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From Wheeler Dixon : Experimental Cinema, The Film Reader (In Focus: Routledge Film Readers) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Experimental Cinema, The

Film Reader (In Focus: Routledge Film Readers):

Experimental Cinema, The Film Reader brings together key writings on American avant-garde cinema to explore the long tradition of underground filmmaking from its origins in the 1920s to the work of contemporary film and video artists. The Reader traces the development of major movements such as the New American Cinema of the 1960s and the Structuralist films of the 1970s, examining the work of key practitioners and recovering neglected filmmakers. Contributors focus on the ways in which underground films have explored issues of gender, sexuality and race, and foreground important technical innovations such as the use of Super 8mm and video. Each section features an editor's introduction setting debates in their context. Sections include:

- *Origins of the American avant-garde cinema - Explores the influence of the birth of experimental film, and considers the early work of filmmakers such as Maya Deren.*
- The 1960s experimental film explosion - traces the development of the New American Cinema, examining the influence and work of key filmmakers such as Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Stan Brakhage, and collage filmmaker Bruce Conner.*
- Structuralism in the 1970s - Identifies and discusses the main figures in Structuralist film including Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton.*
- Alternative cinemas - Examines the work of recent filmmakers such as Isaac Julien, Julie Dash, and Barbara Hammer, and considers the future of experimental film.

Contents

1. The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945 by Jan-Christopher Horak
2. Notes on the New American Cinema by Jonas Mekas
3. The Woman Filmmaker in the New York Avant-Garde by Lauren Rabinovitz
4. Women in the Avant-Garde: Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren, Agnes Varda, Chantal Akerman and Trinh T. Minh-ha by Judith Mayne
5. Pop, Queer or Fascist? The Ambiguity of Mass Culture in Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* by Juan A. Suarez
6. Stan Brakhage - The 60th Birthday Interview by Suranjan Ganguly
7. The Perfect Queer Appositeness of Jack Smith by Jerry Tartaglia
8. An Interview with Carolee Schneemann by Kate Haug
9. The Flower Thief and The Film Poem: Warhol's Early Films and the Beat Writers by Reva Wolf
10. Walking on Thin Ice: The Films of Yoko Ono by Daryl Chin
11. Yoko Ono on Yoko Ono by Yoko Ono
12. Structural Film by P. Adams Sitney
13. Interview with Michael Snow by Scott MacDonald
14. The Films of Warren Sonbert by Phillip Lopate
15. Warren Sonbert Interview by David Ehrenstein
16. An Interview with Hollis Frampton by Peter Gidal
17. Re/Constructing Lesbian Auto /Biographies in *Tender Fictions* and *Nitrate Kisses* by Gwendolyn Audrey Foster
18. The Films of Sadie Benning and Su Friedrich by Chris Holmlund
19. Black Women's Independent Cinema by Gloria J. Gibson
20. Dark and Lovely Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film by Kobena Mercer

"Experimental Cinema: The Film Reader offers a wide selection of history, theory, criticism, interviews, and original writings by filmmakers of the American avant-garde. Editors (and contributors) Wheeler Winston Dixon and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster include a diverse selection of essays . . . any reader will ultimately find this collection a welcome addition to the literature on a form of filmmaking that has received limited critical attention." - Stuart Minnis, *Journal of Film and Video*

Experimental Cinema, The Film Reader brings together key writings on American avant-garde cinema to explore the long tradition of underground filmmaking from its origins in the 1920s to the work of contemporary film and video artists. The Reader traces the development of major movements such as the New American Cinema of the 1960s and the Structuralist films of the 1970s, examining the work of key practitioners and recovering neglected filmmakers. Contributors focus on the ways in which underground films have explored issues of gender, sexuality and race, and foreground important technical innovations such as the use of Super 8mm and video. Each section features an editor's introduction setting debates in their context. The book concludes with a valuable filmography of key films available." -- *Experimental Cinema: News and Resources on Experimental Films*. "This book covers a lot of familiar territory I've read in other film books, but Dixon and Foster have pulled out articles that give these topics a unique spin. For example, I particularly enjoyed Juan A. Suarez's "Pop, Queer, or Fascist? The Ambiguity of Mass Culture in Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising*". Other standout stuff includes Jonas Mekas, "Notes on the New American Cinema;" "The Perfect Queer Appositeness of Jack Smith," by Jerry Tartaglia [which] focuses less on Flaming Creatures specifically, and instead covers Smith's less known films, most of which were only screened during Smith's live performance pieces. Reva Wolf's "The Flower Thief: The 'Film Poem,' Warhol's Early Films, and the Beat Writers," clearly connects the pop artist's films as being very influenced by the Beat Writers. Another thing that Dixon and Foster try to do in the book is to give a lot of space to female avant garde filmmakers. Most other books seem to cover Maya Deren extensively, but then that's about it. Well, except for maybe a little Shirley Clarke thrown in, too. In *Experimental Cinema: The Film Reader*, there's some great interviews with Carolee Schneeman and Barbara Hammer, as well as a surprising little two article section on Yoko Ono. These are two interesting pieces, a reverential examination of her work by Daryl Chin and diary descriptions by Yoko herself on her films. Overall, well worth a read. ---

Underground Film Journal

From the Back Cover

1. The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945 Jan-Christoph Horak
2. Notes on the New American Cinema Jonas Mekas
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4. Women in the Avant-Garde: Germaine Dulac, Maya Deren, Agnes Varda, Chantal

Akerman and Trinh T. Himh-ha Judith Mayne 5. Pop, Queer or Fascist? The Ambiguity of Mass Culture in Kenneth Anger's Scorpio Rising Juan A. Suarez 6. Stan Brakhage - the 60th Birthday Interview Suranjan Ganguly 7. The Perfect Queer Appositeness of Jack Smith Jerry Tartaglia 8. An Interview with Carolee Schneemann Kate Haug 9. The Flower Thief' and The Film Poem: Warhol's early films and the Beat Writers Reva Wolf 10. Walking on Thin Ice: The Films of Yoko Ono Daryl Chin 11. Yoko Ono on Yoko Ono Yoko Ono 12. Structural Film P. Adams Sitney 13. Interview with Michael Snow Scott MacDonals 14. The Films of Warren Sonbert Phillip Lopate 15. Warren Sonbert Interview David Ehrenstein 16. An Interview with Hollis Frampton Peter Girdal 17. Reconstructing Lesbian Auto/Biography in Tender Fictions and Nitrate Kisses Gwendolyn Audrey Foster 18. The Films of Sadie Benning and Su Friedrich Chris Holmlund 19. Black Women's Independent Cinema Gloria Gibson 20. Dark and Lovely Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film Kobena Mercer. About the Author Wheeler Winston Dixon is the James Ryan Endowed Professor of Film Studies, University of Nebraska. He is author of over thirty volumes in film studies and cultural studies. Visit wheelerwinstondixon.com for more information on his many publications and experimental films. Many of Dixon's early experimental films are available at vimeo.com/channels/1080541 - his more recent films can be found at vimeo.com/channels/1080534 for viewing. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster is Willa Cather Endowed Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Foster is author of numerous books in the areas of film studies/cultural studies including Identity and Memory: The Films of Chantal Akerman. Foster's short experimental films can be viewed at vimeo.com/user33782190 See Foster's website at gwendolynaudreyfoster.com