Library to curate a screening of Communist Party USA films, donated to the University's Tamiment Library / Wagner Labor Archives in 2006. This was the first public glimpse into this landmark collection.

- As part of an NFPF project at the Electronic Arts Intermix, MIAP student Miwa Yokoyama collaborated in the preservation of avant-garde artist Carolee Schneeman's early works. While Schneeman's film and video works are in distribution on video and DVD, much of the original film material has been unavailable. Miwa worked with the filmmaker, as well as multiple archives, distributors, and exhibition spaces to locate the original film elements needed for the preservation work.

- As a result of an assessment and preservation project at the Country Music Hall of Fame, Leah Churner discovered 30 unreleased songs by Johnny Bragg and his band the Prisonaires, an all-inmate doo-wop/rock-and-roll band formed

in the early 1950's at the Tennessee State Penitentiary. The CMHF plans to release these songs as a new CD project.

- Working at Anthology Film Archives, students Kathleen Maguire and Leah Churner furthered Anthology's preservation and exhibition efforts through their work on the Bob Parent Collection, a large uncataloged collection of unedited amateur films. Leah identified important historical footage that led to a presentation at Orphans 6 about archiving raw footage and possibly an upcoming AMIA panel on licensing home movie collections to documentary producers (in collaboration with Country Music Hall of Fame, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Anthology, and Chicago Film Archives). Kathleen also developed a database for Anthology's cornerstone Essential Cinema Collection.

- Miwa Yokoyama worked as Digital Archivist on the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive project, a digital repatriation effort. This project was a collaboration with 10 museums and libraries around the world, including the British Library, Bibliotheque Nationale, Victoria and Albert Museum, and Northwestern University. Miwa helped to catalog, track, and archive thousands of images (stills and QTVR) of the Dunhuang caves and cave art (scrolls, textiles, and paintings). These images are now accessible online through ARTstor's web site for research and scholarship and the catalogs and digital files will be repatriated to the Chinese government.

Disaster Workshop

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given instruction on the steps involved in putting together a response team, developing a triage system for salvage, and common stabilization and drying techniques. As a case study, Kara shared some of the first-hand lessons learned from her work with institutions and individuals in New Orleans during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. After the presentation, we had the opportunity to discuss aspects of planning and recovery as a group.

In the afternoon, we participated in a complex disaster scenario, which involved

buckets of water-logged materials and MIAP faculty and staff brilliantly cast in the roles of harried curators, upset collectors, and sensationalizing reporters from the press. We, the students, were charged with organizing ourselves into a response team to recover an assortment of damaged videotapes, 16mm films, books, photographs, audiocassettes and other objects using a variety of available supplies and tools. As we hung, blotted, and spread our wet materials out on covered tables, the faculty/staff actors introduced complications into

the scenario, giving us a better understanding of the stressful circumstances under which recovery efforts often take place.

The day ended with a short debriefing that allowed us to reflect on the successes and failures of our staged attempt at disaster response and recovery. For our further edification, we were provided with a package of documents, guidelines, and a disaster planning bibliography to take home. In all, the day was extremely informative and educational (and fun!), covering an important but often overlooked area in our profession.



MIAP students recover water-soaked materials during the Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Workshop in February.

Hirshhorn Dispatch

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looking out to be sure that we're going to get acceptable archival master material...etc., etc. I think what's been most interesting is the position the Chief Conservator now takes on the conservation of time-based art (and which she has been

advocating at various professional meetings over the course of the last year): that there is already a wealth of expertise out there regarding preservation of moving-image works, and that museums shouldn't be trying to teach these practices to

conservators, but instead recruiting moving image archivists who have this expertise already, and teaching them to work within the standards and ethics of fine-art conservation.

Makes sense to me.

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