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The Story Of Film



Synopsis

A new edition of the most accessible and compelling history of the medium published, with an updated foreword by the author to accompany his 15-hour feature documentary. Film critic, producer, and presenter Mark Cousins' history shows how filmmakers are influenced both by the historical events of their times, and by each other. He demonstrates, for example, how Douglas Sirk's 1950s Hollywood melodramas influenced Rainer Werner Fassbinder's despairing visions of 1970s Germany and how George Lucas' Star Wars epics grew out of Akira Kurosawa's The Hidden Fortress. The Story of Film is divided into three main epochs: silent (1885–1928), sound (1928–1990), and digital (1990–present), and within this structure films are discussed in chapters reflecting both the stylistic concerns of the filmmakers and the political and social themes of the time. As well as covering the great American films and filmmakers, the book explores cinema in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia, and South America, and shows how cinematic ideas and techniques cross national boundaries. Avoiding jargon and obscure critical theory, the author constantly places himself in the role of the moviegoer watching a film, asking How does a scene or a story affect us, and why? In doing so, he gets to the heart of cinematic technique, explaining how filmmakers use lighting, framing, focal length, and editing to create their effects. Clearly written, and illustrated with more than 400 stills, this book is essential reading for both film students and the general moviegoer.

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Customer Reviews

Mark Cousins is an author, film critic, producer, and documentary filmmaker. He is the former

director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival and a regular contributor to Prospect, Sight and Sound, and the Times.

When I set out to understand - nearly from scratch - the history of film, this loving, passionate, erudite, surprising and absolutely essential book was my main guide and inspiration. After dog-earring it and watching the accompanying film twice, I went forth with a camera and made my first film, which went on to win the Sundance Grand Jury Prize for World Documentary in 2015. I love the fact that Cousins lingers in little known parts of the world and with lesser known filmmakers (of course, Hollywood, etc., get their proper due). And most importantly, the unifying theme of INNOVATION is an extremely helpful lens through which to organize a book, and assess new work.

We usually have to learn about film history from books, which can only show stills. This has always seemed to fall short of doing justice to the subject. The film series from Mark Cousins allows us to see the moving clips, which I consider essential. It was a thrill to see the earliest work that is not available elsewhere to most of us. The narration was insightful and well-written. The advantage of the companion book is that we can read it rather than listen to it, which became annoying at times. The narrator ends every sentence with an upward tilt, as if all of it is a question. There is no question that this series finally covers the globe. We get to see film from Africa, Asia, Latin America--this is not just Hollywood. It treats film as art, covering innovations in form as well as content.

With the wonderful Mark Cousins' voice rediscovering the pasts and futures of cinema, an introduction to the medium, including those neglected cinematographies, and the gems of film that have escaped the official canon.

It's a very good and comprehensive history of world cinema. Now I sure know why I dislike some kind of films. Unfortunately I've found few minor mistakes about some facts but it's a must for those who are interested to know the story of cinema around the world.

Very compelling series. I liked the emphasis on world cinema.

The remarkable thing about this book is just how many must see movies it added to my list. It's coverage is genuinely global and covers the entire history of film world wide. I am not so sure about

how well it fits film into the national histories of the countries concerned but any weakness in this area is more than made up with its focus on technique, scene analysis and simply throwing new light on familiar and unfamiliar films. An eye opener and it also has a good bibliography to assist further study. The related DVD documentary by Mark Cousins seems equally interesting from the four episodes I have so far seen.

To all film lovers, The Story of Film is a must. An invaluable learning set and a tool for research. Got to get it.

the book is fine but price is too high for me

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