

# MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## FASHION IN FILM FESTIVAL: 'IF LOOKS COULD KILL,' EXPLORES THE LINKS BETWEEN CINEMA, FASHION, AND CRIME

Screenings include Martin Scorsese's *Casino*, silent German expressionist *Asphalt* with live music, and Mother's Day *Mildred Pierce* marathon, and personal appearances by film scholar Tom Gunning and designers from *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire*

May 4–13, 2012 at Museum of the Moving Image

**Press Screening: Frank Borzage's *Desire* on Tuesday, April 24, 2:30 p.m.**

RSVP to Tomoko Kawamoto / [tkawamoto@movingimage.us](mailto:tkawamoto@movingimage.us)

From stolen pearls to a glove left at the scene of the crime, from an excess of red lipstick to the postmodern gangster silhouette, fashion and style are commonly utilized in film to glamorize and glorify criminal behavior. These images and more will be the focus of the third New York edition of the London-based Fashion in Film Festival to take place at Museum of the Moving Image from May 4 through 13, 2012. Titled ***If Looks Could Kill***, the Festival explores the compelling links between cinema, television, fashion, crime, and violence.

Tackling themes such as disguise, desire, and the corruption of beauty, the festival features a string of underworld characters and their prosecutors whose highly effective costume, styling, and sartorial gestures helped define cinematic genres from detective to thriller, gangster, film noir, and horror.

*If Looks Could Kill* includes screenings of ten feature films, a talk by the noted film scholar Tom Gunning about the use of invisibility and transformation by criminals in early silent films, and a panel discussion on May 12 featuring costume designers Juliet Polcsa from the HBO series *The Sopranos*, John Dunn and Lisa Padovani from the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*, and Shelley Fox, Professor of Fashion at Parsons The New School for Design. In his illustrated presentation on May 5, Gunning will talk about the visual identity of early film criminals including Louis Feuillades's Irma Vep with her black bodysuit and the dapper yet sadistic Fantomas, and will also introduce a rare screening of the 1929 Belgian surrealist short *The Pearl*.

Highlights of the feature films include an imported 35mm print of *Asphalt*, a 1929 German “Strassenfilm,” a pre-film noir tale about a lovely diamond thief, presented with live music by Makia Matsumara; an archival print of Frank Borzage’s *Desire* (1936), starring Marlene Dietrich and Gary Cooper; screenings of two versions of *Mildred Pierce*, the 1945 film directed by Michael Curtiz, starring Joan Crawford, and Todd Haynes’s recent HBO miniseries, with Kate Winslet in the title role; and John M. Stahl’s luxurious Technicolor melodrama *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945). Also screening are Martin Scorsese’s *Casino*, Elio Petri’s *The Tenth Victim*, Paul Schrader’s *American Gigolo*, Abel Ferrara’s *Ms. 45*, and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Marnie*.

The New York edition of Fashion in Film Festival: *If Looks Could Kill* is programmed by Marketa Uhlirova, Festival Director and Research Fellow in fashion history and theory at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design; David Schwartz, Chief Curator of Museum of the Moving Image; and Christel Tsilibaris, Associate Curator of *If Looks Could Kill* program.

“Cinema’s images of crime are both seductive and haunting,” said Marketa Uhlirova. “It seems cinema has a tendency to portray criminality and evil as lethally stylish. Fashion lends crime an air of chic decadence and can perform as an immoral equivalent to crime’s extreme measures.”

“As always, the Fashion in Film Festival takes a wide-ranging, expansive view of film history, going from the silent era through classic Hollywood and international cinema to the present,” said David Schwartz, the Museum’s Chief Curator. “It provides an opportunity for audiences to see both rediscovered gems and celebrated works on the big screen. A particularly special treat is the chance to see Todd Haynes’s beautiful production of *Mildred Pierce* on the big screen, on Mother’s Day.”

Fashion in Film ([fashioninfilm.com](http://fashioninfilm.com)) was founded in 2005 and stages a biennial festival and year-round conference and exhibition programs exploring how the moving image represents and interprets fashion as a concept, an industry, and a cultural form. Fashion in Film is based at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts, London.



Museum of the Moving Image ([movingimage.us](http://movingimage.us)) advances the understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. In January 2011, the Museum reopened after a major expansion and renovation that nearly doubled its size. Accessible, innovative, and forward-looking, the

Museum presents exhibitions, education programs, significant moving-image works, and interpretive programs, and maintains a collection of moving-image related artifacts.

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**SCHEDULE FOR 'FASHION IN FILM: IF LOOKS COULD KILL'**  
**MAY 4–13, 2012**

Unless otherwise noted, films are free with Museum admission and take place at Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Avenue, Astoria, NY 11106.

***Casino***

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Martin Scorsese. 1995, 178 mins. With Robert De Niro, Sharon Stone, Joe Pesci. Costumes by Rita Ryack. Gangster Sam "Ace" Rothstein, Robert De Niro is seen in more than 60 different outfits during Scorsese's breathtaking epic about corruption in Sin City. The film's lavish spectacle—its flashing marquee lights, dizzying quick cuts, pulsing music soundtrack, and infinite rainbow of flamboyant costumes—reflect the characters' emotions.

***The Color of Nothingness, a presentation by Tom Gunning, and The Pearl***  
**With live piano accompaniment by Makia Matsumara**

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2:00 P.M.

The modern detective genre deals with the problem of identification in a society where identity is no longer emblazoned in outward appearances. The arrest of a criminal depends not only upon capture, but also, and even more fundamentally, on identification. Acclaimed film scholar Tom Gunning will trace early film criminals' visual identity, focusing on their acts of disappearance and transformation that owe much to the realms of magic and early trick film. Under special scrutiny will be the black costume, the body suit, and masks worn by such nemeses of the law as Fantômas and Irma Vep of the Vampire gang in popular French crime serials of the 1910s. The program includes a special screening of the short film ***The Pearl (Le Perle)*** (Dir. Henri d'Ursel, 1929, Belgium. Archival 35mm print from the Royal Belgium Film Archive). *The Pearl* is a Belgian Surrealist dazzler, with a pearl necklace at the center of the action. The movie stars a young group of female criminals who are secret residents in a hotel where they steal from rich guests; the film plays with disguises and multiple identities.

***Asphalt***

**With live piano accompaniment by Makia Matsumara**

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

Dir. Joe May. 1929, 94 mins. With Betty Amann, Gustav Frölich. Costumes by Rene Hubert. Imported 35mm print, with live projection of intertitles. A pretalkie release, *Asphalt* is a stunning gem of expressionist cinema, and a prime example of German "Strassenfilm." Its shadowy scenes, the overt eroticism of the fatal woman and diamond thief Else, and the plot itself, in which an orderly traffic cop is caught in a web of crime and uncontrollable passion, all prefigure film noir. Yet it is in the way the story unfolds where director May shines, able to shift effortlessly from social realism to romantic melodrama and comedy.

### ***Desire***

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Frank Borzage. 1936, 89 mins. With Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper. Costumes by Travis Banton. Dietrich's foxy siren Madeleine makes for a supremely aristocratic crook in this Hollywood story set in France and Spain. Dressed for success in magnificent gowns by Travis Banton, Paramount's star costume designer of the 1920s and 1930s, Madeleine uses her "European" elegance and glamour to fool and seduce everyone, only to get closer to that rare string of pearls. But who can hold that against the girl?

### ***The Tenth Victim***

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 4:30 P.M.

Dir. Elio Petri. 1965, 92 mins. With Ursula Andres, Marcello Mastroianni. Costumes by Giulio Coltellacici. In a distant 21st century where the world lusts for violence, an international organization called "The Big Hunt" has legalized murder. Things get heated when the game's top players become Victim and Hunter. Marcello Mastroianni stars as a blond-haired, sun-glassed impassive Victim and Ursula Andres as his beautiful Amazonian Hunter in what can only be described as an über-cool Italian 1960s pop art sci-fi comedy extravaganza, complete with an exciting electronic musical score and comic book architecture.

### ***American Gigolo***

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

Dir. Paul Schrader. 1980, 117 mins. A tale of crime and love inspired stylistically by Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket*, Paul Schrader's evocative character study of an alienated California gigolo who finds himself drawn into a murder investigation, made movie stars of actor Richard Gere and fashion designer Giorgio Armani.

### ***Ms. 45***

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. Abel Ferrara. 1981, 80 mins. With Zoë Lund. In Abel Ferrara's violent retribution drama, a shy, dowdy seamstress is brutally raped twice in the same day and transformed into a killer, shooting men with her .45 pistol. The transformation of the heroine is marked by the change of her style and dress, to a sleek catlike vamp who wears bright red lipstick and killer boots.

### ***Marnie***

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2:00 P.M.

Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. 1964, 130 mins. With Tippi Hedren, Sean Connery. Costumes by Edith Head. In Hitchcock's sexually charged psychodrama, one of his most disturbing and accomplished films, Tippi Hedren is a psychologically troubled thief with an aversion to the color red, and to marriage. The film is exemplary of Hitchcock's masterful ability to tell a story visually, not to mention his obsessive attention to detail.

### **PANEL DISCUSS ION: *Crime, Fashion, and Television***

**With Juliet Polcsa, John Dunn, Lisa Padovani, and Shelley Fox**

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 5:00 P.M.

Television series like *The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, and *Boardwalk Empire* create fully realized

criminal underworlds in which issues of class, power, and character are expressed through clothing, from the anti-fashion of *The Sopranos*, which reveals the misshapen underbelly of the American mafia, to the elegant retro-style of *Boardwalk Empire*, to the complex, contemporary urban landscape of *The Wire*. This panel discussion will explore the specifics of costume design and styling for crime television, featuring costume designers from some of the best contemporary crime dramas. Confirmed panelists include costume designers Juliet Polcsa from the HBO series *The Sopranos*, John Dunn and Lisa Padovani from the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*, and Shelley Fox, Professor of Fashion at Parsons The New School for Design.

### ***Leave Her to Heaven***

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 7:00 P.M.

Dir. John M. Stahl. 1945, 105 mins. With Gene Tierney. Costumes by Kay Nelson. Throughout this noirish melodrama, Gene Tierney's character Ellen Berent Harland presents a mask of impenetrable beauty. Immaculately groomed and coordinated, her style speaks of wealth and exclusivity that is echoed in the cinematography's luxurious Technicolor, which emphasizes vistas of the American landscape. However, beneath this apparently idyllic façade is a dark, psychological story of obsession and violence—Ellen's repressed emotions are expressed through the dramatic *mise-en-scène* and costume.

*Also screening as part of the series See It Big!*

### ***Mildred Pierce***

SUNDAY, MAY 13, 1:00 P.M.

Dir. Michael Curtiz. 1945, 111 mins. With Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott. Costumes by Milo Anderson. Crawford won an Oscar for her portrayal of a housewife-turned-waitress (swapping an apron for a mink coat) who finds business success while trying to keep control over her vindictive daughter.

### ***Mildred Pierce***

SUNDAY, MAY 13, 4:00 P.M.

Dir. Todd Haynes. 2011, 330 mins. Screened with one intermission. With Kate Winslet, Evan Rachel Wood. Costumes by Ann Roth. Haynes's rich, psychologically complex HBO miniseries is an undeniably sumptuous cinematic experience that plays best on the big screen. Winslet won an Emmy for her wrenching work as the ultimate sacrificing mother, struggling to find a job after a divorce and coping with a monstrously selfish daughter. A detailed portrait of the depression and a domestic epic, this version is more faithful to James M. Cain's novel than Curtiz's 1945 adaptation.

*Also screening as part of the series See It Big!*

## **MUSEUM INFORMATION**

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Closed Monday.

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled. Unless otherwise noted, screenings are included with Museum admission.

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

\$6.00 for children ages 3-18. 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](http://movingimage.us)

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and 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](http://movingimage.us).

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