*Rose Hobart* (1936)

Johanna Gosse (Bryn Mawr)

*Rose Hobart* (1936) is a landmark work of found footage film by the American surrealist artist, Joseph Cornell (1903-1972). Cornell is most widely celebrated for his delicate collaged boxes, which house small objects alongside images of movie stars, exotic birds, and illustrated maps of the earth and the sky, like miniature curiosity cabinets. Cornell adapted his collage aesthetic for the film medium, by cutting up a 16mm print of the B-movie *East of Borneo* (1931), and selecting only the scenes featuring his favorite actress, Rose Hobart. He combined Hobart’s scenes with documentary footage of a lunar eclipse, resulting in a dream-like, 19-minute montage of discontinuous shots, to which he added a found soundtrack of kitschy Brazilian music by Nestor Amaral. Cornell initially projected the film at silent speed and through a deep blue-tinted lens, giving it an aura of melancholic romance; later, he switched to a rose-tinted lens, perhaps in a nod to his leading lady. During the film’s first public screening at the Julian Levy Gallery in 1936, Salvador Dalí allegedly disturbed the projection accusing Cornell of stealing his own idea for a film before he had the chance to realize it.

**Further Reading**

Barefoot, Guy. (2011) “Recycled Images: *Rose Hobart*, *East of Borneo*, and *The Perils of Pauline*”, *Adaptation*, 5 (2): 152-168.

Hauptman, Jodi. (1999) *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sitney, P. Adams. (1980) “The Cinematic Gaze of Joseph Cornell”, *Joseph Cornell*, Kynaston McShine, ed. New York: Museum of Modern Art: 69-89.

Wees, William C. (2002) “The Ambiguous Aura of Hollywood Stars in Avant-Garde Found Footage Films”, *Cinema Journal* 41: 3-18.

