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# Filmish: A Graphic Journey Through Film



## Synopsis

2017 ALA/YALSA Great Graphic Novel for Teens Award Winner Cartoonist Edward Ross uses comics to illuminate the ideas behind our favorite movies. In *Filmish*, Ross's cartoon alter ego guides readers through the annals of cinematic history, introducing some of the strange and fascinating concepts at work in the movies. Each chapter focuses on a particular theme—the body, architecture, language—and explores an eclectic mix of cinematic triumphs, from *A Trip to the Moon* to *Top Gun*. Like other bestselling nonfiction graphic novels such as Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, *Filmish* tackles serious issues—sexuality, race, censorship, propaganda—with authority and wit, throwing new light on some of the greatest films ever made.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Highly recommended to anyone interested in cinema (and who isn't?); it's informed enough to be an introductory film studies textbook.” (Library Journal online (starred review))  
“Film historians and comic enthusiasts, meet your new favorite book.” (Entertainment Weekly)  
“It's probably the first graphic novel in history to include the phrase, ‘As James Naremore posits . . . or, ‘As cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek puts it . . .’” (Flavorwire)

Edward Ross is a comic book artist, writer, and illustrator. Working alongside Dr. James Hall, he has created many science-themed comics for universities, museums, charities, and research bodies. Ross is a film studies graduate and regularly leads workshops in comic book creation. He lives in Edinburgh.

This book is fine, and not a waste of time. Still, if you're interested in learning about film, you're better off watching *The Story of Film* (actually, do this anyway) or reading any of a number of other introductory texts ( will likely point you in the right direction). If you're interested in the graphic info-novel format, this might be a good bet for you, though I question the idea of trying to talk about film using a combination of simple pictures and sparse text -- I could imagine this format working, but I don't think it does in this case. Also, this is just my personal taste, but I also didn't love (a) the prose [it tended towards the cliché and vague] or (b) the omnipresence of the narrator's (authors?) face.

I teach filmmaking to teenagers, so I am always on the lookout for new teaching tools and resources. This is an excellent introduction to film theory for young people who have developed an enthusiasm for movies but know nothing about film studies. Not only is the graphic approach fun, fast and easy to understand but Ross has essentially created a superb illustrated bibliography here for those wanting a jumping off place into more in-depth study. If I taught an undergraduate college course in film history or appreciation, this would be required reading. I would also give it to advanced high school students. My one beef with Ross's approach is that I find him to present a number of popular critical positions somewhat uncritically himself. There is a lot of pleasure and enrichment to be had in movies that may be, for one reason or another, "problematic," from within a certain context. For some students, this book might lead to pre-judgement of works they have not experienced first hand. Overall, though, if taken for the many ways it is useful and enjoyable, an excellent guide.

This was fun, insightful and well produced. A great gift for anyone who likes films and is interested in some film history and theory.

This was a fantastic journey through film divided into 7 chapters exploring the following aspects of film: The Eye; The Body; Sets & Architecture; Time; Voice & Language; Power & Ideology; Technology & Technophobia. I've always been interested in film history and the art of film making and cinema, and this was indeed enlightening and quite educational as well. The graphics are beautiful, and I loved the different illustrations of films and characters that we've known and seen our whole lives and are instantly recognizable. I loved how he took different films and studied them, not only mentioning them once, but mentioning them again whenever it applied throughout the

different chapters. Films like *The Shining* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Jurassic Park* and *A Clockwork Orange* and *King Kong* and *Die Hard* and *The Matrix* are just a fraction of the movies mentioned and used as examples to showcase different aspects of film making throughout history. It is very interesting, and highly entertaining, and many films I hadn't yet watched have been added to my "To Watch" list with a new outlook on how they're made. Excellent book for all lovers of film. More books like this need to be made. I would love a version of this book made about music for instance.

A lovely little book, would recommend to anyone with an interest in film. Will definitely make me rewatch a fair few films in a new light.

If you want to be preached to about how women and minorities have been mistreated in cinema this is the book for you. It really is just lazy and a distraction. It is obviously part of film history but when the point is slammed home with a hammer it gets old fast. Guilt ridden liberals will love it. Not a fun read.

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