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| Vigo, Jean (1905-1934) |
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| Jean Vigo is an anarchist and social realist French filmmaker responsible for four small, yet influential works. Famously honored as ‘the cinema incarnate’ by Henri Langlois, Vigo impacted French New Wave directors despite producing just 165 minutes of film during his short life. Born to militant anarchist parents in 1905, Vigo grew up in boarding schools after his father, radical agitator Miguel Almereyda, died in prison. Plagued by illness throughout his life, Vigo read the impressionist film theories of Jean Epstein and Louis Delluc while in hospital, and there he met his wife ‘Lydu’ Lozinska. The couple moved to Nice and Lydu’s family bankrolled Vigo’s first film, À Propos de Nice (1930), an experimental documentary inspired by Dziga Vertov. Vigo then completed his masterpiece, Zero de Conduite (Zero for Conduct, 1933): a short film about an insurrection enacted by children at a boarding school. The film is autobiographical, referencing his parent’s politics, as well as characters and incidents from Vigo’s life, while aesthetically playing between realism and a surrealist sensitivity prone to play and mischief. A few weeks after the release of his social realist film about love on a canal barge, l’Atalante (1934), Vigo passed away from tuberculosis. |
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| Further reading:  (Gomes)  (John) |