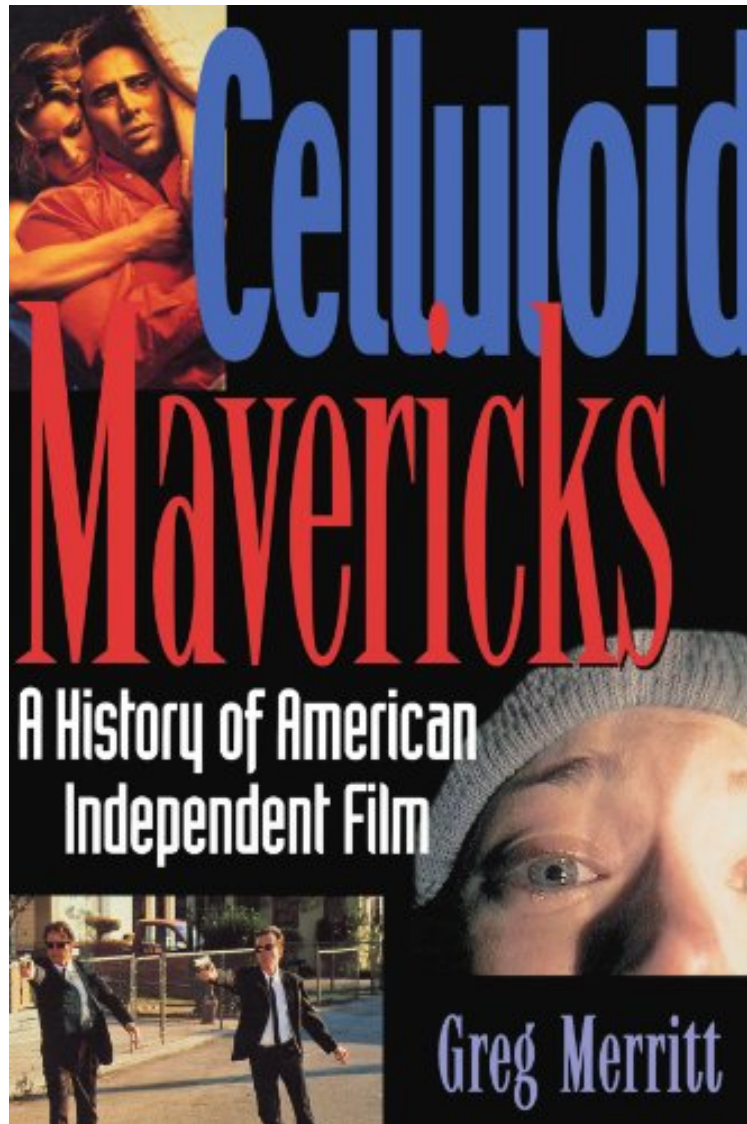


(Free read ebook) Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film Making

Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film Making

Greg Merritt

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Greg Merritt : Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film Making before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Film Making:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By Richard Saiz fairly good research, but could do without the personal commentary. not that authoritative 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By

Thomas DeRobertoExcellent product and service!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good readBy Matthew PietropaoliAn interesting, fast read for a university film course. However, I can say it's a bit of a letdown learning how cheaply and efficiently these amazing independent films were made.

Celluloid Mavericks: A History of American Independent Filmmaking documents this rich history, showing what it meant to be "independent" in the 1930s and what it means today. Author Greg Merritt distinguishes between indie and semi-indie productions, explores the genres represented under the independent umbrella, and addresses the question of what makes a movie independent -- its "spirit" or the budget backing the production. From one-reel flicks at the turn of the century to the blockbusters of the 90s, Celluloid Mavericks takes readers on a fascinating tour of the industry.

From Publishers WeeklySomewhere between Titanic and The Blair Witch Project lies the demarcation between commercial and "independent" film. In this thorough and audacious history, Merritt (How to Produce an Independent Film) attempts to offer a century's-end definition to this carelessly tossed-about term. "To truly gain freedom," he writes, "filmmakers must completely disassociate themselves from the studios until their vision is put on film: no financing, no presigned distribution agreement, no help, no interference." The dubious origins of independent cinema can be traced to a private screening of D.W. Griffith's Ku Klux Klan epic The Birth of a Nation in 1915. Merritt bestows the indie label on a select roster of films, mostly by "celluloid mavericks"--John Cassavetes, Roger Corman, John Sayles, Quentin Tarantino and the other usual suspects--who have had the courage to defy mainstream ideas and ideals. His excessive plot/theme analysis and Pauline Kael aspirations notwithstanding, Merritt applies sound research and an infectious amount of enthusiasm, often conveyed through sidebar anecdotes, cost-to-gross ratio charts, lists of award-winners and time lines. Yet while his linear narrative promises a sweeping conclusion, the last chapter fails to deliver. Instead of analyzing the relationship between the rise of Gen-X viewers and the recent proliferation of indie films, or offering predictions about the future of independent cinema, Merritt gets lost in the trees where the Blair Witch lurks and misses the forest. Agent, Victoria Sanders. (Feb.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalThe blandness of current Hollywood product and the rise of a viable indie scene has increased public interest in the American independent filmmaking movement. This book is a timely look at a century of indie films--which the author defines as projects financed and produced outside the control of a studio. Attacking the subject from all angles, Merritt (a screenwriter and author of How To Produce an Independent Film) shows how forces like the Production Code, the blacklisting crisis, the breakdown of the studio system, and the counterculture of the Vietnam era shaped the indie film scene. But determining what an independent is gets more complicated as companies like Miramax fold into entertainment conglomerates, and Merritt stretches the definition by including genres like pornography, low-budget horror films, "underground" films of the 1950s and 1960s, even works by bad movie auteurs like Ed Wood. Although a narrower focus might have helped, this whirlwind tour of American independent films is recommended for most public and academic libraries.--Stephen Rees, Levittown Regional Lib., PA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sHow refreshing to be reminded that independent film didn't begin with Quentin Tarantino and the Sundance Institute: Merritt (How to Produce an Independent Film, not reviewed) takes us back considerably further. Although Tarantino and his infernal offspring seem to think they invented cutting-edge cinema, there have been independent filmmakers in the US almost since there have been filmmakers. As Merritt's leisurely pop history shows readers, even D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation is really an indie film, produced outside the prevailing studio framework, primitive as it was in 1915. Tracing the development of movie outsiders chronologically, Merritt discerns certain common threads that run from the beginning of the silent era right up to the present. And an odd assortment of threads they are: ethnic and "race" films, films by women, exploitation and horror films, documentaries, avant-garde experimental works. In short, the independent umbrella covers almost anyone who couldn't or wouldn't make it in the factory-like conditions of Hollywood. As a reminder of nearly forgotten veterans like William Foster (an early black filmmaker) and Poverty Row stalwarts like Hugo Haas, Merritt is a nice corrective. But the sheer disparity among these many different kinds of films and filmmakers makes for an uneasy narrative, and Merritt doesn't help matters by making some seemingly logical but finally arbitrary divisions in time; how helpful to readers can it be to have the career of life-long indie cineastes like John Cassavetes and John Sayles strung together over two and three chapters? Merritt is capable of some wonderfully wry humor, and his critical judgments are thoughtful, but the writing and editing of the book are careless, and it too often turns into a catalog of plot synopses. An adequate introduction for someone who knows no film history, but there are more rigorous works covering the same material. -- Copyright 2000, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.