

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUPPET MOVIES, RARE AND EARLY WORKS BY JIM HENSON, SPECIAL GUESTS, FAMILY WORKSHOPS, AND OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO ACCOMPANY THE EXHIBITION 'JIM HENSON'S FANTASTIC WORLD'

Programs, most free with Museum admission, to be held in conjunction with the Smithsonian traveling exhibition, on view from July 16, 2011 through January 16, 2012

Astoria, New York, July 12, 2011—Museum of the Moving Image announced an updated schedule of screenings, special guest appearances, and workshops that will be presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Jim Henson's Fantastic World*, beginning July 16, 2011. These include a rare and surprise-filled conversation with Jane Henson, co-creator of the Muppets and wife of the late Jim Henson (September 18); a preview screening of the Sundance hit documentary *Being Elmo* with its subject, puppeteer Kevin Clash, and director Constance Marks in person (September 25); screenings of *The Muppet Movie* and its sequels, *The Dark Crystal*, Henson's Academy Award-nominated experimental short *Time Piece*, and more, accompanied by appearances by actors, puppeteers, designers, and other close Henson collaborators; and a weekend 75th birthday celebration for Jim Henson featuring an anthology of Muppet musical moments (September 24 & 25). In addition to feature films, the programs include exclusive showings of compilation programs featuring hundreds of highlights and special moments from the history of the Muppets.

After debuting on television in 1958 with his puppets on a local television station in Washington, D.C., Henson and his collaborative partners evolved into a remarkable and popular creative force in film and television. Throughout the 1960s, Henson and the Muppets rose to national prominence on variety shows, talk shows, and *Sesame Street*. This led to the phenomenally successful *The Muppet Show* in the 1970s and a series of feature films, including *The Muppet Movie*, *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, and *The Great Muppet Caper*. In the 1980s, Henson explored new directions in television and film with series like *Fraggle Rock* and *The Storyteller* and films like *Labyrinth*.

"These matinee screenings celebrate both the childlike wonder and the sophistication of Jim Henson's artistry in films and television programs that are entertaining for all

ages,” said Carl Goodman, Executive Director of the Museum. “While the exhibition explores Jim Henson’s creative process with many behind-the-scenes materials including sketches, storyboards, photographs, and the puppets themselves, his living legacy lies in all of the great movies and television shows he created.”

Nearly all screenings are free with Museum admission, which also includes admission to the exhibition. *Time Piece* will be presented in the Museum’s Video Screening Amphitheater, showing continuously through September 13. It will also be shown in an archival 35mm print in the Museum’s main theater following the conversation with Jane Henson. Programs will continue in October, through the entire run of the exhibition, which closes on January 16, 2012.

This series was organized by Chief Curator David Schwartz and Assistant Curator Rachael Rakes for Museum of the Moving Image, in partnership with The Jim Henson Legacy, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Irena Kovarova. It includes programs from the touring series *Muppets, Music and Magic: Jim Henson’s Legacy*.

The Jim Henson Legacy is a non-profit 501(C3) organization that is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating Jim Henson’s contributions to the worlds of puppetry, television and motion pictures, special effects and media technology. More information at <http://www.jimhensonlegacy.org>.

The Smithsonian traveling exhibition, *Jim Henson’s Fantastic World*, features over 120 artifacts, including drawings, storyboards, and props, and video material that illustrate Henson’s boundless creativity and innumerable accomplishments. Among the highlights are fifteen iconic original puppets of such characters as Kermit the Frog, Rowlf, Bert, Ernie, and Miss Piggy; photographs of Henson and his collaborators at work; and excerpts from Henson’s early projects and experimental films.

The exhibition spans Henson’s entire career, beginning with drawings, cartoons, and posters produced during his college years in the late 1950s and concluding with objects related to the inspired imaginary world of his popular fantasy film, *The Dark Crystal*. Visitors will encounter materials from Henson’s best-known projects, *The Muppet Show*, *The Muppet Movie* and its sequels, and *Fraggle Rock*, as well as objects related to his *Sesame Street* characters. Visitors will also learn about *Sam and Friends*, an early show Henson created in the 1950s, Henson’s television commercial work in the 1960s, and the segments Henson made for *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

Thirty-minute guided tours of the exhibition will be offered every Saturday and Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

Jim Henson’s Fantastic World is organized by The Jim Henson Legacy and Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), in cooperation with the

Henson Family; The Jim Henson Company; The Muppets Studio, LLC; and Sesame Workshop. The exhibition is made possible by the BIO channel. Additional support has been provided by The Jane Henson Foundation and Cheryl Henson. Support for the exhibition at Museum of the Moving Image is provided by Five Napkin Burger, The Astor Room, and Schmutter, Strull, Fleisch Inc.

Press Contact: Tomoko Kawamoto / tkawamoto@movingimage.us / 718 777 6830

'JIM HENSON'S FANTASTIC WORLD' SPECIAL PROGRAMS **SCHEDULE FOR JULY 16–SEPTEMBER 25, 2011**

(Programs for the second half of the exhibition run, through January 16, will be announced at a later date)

Time Piece

On view continuously July 9–September 30

IN THE VIDEO SCREENING AMPHITHEATER

Dir. Jim Henson. 1965, 9 mins. With Jim Henson. In 1965, Jim Henson made *Time Piece*, an experimental short film that tells what he called “the story of Everyman, frustrated by the typical tasks of a typical day.” The film opens with a man—played by Henson—in a hospital bed. A doctor takes his pulse. The pulse turns into a drumbeat, which becomes the percussive soundtrack for the film, in a syncopated score created by Don Sebesky. Through a series of jump cuts, we follow the man as he walks through city streets, then suburban streets, and then the jungle. Playfully surreal sequences are bridged by short passages of stop-motion animation. As Henson described his filmmaking goals: “In *Time Piece*, I was playing with a kind of flow of consciousness form of editing, where the image took you to another image, and there was no logic to it but your mind put it together.” While the film retains his trademark sense of humor, it is also a bold example of nonlinear editing.

Time Piece played for a year at the Paris Theatre in Manhattan, along with the French art-house hit *A Man and a Woman*. Henson’s film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Short Film. It remains fresh today as both a time capsule of 1960s experimental filmmaking, and as a brilliantly conceived and edited example of Henson’s creativity. The film is presented courtesy of The Jim Henson Company.

The Muppet Movie

Saturday, July 16, 1:00 p.m. **Introduced by Craig Shemin, President of The Jim Henson Legacy and longtime Muppets writer, with exclusive video material**

Sunday, July 17, 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, July 23, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 24, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. James Frawley. 1979, 95 mins. 35mm. With the voices of Jim Henson, Frank Oz. Kermit the Frog makes his way from humble origins in a swamp to fabled Hollywood, assembling his team as he goes, including Fozzie Bear, Miss Piggy, Gonzo, and others. This enchanting and clever road movie includes Kermit’s heart-tugging rendition of “The Rainbow Connection.”

Muppet History 101

Presented by Craig Shemin, President of The Jim Henson Legacy and longtime Muppets writer

Saturday, July 30, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 31, 1:00 p.m.

80 mins. This unique program of rarities from the Henson archives examines the origins of the Muppets. It includes excerpts from early live TV appearances, unusual commercials, guest spots on the Jimmy Dean and Dick Cavett shows, and much more, including the rarely seen pilot episode of *The Muppet Show*.

The Dark Crystal

Saturday, August 6, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 7, 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 13, 1:00 p.m. **Introduced by Kathy Mullen (puppeteer, Kira)**

Sunday, August 14, 1:00 p.m. **Introduced by Kathy Mullen (puppeteer, Kira)**

Dir. Jim Henson, Frank Oz. 1982, 93 mins. 35mm. With Kathy Mullen, Dave Goelz, Steve Whitmire. On a remote planet in the distant past, a Gelfling embarks on a quest to find the missing shard of a magical crystal, to restore order to his world. Using a mix of puppetry, animatronics, modern special effects, and more, *The Dark Crystal* creates a sense of visual astonishment rarely equaled in fantasy filmmaking.

The Muppets Take Manhattan

Saturday, August 20, 1:00 p.m. **With Calista and Stephen Hendrickson in person**

Sunday, August 21, 1:00 p.m. **With Calista Hendrickson and John Davis in person**

Dir. Frank Oz. 1984, 94 mins. Digital projection. With Jerry Nelson, Richard Hunt, Dave Goelz, Steve Whitmire. When the Muppets' college revue is a big hit, they decide to take it all the way to Broadway. Filled with cameos by such New Yorkers as Mayor Ed Koch, Gregory Hines, and Liza Minelli, the movie ends with a wedding between Kermit and Miss Piggy. Is it part of the show . . . or could it be real?

Muppet Treasure Island

Saturday, August 27, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 28, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. Brian Henson. 1996, 99 mins. 35mm. With Tim Curry, Kevin Bishop, Billy Connolly. Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure gets the full Muppet treatment in this musical version, with Kermit as the captain pitted against the villainous Long John Silver and his band of pirates, and Miss Piggy as, of course, the island's love goddess.

The Great Muppet Caper

Saturday, September 3, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 4, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. Jim Henson. 1981, 95 mins. 35mm. With Frank Oz, Jerry Nelson, Richard Hunt, Dave Goelz. Intrepid reporters Kermit, Fozzie Bear, and Gonzo go to London to interview a fashion designer whose jewels have been stolen. When the thieves strike again and Miss Piggy is accused of the crime, it's Kermit and friends to the rescue.

Muppets from Space

Saturday, September 10, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 11, 1:00 p.m.

Dir. Tim Hill. 1999, 87 mins. Digital projection. With Steve Whitmire, Frank Oz, Jerry Nelson, Dave Goetz. After Gonzo receives strange signals from his breakfast cereal, he determines that he is an alien. Before long, he is captured by an overzealous secret government agency determined to prove the existence of extraterrestrial life. It's up to Kermit and the gang to rescue Gonzo.

Dog City and The Storyteller: "The Soldier and Death"

Saturday, September 17, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 18, 1:00 p.m.

With puppeteer Fran Brill in person at both screenings

Approx. 70 mins. Originally shown on *The Jim Henson Hour*, *Dog City* features a fully realized Muppet universe—a 1940s film noir city populated entirely by dogs, with Muppet favorite Rowlf the Dog narrating from a piano. "The Soldier and Death" is one of the finest episodes produced for Henson's acclaimed television series *The Storyteller*, which used a blend of puppets and live action to rework classic and obscure folk tales.

An Afternoon with Jane Henson: "Look Both Ways and Go"

Sunday, September 18, 4:00 p.m.

In this special program, "Look Both Ways and Go," Jane Henson, co-founder of the Muppets and wife of the late Jim Henson, gives a very personal and surprising behind-the-scenes look at creating a cultural phenomenon. The program includes seldom-seen video clips from the Jim Henson Family Archives, and stories about the early days when she met Jim Henson in a puppet class. Among the rare material to be screened is an archival 35mm print of *Time Piece*, the Oscar-nominated experimental short film that was directed and written by Jim Henson.

Recommended for ages 9+

Tickets: \$25 public / \$15 for members / Free for Silver Screen members and above.

Order online at movingimage.us or call 718 777 6800. **Tickets include admission to the Museum and the exhibition *Jim Henson's Fantastic World*.**

Muppet Music Moments: A Weekend Celebration of Jim Henson's Birthday

Saturday, September 24, 1:00 p.m. **With music consultant Larry Grossman in person**

Sunday, September 25, 1:00 p.m.

77 mins. Classic music numbers interpreted as only the Muppets can. This compilation features a wide range of musical genres, including performances by guest stars Harry Belafonte, Elton John, and Linda Ronstadt. Jim Henson would have celebrated his 75th birthday on September 24.

Being Elmo: A Puppeteer's Journey

Sunday, September 25, 4:30 p.m. **With Kevin Clash and Constance Marks in person**

Dir. Constance Marks. 2011, 85mins. The furry red creature Elmo, seen by millions every day on *Sesame Street*, is one of the world's most beloved and recognizable television characters. Yet few people know his creator, Kevin Clash, who from the time he was a child, dreamed of

working with his idol, master puppeteer Jim Henson. Displaying his creativity and talent at a young age, Kevin ultimately found a home on *Sesame Street* and the role of a lifetime as the voice, hand, and personality of Elmo. Constance Marks explores his story in vivid detail, chronicling the meteoric rise of Jim Henson's Muppets in the process. Kevin Clash—and Elmo—will make personal appearances, along with director Constance Marks, in this special preview of this special jury prize winner at Sundance.

TICKETS: \$20 public/\$15 Museum members/Free for Silver Screen members and above and Red Carpet Kids members. Order online at movingimage.us or call 718 777 6800. **Tickets include admission to the Museum and the exhibition *Jim Henson's Fantastic World*.**

FAMILY WORKSHOPS

Shadow Puppets

July 23 and 24, 3:00 p .m.

Recommended for ages 8+

Learn about the very first moving images in this 60-minute workshop. Participants will design and create puppets made of paper, then perform with them, casting silhouettes into an animated setting.

\$5 materials fee (does not include Museum admission) / Free for Red Carpet Kids members. Register upon arrival at the Museum; space is first-come, first-served.

Sound Effects

August 20 and 21, 3:00 p .m.

Recommended for ages 8+

Find out how Foley artists create sound effects for movies and television shows. Participants will watch a clip of *The Muppet Movie* and learn how the sounds in the film were produced.

Afterward, they will have the opportunity to create new sounds for the action on-screen using a variety of materials and props.

\$5 materials fee (does not include Museum admission) / Free for Red Carpet Kids members. Register upon arrival at the Museum; space is first-come, first-served.

Puppet-Making with Noel MacNeal

September 17 and 18, 3:00 p .m.

Recommended for ages 8+

Noel MacNeal, a professional puppeteer from The Jim Henson Company, will introduce and demonstrate the craft of puppetry using puppets created at Jim Henson's Creature Shop in New York. Afterward, he will guide participants as they create their own paper puppet to take home and share with their families and friends.

\$10 materials fee (does not include Museum admission) / \$5 for Red Carpet Kids. Register in advance online at movingimage.us or call 718 777 6800.

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 on Monday except for holiday openings).

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled.

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

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.

#