

WITH JIM SOTO

WHAT ARE CINEMATIC STYLES?

About Style



Style refers to a particular, distinctive, or characteristic mode of execution in any form of art, work, or living. In fiction, style is the manner in which the author tells the story. Style make anyone or anything stand out.

About Cinematic Style

Film styles are recognizable film techniques used by filmmakers to give specific changes or value to their work. It can include all aspects in making a film: sound, mise-en-scene, dialogue, cinematography, or attitude (mood).

It is the cinematic equivalent of styles in art and literature. It refers to movements or schools of style in cinema and encompasses all elements of a film; theme, story, camera-work, lighting, performances editing, etc.

Cinematic Style



Film style is distinct from **film genre**, which categorizes films based on similar narrative structures. (e.g., Westerns are about the American West, Romances are about love, etc.) Film style categorizes films based on the techniques used in filming, such as its cinematography or lighting. Two films can share the same genre, but can look different based on their style.



Independence Day (1996)



Cloverfield (2008)

For example, Independence Day and Cloverfield are both sci-fi, action films about alien invasions. However, they are shot differently, with Independence Day shot as a traditional epic summer blockbuster and Cloverfield using the “lost footage” style.

Elements of Cinematic Style

At the center of cinematic styles, we can find a combination of various elements that contribute to the unique aesthetic and narrative approaches of different styles. While some elements may vary, there are key factors that play a key role in defining cinematic styles.



The elements of cinematic styles include:

- **Narrative Structure:** How a story is told and structured greatly influences the style of a film.
- **Visual Aesthetics:** The visual choices made by cinematographers and directors, are of great impact.
- **Editing Techniques:** It may utilize fast-paced, long takes, jump cuts, or others.
- **Cinematography:** The way the camera captures and frames the action plays a significant role in defining a film's style.
- **Sound Design:** Different sounds and silences, impact the style of a film.
- **Performance/Acting Style:** These can range from naturalistic and understated to exaggerated and stylized.

Cinematic Style Examples



Sound of Metal (2021)



Collateral (2004)

Film style can describe the techniques used by specific filmmakers, but it can also be used to describe a group of filmmakers from the same area and time period. Group style can include film styles such as Film Noir, German Expressionism and Italian Neorealism, for example.

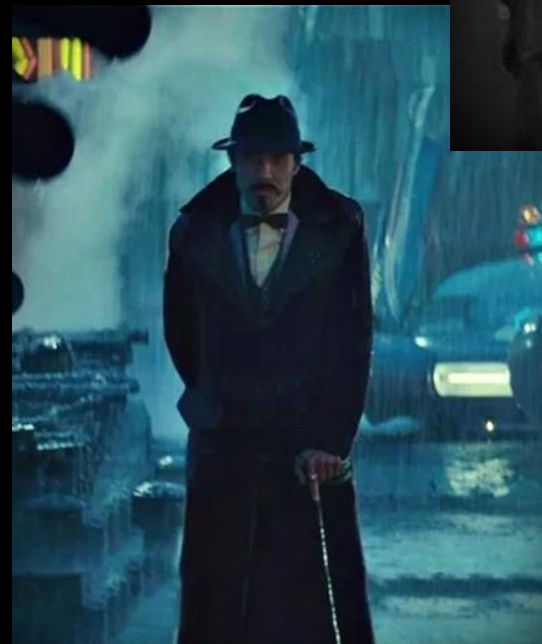
There are many cinematic styles. Too many to mention here. However, to give you a broad view of the different styles, here are some of the better known ones:



Kill Bill: Volume 1 (2003)

Film Noir

Ultimate lost, surviving day-to-day, desperation and paranoia are leading themes in noir stories. Its major features are its black-and-white visual style, using a high-contrast lighting technique called **chiaroscuro** to create dramatic shadows and striking scenes. The characters are often morally ambiguous, and the dialogue usually contains a large use of exposition.



Blade Runner (1982)



Double Indemnity (1944)

Documentary

The purpose of documentaries is to chronicle an authentic depiction of reality with the intent to educate or maintain a historical record. The camera often acts as a passive observer and appears to react to the events on camera. Two familiar camera techniques in this style are handheld and observational. The shots are generally improvised to create feelings of spontaneity in the audience.



Woodstock (1970)



Bowling for Columbine (2002)

German Expressionism

Typically explore a subjective experience of the world by attempting to visualize anxiety through distorted and unusual imagery. They rose in popularity after WWI because their tones often reflected the collective emotion of society. This style is also notable for its use of chiaroscuro and extreme camera angles to provide visual depth or distortion in the frame. People often associate the horror genre with the German expressionist film style.



The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1919)



Batman Returns (1992)

Italian Neorealism

They became popular after WW2 because their stories focus on mostly poor and working-class people. They often represent the complex economic and moral conditions of society and many include children in major roles. Since they were low-budget and for the sake of realism, the films were mostly shot on-location and locals were cast as extras.



Goodfellas (1990)



La Strada (1954)

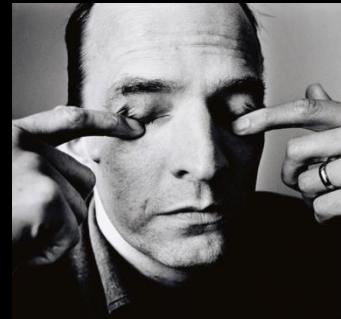
Directors Famous for their Cinematic Style



Fritz Lang



Federico Fellini



Ingmar Bergman



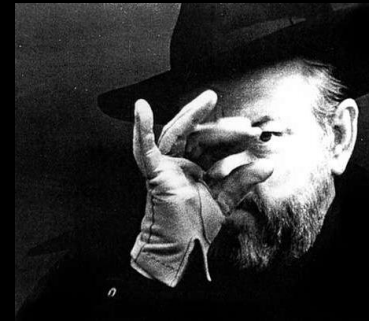
Stanley Kubrick



Sergei Eisenstein



Akira Kurosawa



Orson Welles



Pulp Fiction (1994)

Remember that at the end of the day, films should aim to entertain, engage, educate and involve the viewer beyond the visual medium.

RESHOOT

1. What is a cinematic style?
2. How are the categories of film genre and film style different?
3. Which are the elements of cinematic style?
4. Of the styles discussed in this lesson, which one appeals to you the most? Explain.
5. Do you think that the different cinematic style helps reach the goals of cinematography? Explain.



Next:

GENRES

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