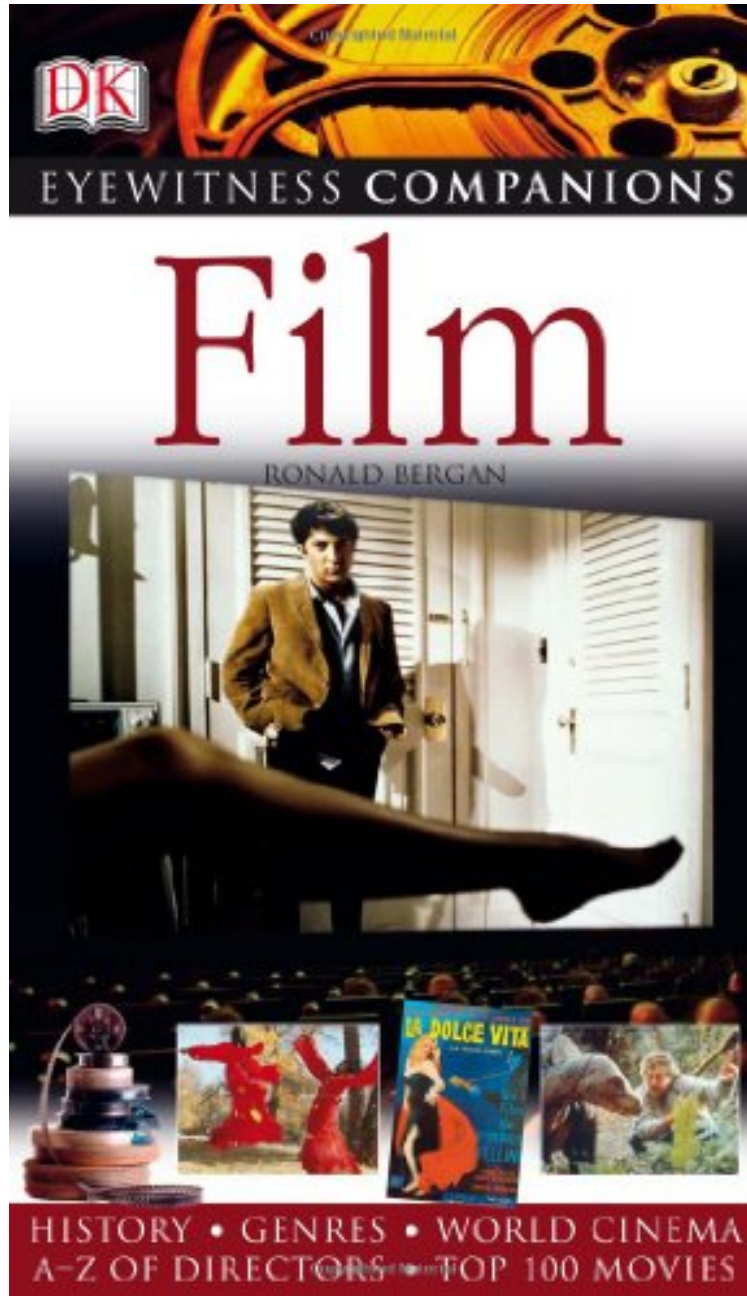


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Film (Eyewitness Companions)

Ronald Bergan, Anita Ganeri
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Ronald Bergan, Anita Ganeri : Film (Eyewitness Companions) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Film (Eyewitness Companions):

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Solid and brief overview of cinema
By Steven Peterson
Ronald Bergan is a film historian and critic. In this volume, part of the Eyewitness Companions series, he looks at film. The book begins with a brief history of movies, from Thomas Edison and Henry Reichenbach to the Lumiere Brothers to D. W. Griffith and onwards. During the discussion of the history of cinema, one interesting feature is the list of box office hits for each decade, from the beginning to the present. Did you know that "The Big Parade" was the top box office hit in the 1920s? I surely did not! The next section focuses on how movies are made, from pre-production to post-production. After that, a not fully satisfying review of genres and examples of each. Some don't really sound like genres to me; each is so brief that you don't get a real sense of what is at stake. Following this is a section entitled "World Cinema," in which various countries/areas with a substantial movie industry are profiled, from Africa to India, from Russia to Central America. The penultimate section explores the world of Directors. There are profiles and "filmographies" of whom the author sees as the greatest 200 directors of all time. Take one example to get a flavor for the discussion. I randomly flipped to a page and saw the discussion of Joseph Mankiewicz' body of work. The entry noted which of his movies one might wish to watch (e.g., *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, *All about Eve*, *Julius Caesar*, *Guys and Dolls*. . .). The entries are quite brief, but they provide pretty decent coverage of major directors (although one can always quibble about inclusion and exclusion--but sometimes that's a part of the fun with encyclopedic works such as this). Finally, the top 100 movies of all time (with the stipulation that no director can have more than one on the list--perhaps a criterion that leaves out masterpieces of prolific and excellent directors such as Alfred Hitchcock or Stephen Spielberg or to the detriment of this section. Anyhow, a typical work in this useful series of books.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Ivo
Absolutely superb!
6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Skin-Deep Look at the History of Film Presented in the Slick Eyewitness Guide Format
By Ed Uyeshima
The history of film could not possibly be covered in one tome without some sacrifice of contextual insight that will cause the reader to dismiss the resource entirely. There have been past attempts to provide a more comprehensive overview, for example, Liz-Ann Bawden's *The Oxford Companion to Film* (which has not been updated since its original publication in 1976) and David Thomson's *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*. Thomson does update his hefty and endlessly fascinating book periodically (the last time in 2004), but his meticulous approach is to provide an alphabetical listing of key contributors to cinema and summarize their work with his own critical eye. Written and compiled by British film critic Ronald Bergan, the DK Eyewitness Companion book is much more cursory, but the organization is also more amenable to the casual browser looking for a few film factoids. That's because the 500-plus-page soft-cover book mimics the same pleasing graphics, easy-to-follow organization, and abbreviated observations of the extensive Eyewitness guidebook line. This one is divided into six discrete sections - The Story of Cinema, How Movies Are Made, Genres, World Cinema, A-Z of Directors, and Top 100 Movies. Each provides interesting tidbits of a thumbnail variety, especially the first chapter which dares to cover the history of movies in such an expeditious fashion. The second section gives a solid look at the entire process of filmmaking from development to release. The section on film genres is somewhat more inconsequential, but Bergan's overview of world cinema and its leading directors provides some true nuggets. It's also interesting to see he doesn't offer much praise to actor-directors other than Clint Eastwood and Woody Allen (whom he mistakenly credits for directing *Play It Again, Sam* - it was Herbert Ross). It seems inevitable that a Top 100 list should be presented, and Bergan's list is as subjective as any other film scholar's. He further conditions his list by including only one film per noted director (so, for example, Hitchcock gets identified for *Vertigo* and nothing else in his illustrious filmography). The likely candidates are here, but so are some idiosyncratic choices like Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* and Mike Newell's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. As with any Eyewitness book, there are lots of nicely presented photographs and sidebars to break up the text. This is good browsing material for the more casual film lover.

Not just another film guide-this is a visual road map to the best cinema has to offer. A comprehensive, fun to browse, and easy-to-use source for everything you need to know about movies and the people behind them. From Hollywood to Bollywood, this book's unique approach will explore every aspect of film and provide pointers on how to watch and understand films of different types, styles, and periods.