The interconnections between film and psychology are the subject of "Movies on the Mind," a new traveling exhibition that was organized in celebration of Sigmund Freud's 150th birthday in 2006. Making its only American stop on a multi-city international tour, this dynamic multimedia installation surveys the history of motion pictures with an eye towards exploring the psychological impact that movies have on their viewers as well as the psychological states and disorders that have long fascinated screenwriters, directors and actors alike.

Film historians and theorists have frequently resorted to the language of psychology when analyzing the power that movies exert over audiences. And moviegoers often describe altered states of mind when they discuss the reasons they enjoy watching movies. As the exhibition affirms these responses, it also delves into on-screen depictions of such subjects as psychoanalysis, mental illness, psychopathic behavior, dreams and their interpretation, repression and memory, narcissism and identity, and the expression of emotional extremes.

"Movies on the Mind" uses posters, photographs, staged environments and numerous film clips to illustrate its points. Sequences are drawn from films ranging from Jean Cocteau's Orphée and Ingmar Bergman's Persona to several works by Alfred Hitchcock (Psycho, Marnie, Spellbound) and Woody Allen (Annie Hall, the "Oedipus Wrecks" episode from New York Stories). The exhibition examines the pathologies represented in such horror films as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1931) and The Silence of the Lambs, and it showcases more recent psychologically oriented films, including Being John Malkovich and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

"Movies on the Mind" was organized by the Deutsche Kinemathek and sponsored by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes. This Los Angeles presentation was made possible through generous support from the Goethe Institut–Los Angeles. Photos courtesy of Deutsche kinemathek, Berlin.


The Academy's Fourth Floor Gallery is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from noon to 6 p.m. Admission is free.