Cincinnati’s film legacy explored during Downtown Main Library exhibit

CINCINNATI — Mention Cincinnati and film in the same breath today, and most people recall movies filed in the city, such as *Rain Man*, *Traffic*, *Miles Ahead*, *Carol*, *Little Man Tate*, *Milk Money* and even *the public*. But Cincinnati’s cinematic history goes back much further than that, to Oct. 12, 1903, when the Mills Edisonia opened at W. Fifth Street on Fountain Square. The new amusement parlor housed 140 electric motion picture machines and was the first permanent location in Cincinnati devoted to exhibiting moving images.

To celebrate the city’s rich historic ties to Hollywood, the exhibit *Cinema Cincinnati* opens Oct. 12 at the Downtown Main Library. The exhibit is on display in the Joseph S. Stern, Jr. Cincinnati Room and runs through Jan. 26, 2020. It celebrates not just local theaters but local businesses with ties to Hollywood such as *Billboard Magazine*, Wurlitzer, Hennegan Company and Kenner Toys.

The exhibit also examines Cincinnatians who worked in the movie industry such as iconic stars Theda Bara, Doris Day and Tyrone Power, as well as character actors, screenwriters, directors, cinematographers and production designers. Current local organizations devoted to the cinematic arts also are featured.

“This exhibit takes a nostalgic look at how Cincinnatians experienced cinema — from the early days of nickelodeons and grand palaces to neighborhood theaters, drive-ins and art houses,” said Reference Librarian Brian Powers. “It also pays tribute to how Greater Cincinnati has contributed to the golden era of Hollywood with stars like Doris Day and Roy Rogers, to the modern form of cinema by providing film crews, local actors, striking architecture, and a variety of locations.”

Film fans won’t want to miss a talk “*Lost and Found Theaters of the Queen City*” by theater historian Hank Sykes at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 6. Sykes is presenting his research and sharing images of early amusement parlors, nickelodeons and the grand palace theaters in the area. The event takes place in the Genealogy & Local History Program Space at the Downtown Main Library.

Hours for the Joseph S. Stern, Jr. Cincinnati Room are: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 513-369-6900 or visit www.CincinnatiLibrary.org/.

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