Animation for “Toccata and Fugue in D Minor” from Fantasia, 1940, Walt Disney Animation Studios
Music by Johann Sebastian Bach, 9 min. Courtesy Walt Disney Pictures
Odar Fischinger was hired to work with Cy Young on animating this segment of Fantasia. When Disney’s studio decided to make the animation more figurative, Fischinger quit and ultimately did not receive credit for his work.

6 pm
John Whitney Sr., Arabesque, 1975
Music by Manoochehr Sadeghi, 7 min. Courtesy the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Whitney created Arabesque using a digital computer vector display, borrowing motifs from Islamic architecture to explore the notion of harmonic progression. The film is set to music performed by Persian composer Sadeghi on the santur.

Evelyn Lambart and Norman McLaren, Mosaic, 1965
Music by Norman McLaren, 5 min. Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada
This short experimental animation follows a single tiny square as it divides and multiplies, eventually forming a colorful, hypnotic mosaic set to the animators’ precise and deliberate musical orchestration.

Norman McLaren, Synchrony, 1971
8 min. Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada
To make this film, McLaren employed novel optical techniques to compose the piano rhythms of the soundtrack, which he then moved, in multicolor, onto the picture area of the screen so that, in effect, viewers see what they hear.

Ishu Patel, Perspectrum, 1975
Music by Michio Miyagi, 7 min. Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada
Simple, flat geometric shapes constantly form and re-form to the sound of the koto, a thirteen-stringed Japanese instrument. For this film, Patel adapted a technique of multiple passes and variable exposures pioneered by Norman McLaren.

Izabella Pruska-Oldenhof, fugitive l(i)ght, 2005
Music by Colin Clark, 9 min. Courtesy Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Center
For this film, various computer programs were used to rework found footage made by Thomas Edison and the Lumière brothers to create an abstract impression of Loïe Fuller’s Serpentine Dance, following poetic interpretations by artists who witnessed the dance in person, including texts by Stéphane Mallarmé, lithographs of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and a Futurist manifesto on dance by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.

Jodie Mack, A Joy, 2005
Music by Four Tet, 3 min. Courtesy the artist
This piece, produced as a music video in collaboration with Four Tet for the album Everything Ecstatic, is a direct animation using stained glass, contact paper, ink, and acetate.

5 min. Courtesy the artist
In this film, cut-paper collage (a medium in which Hilla Rebay was known to produce work) is animated to lyrics from Finian’s Rainbow, a 1947 Broadway musical.

Jodie Mack, Let Your Light Shine, 2013
3 min. Courtesy the artist
Handmade optical polyrhythms and a thousand rainbows explore the grating equation. This film requires the use of prismatic glasses (provided).

Visionaries: Creating a Modern Guggenheim

Film Program: The Future That Is upon Us
Tuesdays, August 1–22, 3 and 6 pm
New Media Theater
Sackler Center for Arts Education

“Most fortunately for the world of art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation has chosen not to be a mausoleum of paintings, embalmed in the sanctity of the past, but to give aid and shelter to the well-springs of art which is becoming great in the future that is upon us.”
—Charles Dockum, in a letter to Hilla Rebay, 1946

Visionaries: Creating a Modern Guggenheim explores the pioneering collections of six individuals—Solomon R. Guggenheim, Hilla Rebay, Peggy Guggenheim, Justin K. Thannhauser, Katherine Dreier, and Karl Neerendorf—who brought to light some of the most significant artists of their day. These figures, along with the artists they championed, were able to conceive of what the future may hold through imagination and forward-thinking tendencies. This selection of diverse filmic material illuminates on screen how many of the artistic techniques and ideas promoted by the collectors and employed by the artists continue to be relevant to contemporary moving image production.

Organized by Alan Seise.
**Tuesday, August 1**

**Alt-Progress: Embodied Anxiety**

A well-known example of German Expressionism—with Bauhaus and Futurist influences—Metropolis is a science fiction film set in 2026. One famous element of the film is a robot bearing a female form that comes to embody impending class conflict in an unequal society. The director employed animator Oskar Fischinger to create special effects for a different film prior to his relocation from Germany to Hollywood, a move that allowed Karl Nerenberg to smuggle a portion of his gallery’s holdings away from the Nazis in Fischinger’s personal effects. In The Skin I Live In, the body again stands in as an object of anxiety and desire, but also as a tool for scientific advancement.

**3 pm**

**Metropolis, 1927**

Directed by Fritz Lang

148 min., silent with English intertitles

Courtesy Kino Lorber

Metropolis takes place in a dystopian society where the populace is divided between workers who must live in the dark underground and the rich who enjoy a futuristic city of splendor. The tense balance between these two societies is realized through images that are among the most famous of the twentieth century. Lavish and spectacular, with elaborate sets and special effects, Metropolis stands today as the crowning achievement of German silent cinema.

**6 pm**

**La Science des rêves (The Science of Sleep), 2006**

Directed by Michel Gondry

105 min., English, French, and Spanish with English subtitles

Courtesy Swank Motion Pictures

This film takes a trip through the mind of an introverted but wildly creative man whose attempts to balance his colorful dreams with his stark reality are complicated by the arrival of a beautiful woman into his life. Gondry has stated, “when I discovered Surrealism, when I was young, I thought it was the most important creative movement of the twentieth century.”

**Tuesday, August 8**

**Surreal Screenings: Oneiric Reflections against Reality**

Following her travels to Paris in the 1930s, Peggy Guggenheim became an enthusiastic supporter of the Surrealists, a group that looked to the unconscious mind, particularly dreams, as a means to liberate desire and trigger individual and political revolution. Witch’s Cradle and Dreams That Money Can Buy both explore dream-like states on film. Contemporary French filmmaker Michel Gondry continues the legacy of the Surrealists by incorporating imagery directly from his own dreams into fantastical sequences in his productions.

**3 pm**

**Maya Deren, Witch’s Cradle, 1945**

12 min., silent

Courtesy Anthology Film Archives, New York

Filmed in Peggy Guggenheim’s Art of This Century museum/gallery, this unfinished film attempts to draw a link between the Surrealists and medieval magicians.

Hans Richter, 

**Dreams That Money Can Buy, 1947**

80 min.

Joe is an ordinary man who signs a complicated lease on a room and sets up a business selling tailor-made dreams to a variety of frustrated and neurotic clients. This film features sequences directed by Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Fernand Léger, and Man Ray, and its production was partially funded by Peggy Guggenheim.

**Tuesday, August 15**

**Synthetic Moving Images: Assembling a Set for a Fairy Tale**

Joseph Cornell, whose famous assemblage boxes were among the first works by an American artist shown by Peggy Guggenheim at Art of This Century, was also an experimental filmmaker. His films Rose Hobart, The Children’s Party, Cotillion, and The Midnight Party take a similar approach to his boxes in that preexisting materials from multiple sources are assembled into collages of meticulous composition. A number of artists, including Peter Tscherskassy, continue to experiment with found material in moving image collages. Wes Anderson, who in an interview recalled viewing Cornell’s boxes at the Menil Collection in Houston, shares an illusionistic sensibility with the artist, often working in miniatures and combining various elements within the frame to set a cohesive stage for his nostalgic stories.

**3 pm**

**Joseph Cornell, Rose Hobart, 1936**

19 min., silent

Courtesy Anthology Film Archives, New York

This film consists almost entirely of footage taken from East of Borneo, a 1931 jungle B-film starring the actress Rose Hobart. Cornell condensed the 77-minute feature into a 19-minute short, removing virtually every shot that didn’t feature Hobart and projecting the results through a deep-blue filter to music from Nostro Amara’s 1957 album Holiday in Brazil.

Joseph Cornell and Lawrence Jordan, 


11 min., silent

Courtesy Lawrence Jordan

Cornell combines vaudeville jugglers, animal acts, circus performers, children eating and dancing, science demonstrations, mythical excerpts, and crucial freeze-frames of faces in this compilation of three films that was completed by Jordan in 1968, closely following Cornell’s instructions.

Peter Tscherskassy,

**The Exquisite Corpus, 2015**

19 min.

Courtesy Sixpack Film

This collage film combines elements of commercials, thrillers, pornography, and amateur film that focus on the human body. The title refers to the Surrealist game cadavre exquis.

**6 pm**

**The Grand Budapest Hotel, 2014**

Directed by Wes Anderson

99 min.

Courtesy Criterion Pictures

Based loosely on the writings of Stefan Zweig, this film recounts the adventures of Gustave H., a legendary concierge at a famous European hotel in the fictional Republic of Zubrowka between the first and second World Wars, and ZoroMOSTAFA, the lobby boy who becomes his most trusted friend. The story involves the theft and recovery of a priceless Renaissance painting and the battle for an enormous family fortune—all against the backdrop of a suddenly and dramatically changing continent.

**Tuesday, August 22**

**Film Concerts: Exploring Abstraction in Motion**

At the Museum of Non-Objective Painting, the precursor to the Guggenheim Museum, its first director and curator Hilla Rebay hosted film concerts as a means of exploring how abstraction might be used in time-based mediums. These public programs, which drew from the collection, typically featured nonobjective filmmakers with whom she had close relationships: Oskar Fischinger, Norman McLaren, and Hans Richter, among others. The film concert re-created here contains works by filmmakers who were included in Rebay’s concerts alongside media from the 1960s to the present by artists experimenting with new methods of abstract filmmaking.

**3 pm**

**Walter Ruttmann, Lichtspiel: Opus 1 (Lightplay: Opus 1), 1923**

Music by Max Butting, 12 min.

Lichtspiel: Opus 1 was the first abstract film to be screened publicly. Ruttmann commissioned Butting to compose a string quartet score for the film, to which Ruttmann added specific notations to ensure the music and visuals were perfectly synchronized. His films were highly influential on the work of Oskar Fischinger.

Hans Richter, Rhythmus 23 (Rhythm 23), 1925

4 min., silent

Richter played an influential role in Rebay’s interest in nonobjective film as he offered his firsthand knowledge as an experimental filmmaker, and worked with her in 1939 to establish a film archive for the Guggenheim Foundation. This film is an expansion of Rhythmus 23 (Rhythm 23), ca. 1923 to which he added additional angles, overlays, and lines.

**Viking Eggeling, Symphonie-Diagonale (Diagonal Symphony)**

8 min., silent

Rebay’s interest in film was first sparked in the 1920s when she was exposed to nonobjective film in Berlin, where she would see Eggeling’s work. This is the only film by Eggeling to survive today.

Oskar Fischinger, 

**An Optical Poem**, 1938

Music by Franz Liszt, 7 min.

Courtesy Virginia Bowers

Rebay was first exposed to Fischinger’s work in 1938 after he emigrated from Germany to the United States, and later turned to him as her advisor when making plans for a planetarium-like film center in the basement of the Guggenheim. Produced for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, this animation set to Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 was made by suspending geometric cutouts from extra-fine fishing line and moving them one millimeter at a time for each frame exposure.

Norman McLaren, Scherzo, 1939

2 min.

Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada

McLaren came to the United States around the same time as Oskar Fischinger and produced this film and three others after visiting the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. He showed all four to Rebay, who was enthusiastic about his work and began making arrangements to screen his films.

Mary Ellen Bute and Norman McLaren, Spook Sport, 1940

Music by Camille Saint-Saëns, 8 min.

Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada

As the introduction to this film reads, “the story suggested here is that at the bewitching hour of midnight, spirits and ghosts arise from their graves to cavort and make merry.”