

Experimental film – Film movements

Film movements

'A film movement is constituted by a distinctive body of films, each directed by an auteur. It is often further constituted by a related body of critical or theoretical writing. A film movement will be of significance in film history because of thematic and formal/stylistic innovations which characterise the films and which are, most often, a response to wider political, social or cultural changes at a particular time and in a particular place.' – Patrick Phillips

Film movements are a new and original style of filmmaking. The films within a movement form a body of films which may have a set of shared characteristics. A film movement emerges at a particular moment in time.

Film movements often develop within a particular country or region. However, as movements are often limited to a certain time period, they might not be reflective of an overall national cinema. Some film movements developed as a reaction against the typical style of national films.

Film movements have a high status in film studies. They contribute to the artistic and academic status of film. Film movements have the status of art and directors the status of artists/auteurs.

Post-war experimentation

This period was dominated by feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusion. Many felt anger towards the older generation who, after causing two world wars, still thought that they knew better and that young people should do as they are told.

From the Italian New Realist post WW2 movement came the idea that the cinematic experience doesn't have to be about the upper classes and that it doesn't need a star system or to be shot in a studio. The everyday lives of working-class people are in fact just as cinematic and considerably more interesting and refreshing than the formulaic Hollywood-like melodramas that seemed to dominate Western European cinema or the social realist state-sponsored ones from the other side of the Iron Curtain.

The 1960s' European Avant-Garde movements, known as the cinematic new waves of Europe, were an anti-establishment answer to the tired, derivative cinema still in production during the 40s and 50s. Their boundless experimentation went on to transform cinema worldwide.

Film movement: the Czech New Wave

This was a move away from the social realist films prescribed by the communist regime. It reflects the Czech cultural tradition for expressing opposition through surreal fantasy.

It was a cinema of rebellion and a desire for freedom which was enabled by a brief relaxation of censorship under communist rule.

Daisies (Chytilova, 1965)

Feminism: The film ridicules the guardians of patriarchy (mainly old men) whilst critiquing their objectification of the protagonists and presenting an early insight on issues of fragmentation of the female body.

Vera Chytilova: Chytilova's auteur style focuses on anti-patriarchal themes and visual symbolisms. The use of a psychedelic colour palette is a recurring aesthetic choice.

Narrative: Very loosely plotted and fractured narrative with many ellipses and ambiguous dialogue, reflective of the film's surrealist nature.

The film is playful and comic. Marie 1 and 2 represent youth, wanting a change with the old patriarchal order.

The film was banned on release because of its 'wasteful' use of food at a time of food shortages, rather than for its critique of the regime.

Chytilova: *'We decided to allow ourselves to be bound by nothing. Absolutely nothing.'*