



Directed by Steven Spielberg: Poetics of the Contemporary Hollywood Blockbuster

Warren Buckland

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Although the blockbuster is the most popular and commercially successful type of filmmaking, it has yet to be studied seriously from a formalist standpoint. This is in opposition to classical Hollywood cinema and International Art cinema, whose form has been analyzed and deconstructed in great detail. Directed By Steven Spielberg fills this gap by examining the distinctive form of the blockbuster. The book focuses on Spielberg's blockbusters, because he is the most consistent and successful director of this type of film - he defines the standard by which other Hollywood blockbusters are judged and compared. But how did Spielberg attain this position? Film critics and scholars generally agree that Spielberg's blockbusters have a unique look and use visual storytelling techniques to their utmost effectiveness. In this book, Warren Buckland examines Spielberg's distinct manipulation of film form, and his singular use of stylistic and narrative techniques.

The book demonstrates the aesthetic options available to Spielberg, and particularly the choices he makes in structuring his blockbusters. Buckland emphasizes the director's activity in making a film (particularly such a powerful director as Spielberg), including: visualizing the scene on paper via storyboards; staging and blocking the scene; selecting camera placement and movement; determining the progression or flow of the film from shot to shot; and deciding how to narrate the story to the spectator.

Directed By Steven Spielberg combines film studies scholarship with the approach taken by many filmmaking manuals. The unique value of the book lies in its grounding of formal film analysis in filmmaking.

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