

Princess Grace Irish Library

# REX INGRAM

Hollywood Romantic  
Riviera Filmmaker



Rex Ingram, Nice, 1925

A Presentation by

## Dr Ruth Barton

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Samuel Beckett Centre – Trinity College Dublin

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013  
at 20:00

REX INGRAM was born Reginald Ingram Montgomery Hitchcock in Rathmines, Dublin, on 18 January 1893. A rectory child, he spent much of his early years in his father's parish of Kinnitty in the Irish midlands. He attended school at St. Columba's College but was a dreamy boy and a poor student.

In 1911, he left Ireland for America, eventually enrolling at Yale to study sculpture. However, within two years, he had succumbed to the lure of the new moving picture industry, where a combination of extraordinary good looks, and a talent for writing and art direction saw him move swiftly to positions both in front of and behind the camera.



Rex Ingram directing (megaphone)

In 1920, Rex Ingram directed what would become the blockbuster of its age – *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* – a film that catapulted him into the first rank of Hollywood film directors, and launched the career of its star, Valentino.



He followed this with a series of swashbucklers and romances that confirmed his reputation as an extraordinary visual artist of the screen. Each one starred his wife and leading lady, Alice Terry.



Rex Ingram & Alice Terry

But Hollywood was changing, and the new studio heads had little time for talented but wilful mavericks.

In 1924 Rex and Alice decamped to Nice, where they set up an alternative studio at the Victorine.



By now, a considerable celebrity, Rex's presence attracted many of the brightest names of the Riviera set. F. Scott Fitzgerald took him as a model for one of his characters, George Bernard Shaw was a

frequent visitor to the Victorine, he painted with Matisse, and, until her tragic death, Isadora Duncan counted herself amongst the couple's friends.



Rex Ingram and Henri Matisse



Rex Ingram at home in Nice

Rex continued to make his often macabre fantasies, and exotic war stories. Only with the advent of sound did he conclude that he was finished with the movies; he upped and went to North Africa, where he converted to Islam, bought a home, wrote two novels, a collection of short stories and his memoirs. His last years were spent divided between travel and life with Alice Terry in Studio City. Rex Ingram died in 1950 aged just 57.

DR RUTH BARTON is Head of Film Studies at Trinity College Dublin. She is the author of numerous books on Irish cinema, including *Irish National Cinema* (2004), and has written a biography of the Hollywood star, Hedy Lamarr – *Hedy Lamarr, The Most Beautiful Woman in Film* (2010). She is currently researching a book on Rex Ingram.

<http://www.tcd.ie/film/rex Ingram/index.php>

Entry 10 EUR per person.



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