

Look who's back —

MARILYN!

REMEMBER THAT movie star with the pendulum-swinging to her walk and dresses that seemed handed up from her kid sister?

That's right—Marilyn Monroe. Didn't think you could forget her even if she hasn't made a picture in more than two years.

This disturbing recession in American living will be remedied soon when MM appears in "Some Like It Hot" with Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis. You'll recognize her by the blond hair, childishly simple face, and the—well, you'll recognize her.

But will you know her?

What's happened to Marilyn as the wife of prize-winning playwright Arthur Miller ("Death of a Salesman," "A View from the Bridge") and as an "observer" at New York's Actors' Studio (alumni: Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, among others)? Is she a better actress, an "intellectual" blonde, a more assured personality?

After interviewing MM and talking with co-workers and friends, I can report only one startling change—Marilyn has developed a new wiggle. This one utilizes her fingers—yes, her fingers—and helps her get into the mood for an important scene.

Her detractors concede that Marilyn did a good job in her first major picture, "Asphalt Jungle." But, they add, it was an undemanding role. They disagree with some critics who lauded Marilyn's talents in "The Prince and the Showgirl" with Sir Laurence Olivier and refer to that effort only as a box-office disappointment.

Marilyn has her defenders, of course. Arthur Miller thinks she's already a highly skilled actress; so does Paula Strasberg, her current mentor and wife of Lee Strasberg, head of Actors' Studio.

But these authorities may be prejudiced. Miller is a rarity among movieland husbands inasmuch

as he really means it when he says he's his wife's best fan. And Paula may be influenced by Marilyn's financial contributions to her husband's school.

Billy Wilder, MM's director in "Some Like It Hot," mugwumps the controversy by saying, "She's one of the two super-stars of our decade." He carefully dodges any opinion of her artistry.

Does acting, however, really matter to anybody but Marilyn? The only lines the public expects her to deliver were bestowed on her by nature. In "Some Like It Hot," for example, she spends about one-third of the footage in a wool-knit bathing suit. When it comes to that kind of a performance, Monroe could teach Stanislavsky!

NO, THE MARILYN you'll see on the screen won't be changed much. But the Marilyn behind the screen has undergone some transformations. In her early career, she was an interviewer's delight; but today she ranks as one of Hollywood's most uncooperative stars.

Ordinarily, Marilyn just won't be interviewed. An English publication sent its London correspondent to Hollywood to talk to Marilyn, but after two days she gave up and returned home with only one piece of fresh information—Marilyn owns a white dress!

Yet Marilyn talked to me in New York for two hours. Why?—because Marilyn is unpredictable. Later, in California, I experienced the Monroe chill and got to see her only because Billy Wilder personally ushered me into her dressing room and demanded to know why she was so difficult to see.

"But I'm not," Marilyn cooed, blinking her eyes innocently. And her charm, I might add, was put on just as thickly as her make-up.

Even if an interviewer sees Marilyn, he's wasting

his time. She won't talk about marriage, children, religion, past, politics, superstitions. As she says herself, "Why see anybody? There's nothing left for us to talk about!"

What Marilyn says makes sense in another respect. The Monroe story has been so painstakingly explored that there is nothing left to tell about her. Her dreary past has been spelled out in lurid detail—how, as a child, she became a ward of the county, was placed in an orphanage, and matured through a series of shocking experiences.

Marilyn's soul was laid as bare as that famous calendar photograph of her. Nothing was left to the public's imagination, and Marilyn is woman enough to recognize this as a mistake. So she has shrewdly become "uncooperative," exposing only enough of Monroe to arouse curiosity, not boredom.

Caught in the middle of this reverse press-agency is Arthur Miller, who is besieged by newsmen trying to glean some fresh facts about his wife. Once he mentioned they had bought a horse for their two-acre Connecticut farm, and reporters buzzed off as excitedly as if they had just uncovered a Pulitzer-prize winning story.

To her credit, Marilyn remains cooperative in one area. She still appears as grateful to the public as she was after her first break, and her fans are refused nothing. Where a newsman draws a blank stare, an autograph hound gets respectful attention. If a movieland tourist wants to take a snapshot of her, Marilyn dutifully poses although no studio can release a professional still shot without her approval—and she rejects approximately 90 percent as "unworthy."

Marilyn seems to sense that though she may have made enemies in Hollywood, the public still loves her. They have seen a parade of imitators



Marilyn mugs with (believe it or not) Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis.



On location for "Some Like It Hot," MM displays familiar charms in 1920 bathing suit, and (above) familiar smile with husband.