ForeWord Reviews

PERFORMING ARTS

Cinema Today: A Conversation with Thirty-Nine Filmmakers from around the World
Elena Oumano
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Groundbreakers in the film industry often remain unfamiliar names to the average moviegoer. Attracted to popular actors and high-budget productions, fans of commercial cinema are often oblivious to the imaginative leaders behind the scenes. Lauded at international festivals as trendsetters and mavericks, these filmmakers dare to experiment with everything from sound and setting to theme and technique.

Cinema Today is a fascinating look at film as an art form. In a work that will appeal to students, novices, and seasoned experts, Oumano presents thirty-nine renowned artists in this mysterious world we know as cinema. Rather than showcasing each interview as a separate entity, she divides her book into nine sections and arranges responses according to topic. Along with expected chapters on cinematography, sound, actors, rhythm, and structure, she covers pre-production, production, and post-production aspects of the work. She addresses the business of financing, distributing, and exhibiting, as well as expansive issues that have intellectual significance such as art and reality and the role of the viewer. Her final chapter on cinema and society is edited with a broad cultural tone. In addition to these extensive discussions, Oumano includes profiles of the filmmakers with biographical information and selected filmographies.

Elena Oumano earned a doctorate in language and communications from New York University. She's a professor of communications at BMCC of the City University of New York. A prolific music and film journalist, Oumano has written, co-written, or ghostwritten over twenty books, including biographies on Paul Newman, Sam Shepard, and Elvis Presley. In addition to her current release, she's published similar works titled *Film Forum: Thirty-Five Top Filmmakers Discuss Their Craft* and *Movies for a Desert Isle: Forty Well-Known Film Lovers in Search of the Films They Love Most.* Her articles have appeared in well-known entertainment publications such as *Spin*, *Interview*, and *GRAMMY* as well as the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, the *Village Voice*, *LA Weekly*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

From every age group and all parts of the world, these talented overachievers represent a freethinking element of the film industry, passionate and inspired, serious about creation.

Oumano's book is an outstanding contribution to the field. Though suitable for classroom use, *Cinema Today* has potential readers among related professionals and avid enthusiasts outside of academia. This text is crammed full of essential information about the production process and enlightening details of personal experiences that any aspiring filmmaker can use.

Julia Ann Charpentier