

months; thereafter, the number of his films shrank considerably. Guillaume managed to pursue a career as a director until the early 1920s and had occasional successes, as in several Federico Fellini films.

IVO BLOM

Gundersen, Jens Christian

b. 1868; d. 1945

producer, distributor, filmmaker, Norway

Producer and amateur actor, Gundersen became the most influential cinema owner and film importer in Norway from 1907 to 1919. Setting up his business in Kristiana in 1907, he acquired cinemas in several cities and established several film distribution companies. He had exclusive rights for **Vitagraph** in the Scandinavian market and for other companies such as **Nordisk**, **Pathéfranco**, **Edison** and **Éclair** in the Norwegian market. In 1911, he directed *Dronen* [The Demon], a sensational **melodrama**, photographed by Alfred Lind in Denmark. In 1926, Gundersen became the first director of the municipal cinemas in Oslo.

GUNNAR IVERSEN

Guy Blaché, Alice

b. 1873; d. 1968

filmmaker, France/USA

The first woman filmmaker and among the first to direct a fiction film. The nearly one thousand films she produced had a significant impact on the development of filmic storytelling. She trained the best of the second generation of French filmmakers, including Victorin **Jasset**, Emile **Sernand**, Romeo **Bosetti**, and Louis **Feuillade**.

She began her film career as office manager to Louis **Gaumont** in 1895 and was present at the March 1895 demonstration of the **Cinématographe Lumière**. She probably began making films herself in the spring of 1896 and was quickly put in charge of the **Gaumont** company's film production. Her specific goal was to apply literary narrative techniques to film. Those she made before 1900, such as *La Concierge* (1899) show the

possibilities of pre-montage filmic narration and a use of off-screen space at its most sophisticated. In addition, she directed over one hundred **phonoscènes** for the Gaumont **Chronophone** between 1902–1906. Significant films from this period include *Madame a des Envies* [Madame Has Her Cravings] (1906) with an early dramatic use of the close-up, and *La Passion*, (The Life of Christ) (1906), with Jasset as an assistant.

In 1907 she married Gaumont manager Herbert Blaché. Blaché was transferred to the USA and eventually became manager of Gaumont's Flushing studio in New York. In 1910, Guy founded her own company, **Solax**, using the Flushing studio to produce films that then were distributed through Gaumont's licensed connections. Solax was critically and financially successful enough for Guy to build her own studio in Fort Lee in 1912; she became perhaps the only woman in the world to have owned her own studio plant. The steady output of one-reelers she directed at Solax best represent her satirical, feminist style, especially *Cupid and the Comet* (1911), *House Divided* (1913), *Matrimony's Speed Limit* (1913), and *Officer Henderson*, (1913); of special interest is *A Fool and His Money* (1912), with an all-black cast. In addition to these early "screwball" **comedies**, she produced stirring melodramas and elaborate fantasy films such as the three-reel *Dick Whittington and his Cat* (1913).

The Solax Company foundered when Gaumont's access to licensed distribution was cut off, and from 1915 Guy worked for her husband's company, Blaché Features, and as a director for hire. She produced and directed a series of features starring Olga Petrova and another series starring Claire Whitney, all unfortunately lost. Her feature for Hearst, *The Ocean Waif* (1916), shows that working as a director for hire forced her to compromise her vision, but her penultimate film, *Her Great Adventure* (1918), starring Bessie Love, shows that she had adapted with the times and could still produce a deft and biting feminist satire. After Blaché Features went bankrupt and her marriage ended in 1920, she returned to France and never made another film.

See also: black cinema, USA; dance films; editing; early practices and techniques; women's movement; USA