

Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at Seventy

Colin MacCabe



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Jean-Luc Godard's early films revolutionized the language of cinema. Hugely prolific in his first decade--*Breathless, Contempt, Pierrot le Fou, Alphaville*, and *Made in USA* are just a handful of the seminal works he directed--Godard introduced filmgoers to the generation of stars associated with the trumpeted sexuality of postwar movies and culture: Brigitte Bardot, Jean Seberg, Jean-Paul Belmondo, and Anna Karina.

As the sixties wore on, however, Godard's life was transformed. The Hollywood he had idolized began to disgust him, and in the midst of the socialist ferment in France his second wife introduced him to the activist student left. From 1968 to 1972, Europe's greatest director worked in the service of Maoist politics, and continued thereafter to experiment on the far peripheries of the medium he had transformed. His extraordinary later works are little seen or appreciated, yet he remains one of Europe's most influential artists.

Drawing on his own working experience with Godard and his coterie, Colin MacCabe, in this first biography of the director, has written a thrilling account of the French cinema's transformation in the hands of Truffaut, Rohmer, Rivette, and Chabrol--critics who toppled the old aesthetics by becoming, legendarily, directors themselves--and Godard's determination to make cinema the greatest of the arts.

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