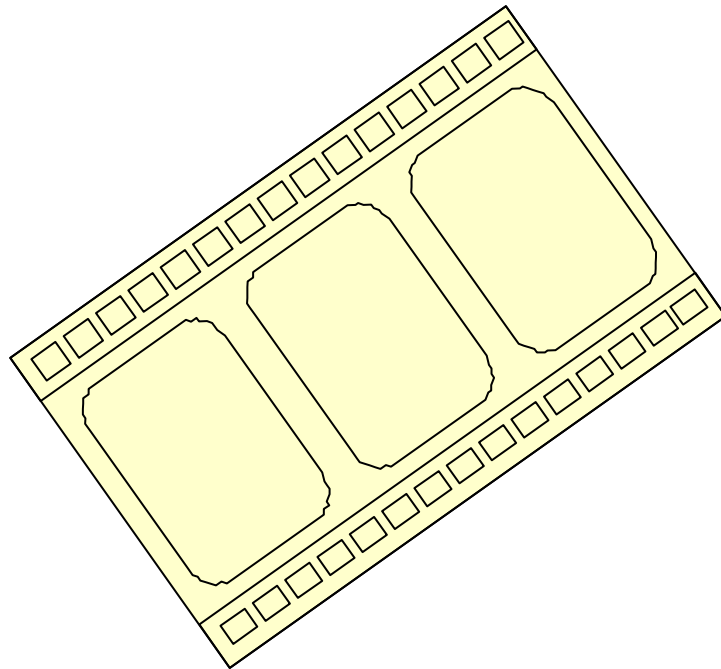


A Quick Cinematic History Lesson



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Origins of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Any overview of the history of cinema would be remiss to fail to at least mention a long history of literature, storytelling, narrative drama, art, mythology, puppetry, shadow play, cave paintings and perhaps even dreams. For the purposes of this ebook guide, the history of cinema begins with formative technological and artistic developments and achievements that led to the modern art of movies.

CINEMATIC DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

About 2,500 years before the present - **Mo-Ti** a Chinese philosopher ponders the phenomenology of an upside down image of the outside world beaming through a small hole in the opposite wall in a darkened room.

c. 350 BCE - Aristotle tells of watching an image of an eclipse beamed onto the ground through a sieve.

c. 1000 - Alhazen experiments with the same optical principle, and writes of the results.

1490 - Leonardo DaVinci describes a structure that would produce this effect.

1544 - Reinerus Gemma-Frisius, a Dutch scientist, illustrates large rooms built for the purpose of viewing eclipses by this means.

1588 - Giovanni Battista Della Porta tips off artists to this trick.

c. 1610 - Johannes Kepler refers to a construction that utilises this phenomenon as a *camera obscura*.

1671 - Athanasius Kircher projected images painted on glass plates with an oil lamp and a lens, his *Magic Lantern*.

1824 - Thaumatrope

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1831 - Faraday's Law of electromagnetic induction.

1820s - Joseph Plateau: Anorthoscope; Phenakistiscope. Spindle viewers. Flip books.

1834 - The Zoetrope (US), a.k.a., the **Daedalum** (England).

Victorian cinema c.1860-1901

1861 - Henri DuMont patents an apparatus for "reproducing successive phases of motion", British Patent 1,457.

1861 - The Kinematoscope is invented. This is a series of stereoscopic pictures on glass plates, linked together in a chain, and mounted in a box. The viewer turns a crank to see moving images.

1872 - Eadweard Muybridge designs the zoopraxiscope. French astronomer **Pierre Jules Cesar Janssen** develops a camera with a revolving photographic plate that makes exposures at regular, automatic intervals.

1877 - Muybridge begins experimenting with "serial photography" (or "chronophotography"), taking multiple exposed images of a running horse.

1878 - George Eastman manufactures photographic dry plates the same year **Thomas Edison** invents the first electric incandescent light bulb, archaically known as a magic lantern.

1880 - Muybridge begins **projecting** his studies of figures in motion.

1881 - Louis Lumiere develops a "dry plate" process with gelatin emulsion.

1882 - Etienne-Jules Marey, a French physiologist, makes a series of photographs of birds in flight. **Hannibal Goodwin** sells an idea to George Eastman, who markets it as "American film" : a roll of paper coated with emulsion.

1886 - Louis Le Prince patented his process for "the successive production of objects in motion by means of a projector"

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1887 - Ottomar Anschütz creates the electrotachyscope, which presents the illusion of motion with transparent chronophotography.

1889 - William Friese Greene developed the first "moving pictures" on celluloid film, exposing 20 feet of film at Hyde Park, London. George Eastman improves on his paper roll film, substituting the paper with plastic.

1890 - Friese Greene patents his process, but was unable to finance manufacturing of it, and later sold his patent.

[1] (<http://www.tales.ndirect.co.uk/FG1.HTML>)

1891 - Edison patents the Kinetoscopic camera invented by **William Kennedy Laurie Dickson**, which takes moving pictures on a strip of film (this was one of many inventions for which Edison claimed credit). A lighted box was used to view the pictures, the viewer was required to turn a handle to see the pictures "move". First called "arcade peepshows", these were to soon be known as nickelodeons. **Fred Ott's Sneeze** is the first Kinetographic film.

1892 - Peter Mark Roget explains the persistence of vision to the world in his paper *Persistence of Vision with Regard to Moving Objects*.

1893 - Edison Laboratories builds a film studio, in West Orange, New Jersey, dubbed the **Black Maria**. It was built on a turntable so the window could rotate toward the sun throughout the day, supplying natural light for the productions.

1894 - Louis Lumiere invents the cinematograph a single-unit camera, developer, and movie projector. Kinetoscopes, meanwhile, were popular and profitable. On January 7, **W.K. Dickson** receives a patent for motion picture film.

1895 - *The Arrival of a Train* premiered on a large screen December 28 at the Grand Cafe in Paris, France. **Louis** and his brother **Auguste Lumiere** also filmed ***Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory*** that year, while in the US **Woodville Latham** combined a Kinetoscope with a projecting device. People were avidly watching nickelodeons on Broadway in New York City.

1896 - Edison loses **W. K. Dickson** who joins with other inventors and investors to form the American Mutoscope Company. The company

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manufactured the mutoscope as a rival to the Kinetoscope and, like Edison, produced films for its invention. Expanding on the idea, American Mutoscope then developed the "biograph" which was a projector allowing films to be shown in theatres to a large audience rather than in single-user nickelodeons. Edison entered the competition for development of a large projector he called the Vitascope. This year also debuted the work of first female film director, **Alice Guy-Blaché's *The Cabbage Fairy***. Vitascope Hall in New Orleans opened in June of this year.

1897 - US President William McKinley's inauguration was filmed, the first US newsreel. In England the Prestwich Camera is patented.

1899 - With the success of the biograph, American Mutoscope changed its name to **American Mutoscope and Biograph Company**. In England Edward R. Turner and F. Marshall Lee create chronophotographic images through red, green and blue filters and project them with together with a three-lens projector.

1900 - **Synchronized sound** was first demonstrated in at the Paris Exposition with a sound-on-disc system.

The Silent Era c.1901-1919

1902 - The **Charles Urban Trading Company** was founded by Charles Urban, an American, in England. The company produced original films and distributed films made by the **Lumiere** brothers and **Georges Méliès** throughout Europe. Méliès filmed a mock coronation of Edward VII and it was presented in theaters the same night as the actual ceremony. **Léon Gaumont** begins experimenting with the possibilities of sound on film.

1903 - **Edwin S. Porter** produces ***The Great Train Robbery***.

1906 - **Eugene Lauste** patents a sound-on-film process in London.

1909 - **Georges Méliès' *A Trip to the Moon***, (*Le Voyage dans la Lune*), premieres, **the first science fiction film** with extravagant **special effects**. **George Albert Smith** produced a processed two-color system using panchromatic stock in Brighton for the Charles Urban Trading Company, this was dubbed Kinemacolor. The first public presentation of Kinemacolor was in February in London, when a series of twenty short movies by the

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Natural Colour Kinematograph Company was shown at the Palace Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue.

1910 - Wladyslaw Starewicz (Ladislas Starevich - Polish Director) - *The Beautiful Lukanida* - the first puppet animated film.

1912 - Universal Pictures Company is founded by Carl Laemmle in Hollywood.

1914 - Charlie Chaplin charms audiences as "The Little Tramp." **Vaudeville** begins to suffer from this redirected audience for entertainment, but early films soon became a new venue for many stage performers.

1917 - An estimated 3,000 cinemas in England.

[2] (http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/timelines/england/ear20_cinema_radio_media.shtml)

1919 - United Artists Corporation is collectively formed by **Charlie Chaplin, D.W. Griffith, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford.**

1920-1929

The **1920s** represented the era of greatest output in the US movie market. An average of 800 films were produced annually.

[3] (<http://www.filmsite.org/20sintro.html>)

While developments in color and sound were still in the experimental stage a strong demand for movies and, therefore, potential for profit, encouraged productions for commercial release.

The French model of commercial movie houses became the international model, and entrepreneurs scurried to build impressive movie houses across North America and Europe including theatres to seat up to 5,000 people.

1927 saw the introduction of some early zoom lenses. These were operated with a primitive hand crank. Optical lenses were not to be perfected for another 20 years.

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With many technical obstacles overcome, film as entertainment began to blossom as an art form in the 1920s, a decade heralded by **art deco** and **German expressionism**. **Rudolph Valentino** and **Charlie Chaplin** rose to stardom in this era, which also saw the premier of the first **Walt Disney** cartoon. **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** founded in **1927** with the first "Oscar" given in **1929**. The popularity of **Horror movies** is traced to this era with ***Nosferatu*** and ***The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari***. Abel Gance's ***Napoleon*** was one movie presented on three screens simultaneously, a hallmark of **epic filmmaking** and **film editing** that was to presage large format film projection system such as the three-projector **Cinerama** system of later decades.

Sound technology, both recording and playback technology, was slow in development. The 1920s would be largely dominated by silent features, often musically accompanied by an in-house organist, pianist or orchestra. Theatres would be the single largest source of employment for musicians. By the latter half of the decade, new innovations in audio, synchronized sound in the form of Vitaphone, allowed theatrical release of ***The Jazz Singer*** (1927), featuring **Al Jolson**. **1928** saw Disney's ***Steamboat Willie***, the first film with entirely post-produced dialogue, sound effects and score. The first all-out Hollywood musical, ***The Broadway Melody***, came to theatres in **1929**. The demand for musicians would dry up at the onset the depression.

1922 - The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America is created by **Will H. Hays** to serve as Hollywood's public relations firm. Hays would go on to dictate the **motion picture production code** which attempted to define objectionable content for US audiences. Other countries would institute their own "code" systems.

1924 - **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer** is founded by **Samuel Goldwyn** and **Louis B. Mayer**.

Sound & cinema 1930-1960

The Golden Age of Hollywood

"The Golden Age of Hollywood" in film history roughly refers to the period beginning with the advent of sound (this was, of course, prior to The Great Depression) until after the end of WWII. This was the heyday of the Hollywood studio system with tremendous output from **Universal, MGM, Columbia, UA, RKO, Paramount Studios, Twentieth Century Fox, and Warner Brothers.**

The Golden Age included some of the greatest movies ever made. Such films as *King Kong*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Gone With The Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Casablanca*, and *Citizen Kane*, are examples of the accomplishments in cinematic technique in this era. Golden Age Disney films include *Bambi*, (1942), and *Pinocchio* & *Fantasia* both from **1940**. *Fantasia* is notable for **Fantasound**, a project that incubated significant developments in film sound recording and playback techniques adopted and expanded upon by the **Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers**, particularly, **SMPTE** -- pronounced *SIMP-tee*.

The "Golden Age" effectively came to a close in **1948**, when in a landmark legal decision the Supreme Court of the United States found several major studios guilty of violating the [Sherman Antitrust Act](#), through their monopolizing control of the production, distribution, and exhibition of their movies.

Depression-era film

Genre films became popular in the **1930s: westerns, comedies, musicals, dramas and cartoons.** *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* incarnated into their silver screen depictions in **1931.** *King Kong* premiered in **1933.** **Howard Hughes** produces *Hell's Angels* in **1930.** Disney released several short animations in the beginning of the decade, including the first **Technicolor** production in **1932.**

Film noir

French film audiences began to notice a certain stylistic approach to certain genres, **Gangster** movies and crime dramas in particular, and began to refer to this type of movie as "**Film noir**". **Robert Siodmak's *The Killers*** (based on the Ernest Hemingway short story) is a prime example. **Suspicion**, (1941), and **Saboteur**, (1942) were **Alfred Hitchcock's** contributions to the style. **Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*** (1941), one of the most critically and popularly acclaimed movies of all time, helped to establish film noir and became one of its icons, as did the similarly heralded **Casablanca**, with **Humphrey Bogart**. Bogart would star in 36 films between 1934 and (1942) including John Huston's **The Maltese Falcon**, (1941).

The 1940s: The War and Post-War Years

The industry and audiences turned away from dark gangster tales with the onset of the US involvement with WWII, lighter fare offered more escapism. Also came a proliferation of movies as both **patriotism** and **propaganda**. Notable films from the war years include the anti-Nazi ***Watch on the Rhine*** (1943), scripted by **Dashiell Hammett**; ***Shadow of a Doubt*** (1943), Hitchcock's direction of a script by **Thornton Wilder**; and the **George M. Cohan** biopic, ***Yankee Doodle Dandy*** (1942), starring **James Cagney**. 1946 saw RKO Radio releasing ***It's a Wonderful Life*** directed by **Frank Capra**. **Samuel Fuller's** experiences in WWII would influence his largely autobiographical films of later decades such as ***The Big Red One***. **Oskar Fischinger** films ***Motion Painting No. 1***, 1947. **The Actor's Studio** was founded in **October 1947** by **Elia Kazan**, **Robert Lewis**, and **Cheryl Crawford**.

The Silver Age

With the "Silver Age" a new medium had begun to rise. Living rooms would soon be invaded by **television**. The increasing popularity of this medium meant that some movie theatres would go bankrupt and close. Distressed on the increasing number of closed theatres, studios and companies would

find new and innovative ways to bring audiences back, but first, Hollywood would have to endure another controversial time...

The 1950s

The **cold war era zeitgeist** translated into a paranoia manifested in themes such as invading armies of evil aliens, (***Invasion of the Body Snatchers***); and communist fifth columnists, (***The Manchurian Candidate***). With television keeping audiences home, studios came up with clever ways to virtually widen their appeal with new screen formats. **CinemaScope**, which would remain a 20th Century Fox distinction until **1967**, was announced with 1953's ***The Robe***. **VistaVision**, **Cinerama**, boasted a "bigger is better" approach to marketing movies to a shrinking US audience. The demise of the "studio system" spurred the self-commentary of the 1950 film, ***Sunset Boulevard***.

Gimmicks proliferated to lure in audiences. The magic of **3-D film** would last for only two years, **1952-1954**, and helped sell ***The Creature From The Black Lagoon***. Producer **William Castle** would tout films featuring "Emergo" "Percepto", the first of a long line of gimmicks that would remain popular marketing tools for Castle and others throughout the 1960s.

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) set the stage for ***The Blackboard Jungle*** (1955). TV productions were notable, e.g. **Paddy Chayefsky's Marty** (1953) was produced for television before the 1955 big screen version. Some directors would refine their styles for TV which attracts talent as well as audiences.

The **House Committee on Un-American Activities** investigated Hollywood in the early 1950's. Protested by the **Hollywood Ten** before the committee, the hearings resulted in the blacklisting of many actors, writers and directors, including **Chayefsky**, **Charlie Chaplin**, and **Dalton Trumbo**.

Disney's ***Sleeping Beauty*** was released on January 29, 1959 by **Buena Vista Distribution** after nearly a decade in production.

Modern movies 1960-2000

Post-Classical Cinema and the Bronze Age

Post-classical cinema (which roughly coincides with the *Bronze Age of Hollywood*) is defined by new approaches to drama and characterization that played upon audience expectations acquired in the classical/Golden Age period. **Heroes** became mortal, storylines featured "twist endings", lines between the **antagonist** and **protagonist** were blurred. Audiences were kept off-balance.

It is impossible to pinpoint exactly when the "post-classical era" began, film noir pointed in this direction, as did 1955's **Rebel Without a Cause**, and many other examples. 1960 is a good approximation, notable for Hitchcock's storyline shattering *Psycho*. The **MacGuffin** is a good example of a Post-Classical plot device.

Maverick directors

- [Stanley Kubrick](#)
- [John Cassavetes](#)
- [Sam Peckinpah](#)
- [Francis Ford Coppola](#)
- [Brian DePalma](#)
- [Roman Polanski](#)

The underground

Underground film refers to low budget, often self-produced works created outside of the studio system and without the involvement of labor unions. Student films such as **Dan O'Bannon** and John Carpenter's *Dark Star*

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should be included in this category, but are also considered Independent film.

Experimental film that used cinema as a vehicle of fine art had been produced since the 1940s, for example the work of **Harry Everett Smith** and **Maya Deren**, but social movements of the 1960s produced a larger and more receptive audience for this type of work and more contributors to the field, such as **Kenneth Anger**. Pornographic movies also avoided union involvement and appealed to an alternative, underground, audience. Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet **Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*** is an example of an independently created, underground movie that used post-classical plot devices -- Van Peebles touted this film as pornography project during its production to avoid complications with the **Screen Actor's Guild**.

The Digital Age

After the decade of the 1970s helped define the blockbuster motion picture, the way Hollywood released its films changed. Now films, for the most part, would premiere in an even wider number of theatres, although, to this day, some movies still premiere using the route of the limited/roadshow release system. Until this new "Digital Age", the primary way for audiences to see their favorite films again and again was to re-release films. But the medium of home video would change all of this.

Among the terms most associated with this new era include:

- [George Lucas: *Star Wars*](#)
- [Industrial Light and Magic](#)
- [Steven Spielberg: *Jaws*](#)

The '80s: Sequels, Blockbusters and Videotape

The shift that occurred in the 1980s from seeing movies in a theater to watching videos on a VCR, is a move close to the original concepts of Thomas Edison. In the early part of that decade, the movie studios tried

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legal action to ban home ownership of VCRs as a violation of copyright, which proved unsuccessful. That proved most fortunate, however, as the sale and rental of their movies on home video became a significant source of revenue for the movie companies. **Bollywood THX Ltd**, a division of Lucasfilm launched in 1982. [4]

(<http://www.thx.com/mod/company/milestones.html>) Martin Scorsese's ***Raging Bull*** (1980); ***After Hours*** (1985); ***The King of Comedy*** (1983).

The '90s: Technical Advances

Quentin Tarantino's ***Pulp Fiction***. Influence of Comics. ***Smoke***, 1995. In the 1990s, cinema began the process of making another transition, from physical film stock to digital cinema technology. I.E. - Pixar, *The Matrix*. Meanwhile, in the home video realm, the DVD would become the new standard for watching movies after their standard theatrical releases.

Addendum

"[Independent film](#)" may be defined as any motion picture financed and produced without the aid of a movie studio. These works have contributed to the history of cinema from the early days, and will continue to do so. Notable independent filmmakers include a plethora of diverse auteurs such as [D. W. Griffith](#), [Maya Deren](#), [Orson Welles](#), [Russ Meyer](#), [John Sayles](#), [Jim Jarmusch](#), [John Waters](#), and [Roger Corman](#).