



On The Figure In General And The Body In Particular:

Figurative Invention In Cinema

Translated by Ted Fendt, By Nicole Brenez

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These wide-ranging essays covering an array of film genres and styles propose a method of cinematic analysis and interpretation that foregrounds film's formal and plastic qualities.

Films fill our imagination with figures, figurines, and talismans. They ceaselessly rework the same archetypes and invent troubling prototypes – especially when they establish a deeper relationship to reality. How do we understand these presences that are both so characteristic and so diverse in cinema? How does film deal with bodies, movements, and gestures? Why are we so drawn to these shadows, silhouettes, and hypothetical beings? What organizes the figurative values at work in a film? How do cinematic creatures circulate from film to film and image to image? How does film articulate the links between the abstract and figurative? Is it possible to write a history of figurative forms? Starting from films themselves and works that are both classical (Sergei Eisenstein, Roberto Rossellini, Orson Welles) and contemporary (Abel Ferrara, Brian DePalma, Patricia Mazuy), celebrated (Robert Bresson, John Cassavetes, Ken Jacobs, Paul Sharits) and overlooked (Al Razutis, Jean Genet, Monte Hellman, and John Travolta), from auteurs as well as aesthetic questions (representations of dance, the naked body, character development...), the essays in this volume, most available for the first in English, aim to open a field that has been neglected by analysis, while also suggesting the tools necessary to understanding figurative phenomena specific to cinema.

Key selling points

1. An expansive and original reconsideration of cinema's formal and plastic qualities.
2. A thought-provoking and original study of aspects of cinema that have often been overlooked, proposing a set of tools for studying film's figurative dimensions.
3. An essential and influential work of 1990s French film theory and criticism.
4. The essays in this volume provide remarkable analyses of film and film aesthetics from the perspective of the figure and the body and how these come to exist on film.

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Nicole Brenez is a professor of film studies at the University of Paris 3/Sorbonne Nouvelle and the Director of the Department "Analyse et Culture cinématographique" at Paris' film school La Fémis since 2017. She has curated avant-garde film series at the Cinémathèque française since 1996 and is the author and editor of numerous books on film.

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