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| Ballet Méchanique (1924) |
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| [Enter an **abstract** for your article] |
| *Ballet Méchanique* is a Dadaist, post-Cubist art film directed by artist Fernand Léger and shot in Paris from 1923-24. The film was photographed by American photographer and filmmaker Dudley Murphy, with some assistance by American Modernist artist Man Ray. Prior to viewing the film, American composer George Antheil created a concert piece for it, which combined industrial sounding instruments, including numerous pianos, sirens, airplane propellers and electric bells. The completed score was thirty minutes in length, yet the film’s runtime was nineteen minutes. As a result, the two were often not presented simultaneously. Instead, multiple versions (of varying lengths) of the scored film were exhibited. A silent version of *Ballet Méchanique* premiered on 24 September 1924, at the Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik [International Exposition for New Theatre Technique] in Vienna.  In the film, repetitious movements of various inanimate objects, such as pots, pans, whisks, and funnels seemingly become dancers in a ballet. These visuals are combined with additional imagery, such as a women climbing and re-climbing stairs. The superimposition of objects and human faces is an attempt by Léger to demonstrate his concern with modernisation, and society’s evident disillusionment with the mechanical world. Multiple angular fragmentations, the contrasting light and shadow, and various editing rhythms and juxtapositions express the repetitive structure of everyday life, a distinguishing trait of modernism. *Ballet Méchanique* is considered a masterpiece in experimental filmmaking and the first completely abstract film to be photographed rather than drawn.  File: Ballet Méchanique - paratextual 3.JPG  *No caption provided.*  File: Ballet Méchanique - Paratextual 4.JPG  No caption provided. |
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