

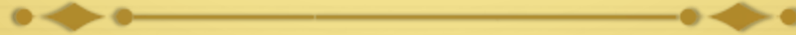


Weimar Film

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Genres and Styles

Ufa



- ✦ Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft: the name says that the company makes films and is publicly owned
- ✦ Ufa was founded outside Berlin in 1917 as a bulwark against foreign competition
- ✦ Ufa rivaled Cinecittà in size and in access to talent on both sides of the camera

Ufa's Multiple Imperatives



- ✦ serve the state
- ✦ expand film art
- ✦ uplift a defeated people
- ✦ enhance Germany's image abroad
- ✦ challenge the limits of "good taste"
- ✦ represent the darker sides of social life
- ✦ explore the extremes of character psychology

Ufa Palast-Am-Zoo, Berlin



Ufa Palast-Am-Zoo, Berlin



Three genres of Weimar film

- ✦ spectacular myths and historical romances
 - ✦ Lubitsch's *Madame Dubarry*, *Anna Boleyn*; Lang's *Siegfried*
- ✦ fairytales and horror films
 - ✦ Lang's *Destiny*, *Metropolis*
 - ✦ Wiene's *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*
 - ✦ Murnau's *Nosferatu*
- ✦ the “street film”
 - ✦ Pabst's *Joyless Street*
 - ✦ May's *Asphalt*

From Caligari to Hitler



- ✦ Weimar cinema begins and ends in a lunatic asylum
 - ✦ *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) to *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1932)
- ✦ Emphasis on tyrants and “slaves”: *Metropolis*
- ✦ Sons rebel against fathers: *Asphalt*
- ✦ the “New Woman”: *Pandora’s Box*
- ✦ Representations of crime and sexual behavior
- ✦ Emphasis on diegetic audiences

Lure of the Exotic



- ✦ Except for “street films” adventure films dominated
- ✦ Intensified experience
- ✦ Escapism and fantasy
- ✦ Resentment of Germany’s geographical isolation
- ✦ Loss of empire
- ✦ Vicarious experience of international expansion

Striking style in all genres



- ✦ myths and historical romances: casts of thousands, elaborate production design
- ✦ fairytale/horror films: exotic settings, distorted Gothic style (fantasy, escape, nostalgia for lost empire)
- ✦ Visual extravagance: Expressionism
- ✦ Non-realistic cinematic techniques
- ✦ street films: the New Objectivity

Weimar Gothic



- ✦ gloomy
- ✦ bizarre
- ✦ irrational
- ✦ fantastic
- ✦ extreme psychological states (objective correlatives)
- ✦ link between crime and insanity
- ✦ appeal of terror and the “night side” of life (decadence)
- ✦ anti-realist; dreamlike quality

The Dark Side of the Street



- ✦ gritty urban dramas
- ✦ focus on crime and explicit sexuality
- ✦ cautionary tales: the risks of excitement; the seductive appeal of the underworld
- ✦ social critique: focus on poverty and unemployment; crime as the only way out

The New Objectivity/ Die Neue Sachlichkeit

- ✦ style developed in response to World War I
- ✦ painting focusing on daily life
- ✦ focus on the ugly, not the beautiful
- ✦ critical of the wealthy and powerful
- ✦ cynical, unsentimental, bitter, disillusioned
- ✦ representation of decadent behavior and settings

George Grosz



Otto Dix



Otto Dix



Max Beckmann



Rudolph Schlicter



Common Cinematic Techniques in Weimar Films

- ✦ highly mobile camera
- ✦ subjective camera shots; motivated POVs
- ✦ unmotivated, extreme, and obtrusive camera angles
- ✦ discontinuity editing; montage
- ✦ chiaroscuro lighting
- ✦ deep focus
- ✦ symbolic, even distorted mise en scène