

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘LIGHTS, CAMERA, ASTORIA!’ EXHIBITION EXPLORES THE HISTORY AND RENAISSANCE OF THE ASTORIA STUDIO

October 26, 2013–February 9, 2014

Astoria, New York, October 25, 2013—Museum of the Moving Image pays tribute to the legacy of filmmaking in Astoria with an exhibition that traces the history of the Astoria studio, a local landmark with deep roots in the culture of New York City. ***Lights, Camera, Astoria!***, on view from October 26, 2013, through February 9, 2014, explores each phase of the site from its start as Paramount Pictures’s East Coast production facility in the 1920s, a center for independent filmmaking in the 1930s, the U.S. Army Pictorial Center from World War II into the Cold War, the site’s rebirth in the late 1970s, to the present day Kaufman Astoria Studios, a thriving motion picture and television studio, and a vibrant cultural hub that includes Museum of the Moving Image, Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, and restaurants and cafes.

Lights, Camera, Astoria!, on view in the Amphitheater Gallery, features more than 100 objects from the Museum’s collection, including film stills, behind-the-scenes photographs, and marketing and design materials to explore the rich legacy and renaissance of the studio campus. With material from silent-era films featuring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson as well as other stars, early talking films featuring the Marx Brothers, World War II training and propaganda films, such modern classics as Martin Scorsese’s *The Age of Innocence* (1993), and television shows like *Sesame Street* (1969–), *The Cosby Show* (1984–1992), *Nurse Jackie* (2009–), and *Orange Is the New Black* (2013–), the exhibition reveals the significant role that Kaufman Astoria Studios continues to play in energizing its surrounding community and making moving-image history.

The exhibition also includes a selection of clips from films and television shows from every era of the studio’s operation, ranging from D.W. Griffiths’s *Sally of the Sawdust* (1925) to *Sesame Street* and *Nurse Jackie*, to be projected in the Video Screening Amphitheater.

Lights, Camera, Astoria! was organized by Barbara Miller, the Museum’s Curator of the Collection and Exhibitions, and Richard Koszarski, author of *Hollywood on the Hudson*, and designed by Wendell Walker, the Museum’s Deputy Director for Exhibitions, Operations, and Design. The exhibition is presented with generous support from Kaufman Astoria Studios.

“Along with the Museum's new George S. Kaufman courtyard, the exhibition signals a unique synergy between a movie studio and a museum, and one that will benefit New York City for generations to come,” said Carl Goodman, Executive Director of Museum of the Moving Image. “I am especially grateful to the foresight of the City of New York, Kaufman Astoria Studios, and the many, many individuals who made it possible for the Museum to tell this exciting story.”

“Lights, Camera, Astoria!” is the most comprehensive telling of the history of the studio and one which the Museum is uniquely positioned to present,” said Barbara Miller. “Our history is deeply entwined with that of the studio. During the Army years, the Museum building—then known as Building #13—was used for processing film and repairing cameras. The Museum’s collection of artifacts includes material related to productions from the earliest years of the studio through the present day.”

“Kaufman Astoria Studios brought film and television production back to its birthplace, New York. Under George Kaufman's visionary leadership, the Kaufman Astoria campus has developed into a world-class production facility and cultural district that reinvigorated the neighborhood's economic and residential growth,” said Hal Rosenbluth, President of Kaufman Astoria Studios. “There is a great synergy between the Museum and Kaufman Astoria and we're proud of this exhibition that celebrates the history and present day achievements of the studio, especially as we plan for the opening of our new outdoor lot.”

Among the photographs in the exhibition are those depicting major stars and filmmakers who made movies in Astoria. In addition to Valentino and Swanson, they include Louise Brooks (*American Venus*, 1926) and W.C. Fields and D.W. Griffiths (*Sally of the Sawdust*), in the 1920s; George Burns and Gracie Allen (*Oh! My Operation*, 1931), Louis Armstrong (*Rhapsody in Black and Blue*, 1932), Paul Robeson (*The Emperor Jones*, 1933), and Buster Keaton (*Blue Blazes*, 1934), in the 1930s; Sidney Lumet (*The Wiz*, 1978), Marlo Thomas and Charles Grodin (*Thieves*, 1977) in the 1970s, and more recently, members of the cast of *Sesame Street* and *Orange Is the New Black*. The exhibition also includes production material from such films as *The Wiz*, *Angels in America* (2003), and *The Age of Innocence*.

Lights, Camera, Astoria! is also the most comprehensive examination to date of the Army Pictorial Center years (1942–1970) when the site turned into the busiest motion picture studio in the world, producing training and propaganda films for the U.S. military. By the end of World War II, 2,100 employees (most of them civilians) were producing over 1,000 short films a year. Professional directors and screenwriters worked side-by-side with veterans of the Army Signal Corps, adding a Hollywood touch to “nuts and bolts” documentaries on everything from equipment maintenance to the digging of latrines. In turn, documentary techniques learned in Astoria brought a new

style of realism to such post-war American classics as *The Naked City* (1948) and *On the Waterfront* (1954).

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MUSEUM INFORMATION

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 expanded and renovated 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.

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.

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

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 by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

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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