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Essential Film A World History

Essentials

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ca. 1000 illustrations, introduction and reference

What was so special about Casablanca? Where did Marilyn Monroe get her start? What is Italian Neo-Realism or New Hollywood about?

Perhaps the most popular artistic genre, films make us laugh, cry, sing, and scream. They capture the essence of a time and place, expressing the hopes, dreams, and fears of people. From the Lumière brothers to Quentin Tarantino, Greta Garbo to Nicole Kidman, Hollywood to Bollywood, this easy to use, compact guide traces the development of films by focusing on the directors who helped shape the

industry. Beginning with the first technological innovations that made the medium possible, *Film* examines topics such as cinematographic techniques, stars and stardom, film movements, awards, world cinema, and changes in the industry, creating a picture of where film comes from and where it is going. All the key information you need about the movies, and the people who made them possible.

Movies offers a clearly sorted approach to the world of motion pictures. Each subdivision treats the important directors and films of an era.



Sales argument

- 900 illustrations, low price
- a survey of the greatest directors and films
- creative and technical inventions, genres, and stars
- chronologically and thematically sorted for easy reference
- unique combination of visual and text information



ESSENTIAL FILM

CONTENT

The Origin of Film 1895–1919

Directors include: *The Lumiere brothers, George Méliès, Cecile B. DeMille, D.W. Griffith*
 Best Film: *Birth of a Nation, 1915*
 Spotlight: *First Divas: Theda Bara, Francesca Bertini*
 Genre: *Monumental Films, Avantgarde*
 Innovations: *The Film Camera*

Silent to Sound 1920–1929

Directors include: *Fritz Lang, King Vidor, Sergei Eisenstein, Charlie Chaplin*
 Best Film: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, 1919*
Nanook of the North, 1922
 Spotlight: *A Star is Born: Rudolph Valentino, Clara Bow*
 Genre: *Documentary, Western, Slap-stick Comedy*
 Innovations: *Sound and Technicolor, The Studio System*

Cinema During the War 1930–1945

Directors include: *Ernst Lubitsch, Walt Disney, Frank Capra, Victor Fleming, Orson Welles*
 Best Film: *Snow White, 1937*
Citizen Kane, 1941
Casablanca, 1942
 Spotlight: *Stars of the Silver Screen: Fred and Ginger, Shirley Temple, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn ...*
 Genre: *Propaganda, Musical, Horror, Screw-ball Comedy*
 Innovations: *Censorship and the Hayes Code*

Postwar Cinema and the 1950s

Directors/Movements include: *Film Noir, John Ford; Italian Neo-Realism, Jacques Tati, Alfred Hitchcock, Akira Kurosawa*
 Best Film: *8 1/2, 1963*
Some Like it Hot, 1959

Spotlight: *Sinners and Saints: James Dean and Marilyn Monroe to Rock Hudson and Doris Day*
 Genre: *Drama, Thriller, Historical Film/Costume Drama*
 Innovations: *Cinemas, 3-D, Drive-Ins, Television*

New Impulses 1960–1974

Directors/Movements include: *French New Wave, Italian New Wave, Ingmar Bergmann, Stanley Kubrick*
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2001 – A Space Odyssey, 1968
 Spotlight: *Angry and Adventurous: Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper and James Bond*
 Genre: *Science Fiction, Disaster Film, Martial Arts*
 Innovations: *Special Effects*

Politics and Blockbusters 1975–1989

Directors/Movements include: *New Hollywood, New German Cinema, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Ridley Scott, David Lynch*
 Best Film: *Godfather I, II, III (1972, 1974, 1990)*
Apocalypse Now, 1979
 Spotlight: *Fighters and Hedonists: Al Pacino, Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffmann, Robert Redford, Harrison Ford, John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Susan Sarandon, Meryl Streep*
 Genre: *Gangster, Action and Adventure, Romantic, Independent*
 Innovations: *Blockbusters, Movie Rentals, Ratings*

World of Cinema 1990–Today

Directors include: *Global Cinema (Iran, India, China, South America, Africa), Quentin Tarrantino, Dogma 95 ...*
 Best Film: *Pulp Fiction, 1994*
City of God, 2002
Lord of the Ring, 2001–2003
 Spotlight: *New Stardom: Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Leonardo DiCaprio ...*
 Genre: *Animation, Fantasy, Cult-Films*
 Innovations: *Celebrity, Digital Technology, Big Budgets*





F. W. Murnau

1889, Bielefeld—1931, Los Angeles

- One of the most celebrated silent directors
- Popularized the moving camera with his film *The Last Laugh*, which included shots filmed from an elevator and on a turntable
- Influenced John Ford and Terrence Malick
- German
- Drama, Horror
- Directed 21 films

- **1889** Born Friedrich Wilhelm Plumpe in Germany
- 1919** Directs *The Blue Boy*, his first film
- 1922** After losing a lawsuit to the Bram Stoker estate, all but bootleg copies of *Nosferatu* are destroyed
- 1924** *The Last Laugh* becomes famous
- 1927** Signs a contract with Fox Studios and moves to Hollywood
- 1931** Dies in an automobile accident; Fritz Lang, Emil Jannings, Greta Garbo, and Robert J. Flaherty are among the 11 people who attend his funeral

■ **Sunrise**, 1927, starring Janet Gaynor and George O'Brien

Sunrise is widely considered one of the best films ever made. For his first American film, Murnau used exaggerated, Expressionist sets, lighting, and acting to tell the story of an impoverished farmer's infatuation with city life. The oversize city set—meant to dwarf and dehumanize its residents—was so costly that, despite its success, the film did not make a large profit.

Silent to Sound 1920–1929

For years, Greta Garbo kept a death mask of F. W. Murnau on her desk. His other acolytes might not have been quite as dedicated, but Murnau's influence on Hollywood—and, indeed, on European filmmaking—was profound. After entering the business at the end of World War I, he became one of the leaders of German Expressionism. He went on to gain international renown for the experimental “unfastened camera” movements in *The Last Laugh*, a Kammer-spiel film. Kammer-spiel, similar to the later New Objectivity movement, consisted of Social Realist “chamber pieces” inspired by Max Reinhardt's theater of the same name. Murnau was one of Germany's top directors when he left Berlin for Hollywood. After making *Sunrise*, he became increasingly disillusioned and ended his contract shortly before his death.



Other Works

- The Haunted Castle*, 1921, starring Arnold Korff
- Phantom*, 1922, starring Alfred Abel
- The Last Laugh*, 1924, starring Emil Jannings
- Tartuffe*, 1925, starring Hermann Picha

■ **Faust**, 1926, starring Gösta Ekman and Emil Jannings

Murnau embraced epic cinema when he filmed the myth of Faust, who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for the opportunity to be young again. Inspired by the demonic paintings of Pieter Brueghel, the film was shot on a vast scale at the UFA studios in Berlin and featured many innovative special effects.

■ **Nosferatu**, 1922, starring Max Schreck

Shunning the studio-bound conventions of most contemporary films, Murnau shot his landmark horror film on location. Copy-

right issues resulted in its official withdrawal, but *Nosferatu*'s eerie story and striking aesthetic made it an underground hit: Its many tributes include Werner Herzog's 1979 remake.





Alfred Hitchcock

1899, London—1980, Los Angeles

- Master of suspense ■ Pioneered the audience's role as a voyeur
- Praised by French New Wave directors ■ Films he directed earned several Oscar nominations but never won
- British-American ■ Thriller, Suspense, Horror ■ Directed 58 films

- **1899** Born into a middle-class Catholic family in east London
- 1920** Starts work at a film studio, designing titles for silent movies
- 1925** His first directed silent film, shot in Germany, flops
- 1926** *The Lodger*, his second film, is a commercial success
- 1929** Directs his first sound film, *Blackmail*
- 1940** Oscar nomination for first American film, *Rebecca*
- 1960** *Psycho* shatters box office records worldwide
- 1980** Dies at home in Los Angeles

One of the few directors to have made successful silent, sound, and color films in a career spanning six decades, Alfred Hitchcock was still plagued by a sense of under-appreciation for most of his life. At first, American critics did not value his decision to lend his name to a series of popular TV mysteries or his work in commercial genre films. It was not until his work was championed by French New Wave directors like Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol (p. 234), and François Truffaut (p. 236) in the late 1950s that Hitchcock was hailed as an *auteur*, a true cinema artist with a singular visual style.

Always looking for a fresh angle, Hitchcock looked for ways to avoid clichés or subvert the familiar. He would challenge himself (and his audiences) by making films set solely on a small rowboat (*Lifeboat*, 1944), seemingly shot in a single, endless take (*Rope*, 1948), or by



Postwar Cinema and the 1950s

- **The Birds**, 1963, starring Tippi Hedren
This film's villains are animals, a first for Hitchcock. Tippi Hedren plays a socialite who arrives at a small coastal village, only to become the subject of increasingly vicious avian attacks. After she escapes their first attempts, the film's open-ended final scenes are haunting, with flocks of birds descending menacingly on the California coast, seemingly just waiting to begin their onslaught in earnest.



- **Vertigo**, 1958, starring James Stewart and Kim Novak
James Stewart stars in this complex psychological thriller, set in San Francisco, as a retired police detective who falls for Kim Novak, a troubled woman he has been hired to shadow. After he saves her from suicide, she remains plagued by nightmares. When he takes her to the bell tower that she keeps dreaming about, she runs up but he is unable to follow due to his crippling vertigo (fear of heights). From the ground, he watches her jump to her death. Depressed, he starts to visit the places she used to go, where he spots a woman who looks strikingly like her (also played by Novak). Though she claims to be a simple country girl, new to the city, he soon finds out the truth, a shocking revelation that takes him to the top of the bell tower. Hitchcock subverts the mystery genre by revealing the puzzle in the middle of the film—thus, it becomes more about the complex character of the detective than a simple



whodunit. To show Stewart's fear of heights, Hitchcock developed the dolly zoom. The camera moves away from the actor while zooming in. The foreground stays the same but the background closes in substantially. This distortion of perspective has a disorienting effect that the director would later reuse in *Marnie* (1964) to signify a sudden, shattering realization.

Other Works

- Dial M for Murder**, 1954, starring Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, and Robert Cummings
- The Man Who Knew Too Much**, 1956, starring James Stewart and Doris Day
- Torn Curtain**, 1966, starring Paul Newman and Julie Andrews
- Family Plot**, 1976, starring Karen Black and Bruce Dern

Alfred Hitchcock



A World of Cinema 1990–Today

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Mixing digital technology and cinema history, these directors create thrilling films that dazzle audiences with visual onslaughts

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