

The Lion Hunt: Animated Film Advertising Hagenbeck's Zoo (1920)

Abstract

The 1920 animated film *Löwenjagd* light-heartedly depicts a lion hunt in which one of the big-game cats unwittingly awakens the protagonist and his trusted donkey from their afternoon siesta. Made by the prolific filmmaker John Hagenbeck, this production promoted the various ventures of his business partner and half-brother Carl Hagenbeck, a renowned trader of exotic animals and operator of zoos and other animal attractions. John himself had helped to trap and transport animals from colonial outposts across Africa and Asia for sale through Carl's company to zoos and menageries in Europe, and his films often featured exotic locations and wild animals. Carl managed an entire network of animal catchers and professional hunters from his home base in the port city of Hamburg, and his company supplied public and private zoological gardens, circuses, and collectors around the continent, in addition to his own zoos and wildlife displays. The latter included the Hagenbeck Zoo in Stellingen, just outside of Hamburg, for which Carl designed innovative animal enclosures bounded by concealed moats, rather than metal bars. That design element nurtured in visitors the illusion of authenticity and an "animal paradise" that the film *Löwenjagd* reflected, as well.

Source

Intertitles:

In the jungle, a merchant has fallen asleep, his donkey dreams next to him.
The man's weapon is hanging in a tree; a cunning monkey steals it.
The donkey awakened by a noise, listening and pricking up its ears, it stands there frightened.
For suddenly, a terrible roar sounded through the silence of the jungle.
The donkey looks for its rider, who peacefully sleeps on.
However, the hoof's double kick releases him from Morpheus' embrace.
Because he didn't hear anything while he was asleep, he starts yelling at the donkey.
He searches in vain for the rifle and beats a hasty retreat.
No sooner did they feel safe than the lion had arrived on the scene.
He managed to escape this time. As the lion grins and prepares to pounce again, he is being pinched in the hind leg.
Alas, the proud tuft is missing from his tail. He no longer hides the pain.
Since it is very decorative, the tuft is then repurposed.
Before the lion's courage is roused once more, the gramophone is being fired up.
As soon as he heard the tune "Zu Hagenbeck," he lost consciousness.
Anyone traveling through the jungle usually carries a lasso.
Now the lion is all tied up, the donkey's ribs heave with his breath.
Dust swirling, he hurries off into the distance; the lion's missus does not like it.
Meanwhile this giraffe feels nothing but pleasure.
The destination our rider is heading for appears lively well before he arrives.
[Sign on building reads: John Hagenbeck's Menagerie. Africa branch]
And with the buyer that was found, the lion's last hope faded.

Source: *John Hagenbecks lustige Jagden und Abenteuer. Nr. 1: Die Löwenjagd*, John Hagenbeck Film GmbH, 1920. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv, Filmwerk ID: 15503

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