



Hollywood Cinema and the Real Los Angeles

Mark Shiel

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For many people the epithet 'City of Angels' evokes sunshine and golden beaches, glamorous movie stars and the promise of fame – the reality is of course very different. And, paradoxically, the city's reality is as much the record of Los Angeles on film as it is the Los Angeles of highways and suburban neighbourhoods, of people and shops, police and parking lots. This is because Los Angeles is first and foremost a city of cinema – it is where so many major movies are made, and where its locations and studio re-creations are recorded and re-presented on film.

This book explores Los Angeles from the invention of motion pictures in the 1890s to the decline of the studio system in the 1950s, describing the ever-changing cinematic image of the city, and the ways in which its representations reflected and manipulated its physical geography. It shows how the construction of big studios helped to change the shape of Los Angeles, and how Hollywood not only contributed to, but also complicated, the city's economic, political, social and cultural life. The incredibly popular films that were produced during this time, from the early slapstick comedies to film noir, and the histories of Los Angeles and its film industry cannot be understood in isolation from each other. Shiel provides a close analysis of narrative, mise en scène, cinematography, editing and other elements of film-making and style, concentrating on the ways in which directors and others engaged with the architecture of the city both within the studios and on location in California.

Written by an expert in the history and theory of cinema and the city, this book is a must-read for anyone interested in Hollywood movies, or the history and architecture of Los Angeles. As well as being illustrated with many previously unpublished photographs, the book offers an in-depth view of a city that has never really been seen before.

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