

Picturegoers

A Critical Anthology of Eyewitness Experiences

by Luke McKernan

DESCRIPTION:

This book is a carefully selected, thematically arranged collection of eyewitness accounts of seeing motion pictures - from the 1890s to the present day, and from countries across the globe. Included are essays, diaries, memoirs, travel accounts, oral history interviews, poems and extracts from novels. These verbatim accounts - from both professional and amateur writers - have been selected not only for what they tell us about the historical experience of cinema in many countries, but also for their literary value. Here is evocative testimony that shows how deeply cinema touches emotional needs, and the huge impact that the cinema has had on modern society.

While most film history studies are centred on films or those who produce them, *Picturegoers* puts the voices of the audience first. It analyses and celebrates the audience's point of view, shaped by time, experience and place, providing a rich, entertaining portrait of a medium that became so transformative precisely because anyone, rich or poor, educated or not, could share in it.

The book will appeal to scholars interested in the relationship between cinema and society, those engaged in audience studies, and general readers interested in world cinema history.

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ISBN:

9781804130124 (hb)

PRICE:

\$97.00 (hb)

PUBLICATION DATE:

30 August 2022 (hb)

BINDING:

Hardback

SIZE:

6 x9

PAGES:

248

ILLUSTRATIONS:

21 b/w illus

PUBLISHER:

University of Exeter Press

IMPRINT:

University of Exeter Press

READER INTERESTS:

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Luke McKernan is a film historian with a particular interest in film audiences and the sociological study of cinema. He has been collecting examples of eyewitness testimony of cinemagoing for many years through the website <https://picturegoing.com>. His book *Charles Urban: Pioneering the Non-Fiction Film in Britain and America, 1897-1925* (Exeter, 2013) won the 2014 Kraszna-Krausz Moving Image Book Award.