

Intro

Definition of New Hollywood The New Hollywood era, also known as the American New Wave, refers to a period in the late 1960s to early 1980s characterized by a significant shift in filmmaking practices, storytelling techniques, and the structure of the American film industry

This era saw the rise of auteur directors who brought a fresh, more personal, and sometimes controversial approach to filmmaking, often influenced by European cinema

Historical Context The decline of the studio system in the late 1950s and early 1960s, along with social and political upheavals such as the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the counterculture, set the stage for the New Hollywood era

The rise of television had also significantly impacted traditional film audiences, prompting Hollywood to explore new ways to attract viewers

The Decline of the Studio System

End of the Golden Age By the 1960s, the traditional studio system was in decline due to various factors, including the Paramount Decision of 1948, which forced studios to divest their theater chains and dismantle the vertical integration model

The rise of television reduced movie theater attendance, forcing studios to reconsider their strategies and seek new ways to appeal to audiences

Cultural Shifts The social upheavals of the 1960s, including the counterculture movement, anti-war protests, and the Civil Rights Movement, influenced the themes and styles of films produced during this period

Younger audiences were seeking more relevant, innovative, and challenging content, prompting studios to take risks on new filmmakers and unconventional narratives

The Rise of Auteur Directors

Characteristics of Auteur Filmmaking The New Hollywood era is marked by the emergence of auteur directors who had a distinct personal style and creative control over their films

The Rise of Auteur Directors (cont)

Directors like Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Robert Altman, and Stanley Kubrick became known for their unique visions and the ability to blend artistic expression with commercial appeal

Influence of European Cinema The influence of the French New Wave and Italian Neorealism was significant, with American directors adopting more experimental techniques, non-linear narratives, and a focus on character-driven stories

Films were often more introspective, focusing on flawed, complex characters and themes such as alienation, identity, and social issues.

Notable Films and Directors "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967) directed by Arthur Penn is often cited as a turning point, breaking conventional storytelling rules and portraying antiheroes in a sympathetic light



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Page 1 of 3.

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The Rise of Auteur Directors (cont)

"Easy Rider" (1969) directed by Dennis Hopper became a symbol of the counterculture, with its low budget, improvisational style, and exploration of freedom and rebellion

Other iconic films include Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather" (1972) and "Apocalypse Now" (1979), Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver" (1976), and Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange" (1971)

Changes in Film Content and Style

New Themes and Subject Matter Films of the New Hollywood era often dealt with more mature and controversial themes, including violence, sexuality, anti-establishment sentiments, and existential dilemmas

The traditional "hero" archetype was often subverted, with films focusing on antiheroes, morally ambiguous characters, and narratives that questioned American values and the status quo

Changes in Film Content and Style (cont)

Innovative Cinematic Techniques Directors experimented with cinematography, editing, and sound, leading to the use of jump cuts, handheld cameras, long takes, and eclectic soundtracks that mixed popular music with classical scores

Editing techniques became more dynamic, with some films employing non-linear storytelling and unconventional narrative structures

Realism and Grit The New Hollywood films often embraced a more realistic and gritty aesthetic, with on-location shooting, naturalistic dialogue, and a focus on the harsh realities of life

This shift away from the polished, studio-bound productions of the Golden Age reflected the directors' desire to depict the complexities of contemporary society

The Impact of Blockbusters

Emergence of the Blockbuster The success of Steven Spielberg's "Jaws" (1975) and George Lucas's "Star Wars" (1977) marked the beginning of the blockbuster era, where big-budget, high-concept films with mass appeal became the new norm

The Impact of Blockbusters (cont)

These films were characterized by their wide releases, heavy marketing campaigns, and focus on special effects and spectacle

Shift in Studio Focus The financial success of blockbusters led studios to prioritize high-grossing films, which often meant a return to more formulaic storytelling and less risk-taking in terms of content and style

While the blockbuster phenomenon revitalized Hollywood financially, it also led to concerns that the creativity and innovation of the New Hollywood era were being overshadowed by commercial considerations

End of the New Hollywood Era By the early 1980s, the focus on blockbuster filmmaking, along with the increasing involvement of corporations in the film industry, marked the end of the New Hollywood era

Directors who had thrived during the 1970s found it more challenging to secure financing for personal, unconventional projects as studios became more risk-averse



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Page 2 of 3.

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Legacy of the New Hollywood Era

Influence on Contemporary Filmmaking The New Hollywood era left a lasting impact on American cinema, influencing subsequent generations of filmmakers who admired the era's bold storytelling and artistic freedom

Many of the era's directors continued to have successful careers, with some adapting to the changing landscape of the film industry while others moved into independent filmmaking

Enduring Cultural Impact Films from the New Hollywood era remain highly regarded and continue to influence film culture, with many considered classics that are studied in film schools and appreciated by cinephiles

The era is often nostalgically remembered as a time of creative freedom and artistic risk-taking in Hollywood

Legacy of the New Hollywood Era (cont)

Reassessment of the Era While the New Hollywood era is celebrated for its innovation, it is also important to recognize the challenges and limitations, including the underrepresentation of women and people of color in both filmmaking roles and on-screen narratives

The era's focus on the auteur director has also been reexamined, with increased attention to the contributions of writers, producers, and other collaborators



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