



# Jean Desmet's Dream Factory: The Adventurous Years of Film (1907-1916)

*Rommy Albers, Soeluh van den Berg, Ivo Blom, Peter Delpout, David Robinson, Elif Rongen, Leanne van Schijndel*

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The early twentieth-century film industry grew with the help of passionate entrepreneurs like Jean Desmet (1875–1956), who went from being a carnival showman to one of the Netherlands' leading cinema operators, and finally became the country's first professional film distributor. The first decades of film were its most adventurous years—a period of astonishing technological development, artistic ingenuity and creative entrepreneurship. With his cinema company, Desmet was part of the transformation of cinema from a novelty into a major popular entertainment industry. The Jean Desmet Collection, now housed at the EYE Film Institute, Amsterdam, consists of more than 900 films, mostly from France, America, Italy and England, including masterpieces that were considered lost for decades. In this publication the story of the early days of the medium is told through films in the Desmet Collection, along with related posters, correspondence, photographs and stills.

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