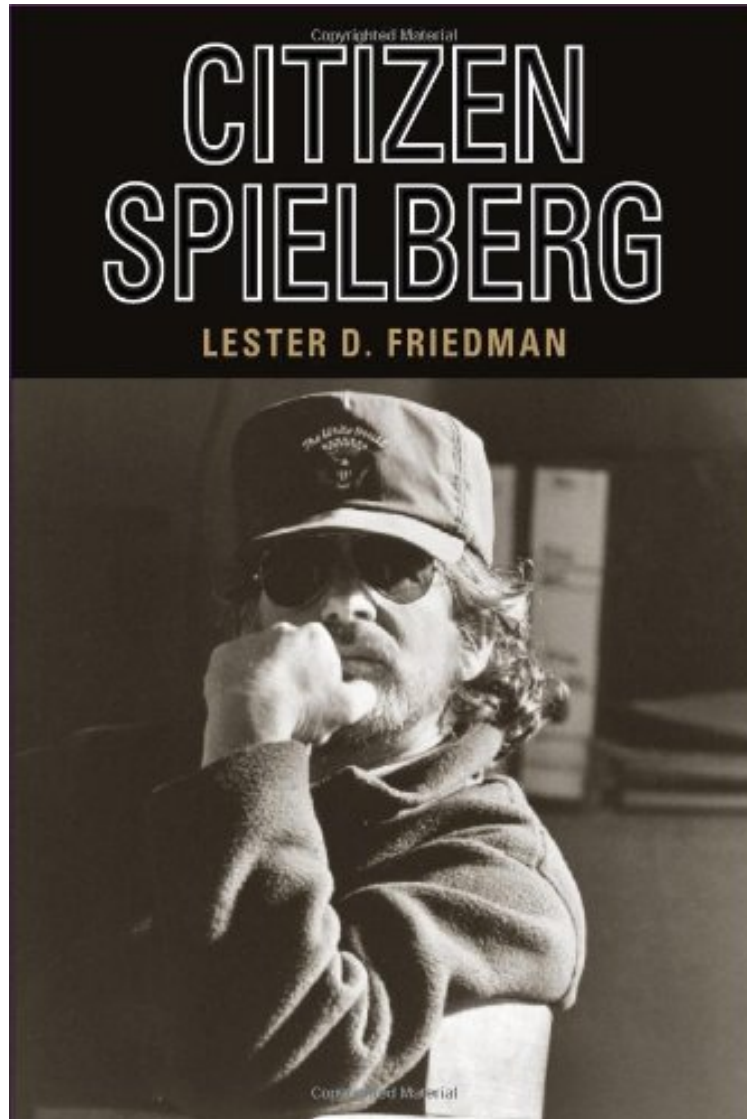


(Free pdf) Citizen Spielberg

Citizen Spielberg

Lester D. Friedman

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Lester D. Friedman : Citizen Spielberg before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Citizen Spielberg:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This book did a good job analyzing and explaining the producers background and how ...By D. RandallI read this for a class. I'm by no means a movie buff and I hadn't seen several of the Spielberg movies required for the class. This book did a good job analyzing and explaining the producers background and how his personal traits made their way into the movies.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The best book about Spielberg ever madeBy JLRIf you've watched your first movie in your life, chances are

it's either a Steven Spielberg film or a Steven Spielberg production. Spielberg's influence on cinema landscape has been profound to the point of immeasurable. Yet it's that same influence that has also denied Spielberg a legitimate critical study that respects his work and sees merit (with the possible exception of Roger Ebert, David Bordwell, Richard Schickel and, to a lesser extent, Stephen Prince). For reasons ranging from inexplicable to exaggerating, the mention of Spielberg's name in the film academia is met with groans, moans and hisses. And as the writer of this book admits, his most daunting moment of writing about Spielberg came when a fellow colleague sneered that he was the Antichrist. Needless to say, if you read an essay about Spielberg, chances are it'll be less than enthusiastic. That's all about to change thanks to Lester D. Friedman's exemplary "Citizen Spielberg", which covers all of Spielberg's movies right up to "Munich" (2005). Most film scholars, especially the worst, have either written vapid biographies (Joseph McBride's "Spielberg") or patronizing, pro-Marxist essays (Andrew Britton's "Blissing Out: The Politics of Reaganite Entertainment"; Robin Wood's "Papering the Cracks: Fantasy and Ideology in the Reagan Era", Peter Biskind's "Blockbuster: The Last Crusade"; anything by Jump Cut) that reduce his movies to political symptoms, yet praise other, less interesting movies for the same reasons (Ex: Is there anything more baffling than hearing Robin Wood say that "Mandingo" is a masterpiece, but that "E.T." is sexist?). Friedman does Spielberg (and his fans) tremendous justice - instead of viewing Spielberg as a purveyor of mindless entertainment, he sees him as a far more complex, sophisticated and wry filmmaker than most of his peers. Instead of dissecting each of Spielberg's movies one by one, Friedman creates a thematic study, putting Spielberg's movies in several categories, ranging from science-fiction and fantasy films to monster movies to social problem/ethnic minority films, before concluding the book with an essay solely dedicated to "Schindler's List". Friedman's approach actually works - not only does it allow for a richer critical analysis, but it also shows the growth of Spielberg as a director and how these movies differ in tone, style and context. Like many good movie writers, Friedman creates a theory about Spielberg and debunks it, using a movie scholar's essay and then proving it wrong. My personal favorite moments are when Friedman views the "Indiana Jones" trilogy as a satire and even an indictment on masculine behavior and when Friedman writes about his e-mail argument with Frank P. Tomasulo over "Saving Private Ryan". It also shows that Spielberg's movies are more than just blockbusters. People that whine on how Spielberg has done nothing special in recent years seem to forget that he has been making movies for over 35 years, which is an achievement only matched by equally talented directors like Scorsese and Allen. Yet these same people also seem to forget, as Friedman points out, that Spielberg may be the most versatile, even daring American director today. Name one director who has made science-fiction, fantasy, action/adventures, historical dramas, romantic comedies and even a political thriller under his belt and still bare his signature directing style. No other director - not Griffith, not Scorsese, not Kubrick, not Welles, not even the giants of European cinema, has that range. Friedman's book is anything but a superficial apologia, though. As he writes about Spielberg's weaker movies ("Always", "Hook", "1941"), they are more fun to talk about than see. Some of Spielberg's "mature movies", like "The Color Purple" and "Amistad", are given begrudging respects, if not outright enthusiasm. And like many detractors, Friedman criticizes Spielberg for his shallow portrait of women. Unlike those critics, however, Friedman sees this not as a reflection of his sexist behavior, but as a limitation on the part of the director. In all honesty, it's annoying that Spielberg gets criticized by writers for his depiction of women, yet more esteemed filmmakers like Hitchcock, Ford and Kubrick are given a free pass, despite their generally simplistic, even irrational, attitude towards women on film. Friedman's criticism, however, thankfully has none of the hyperbole of Biskind's empty-headed essays. For example, the notorious "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom", one of Spielberg's many 80s movies that labeled him a Reaganesque director, is scrutinized, but Friedman argues that it is more or less a mirror of the director's state of mind at the time (the infamous "Twilight Zone" incident) than a symbol of the Reagan years. I wish books like this existed more, because there hasn't been an indispensable critical portrait of Spielberg that does him or his movies justice. Even his most sympathetic biographers (Joseph McBride and Richard Schickel) have come short. But Friedman comes through with this outstanding critical study that deserves more recognition than it is getting right now. If there isn't a better book about Spielberg, I missed it. Read this book and I promise you that you'll never look at Spielberg the same way again. Strongest recommendation to buy.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Insightful Book About Spielberg and his films By KLLI am surprised there is no review about this great book yet! Well let me remedy this by telling anyone who wants to buy this book that its worth the purchase. Lester Friedman does his darnedest to analyze all of Spielberg works (to Munich up to the point of its 2006 publication). You not only get various interpretations about Spielberg's well-known classics such as Jaws and the Indiana Jones trilogy but he also delve into his films that are classified as failures such as 1941, Always, and Hook and why they are considered weaknesses when he indulge into one specific genre. Friedman also delve into the many themes that Spielberg tackles such as child like behaviour when you are young, fatherly issues, and flight into genres that deal with sci-fi, fantasy, action/adventure, horror, World War II, and race/social problems. For anyone who thinks he just a big blockbuster director should read this book and rewatch his films. My only trepidation is the fact that this book is not updated to include the fourth Indiana Jones film Tintin, Warhorse, and Lincoln in the future because I would love to hear his thoughts about these recent films. Overall this is a five out of five, I recommend this book who loves film in general.

A study of Spielberg's film career, this text analyses the components of Spielberg's worldview, the issues which animate his most significant works, the roots of his immense acceptance, and the influence his vast spectrum of imaginative products exerts on the public consciousness.

About the AuthorLester D. Friedman is currently scholar-in-residence at Hobart and William Smith Colleges.He is the author of *The Jewish Image in American Film*, *Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde*, and (with David Desser) *American Jewish Filmmakers*."