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THE DAY OF THE DEAD.

On October 31st, next Thursday, the Museum of International Folk Art is presenting the premier of the film THE DAY OF THE DEAD by Charles and Ray Eames. This is an event in our city, for not only is it the first production by the Museum, but is, it seems to me, the outstanding effort since ¹⁹⁵ ~~the founding of this institution.~~

The festival of All Souls' Day, or the Day of the Dead, has behind it a unique and wonderful philosophy. It commemorates the day when the souls of the departed return to visit the earth, therefore there must be no mourning, no grief, only happiness and rejoicing.

All Souls' Day has long held the interest of Mr. Alexander Girard who suggested to Mr. William J. Lippincott, more than a year ago, the possibility of making such a film as a project for the Museum. Mr. Girard has collaborated with Mr. & Mrs. Eames on other projects and is an enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Eames vision and technique. Both Mr. & Mrs. Girard helped not only with the photography, but with the far more difficult task of finding the material and in winning the cooperation from the people involved. The work was done in Toluca, Metapae and other towns and villages in Mexico. Much of the film is produced from still photographs with a climactic section in animation. The technique of using stills put into motion is not new. For example we have had the beautiful films of growing and opening flowers from stills made at intervals, but Mr. Eames has modified this idea to the use of his sensitive and creative imagination. The transition from the stills to the animation is masterful. On a first viewing of THE DAY OF THE DEAD one is left with a feeling of frustration because the

change of scene and idea is so rapid that one hardly has time to absorb one before another grabs the attention. Doubtless this is done purposely, for at the end one has a great desire to see it again as soon as possible. What could be more successful than creating such a feeling? Having seen this picture three times, I still want to see it again and again. Repetition only enhances, there are new beauties, new appreciation of the skill with which Mr. Eames has blended color and subject sequence. With the technique of using stills it is possible to see an infinitely greater number of subjects than by the standard motion picture procedure. One is impressed with the idea that motion itself is not used, with the exception of the climax, and that the motion is of vision. Mr. Eames flits about like a butterfly, a glimpse here, a glimpse there, and in his final selection from hundreds of stills, has created a new kind of impression for the eye and the mind of the beholder that stimulate immeasurably. The film is short, twenty minutes, far too short to satisfy anyone, but during those twenty minutes one is enthralled and deeply moved. And here within this festival is folk art in its truest sense, the spontaneous expression of all the people.

To Mr. & Mrs. Eames it is hats off for a very real contribution to creative photography, and great credit to Mr. & Mrs. Girard for their large share in the production and to Mr. Lipincott for sponsoring the film under the auspices of the Museum of International Folk Art during his tenure as director. Let us hope that with such a superb beginning, the Museum may go on with an increasing number of productions. Films such as this bring the Folk Art of a people vividly to life, preserve disappearing customs, and are

the means of presenting materila to the greatest possible audience,
will I am sure, bring interest in and great credit to our
institution.

Laura Gilpin.