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Provisional

A Chronology of Film

A Cultural Timeline from the Magic Lantern to the Digital Screen

Ian Haydn Smith

An entirely fresh perspective on the history of cinema, using timelines to trace its development from the earliest moving images to now

Over 300 illustrations

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Provisional

Key Sales Points

- A companion to the successful *A Chronology of Photography* (978 0 500 545034) and *A Chronology of Art* (978 0 500 239810).
- Uses a unique timeline framework to mark and illustrate significant films, events and developments.
- Feature spreads interspersed throughout the chronological narrative highlight important themes.



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1875–1890

Technology accelerates. At the beginning of the 19th century, photography was in its infancy. By the end, it is not only perceived by some to be an art form, it had become an everyday part of people's lives. The painted portraits that once hung alone on the walls of family homes are now joined or replaced by photographs. Newspapers that featured illustrations of events or people on their front pages can now send stringers out to capture them with cameras. Just as Dutch artist Vincent van Gogh challenges artistic practice through his radical vision of the world, so the darkroom allows photographers the ability to transform reality. Among these innovators are visionaries who see the potential of moving images and recorded sound.



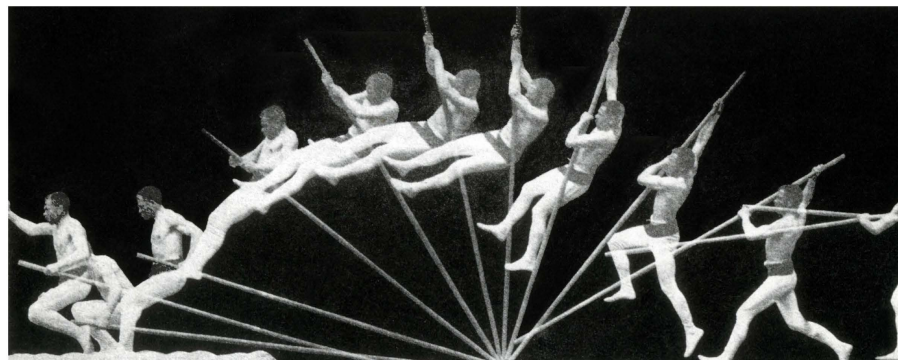
The Phonograph, USA

By his late twenties, Thomas Edison had already established himself as an entrepreneur and inventor. In 1876, he establishes a research laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey. His breakthrough invention, which makes his name, is the phonograph – a device capable of recording and replaying sound. The first version is recorded on tinfoil around a grooved cylinder. The sound is rough as the critic Herman Klein notes: 'It sounded to my ear like someone singing about half a mile away...' Subsequent models improve on the quality of the recording. This image shows Edison with the second version of the device in 1878.

Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone.

1876

1877

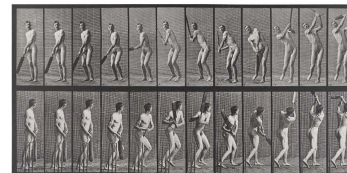


Chronophotography, France

The cardiologist Étienne-Jules Marey's interest in the functioning of the human anatomy led to a wider interest in animal movement that develops into a passion for the technologies capable of capturing it. He creates the chronophotographic gun camera in 1882, which is capable of taking twelve consecutive frames in one second. However, in contrast to Eadweard Muybridge's multi-camera set-up, Marey's device captures all the frames within one single image, such as this shot of a man pole vaulting taken in c. 1890.

Animal Locomotion, Plate 391, USA

In the early 1880s, Muybridge begins working out of the University of Pennsylvania photographing a variety of subjects in order to study movement. His subjects range from animals and birds to humans, such as this study of a man playing cricket. The resulting book, *Animal Locomotion – An Electro-photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Movements* (1872–85), features 781 plates comprising 20,000 photographs. The images remain a valuable resource for the study of movement.



George Eastman's company begins to produce celluloid roll film for use in cameras.

Louis Le Prince makes the earliest extant film *Roundhay Garden Scene*, shot in the English city of Leeds.

Photography is more common in newspapers and periodicals.

1882

1887

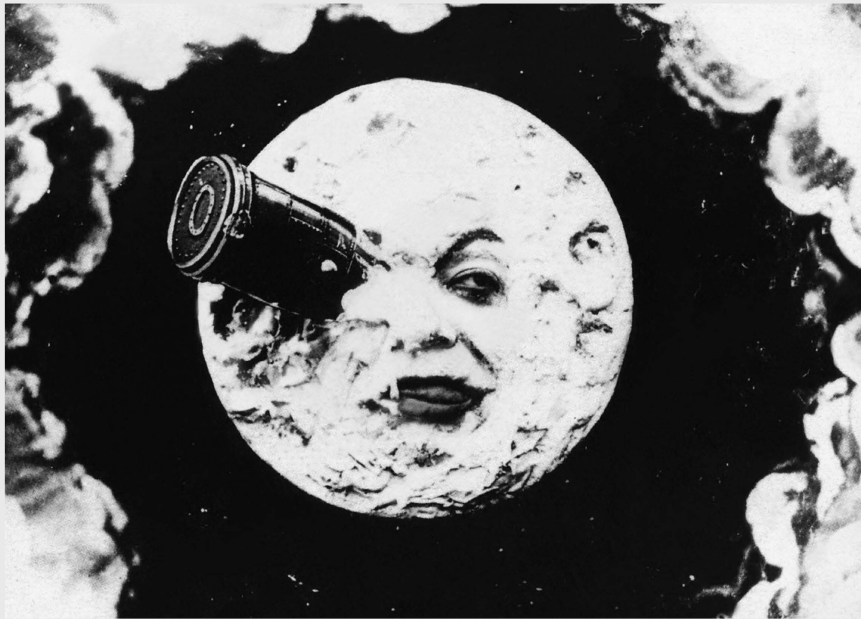
1888

1889

1890

MAGICAL CINEMA

The first film-makers soon saw the potential to transform the everyday into a place of wonder. From the earliest visual conjuring through to the creation of worlds with computer-generated imagery, the only limit to what can be created lies with the imagination.



OPPOSITE. *A Trip to the Moon* (*Le voyage dans la lune*, 1902), Georges Méliès, France
George Méliès's most celebrated film blends special effects, such as steam escaping from the moon's craters, with visual effects and animation to create a 14-minute masterpiece.

LEFT. *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Victor Fleming, USA
This popular film presented audiences with a resplendent Technicolor fantasy whose state-of-the-art visuals still employed some of the techniques used earlier by Méliès.

The manipulation of images can be traced to photographic experiments in the 18th century. Multiple exposure of one frame or overlaying a number of negatives to create a single image were early examples, employed by pioneers such as British Pictorialist photographers Oscar Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson. US film-maker Alfred Clark was one of the first to cut two pieces of film together to create a desired effect, for *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots* (1895). At the moment of the Scottish queen's beheading, Clark stopped filming, kept everyone stationary save for the actor playing Mary, whom he replaced with a dummy, and started shooting again. In the resulting film, the beheading is remarkably convincing.

Clark's film, with its use of a dummy, employs a special effect – the term given to physical effects used during filming. Effects that are achieved through the manipulation of film or, more recently, the use of computer programs, are known as visual effects. Most films that require effects will generally employ both, as was the case with the first wizard of cinema, Georges Méliès. The prolific French film-maker apparently stumbled upon his first effect when the film in his camera momentarily jammed while filming a street scene. On projecting the film, he saw that a van suddenly transformed into a hearse, pedestrians instantaneously changed direction and women became men. This accident resulted in Méliès's increasingly ambitious series of short films, playing cinematic tricks to audiences and creating the largest early body of visual and special effects sequences.

The next two decades saw improvements in the use of effects such as matte paintings – the creation of backdrops that give a sense of another world or a vast space – particularly through the work of US director Norman Dawn, who was also responsible for the earliest use of rear projection in films. In Germany, Eugen Schufftan created a process that allowed actors to appear in

scale on miniature sets through the use of mirrors. Known as the Schufftan process, it was developed for Austrian director Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). The optical printer, a projector connected to a camera, which was originally used to produce multiple copies of a film, was developed by US special-effects pioneer Linwood G. Dunn and eliminated the need for effects to be produced in-camera. His work, alongside matte painters and stop-motion animators, achieved the effects produced in *King Kong* (1933). He also worked with US film-maker Orson Welles and US cinematographer Gregg Toland to achieve some of the deep focus shots for *Citizen Kane* (1941).

Colour brought its own challenges. Chromakey compositing followed in the 1940s, which used a blue screen background to allow one shot of a character to be superimposed over another. It was pioneered by Dunn in the 1930s, but primarily used for screen-wipe effects in films. US special-effects artist, Lawrence 'Larry' W. Butler displayed its potential with the magic carpet sequence in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1941). That film was co-directed by British film-maker Michael Powell, who would make the most of visual-effects technology for his acclaimed ballet sequence in *The Red Shoes* (1948).

Visual and special effects over the next few decades added enhancements to this technology. However, the appearance of digital technology in the 1980s transformed the cinematic landscape. Canadian film-maker James Cameron's *The Abyss* (1989) pushed the boundary of what could be achieved with computer-generated imagery (CGI), which he then took further with *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1992), while US film-maker Steven Spielberg merged animatronics with CGI for *Jurassic Park* (1993). The astonishing technological advances that produced the first-ever computer-animated feature film, Pixar's *Toy Story* (1995), would eventually erase the line between live action and animation.

1937-1938

Aggression and atrocities. Adolf Hitler officially withdraws from the Treaty of Versailles (1919). Japan increases its aggression towards China, which includes the bombing of Shanghai and

atrocities committed over the course of one month in Nanking. Joseph Stalin begins his Great Purge, which leads to the deaths of more than 700,000 Soviet citizens. Sergei Eisenstein regains the favour of the Soviet leader by directing *Alexander Nevsky* (*Aleksandr Nevskiy*, 1938), a heroic portrait of the 13th-century Russian prince's defeat of an invasion by the Teutonic Knights of Novgorod. It initiates a collaboration between him and composer Sergei Prokofiev, who would provide the score for the first two parts of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (*Ivan Groznyy*, 1944/58) trilogy. Orson Welles makes a name for himself with his radio adaptation of *War of the Worlds* (1938), which plays in real time and panics some Americans, believing that Martians had invaded the United States.

Make Way For Tomorrow, Leo McCarey, USA

This Paramount production, directed by Leo McCarey, never pulls its punches as it details the impact of the Great Depression on an elderly couple and the indifference meted out to them by their loved ones. When Barkley and Lucy Cooper's house is foreclosed and he is unable to find employment because of his age, they turn to their family, who force them to separate and live with different children. The siblings' acknowledgment of their callousness ultimately comes too late.



The Basque town of Guernica is destroyed by the Luftwaffe at the behest of Francisco Franco's Nationalist faction, and is immortalized by Pablo Picasso's painting.

NKVD Operative Order 00447 sanctions the execution or imprisonment of more than 250,000 kulak dissidents and other individuals opposed to Stalin's regime.



La grande illusion, Jean Renoir, France

The futility of war, class, anti-Semitism and racial prejudice are explored through the prism of Jean Renoir's prisoner-of-war drama, one of the key works of French Poetic Realism. Set during the First World War (1914-18), it opens with Pierre Fresnay's aristocratic Captain de Boëldieu and Jean Gabin's working-class Lieutenant Maréchal shot down and captured by Erich von Stroheim's upper-class German officer Rittmeister von Rauffenstein. The film warns of the rise of fascism in Europe and the need for a class-consciousness that could overturn it.

1937



Germany annexes Austria.

Enormous reserves of oil are discovered by US geologists while searching for water in the deserts of Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returns from a meeting with German and French leaders in Munich, declaring 'peace for our time.'

Bringing Up Baby, Howard Hawks, USA

Although it failed to ignite the box office when it opened, Howard Hawks's frenetic screwball comedy is regarded as one of the best examples of the genre. It finds the life of Cary Grant's palaeontologist David Huxley descending into chaos after he encounters Katharine Hepburn's Susan Vance, an eccentric society heiress, who has to look after a tame leopard named 'Baby'. Hawks encouraged his actors to race through their dialogue, and combined with his frenetic direction, this adds to the film's gradual increase in mayhem and hilarity.

1938



OPPOSITE. *Xala* (1975), Ousmane Sembène, Senegal
A satire of corruption among postcolonial Senegal's ruling elite, Ousmane Sembène's adaptation of his eponymous novel of 1973 forged his reputation as one of the strongest voices in African cinema.

LEFT. *Enter the Dragon* (1973), Robert Clouse, Hong Kong/USA
Martial-arts cinema became a global phenomenon in the 1970s and Bruce Lee was its biggest star. He died before the release of his most popular film, *Enter the Dragon*.

found its first superstar in Bruce Lee, in a series of films that prioritized kinetic action scenes over narrative logic. The vacuum that was left by his death in 1973 at the age of thirty-two was filled by Jackie Chan, whose blend of athleticism and high-jinks comedy outlasted martial-arts cinema's popularity, which waned from the late 1970s.

Blaxploitation embraced martial-arts cinema, most notably *Black Belt Jones* (1974), with Jim Kelly who starred opposite Lee in *Enter the Dragon* (1973). But blaxploitation was not so much a genre as an attempt to create a cinema that featured a representation of African American characters and culture that did not kowtow to mainstream stereotypes. Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* and photographer Gordon Parks's *Shaft* (both 1971) are early entries and were followed by a range of films that spanned the 1970s. Their quality varied and opinions on whether they resisted or reinforced African American stereotypes remain divided. But they created some of the earliest female action heroines in Pam Grier and Tamara Dobson. Such was their popularity among mainstream audiences that the James Bond adventure *Live and Let Die* (1973) drew heavily from them.

This era saw nations and cultures that had recently won independence reject the white-dominated narratives of colonial rule. Third Cinema, a movement that began in Latin America, soon spread out across the world. Directors keen to hear their voices heard responded to the call of Argentine film-makers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in their 'Toward a Third Cinema' manifesto, which stressed that the greatest struggle was 'the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point – in a word, the

decolonization of culture'. A powerful cinema in Africa was visible through the work of Ousmane Sembène (Senegal), Med Hondo (Mauritania), Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina (Algeria), Omar Khelifi (Tunisia), Moustapha Alassane and Oumarou Ganda (Niger), Dia Moukouri (Cameroun), Ibrahim Mallasy (Sudan) and Benoît Ramampy (Madagascar).

Cinema during this period shifted between the sublime and the shocking. At one end, cinema presented an opportunity to reflect on the past. Theo Angelopoulos employed long and complex takes in his exploration of history and time, most notably in *The Travelling Players* (*O thiasos*, 1975), his study of mid-20th-century Greece. By contrast, Sergei Parajanov created a rich *mise-en-scène* with a cinema constructed of tableaux that did not so much attempt to capture the culture that formed the bedrock of his influences – spanning Russian, Georgian and Armenian traditions – but witnessed a singular vision employing the medium to forge his own view of the world. There had never been anything quite like *Shadow of Forgotten Ancestors* (*Tini zabutykh predkiv*, 1965) or *The Colour of Pomegranates* (*Sayat Nova*, 1969).

Parajanov cited Russian film-maker Andrei Tarkovsky's feature debut as a significant influence over his decision to make films. *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo*, 1962) presented a child's view of the Second World War (1939–45) from a perspective that was so artfully composed – the director used the term 'poetic logic' – it stood apart from most other dramas dealing with the conflict. However, the film was a project that had been hoisted on to Tarkovsky and he regarded it more as his 'qualifying examination' to be a film-maker. His next feature *Andrei Rublev* (*Andrey Rublev*, 1966) fully realized his cinematic vision. A portrait of the 15th-century Russian icon painter,

1967-1968

To space and beyond. In 1961, both the Soviet Union and the United States successfully sent a man into space, and President John F. Kennedy announced his intention to support

a programme to send a man to the moon. The Space Race moved up a gear and with it the public's fascination regarding the possibility of a manned lunar mission. If science fiction in 1950s' cinema was populated by films whose allegorical undertow exploited fears of Cold War (1947-91) tensions and the threat of a nuclear apocalypse, a strand of films in the 1960s speculates hopefully on the possibilities of space travel. As the Apollo missions edge closer to their goal, the films produced range from astronauts-on-a-mission dramas such as Robert Altman's *Countdown* (1967) and John Sturges's *Marooned* (1969), to Roger Vadim's psychedelic romp *Barbarella* and the era-defining *Planet of the Apes* and 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (all 1968).



Bonnie and Clyde, Arthur Penn, USA

A landmark in presaging a new era in Hollywood film-making, this film is based on the real-life exploits of 1930s' bank robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. Writers Robert Benton and David Newman originally envisaged Jean-Luc Godard directing their screenplay. Arthur Penn eventually came on board and drew together disparate styles, from Keystone Cops-era slapstick to the French New Wave, to create a thrilling portrait of an outlaw gang whose anti-establishment image chimed perfectly with the times.

The Six-Day War, between Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt (then the United Arab Republic), Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria, is fought between 5 and 10 June.

The Jungle Book, the last animated feature supervised and overseen personally by Walt Disney before his death in December 1966, is released.

1967



Playtime, Jacques Tati, France

This is the third of four outings for Jacques Tati's singular comic character Monsieur Hulot who first appeared in *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot* (1953) followed by *Mon oncle* (1958) and *Trafic* (1971). It finds Hulot wandering through a sterile world. If his screen persona echoes Chaplin's journeyman tramp, *Playtime* is very much Tati's *Modern Times* (1936), the film's six sequences presenting an automated world lacking in warmth. It is a *tour de force* of production design – a small city was built for it – while Tati's comic set pieces are skilfully choreographed.

Martin Luther King Jr is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in April.

Robert F. Kennedy is fatally shot in Los Angeles, two months later.

Following the Prague Spring liberal reforms introduced by Alexander Dubček, more than half a million Warsaw Pact troops invade Czechoslovakia to restore authoritarian rule.

If...., Lindsay Anderson, UK

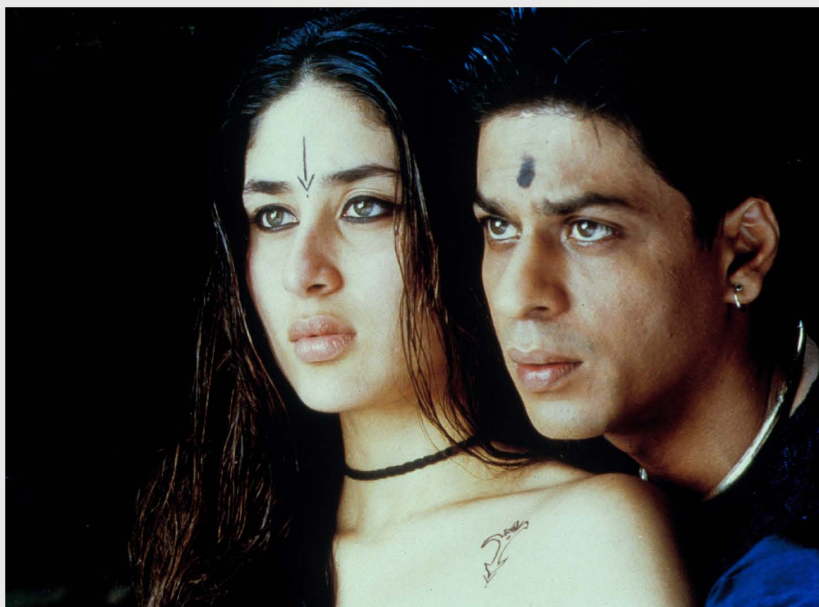
Malcolm McDowell became the face of rebellion in the late 1960s thanks to his debut in Lindsay Anderson's unsparring satire of English public-school life. He plays Mick Travis, a senior pupil whose antipathy towards the stifling formality and severe discipline of the school leads to his armed insurrection. The film encapsulates the spirit of May 1968 and the student demonstrations across Europe. Anderson and McDowell returned to Travis for two further satires, *O Lucky Man!* (1973) and *Britannia Hospital* (1982).



1968

BOLLYWOOD

Representing the Indian Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai, whose domestic audience is vast enough to support its sizeable yearly output, Bollywood is the byword for a certain kind of cinema. Yet its history embraces a wider spectrum of films that date to its golden age in the 1950s and resurgence in the 1970s.



OPPOSITE. *Ashoka the Great* (Asoka, 2001), Santosh Sivan, India

An epic adventure with echoes of earlier films such as *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960), Santosh Sivan's film, along with Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* (2001) highlighted the global potential of this new era of Hindi cinema.

RIGHT. *Sholay* (1975), Ramesh Sippy, India

The ultimate Masala film blended the conventions of the Indian dacoit bandit film with elements of Spaghetti Western and samurai adventures.



A portmanteau of 'Bombay' (now Mumbai) and 'Hollywood', it is unclear who came up with the term 'Bollywood', but it gained traction in the 1970s. It followed Tollywood, the name for Bengali cinema, which was based in the Kolkata neighbourhood of Tollygunge. (Telugu cinema has been given the same label.) To some, these terms are derogatory as they imply the industries are inferior to their US counterpart.

Prior to the partition of India in 1947, the Bombay film industry had counterparts in Kolkata and Lahore, now part of Pakistan. But as production centralized around the west coast city, directors, actors, writers and technicians who had been working in Hindustani cinema across the country gravitated there. The fifteen years after the country's independence became known as the golden age of Hindi cinema. It saw the release of films that have become key works in its history. They attempted to balance entertainment with social concerns. Among the early landmark films are Raj Kapoor's *Awaara* (1951), Mehboob Khan's *The Savage Princess* (*Aan*, 1952), Guru Dutt's *Pyaasa* (1957) and K. Asif's *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960).

Kapoor's crime drama features him as a tramp that directly references Charles Chaplin's earlier screen incarnation. (Along with Dilip Kumar, Kapoor was one of the first major stars of Bollywood cinema.) It played in competition at the Cannes Film Festival and became a success in China and the Soviet Union, where it was seen by more than sixty-four million viewers. Khan's *The Savage Princess*, the first Indian film to be made in Technicolor, was a lustrous romantic adventure that became the highest-grossing Indian film at home and overseas. Dutt was also the star of *Pyaasa*, playing a poet struggling to be known in post-independence India and a benevolent prostitute who attempts to help him. Although Asif's romantic epic *Mughal-E-Azam* took fifteen years to make, it remained the country's most successful film until the mid 1970s. Khan's *Mother India* (1957) also played a key role during this period. One of the most expensive films of the era, it was the first Indian film to be nominated for an Academy Award.

The two components these films shared were the incorporation of song and dance numbers into their narratives and the promotion of stars. It is what distinguishes the films

from the country's Parallel Cinema, which emerged in the mid 1950s. These elements were key to Bollywood's resurgence in the 1970s, after more than a decade of creative and commercial stagnancy. The screenwriting team of Salim-Javed (Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar) is credited with this resurgence through reversal in fortunes, penning a series of exciting crime thrillers that also launched the career of Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan. He starred in their *Procession of Memories* (*Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, 1973), *The Wall* (*Deewaar*) and *Sholay* (both 1975), which defined the Masala film as a hybrid of several popular genres. Plot was secondary to star performances, original musical numbers and a high quotient of thrills.

Another stagnant period followed in the 1980s, but Bollywood returned with renewed vigour in the 1990s. New Bollywood has vastly improved its technical and production quality in order to stave off domestic competition from Hollywood. But its own market stretches far beyond its borders and into the vast Indian diaspora. It remains dominated by a roster of stars whose fame travels far beyond the screen.

1979-1980

End of an era. For twenty years, cinema around the world seemed to thrive on responding to the times. But the landscape for daring, groundbreaking cinema appears to be diminishing.

In Italy, a national cinema that was once such a vital presence on the world stage, enters a period of stagnation, save for the work of a few key film-makers. The United Kingdom and Germany follow suit. Even in the United States the outlook seems grave. Many will point to the commercial disaster of Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate* (1980) as the final nail in the coffin of a Hollywood dominated by the director. But the popularity of blockbuster films, a new generation of commercially-minded producers and the acquisition of studios by business conglomerates control what people watch and the way they watch it throughout the 1980s.



My Brilliant Career, Gillian Armstrong, Australia

The sole female film-maker most prominently associated with the Australian New Wave, Gillian Armstrong's feature debut attracted international acclaim for its portrait of a young woman in the 19th century who chooses to forge her own path in the world. As Armstrong noted: 'I wanted to make the statement that the heroine is a full woman who can develop her talents and have a career. I didn't want to reinforce the old stereotypes that a woman who has a career only does so only because she can't get a man.'

Screen legend John Wayne dies in Los Angeles.

The China Syndrome, a film about a fictional nuclear plant that narrowly avoids a nuclear meltdown, opens twelve days before an actual partial nuclear reactor core melt-down occurs at the Three Mile Island nuclear facility in Pennsylvania.

1979



Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola, USA

Updating Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) from the Congo to Vietnam, Francis Ford Coppola's fever dream of a war film finds Martin Sheen's Captain Benjamin L.

Willard journeying deep into enemy territory in order to dispatch a colonel who has gone both AWOL and insane.

Unlike previous films about Vietnam, which grappled with its politics, Coppola emphasizes the surreal nature and horror of war. He is aided by advances in sound technology and the ingenuity of Vittorio Storaro's cinematography.

Alfred Hitchcock dies.

John Lennon is shot and killed by Mark David Chapman outside his home in New York.

The Trial of the Gang of Four begins in China.

Former film star Ronald Reagan wins the US presidential election.

1980

Cannibal Holocaust, Ruggero Deodato, Italy

This is one of the earliest films to employ the found-footage narrative format that was used for *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and subsequent horror films. Ruggero Deodato recounts the experiences of a group of film-makers who go missing in the Amazon rainforest. Controversy followed the film wherever it opened because of its graphic and realistic violence, and actual harm caused to animals. Deodato defended his film, claiming somewhat spuriously that it was an attempt to grapple with the ethics of journalism.

