

[Free pdf] Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present

Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present

Ally Acker

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Ally Acker : Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A good (but not great) reference bookBy S W SiferdJust to be clear, this is an encyclopedic history of women who worked behind the camera, and not a narrative history. The book includes short biographies of 127 women (and one production company) who worked in high-profile occupations -- writers, directors, producers -- along with others who worked in less glamorous positions -- editors, stuntwomen, animators. There are several entries for women who started as actresses before moving behind the camera. (Those who worked purely as actresses aren't really discussed here.) There are also 16 entries for American women of color, and 16 more for women who built their careers outside of North America. There are also several more entries for women who made unique contributions to the industry, such as gossip columnists Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, technical pioneers like Natalie Kalmus of Technicolor and cinematographer Brianne Murphy, costume designer Edith Head, and production assistants who worked for (and often propped up the careers of) powerful movie men like the De Mille brothers, Alfred Hitchcock, and David O. Selznick.According to the introduction, Acker wrote the book because the men who ran PBS in 1985 shot down her pitch for a documentary on this topic. The documentary might have been interesting, but in the long run the book is of more value as a quick-access source of information. (Also, PBS rarely sells videos of its 1980s era documentaries nowadays, so having published the book was definitely beneficial.)There are occasional errors scattered throughout the book, for which I took away one star from my overall rating of the book.

Some of them are due to limited and/or erroneous information commonly available at the time that the book was written. That, of course, isn't Acker's fault. But there are also some errors that are of the author's origin. For example, under the Ruth Gordon entry, Acker conflates the American Academy of Dramatic Arts -- which expelled Gordon in 1915 -- with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (est. 1927) which awarded Gordon a Best Supporting Actress Oscar 53 years later. I took away a second star because of some of the other prominent women that Acker could've included, but didn't. In the editors section alone, she could've included other women who had won Oscars before publication, such as Anne V. Coates (Lawrence of Arabia), Marcia Lucas (Star Wars), Claire Simpson (Platoon), and Gabriella Cristiani (The Last Emperor). She also included Lillian Gish for her one directing credit (and her several uncredited turns as producer) while barely mentioning Alla Nazimova, a prominent producer/actress whose one directing effort (Salome) was a much bigger success than the film that Lillian Gish directed. But the most jaw-dropping omission is probably that of Julia Philips, the first woman to win the Best Picture Oscar (The Sting). But the errors and omissions in the book are still not enough to completely degrade the book's overall value as the first reference guide to the often overlooked contributions of women to the film industry. I'd actually give the book 3.33 out of 5 stars if that were allowed.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The most cohesive history of women in film available!

By Heather Arnet
I can't understand how anyone has written a bad review of this book. It is filled with historical information on the women who pioneered the medium and who continue to create ground breaking work in film. My favorite thing about the book is that it does not promote just "the stars" but the important people behind the camera too - the directors, cinematographers, stunt women, and others who have built a lush history of women in film. Applause for Ally Acker for presenting such crucial information in an orderly and friendly manner. The book is equally filled with relevant facts, photos, and anecdotes. This book should be mandatory reading for every first year film student.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. From Anita Loos to ZaSu Pitts, Its All in There!

By sabrina@2xtreme.net
As a graphic design intern I had the supreme pleasure of working with Ally Acker on the video version of this book. Ally's undying, unflinching commitment to bringing the story of women in cinema to the general public is one of the finest works I've ever read, and is a resource for information and inspiration for my own fledgling forays into the world of film. Everyone, regardless of their interest or occupation, should read this book to update their knowledge of our country's history, and particularly of the pioneering women of the world of film.

An unconventional look at the women directors, producers, technicians, editors, writers and stunt women who have helped shape the history of the movies, from 1896 to the present day. There were more women working in creative and influential positions before 1920 than at any other time in movie history. Today, the second wave of women pioneers is carving a new niche - Susan Seidelman, Diane Kurys and Gillian Armstrong. The author is a filmmaker and writer who has also worked as a director, producer and writer in American film, television and radio. This book is designed to be of interest to those involved in film, reference, women's studies and history.

From Library Journal
Writer/producer/director Acker's volume capably fills a surprisingly neglected gap in the film field by profiling more than 120 women directors, writers, producers, editors, stuntpersons, etc., who worked or are working in the U.S. film industry. Coverage is from the 19th century to the present day. Each entry includes a biographical sketch, emphasizing interview quotes, and filmographies (some selective). Acker wisely avoids any critical analyses of her subjects' films, and should be commended for her accuracy. Her resource is more compact, comprehensive, and useful (while more pricey) than works such as Louise Heck-Rabi's *Women Filmmakers* (Scarecrow, 1984).

- David Bartholomew, NYPL
Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. Here is a comprehensively researched encyclopedia of women in every area of the film industry: writers, editors, directors, producers, animators and stunt women. A brief biography of each woman is followed by a complete listing of her work. Would it surprise you to know that one of the earliest film companies was owned by Helen Keller, and she produced and starred in *Deliverance*, a 1918 production about her life. This book is not only packed with the contributions women have made to cinema, it is also an excellent resource for discovering the many films created and shaped by women (you can rent many of them at your local video store). You will no doubt be surprised at the number of well-known film classics you recognize. -- From *The WomanSource Catalog: Tools for Connecting the Community for Women*; review by Ilene Rosoff
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Anita Loos's prolific contribution to the world of film is undeniable. She turned out 105 scripts between 1912 and 1915, only 4 of which went unproduced. She was the first to turn "title writing" on the silent screen into a wisecracking art form. Between 1919 and 1921 everyone tried to copy her wit, making the reading of screen titles nearly unbearable, for no one could quite match her humor. By the time her smash hit *Gentlemen Prefer Blonds* was adapted for the screen from her novel, the *New York Times* commented that Anita Loos's big triumph was to bring an element of maturity to an art form that was in danger of becoming infantile. She's the woman who beat out Walt Disney by ten years. Lotte Reiniger was the first person to create, and produce a fully animated feature from 1923 to 1926, using a technique that she pioneered known as "silhouette" animation.