Friday Spotlight: Un Chien Andalou

For any person serious about film "Un Chien Andalou" is among the first titles on their "must-see" list. Famously conceptualized by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, though Dali had no direct involvement in the production of the film, Un Chien Andalou or *An Andalusian Dog* is the first effort in surrealist cinema and arguably the most influential work in film history. Made in 1929 and lasting only 17 minutes, Un Chien Andalou mimics the actions of the subconscious using only unrelated imagery and sparsely intercut titles, but perhaps that is too sophisticated a way of describing it. Simply, without any pretense, Buñuel set out to make something weird, different and above all else, new. He succeeded supremely, creating a shocking, uncompromised vision of nothing in particular. The film's most famous and striking image consists of a woman having her eyeball sliced open with a straight razor, and the realistic depiction still baffles most film-goers to this day. The ingenuity and pure bizarreness exuded became a staple of Buñuel's work, though his subject matter gradually became more profound, especially with works like "Simon of the Desert." Un Chien Andalou's surreal approach and absence of structure or deeper meaning flung the doors open concerning what was achievable in film and how far the boundaries could be pushed. Each viewer has a different interpretation, despite the intent of the film being to create something, for the lack of a better word, meaningless, and continues to be one of the most advanced film experiences, keeping intact its provocativeness and allure. The irony lies in the fact that a meaningless film went on to become one of the influential works of art, having meaning forced upon it by minds so eager to label things. That's what keeps Un Chien Andalou so fresh, Buñuel understood that it was innately human to want to place meaning in meaningless things, and that was his genius, depriving us of that need, forever making his film weird, different and above all else, new.