



The Story of Film

Mark Cousins , Alberto Barbera (Preface)

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The Story of Film presents the history of the movies in a way never told before. Mark Cousins's chronological journey through the worldwide history of film is told from the point of view of filmmakers and moviegoers. Weaving personalities, film technology, and production with engaging descriptions of groundbreaking scenes, Cousins uses his experience as film historian, producer, and director to capture the shifting trends of movie history. We learn how filmmakers influenced each other; how contemporary events influenced them; how they challenged established techniques and developed new technologies to enhance their medium. Striking images reinforce the reader's understanding of cinematic innovation, both stylistic and technical. The images reveal astonishing parallels in global filmmaking, thus introducing the less familiar worlds of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern cinema, as well as documenting the fortunes of the best Western directors. The Story of Film presents Silent (1885-1928), Sound (1928-1990), and Digital (1990-present), spanning the birth of the moving image; the establishment of Hollywood; the European avant-garde movements, personal filmmaking; world cinema; and recent phenomena like Computer Generated Imagery and the ever-more "real" realizations of the wildest of imaginations. The Story of Film explores what has today become the world's most popular artistic medium.

The Story of Film Details

Date : Published August 27th 2004 by Pavilion Books

ISBN : 9781862055742

Author : Mark Cousins , Alberto Barbera (Preface)

Format : Hardcover 512 pages

Genre : Culture, Film, Nonfiction, History, Art, Media Tie In, Movies, Reference, Literature, 21st Century, Unfinished, Research, Writing, Essays

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From Reader Review The Story of Film for online ebook

Elias Dourado says

O mais completo, tratando-se de história no geral. Para além desse, procurar as biografias dos diretores.

Jarvo says

Impressive, enthusiastic and close to panoramic. Really good on what we know give the rather odd name of world cinema (here do the other films come from?), pretty good on silent, and with a particular attachment to Japanese director Ozu (which is a big plus). The downside is a perennial for me with books about film - I find it hard for someone to say something interesting in two paragraphs about a book I've never seen. It also can be a bit gushing at times.

Also it manages to be both beautifully produced - great illustrations - but full of typos.

Abigail says

This is the first book I bought for studying film at university and I have never regretted it. Beautifully constructed and filled with wonderful stories and ideas. Cousins' passion for film is both remarkable and approachable and his vast array of knowledge makes me incredibly jealous. Despite all of the knowledge stuffed into this book, it is concise and neatly done; it flows well and never fails to stimulate, just like the films it sheds valuable light on. Film lovers of all levels and ages should read this.

Rosie says

Excellent book! It was the course textbook for a class I took on Explorations of Faith in Film in World Cinema. It is not written from a faith perspective, but as any good film addresses the important stuff of life, it is good background material for such an exploration.

Cousins gives a compelling introduction to a vast number of international film genres and directors through his approach of describing the "schema and variation" of film innovators. He shows how, time and again, one director influences another throughout film history with new ways of using the new advances in film technology to tell new kinds of stories about new things that are going on in a changing world. Very readable, illustrated with movie stills (full color, unless the movie was B&W) on nearly every page.

One amusing thing was his strange obsession with the occupations of the parents of all the film directors he profiles. He introduced them as "dashing English son of an accountant" (David Lean) or "son of a fertilizer merchant" (Yasujiro Ozu). After a while, it became a game for me to see whether he'd do it yet again, and he did in almost every case. The few where he omitted that detail were probably ones where he wasn't able to find out the info. I wondered whether he was trying to make an unarticulated point -- that good film directors can come from just about any stock.

My only complaint is that, due to the high quality glossy paper it's printed on, the book is so heavy: 2.75 lbs

is excessive for a paperback! But the content is weighty, so it was worth carrying around.

Bernard O'Leary says

Slightly redundant in light of the documentary series but still an impressive undertaking

Martin Raybould says

This is the best book about the art of film I have ever read.

Mark Cousins shows what makes movies work and gives them their power

By adopting an admirably non-elitist global standpoint and by writing in plain, jargon-free English, he combines the enthusiasm of a fan with the thrill of discovery.

It's a perspective that means he can convey as much admiration for Laurel & Hardy as for Ozu and Godard.

The subtext is that there are always many ways of seeing the world and true magic happens when a film succeeds in tapping into our dreams or exposing us to our nightmares.

At a time when mainstream American movies in particular are rapidly running out of ideas, this book is a timely and impassioned reminder that great cinema, like great literature, should not deaden the brain but inspire us to see the world from other points of view.

(A fuller version of this review can be found on the Animal My Soul blog)

Ruby Tombstone [With A Vengeance] says

I NEED THIS. You don't even understand how much. I just watched the tv series, and it was AMAZING. The guy has some serious chops. And the most hypnotic narration in cinematic history. Yes - I said, "cinematic". Even the series is filmic. Genius.

Andy Norton says

For anyone looking for a film history book that covers the medium from all angles and areas of the world, then The Story of Film would satisfy your desire very well. Thoroughly in depth, in both technical and artistic achievements Mark Cousins' writing makes every film sound like an important milestone from one paragraph to another. Whilst those familiar with film guides that recommend the same films repeatedly may be in for a shock amongst some of the snubs over such celebrated films. Even Cousins admits this in his introduction when one of his favourite films does not make the cut.

The Story of Film is an engaging read for anyone interested in film. Whether you've seen a good portion of the films mentioned throughout the book, to the casual viewer that wants to push the boat further in their film-viewing habits, this book is worth reading for some technical, historical, and cultural aspects throughout the scope that films have gone through ever since its inception.

gramakri says

This is a very well written jargon-free history of cinema. Readers interested in knowing about the finer aspects of film making will find it very enjoyable.

A must read for all the serious lovers of cinema who want to develop the art of film appreciation.

It can also be a very good introductory text book on history of cinema.

For more details about this book visit

<http://bookwormsrecos.blogspot.in/200...>

Russio says

Almost encyclopaedic write up of the key changes in the history of cinema from pre-Lumiere Bros to the current digital age. A really interesting read that highlights loads of films worth seeing and gives context to many that you may have already enjoyed (for example, the link between *Ali: Fear eats the Soul* and *All That Heaven Allows* is one that I had been aware of, but I had not been aware of the political reasons why the latter film-maker may have wanted to emulate the former). This book celebrates both technical innovation and artistic creativity: my interest is much more in the latter, so I did not share the excitement about the technical skill of, say, *The Matrix* as much as some readers might. Also, some films that seemed a little average to me were elevated to greater status by the writer, but again, you have to allow for idiosyncrasy in these things. A great read - really interesting and worth savouring.

Chris Campbell says

An amazing overview of the story of film with a clear point of view and a wealth of information and a massive list of films to see. A book that is general and broad and interesting. It's a great leaping off point for a journey through film that takes a path a bit outside of the major films that everyone agrees you should see. The other interesting thing is that it's really the story of film in the world with a focus on filmmakers who are from outside of the Hollywood tradition. It's fun and comprehensive and really gives a fun sense of filmmaking and how why we love it so.

M. Ryan says

Cousins primarily focuses on auteur theory, discussing influential directors more than actors. The treatment of the technical aspect of film is superficial. Instead, the book is a celebration of great cinema and its best artists. He touches upon the important trends, movements, and genres in film history without spending too much time on any one film. Probably not the best choice for readers without some understanding of film history.

Pete Dobson says

I really enjoyed this book. A masterly an erudite study.

becksgee says

Go-to book for when I've drunk too much coffee and can't get to sleep. I'm not joking, but Cousins does a good job of condensing the last century into something of a whistle-stop tour of the history of cinema, without skimping on details about filming techniques and the filmmakers themselves. For anyone with at least a passing interest in film, it's full of interesting stuff- pick a page at random, and you're good to go. One thing which Cousins must be commended for is for his thorough recording of film history from all corners of the globe: the temptation for Westerners is to only write about the contributions to cinema from the USA and Europe. Cousins leaves no stone unturned, highlighting India and Japan's importance in testing and innovating cinematic techniques over the past 100 years, and details the filmic debuts of places as far-flung as Senegal and Eastern Europe.

In all, a book that is definitely worth the read, but not one that you could finish in one sitting.

Evan says

Cousins' approach to film history appears to be scintillating and provocative; he doesn't much care about the audiences or the critics or the financial or economic vagaries or concerns of the industry or marketplace, he is purely interested in artistic innovation in cinema---so his overview sticks to that premise. I can only glean this from the intro and from quick skims through the contents; I have just begun to read the first few pages. I have a lot of different movie overview texts in my collections. I'll always have a fondness for David A. Cook's "History of Narrative Film" and David Shipman's iconoclastic and thorough "The Story of Cinema," among other tomes, but this effort by Cousins promises to shed light on obscure gems often overlooked in standard overviews. And the super heavy, high quality paper on which the book is printed seems to add "weight" to the importance of the enterprise. Kind of reminds me of that old compilation by Lewis Jacobs of film writings by the communist film critic Harry Alan Potamkin, "The Compound Cinema" -- a great book and also the heaviest for its size that I've ever felt; the paper seems made of indestructible lead. Will report later....

Derek Baldwin says

A fantastic book which is engagingly written by a true cineaste who knows his subject inside-out. What is especially notable about Cousins' book, as with the outstanding TV series, is how he takes pains to correct, a little at any rate, the way in which women's role in film history (film as art, rather than as box office, that is) is underestimated. He's very fair in his comments, freely admits he has been highly selective, and this is excellent for dipping into whenever the mood takes you. If you appreciate the art form of film then this will enhance your enjoyment. If you like escapism and car chases, fair do's, don't bother with this.

Lauren says

The best book about film history I have read thus far. A must-read for cinema lovers who want to learn about the development of movies over the past century.

Ed says

Very comprehensive and interesting history of global cinema from the beginning in roughly decade long chunks and covering a wealth of non Western masterpieces as well as the usual suspects. Very focused on film technique, shot construction and very different from most film histories. There is a 15 program DVD to go with this book and that is also very interesting though obviously less detailed.

Brad Abraham says

Comprehensive, and I mean *comprehensive* look at film, from its origins right through to the digital age. But unlike a lot of books, this focuses on the cinema of the entire world, not just Hollywood, and in a thankfully accessible way. Whether a seasoned veteran or someone new to the world of film there's much to recommend here.

José Ribeiro says

An essential read on film history and analysis which flows like a novel. Informative, passionate and personal, provides insight into film-making and its evolution spanning more than a century and covering worldwide filmography. The author tries to showcase the way widely known films, personalities and events have influenced lesser known cinematographers from almost all points in the world and vice-versa. And not only succeeds in it but makes one regret having so short a time to catch-up on all there is still to see...

Note on the Portuguese translation: Various inaccuracies in translation and mostly in proofreading make for a less pleasurable read than the original would have provided. A pity.
