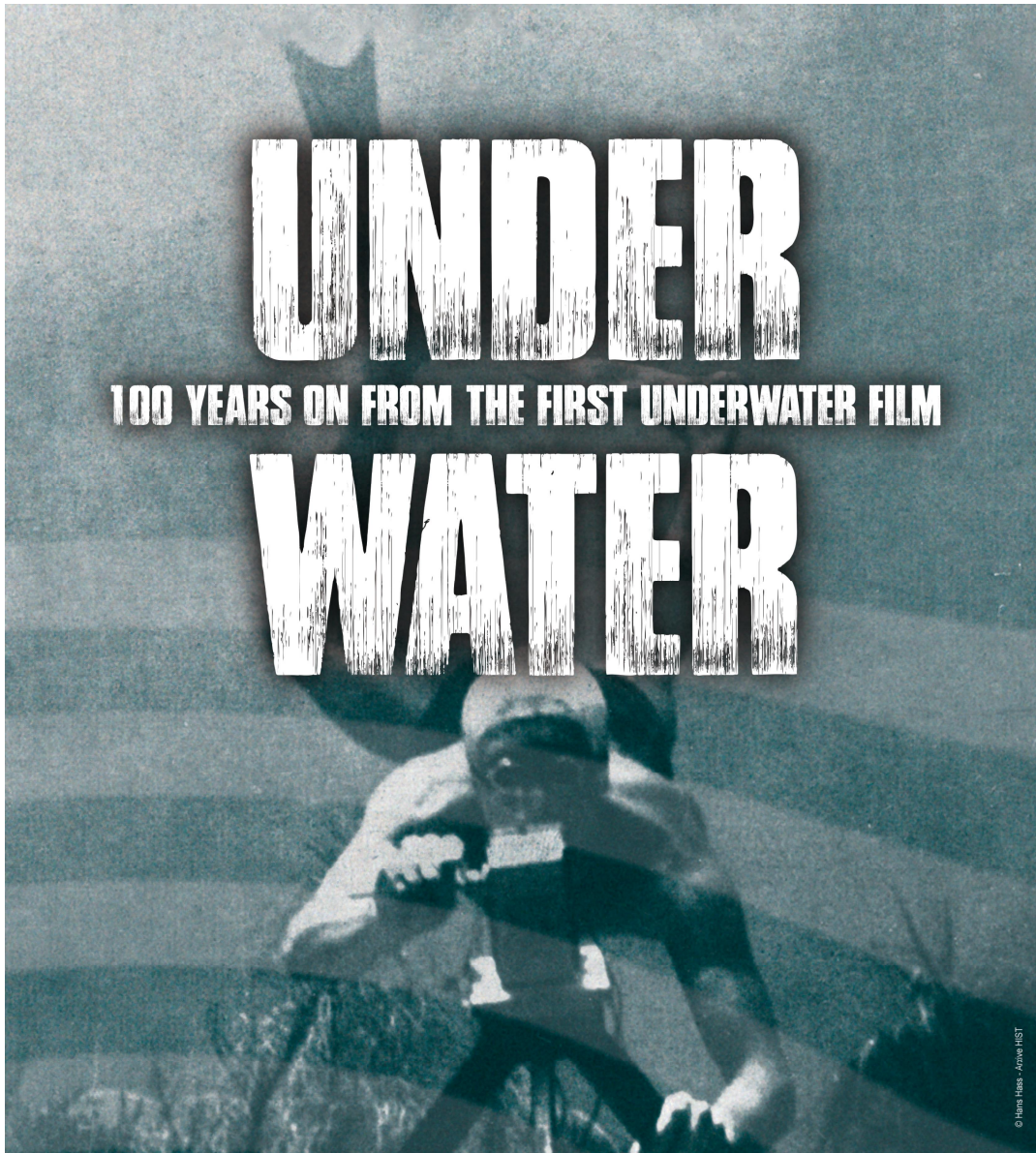


Museu del Cinema
Col·lecció Tomàs Mallol



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Underwater

100 years on from the first underwater film

Since the beginning of time, the underwater world has captivated us. The adaptation of humans to the underwater environment was the first step towards discovering it. However, it was not until the photograph was invented in the 19th century and the development of cameras which could capture moving images (protected by waterproof cases which could withstand water, saltpeter and pressure variations), that the fascinating and mysterious world which lies beneath was revealed.

In 1916, the first commercial film which included underwater images was screened. These images were taken by John Ernest Williamson for the film *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, which was inspired by the book written by Jules Verne. The dramatic images depicting a battle between a sea monster and a pearl diver sent chills down the spines of the whole world. This was the beginning of a series of future productions in the great field of documentary and fictional cinema.

A hundred years later, based on an original idea by Dr Andrés Clarós and the material from his private collection of underwater cameras, this year we will be commemorating this first film and the pioneers who took on the great challenge of revealing the underwater world.

Inauguration: Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at 19.00

Exhibition: 6 July 2016 to 29 January 2017.

Openings:

July and August:

Monday to Sunday from 10.00 to 20.00

September

Tuesday to Saturday from 10.00 to 20.00

Sunday from 11.00 to 15.00

October to January:

Tuesday to Friday from 10.00 to 18.00

Saturday from 10.00 to 20.00

Sunday from 11.00 to 15.00

Free admission

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EXHIBITION CREDITS

Production

MUSEU DEL CINEMA
MUSEU MARÍTIM DE BARCELONA
BCN UNDERWATER FESTIVAL

Exhibition comissars

ANDRÉS CLARÓS
SÍLVIA DAHL

Coordinator

JORDI PONS

Design

MOSTRA COMUNICACIÓ

Original materials exposed

COL·LECCIÓ ANDRÉS CLARÓS
MUSEU DEL CINEMA-COL·LECCIÓ TOMÀS MALLOL
MUSEU DEL CINEMA-COL·LECCIÓ ALFRED BARRÓS
MUSEU MARÍTIM DE BARCELONA
COL·LECCIÓ LLUÍS BENEJAM

Installation

RAFEL D'ARQUER
MOSTRA COMUNICACIÓ

Curator

MONTSE PUIGDEVALL

Audiovisuals editing

SALVADOR ÀNGEL

Photographic reproductions and audiovisual courtesy

OBSERVATOIRE OCÉANOLOGIQUE DE BANYULS/MER
HANS HASS ARCHIVE HIST
CINEMARINE CHRISTIAN PETRON
MARINERS' MUSEUM (NEWPORT)
JONATHAN SILENT FILM COLLECTION (CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY)

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GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA. DEPARTAMENT DE CULTURA

Collaboration:

COL·LECCIÓ LLUÍS BENEJAM

CONTENTS OF THE EXHIBITION

Underwater

100 years on from the first underwater film

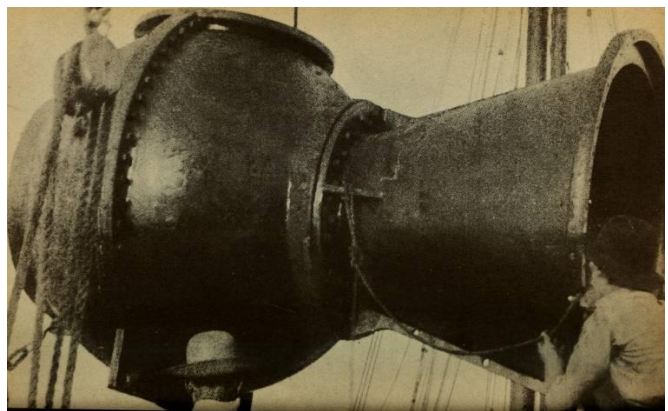
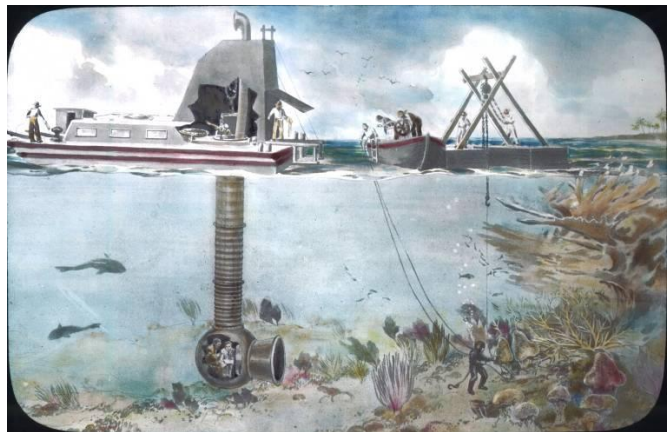
Part 1

1916: 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

1916: Europe and the rest of the world were at war. Ships and submarines were darting across the seas at a time at which the seabed was still largely unexplored. Only a few adventurers armed with rudimentary equipment were willing to delve deep and explore it.

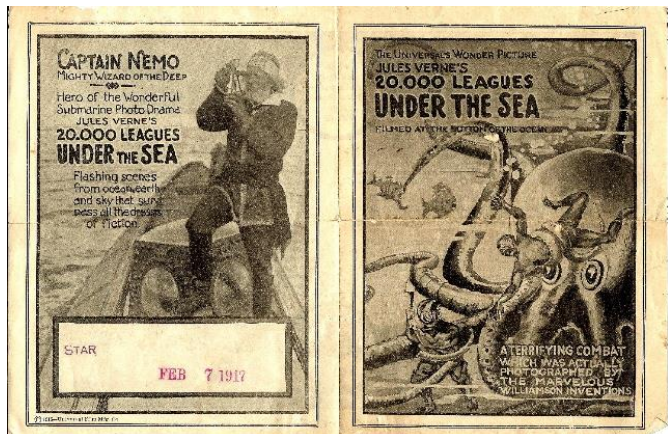
John Ernest Williamson (1881 - 1966), inspired by a novel by Jules Verne, turned underwater life into fiction. He was a lover of the sea, a journalist, visionary, engineer, photographer and a businessman who left behind him a great legacy in the exploration of the seabed and lent his knowledge and experience to film and scientific circles.

The challenge for him would be to show the world the reality of life on the seabed. And he succeeded. In 1916, the first commercial fiction film showing underwater recordings was screened and led to worldwide success for the film *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. This opened up a stage of continuous experimentation which would be followed by other pioneers in the years to come.



Chapters:

- The first underwater photos
- The first attempts at filming underwater images
- Captain Williamson's invention
- J.E. Williamson's first underwater photos
- *The Williamsons and the Photosphere*
- *We were world pioneers* (J.E. Williamson)
- *Thirty Leagues Under The Sea*
- *How I did it...how the Photosphere worked*
- *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*
- Williamson's Filmography
- Other uses for the Photosphere
- The other precursors



Part 2

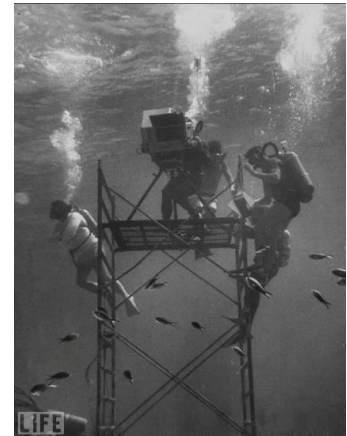
Underwater fiction

When the underwater world was still largely unknown, just shooting scenes underwater was enough to engage the audience. However, as underwater images and diving were becoming more popular, the commercial film industry had to invest large amounts in creating special effects to carry on impacting on the viewer.

Adaptations were made to the novels and new scripts were written which described risky adventures in the deep blue waters, fights with monsters in freshwater and saltwater or even monsters from space. However, there was also space in this type of cinema for love and the humanisation of animals.

Chapters:

- Aquaflex
- James Bond
- Le grand bleu

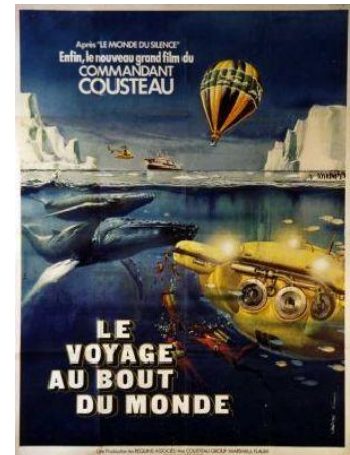


Part 3

Underwater Documentaries

Williamson opened up a window to the world by showing documentaries which revealed empty spaces which had never been seen before. The interplay between fascination and fear captivated new audiences who quickly became the sidekicks of the pioneers of the underwater documentary, people like Hans Hass, Cousteau and Eduard Admetlla.

All of these adventurers, who suffered the risks inherent in an emerging technique, a technique which placed their own lives in danger, became, over time, the biggest defenders of underwater life when they revealed their unedited images. The films, which were shown all over the world, had a clear educational and conservationist message but they also had a large impact. These would go on to form the foundations of underwater documentary cinema for those to whom the sea still holds many mysteries to be uncovered.



Chapters:

- Early promoters of underwater imagery: Hans Hass and Jacques-Yves Cousteau
- Pioneers in Catalonia
- Documentary Productions
- Titanic



Part 4

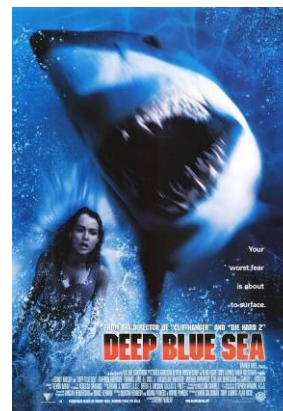
Amateur cinema

The film industry has always used professional underwater cameras which are both sophisticated and expensive. However, at the same time there has been a market for amateur photography, cinema and video. Initially, these pioneers made their own waterproof cases by hand. Later on, a few small workshops began to manufacture limited series for sale. Since diving has become much more mainstream, a market with a large range of makes and models has developed which is accessible to pretty much everyone.

Part 5

Underwater monsters

Monsters and fantastical beings have been an inexhaustible source of inspiration throughout time. It has now been 100 years since Williamson recreated the underwater battle between monster and man which surprised audiences who had never before seen images of the seabed. Nowadays, even though we have a better understanding of life in the sea, our curiosity about the sea and the fantastical beings which live within it have far from disappeared



The exhibition contains the following material

- 34 objects and devices for underwater filming
- 14 original photographs
- 23 original movie posters, hand programs, lobby-cards and press-books
- 7 magazines
- 100 photographic reproductions and prints reproductions
- Interactive game: "Underwater Monsters"
- 8 Audiovisual:
 - Scaphandrier Le (Author unknown, ca 1905-14). Océanologique Observatoire de Banyuls / Mer (donated by the Fondation Albert 1st of Monaco - 2000)
 - In the Tropical Seas (John Ernest Williamson, 1914)
 - Under the Sea (John Ernest Williamson, 1929)
 - 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea (Stuart Paton, 1916)
 - Several fragments of the fiction films between 1924 and 1988
 - Menschen unter Haien (Hans Hass, 1947). Hans Hass Archive HIST
 - Lobos Costa Brava (Ernest Adler, 1945)
 - Images exploration campaign on the wreck of the Titanic. Christian Petron, 1996-1998)

The majority of the original material shown in this exhibition come from the collection Andrés Clarós Collection, specialized in underwater photography and cinema. This exhibition also contains original material from the Alfred Barrós Collection and Tomàs Mallol Collection, both preserved in the Museum of Cinema, the Maritime Museum Collection and the private movie poster Lluís Benejam Collection.

The exhibition occupies the temporary exhibition hall of the Museum of Cinema: 120 m2.

Girona, juny de 2016