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Filmish: A Graphic Journey Through Film



Synopsis

Cartoonist Edward Ross uses comics to illuminate the ideas behind our favorite movies. In *Filmish*, Ross's cartoon alter ego guides readers through the annals of cinematic history, introducing some of the strange and fascinating concepts at work in the movies. Each chapter focuses on a particular theme—the body, architecture, language—and explores an eclectic mix of cinematic triumphs, from *A Trip to the Moon* to *Top Gun*. Like other bestselling nonfiction graphic novels such as Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, *Filmish* tackles serious issues—sexuality, race, censorship, propaganda—with authority and wit, throwing new light on some of the greatest films ever made.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is fine, and not a waste of time. Still, if you're interested in learning about film, you're better off watching *The Story of Film* (actually, do this anyway) or reading any of a number of other introductory texts (which will likely point you in the right direction). If you're interested in the graphic info-novel format, this might be a good bet for you, though I question the idea of trying to talk about film using a combination of simple pictures and sparse text -- I could imagine this format working, but I don't think it does in this case. Also, this is just my personal taste, but I also didn't love (a) the prose [it tended towards the cliché and vague] or (b) the omnipresence of the narrator's (author's?) face.

I teach filmmaking to teenagers, so I am always on the lookout for new teaching tools and

resources. This is an excellent introduction to film theory for young people who have developed an enthusiasm for movies but know nothing about film studies. Not only is the graphic approach fun, fast and easy to understand but Ross has essentially created a superb illustrated bibliography here for those wanting a jumping off place into more in-depth study. If I taught an undergraduate college course in film history or appreciation, this would be required reading. I would also give it to advanced high school students. My one beef with Ross's approach is that I find him to present a number of popular critical positions somewhat uncritically himself. There is a lot of pleasure and enrichment to be had in movies that may be, for one reason or another, "problematic," from within a certain context. For some students, this book might lead to pre-judgement of works they have not experienced first hand. Overall, though, if taken for the many ways it is useful and enjoyable, an excellent guide.

This was fun, insightful and well produced. A great gift for anyone who likes films and is interested in some film history and theory.

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