

Great film directors

■ Expressionists

With their stories of despair, German Expressionists directed masterpieces of the horror genre.

- Fritz Lang's *M* is one of the cinema's early films which employed distortion and exaggeration to represent subjective emotions rather than objective reality;
- Robert Wiene's, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, has a striking visual style, using **harsh** lines and intense shadow contrasts to represent the character's subjective reality.

■ Orson Welles

His narrative techniques and use of photography, dramatic lighting, depth, and music to create mood made his **genre blender** *Citizen Kane* (1941) one of the most-influential films in the history of the art, representing an encyclopedia of techniques, from deep focus and **rear projection** to extreme close-ups.

■ Neorealism

In Italy, neorealism aimed at describing relevant socio-economic problems realistically. It was a break from the earlier **escapist** entertainment, known in Italy as the white telephones.

Rossellini's *Roma Città Aperta* (1945) portrayed life in nazi-occupied Rome in a documentary

style that was innovative for the time and brought international attention to this movement and their masters, such as De Sica and Visconti.

■ The Giants of French cinema

In the late 1950's a new cinematic beginning called *La Nouvelle Vague* (The New Wave) emerged. Directors like

Chabrol, Godard and Truffaut – associated with the film magazine *Cahiers du cinema* which popularised the auteur theory – had a technique which stimulated discussion about the cinema and helped demonstrate that films could achieve both commercial and artistic success, producing directors who could “write” with their *caméra-stylo* (“camera-pen”).



■ Stanley Kubrick

Kubrick loved getting involved with every detail of all aspects of his films: production design, editing, and cinematography. Many of his films are adaptations from literature, and include a range of different genres including war, horror, crime and science fiction. Two of his successes were:

- the **handheld tracking shots** in *Paths of Glory*;
- *2001: A Space Odyssey* and his stunning use of music to amplify atmosphere, which also set a new standard for special effects.


■ Jane Campion

Campion is a New Zealand director and screenwriter whose films often focused on women who are outsiders in society. She became the second female to be nominated for an Oscar in the Best Director category for *Piano* (1993), the first being Lina Wertmüller for *Pasqualino Settebellezze* (1975) (aka **Seven Beauties**).

aka: *Also Known As*
escapist: *di evasione*
genre blender: *insieme di più generi*
handheld: *portata a spalla*

harsh: *duro*
rear projection: *proiezione posteriore*
tracking shot: *carrellata*



1  Read the passage. Then, complete a grid about the films mentioned in it following the prompts.

- Title
- Directed by
- Starring
- Main features

Watching Novels

The film industry adapted a great deal of novels. Some remained faithful to the writer's original book; some took the source material into previously unimagined areas. The following ones are really brilliant.

- Jane Campion's cinematic adaptation stays very close to James' text, *The Portrait of a Lady*, but her portrait offers us a more feminist view of the novel's heroine, allowing Nicole Kidman's performance to create a new sensibility in the character.
- Joe Wright's version of *Pride and Prejudice*, instead, focuses on the romantic aspect of Jane Austen's novel to appeal to the general public, in particular the love story between Elizabeth (Keira Knightley) and Darcy (Matthew Mac Fayden).
- David Lean's vision of *A Passage to India* – Forster's novel about the gap between cultures that characterises British rule in India – stresses the characterisations of Judy Davis as Adela Qusted, Victor Banerjee as Dr Aziz, and the excellent Peggy Ashcroft as Mrs Moore.
- Fitzgerald's masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, inspired two major directors. In Jack Clayton's 1974 adaptation the camera captures the romanticised side of the story. When it isn't focused on the dreamy scenery, it zooms in to follow the characters, in particular on Mia Farrow and Robert Redford, as a humble Jay Gatsby. In Baz Luhrmann's adaptation, the party scenes offer a visual buffet of multicoloured lights and 3-D texture. Di Caprio's portrayal of Jay Gatsby is a bold change, characterised by exaggeration in comparison with Redford's understated performance.
- "Oliver Twist is a story of a boy who is hit by adversity and who at the end manages to escape all the dangers," said the Polish director. "At the same time, he does not lead destiny, destiny leads him." Polanski was keen to describe a world away from fairy tales. Oliver Twist stars 12-year-old Barney Clark as Oliver, 15-year-old Harry Eden as the Artful Dodger and Sir Ben Kingsley as Fagin. The film was shot over four months at studios in Prague.



KUBRICK'S TECHNIQUES

Stanley Kubrick was known to push the limits of cinematic technology. In *Barry Lyndon*, a masterpiece from the novel by W.M. Thackeray, an Irish drama set with great battle sequences, all was shot on location and lenses originally developed for NASA was used. Many scenes in the movie were shot in natural light and candlelight to authentically portray the look and feel of the 18th century. In *The Shining*, Kubrick recruited the inventor of the steadycam to operate some of its most iconic shots, such as the tracking shot of Danny riding his tricycle through the hotel hallways and the chase at the end of the film.

