



Black Directors in Hollywood

Melvin Donalson

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Hollywood film directors are some of the world's most powerful storytellers, shaping the fantasies and aspirations of people around the globe. Since the 1960s, African Americans have increasingly joined their ranks, bringing fresh insights to movie characterizations, plots, and themes and depicting areas of African American culture that were previously absent from mainstream films. Today, black directors are making films in all popular genres, while inventing new ones to speak directly from and to the black experience.

This book offers a first comprehensive look at the work of black directors in Hollywood, from pioneers such as Gordon Parks, Melvin Van Peebles, and Ossie Davis to current talents including Spike Lee, John Singleton, Kasi Lemmons, and Carl Franklin. Discussing 67 individuals and over 135 films, Melvin Donalson thoroughly explores how black directors' storytelling skills and film techniques have widened both the thematic focus and visual style of American cinema. Assessing the meanings and messages in their films, he convincingly demonstrates that black directors are balancing Hollywood's demand for box office success with artistic achievement and responsibility to ethnic, cultural, and gender issues.

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