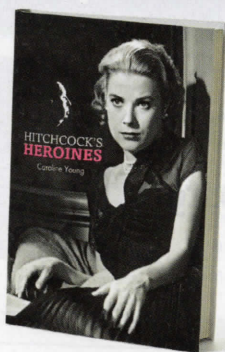


HOT OFF THE PRESS

Beat the summer heat with this cool collection of moviemaking tomes

BY RYAN COLEMAN, MALIN KAN, GRANT VANCE AND RYAN WILLIAMS



Hitchcock's Heroines
Caroline Young
Insight Editions.
192 Pages

Caroline Young is the Scottish author of several books on film and fashion, most recently *Hitchcock's Heroines*, a big, beautiful survey of women's style in the films of Alfred Hitchcock.

Each entry focuses on one actress in one of Hitchcock's films, arranged chronologically from June Howard-Tripp in *The Lodger* (1927) to the only double bill, Anna Massey and Barbara Leigh-Hunt in *Frenzy* (1972). Young's five-decade tableau does indeed cover fashion—from Hitchcock's era-defining collaboration with Edith Head, to his "Victorian, suppressive instinct for fetishism" manifested through costume. But beyond the gorgeously reproduced production stills

and concept designs (Christian Dior's sketches for Marlene Dietrich's wardrobe in *Stage Fright* are a highlight) lie vital gestures toward under-discussed elements that make up the reactive cauldron of Hitchcock's cinema. Frequent contributions from "the era's only female writing team" (Alma Reville, Hitchcock's wife, and Joan Harrison, his former secretary and future producer of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*), for example, are faithfully chronicled.

Hitchcock's notoriously troubled relationship with women in general goes chillingly un-challenged in *Hitchcock's Heroines*. In any other year that might slip under the radar, but 2018 is not one of those years. Daily, it seems, the cascade of allegations condemning men in Hollywood who've abused their power continues to flow. Though it's clear Young didn't set out to analyze but to document, the tacts she took sometimes left me cold. "While other more experienced actresses could laugh it off," she writes of Tippi Hedren, Hitch's most enduring detractor, on the set of *The Birds* (1963), "perhaps her fear of being out of her depth made her more vulnerable." Perhaps so. Perhaps, too, the director took strategic advantage of that fear, exacerbating her feeling of vulnerability to make her more pliable, isolated. Perhaps this strategy is in part what rendered the iconic looks and performances which made this very book possible.

THE TAKEAWAY:

Hitchcock's Heroines is a powerful aesthetic achievement that lands somewhat stiltedly during a moment wherein a newfound skepticism toward problematic male geniuses is being enthusiastically exercised. The roadmap to any

such reckoning is bound to be circuitous, and it's perhaps foolish to demand that a coffee table-style book succeed visually *and* narratively in telling the macro story behind one of the 20th century's most influential image makers. (The technical play-by-play of the Hayes Code-demolishing kiss scene between Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant in *Notorious* is, pun fully intended, spellbinding.) In this respect, even the buffest Hitch-head will be bowled over by the details Young has artfully uncovered. — R.C.



Transcendental Style in Film
Paul Schrader
University of California Press.
232 Pages

In 1972, film student and aspiring critic Paul Schrader published his landmark study on spirituality in cinema, *Transcendental Style in Film*. Four years later, he broke into the film scene with his monumental screenplay for Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, propelling a career that would span over 40 years. His latest directorial effort, *First Reformed*, was released this year to near-unanimous critical acclaim.

Transcendental Style in Film looks to canonized moviemakers Yasujir Ozu, Robert Bresson and Carl Theodor Dreyer to argue that, in withholding narrative action and subverting empathy, these

moviemakers use boredom as a tool to push viewers into contemplation—into a space where we're better able to accept "the paradox of the spiritual within the physical."

Inadvertently, Schrader outlined the philosophical foundation of contemporary slow cinema. With this recent republication, he devotes a new 35-page introduction that eagerly plows through a new era of contemplative moviemaking, drawing a "cosmogonic" map that places such diverse moviemakers as Andy Warhol, Bruno Dumont, and Jim Jarmusch in relation to their various non-narrative directions.

Readers new to academic film writing will find this book to be an ideal introduction, precise yet encompassing in its approach to film history and theory. The other camp of devotees—comprised of cinephiles aspiring to be moviemakers—will find a companion piece to Schrader's work, a vantage point from which we can see his theories as deftly articulated as applied.

THE TAKEAWAY:

For moviemakers, Schrader's analysis reads as instructive rather than analytical, offering ways in which directorial decisions can produce a powerful response that's more difficult to evoke than empathy—enlightenment.

At his most clinically academic, Schrader revels in some arbitrary aspects of film theory, which begs for a level of mental engagement that might at first feel like homework... until it doesn't. This deep dive into three all-time great moviemakers is the perfect example of why eating your cultural vegetables can be endlessly rewarding, potentially even life-changing. — M.K.