



“JUST IMAGINE” (1930) Screening Salutes America’s First Science-Fiction Musical Blockbuster!

**Art Directors Guild Film Society and
The American Cinematheque Present Screening and Special Panel
Sunday, August 19, 5:30 p.m. Aero Theatre in Santa Monica**

LOS ANGELES, August 1, 2012 —The Art Directors Guild (ADG) Film Society and American Cinematheque will screen *Just Imagine* (1930), arguably Hollywood’s very first major science-fiction film, on Sunday, August 19, at the Aero Theatre in Santa Monica. Though *Just Imagine* was reportedly inspired by the grim *Metropolis* (1927), this rarely seen film is a fascinating musical comedy set in the then unimaginably distant future of 1980 – a future of personal airships and rockets to Mars – starring Maureen O’Sullivan, El Brendel, John Garrick, and the exotic “Joyzelle.” The program, sponsored by *The Hollywood Reporter*, will explore the film’s place at the very beginning of futurism in American movies, as well as honor the film’s legendary Oscar®-winning Production Designer Stephen Goosson for his major design contributions to this highly influential film.

Just Imagine, a very expensive film, was considered only a modest success in its time and almost forgotten. Today it has become something of a “lost” film and nearly impossible to see on the big screen. “While the beautiful art deco sets, enormous miniatures, and remarkable projection effects still amaze,” says Production Designer John Muto, Founder of the ADG Film Series, “the music, comedy, and love story are derived from vaudeville and must have seemed very dated as cinematic musicals exploded in the 1930s. I suspect that may be why the film faded from view. Our audience will discover a very suprising film!”

“Today, most films set in the future portray a bleak, dystopian, even apocalyptic world. *Just Imagine*’s vision of the future is a beautiful, playful utopia. Prohibition may be a nuisance in their 1980 – but a hero can still woo his girl by leading an expedition to Mars – where he discovers a planet ruled by a showgirl in a chrome sarong!”

“The art direction in *Just Imagine* is unforgettable by any standard,” said Muto. The centerpiece of the film, an enormous miniature of a future New York City, filled an airship hanger in Arcadia, required more than 200 craftsmen working over five months to build, and cost \$250,000 in 1930 dollars! Besides the many classy art deco settings, the film includes a remarkable laboratory set – the first to feature the Kenneth Strickfaden electrical equipment later made famous in the *Frankenstein* films. The fantastic rocketship created for the film went on to become *Flash Gordon*’s trademark spaceship in the most successful serial of all time. “Given that *Just Imagine* had such a unique and unconventional look for its day, it was a remarkable tribute to Mr. Goosson when he was recognized with a nomination for the Best Art Direction Oscar of 1930.”

After the feature, a series of clips illustrating the influence of *Just Imagine* on such films as *The Fifth Element* (1997), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Minority Report* (2002), *Things To Come* (1936), *Logan’s Run* (1976), *Brazil* (1985), *Soylent Green* (1973), and *Sleeper* (1973) will be run.

A Q&A will follow, moderated by Muto, which will feature Nicholas Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy at USC's Annenberg School. Cull's books include *Projecting Empire: Imperialism and the Popular Cinema* and the forthcoming *Projecting Tomorrow: Science Fiction and the Popular Cinema*.

Just Imagine's Production Designer, Stephen Goosson (1889 – 1973), was Columbia Pictures' supervising art director for 25 years. A gifted artist, he is responsible for the look of some of the most memorable films in Hollywood history. Goosson worked for a number of pioneer film companies including Lewis J. Selznick, Mary Pickford Productions, Frank Lloyd, DeMille Pictures, and Fox, before being hired by Columbia. Nominated for five Academy Awards®, Goosson won for his magnificent Shangri-La set for Frank Capra's *Lost Horizon* (1937). A very short selection of his other memorable film designs might include *The Lady From Shanghai* (1947), *Gilda* (1946), *The Little Foxes* (1941), *Meet John Doe* (1941), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), and *It Happened One Night* (1934).

“As 2012 heralds the Guild's 75th anniversary year, we have chosen this visually amazing film as our way of honoring the memory of some of our industry's finest artisans and performers such as Stephen Goosson,” said Tom Walsh, President of the ADG. “The atmosphere at our screenings is very casual and the audience of film enthusiasts, students, and colleagues from the film industry bring their love of film to the Q&A, which creates an atmosphere for some lively and entertaining discussions.”

Representing the ADG are Guild President Walsh and Film Society Founder Muto. Working with them are the American Cinematheque's Gwen Deglise and Grant Moninger. General admission: \$11. American Cinematheque members: \$7. Students/Seniors with valid ID: \$9. All screenings start at 5:30 p.m. 24-hour information is available at 323-466-FILM (3456). For images: [Just Imagine Photos](#). For ticket information: [American Cinematheque/Just Imagine Tickets](#)

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Major media are invited to cover.

About the Art Directors Guild:

The Art Directors Guild (IATSE Local 800) represents nearly 2,000 members who work throughout the United States, Canada and the rest of the world in film, television and theater as Production Designers, Art Directors, and Assistant Art Directors; Scenic, Title and Graphic Artists; Illustrators and Matte Artists; and Set Designers and Model Makers. Established in 1937, ADG's ongoing activities include a Film Society; an annual Awards Banquet, a creative/technology community (5D: The Future of Immersive Design) and Membership Directory; a bimonthly professional magazine (Perspective); and extensive technology-training programs, creative workshops and craft and art exhibitions. The Guild's Online Directory/Website Resource: [Art Directors Guild](#); Follow ADG on Twitter: [@ADG800](#); For Facebook: [Facebook](#).

About American Cinematheque:

Established in 1981, the American Cinematheque is a 501(c)(3) non-profit viewer-supported film exhibition and cultural organization dedicated to the celebration of the Moving Picture in all of its forms. At the Egyptian Theatre, the Cinematheque presents daily film and video programming which ranges from the classics of American and international cinema to new independent films and digital work. Exhibition of rare works, special and rare prints, etc., combined with fascinating post-screening discussions with the filmmakers who created the work, are a Cinematheque tradition that keep audiences coming back for once-in-a-lifetime cinema experiences. The American Cinematheque renovated and reopened (on Dec. 4, 1998) the historic 1922 Hollywood Egyptian Theatre. This includes a state-of-the-art 616-seat theatre housed within Sid Grauman's first grand movie palace on Hollywood Boulevard. The exotic courtyard is fully restored to its 1922 grandeur. The Egyptian was the home of the very first Hollywood movie premiere in 1922. In January 2005, the American Cinematheque expanded its programming to the 1940 Aero Theatre

on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica. For more information about American Cinematheque, visit the website: [American Cinematheque](#). Follow the American Cinematheque on Twitter ([@sidgrauman](#)) and Facebook ([Egyptian Theatre](#), [Aero Theatre](#)).

PRESS CONTACTS FOR ADG:

Weissman/Markovitz Communications
Briana Wilson, Paige Guritzky
Tel: 818-760-8995, Fax: 818-760-4847
Briana@publicity4all.com Paige@publicity4all.com

FOR AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE:

Margot Gerber
323-461-2020 x 115
Publicity@americancinematheque.com