

TIMELINE OF THE FRENCH NEW WAVE

Realism, and the counter current to the Formalist Tradition.

FOUNDATIONS/EVENTS

1895 - Auguste and Louis Lumiere are credited with the world's first public film screening on December 28, 1895 at the Grand Café in Paris

1919 – Dziga Vertov founds **Kino-Eye Group**

1922-23 Vertov, Mikhail Kaufman (Vertov's Brother), and Elisaveta Svilova (Vertov's wife) publish a number of manifestos in avant-garde journals, which set out the Kinoks' (**Kino-eye's**) positions as opposed to other leftist groups. The Kinoks rejected 'staged' cinema with its stars, plots, props and studio shooting. They insisted that the cinema of the future be the cinema of fact: newsreels recording the real world, as 'life caught unawares.' Vertov proclaimed the primacy of the camera itself (the 'Kino-Eye') over the human eye. He clearly saw it as some kind of innocent machine that could record without bias or superfluous aesthetic considerations (as would, say, its human operator) the world as it really was.

1926 - John Grierson (founding father of the British documentary movement and proponent of what would later be deemed the “realist” style) was said to have **originated the usage of the term 'documentary'** in relation to film when he wrote, "of course, *Moana* [Flaherty, 1926] being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth and his family, has documentary value." Grierson would go on to become Films Officer at the General Post Office film unit in 1933 (Britain) and then found National Film Board of Canada in 1939.

1936 - The **Cinemathèque Française** was founded in by Henri Langlois, a journalist, whose museum, the Musée du cinéma Henri Langlois, is immediately adjacent.

1942- Beginning of Existentialism. Philosophy founded by writers like Albert Camus, Jean Paul-Sarte and Simone de Beauvoir that goes on to heavily influence American Beat Generation and The French New Wave. A Unilateral philosophical movement that emphasizes the individual, the self, the individual's experience, and the uniqueness therein as the only reality. Existentialists believe in sheer freedom and accept the consequences and ramifications of their actions wholly. Existentialists prefer subjectivity, and view general existence as arcane, that they are isolated entities in an indifferent and often ambiguous universe.

1942 – Albert Camus' *The Stranger* is published

1943 - Jean Paul Sartre publishes his major philosophic work *Being and Nothingness*

1945 – Roberto Rossellini’s *Rome Open City (Roma, città aperta)* begins Italian Neo Realism. It is Rossellini that would go on to **provoke the Cashiers du Cinema** group to make films.

1945(1942)-1952 – Italian Neo-Realism begins with some argue *Osessione (Obsession)* by Visconti (1942) and ends with *Uberto D.* by De Sica (1952). Italian Neo-Realism is characterized by stories set amongst the poor and working class, filmed in long takes on location, frequently using non-actors for secondary and sometimes primary roles. Italian neorealist films mostly contend with the difficult economical and moral conditions of postwar Italy. The movement was developed by a circle of film critics that revolved around the magazine *Cinema*, including Michelangelo Antonioni, Luchino Visconti, Gianni Puccini, Giuseppe De Santis, and Pietro Ingrao. Largely prevented from writing about politics (the editor-in-chief of the magazine was none other than Vittorio Mussolini, son of Il Duce), the critics attacked the *telefono bianco* films that dominated the industry at the time. As a counter to the poor quality of mainstream films, some of the critics felt that Italian cinema should turn to the realist writers from the turn of the century.

1945 - Jean Paul Sartre gave up teaching in 1945 and founded the political and literary magazine **Les Temps Modernes**, of which he became editor in chief. This magazine seemingly took its name from the Charlie Chaplin film "Modern Times".

1948 - Alexandre Astruc (follower of Bazin) writes article “**The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La caméra-stylo**” article for the Marxist film journal *Ecran Français*. Astruc positions cinema as an art form/means of expression akin to Painting and the Novel.

"The cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all the other arts have before it, and in particular painting and the novel. After having been successively a fairground attraction, an amusement analogous to boulevard theatre, or a means of preserving the images of an era, it is gradually becoming a language. By language, I mean a form in which and by which an artist can express his thoughts, however abstract they may be, or translate his obsessions exactly as he does in a contemporary essay or novel. That is why I would like to call this new age of cinema the age of "caméra-stylo" (Monaco, p. 5).

BEGINNINGS/ STIRRINGS

1945-48- The **Cinmathèque Française** reestablished – begins to systematically view internationally films/film history as well as backlog of American films from WWII.

1945- 59 – Andre Bazin begins diverse writings /articles espousing realistic cinema (coinciding with the rise of Italian Neo Realism). Begins presentations/teachings at IDHEC (Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques) French Film School.

1951- French Film Magazine (most influential periodical in film history) **Cashiers du cinéma** is founded by André Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Lo Duca

Mid 1950's- Renegade film makers and critics-turned-film makers and like Claude Chabrol, Godard, Truffaut and Jacques Rivette broke with convention by taking to the streets with their cameras in hand instead of waiting for a break from the old studio system.

1953- Andre Malraux, French Minister of Culture creates “**avance sur recettes**”, method of funding films that ministry sees and worthwhile. Aids Renais, Marker and other to finance films.

1954 - Article by Francois Truffaut in Cahiers du Cinema “ A Certain Tendency in French Cinema” attacks Frances “Literary”scenarios and the “Quality of Tradition”/Classic film making techniques and literary adaptations of Classic French cinema. Establishes La politique des auteurs (Policy of Auteurs) and claims that this policy cannot coexist peacefully with the quality of tradition.

1955- Jean Pierre Melvilles, film *Bob Le Flambeur*

1955/56 – Anges Varda’s *La Pointe Courte* is released– Argued by man to be first French New Wave film,

1956- Roger Vadim’s *And God Created Woman*

1957 – Andre Bazin’s articles collected under title *Quest-ce que le cinema*. Collected posthumously under titles *What is Cinema?* And *What is Cinema II?*.

THE NEW WAVE (*La Nouvelle Vague*) BREAKS (1958-1964)

1958 – Bazin dies one day after the shooting begins on *the 400 blows*. Film is dedicated to in his memory.

1959 – Cannes film festival marks feature film debut of Cahiers group.

1959 – Truffaut’s *The 400 Blows* (Les Cuatre Cent Coupe) – Wins best director award at Canne’s/Nominated for best screen play Oscars.

1959- Alain Resnais, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*

1959- Marcel Camus *Black Orpheus* (set in Brazil) wins best Foreign Film at Oscars./stylistically is not part of New Wave.

1959 - Jean-Luc Godard, *Breathless* (shot in '59, released January '60) - cinematographer Raoul Coutard,

1959- 1962 Debut of more than 100 directors in France. Literally hundreds of cheaply produced, experimental films flood European and to a lesser extent American Markets.

THE AFTERMATH

1959- *Shadows* by John Cassevettes. Beat inspired film. Influence by French New Wave style: improvisation, non-professional actors, real locations, etc.

1960- Publication of Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film. First full length, organized, systematic treatise on authoritative nature of the material aesthetic/ on content over form. That film should server material reality/that certain types of cinema were more justified than others. 1) Cinema is more a product of Photography than editing or other formative processes. 2) Photography is a process tied to the objects it registers than a transformation of these objects.3) Cinema must serve these objects and events to which it is suited.

1960s- Advent of filmstudies class and programs in US and England. Usually in language (English) departments, Art department or Sociology/Humanities programs.

1962 – Andrew Sarris, the leading American proponent of the so-called "auteur theory," first uses term "auteur" in an article published in *Film Culture*.

1967- Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*- Homage to Gangster films and the French New Wave. Script brought to attention of Warren Beatty by Fracois Traffaut. Critic Paulene Kael comes to films defense

1969- Dennis Hoppers' *Easy Rider* begins *American New Wave*

1974- Coppolla's *The Conversation*

1976- Speilberg's *Jaws* (*first real Summer Block Buster, first use of heavy TV advertistment*)

1977- George Lucas' *Starwars* is released