

Styling the Stars: Lost Treasures from the Twentieth Century Fox Archive

Angela Cartwright

Tom McLaren

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Eccentric and artsy, this candid glimpse of the world's beloved film stars focuses on a bygone era of traditional romance and old-school charm.

With primarily black-and-white and a small number of color stills, Twentieth Century Fox has maintained a vault of visual gems, outstanding shots of icons in the movie industry. In *Styling the Stars: Lost Treasures from the Twentieth Century Fox Archive*, actress Angela Cartwright and actor Tom McLaren present a revealing collection of photographs never before seen.

What makes this book unique is the intent opposed to the content—each picture was taken for technical purposes only, not for promotional avenues. The actors themselves did not want these photos offered to the scrutinizing public. This is not to imply that the compilation is unflattering or even private. These continuity shots—some natural, some posed—were used for maintaining consistency in scenes when filming could not be completed in one day. Inconsistencies in the length of a rip, the intensity of a smudge, the depth of a wound, or the angle of a handkerchief could mar the quality of the movie, detracting from credibility after production.

Divided into two parts with a foreword by Maureen O'Hara, this captivating coffee-table centerpiece is a nostalgic art form that rests in the annals of Hollywood obsession. Film fanatics who remember the diamond age of movie-star idolatry—perhaps “golden age” is not a strong enough term to describe the durability of these heroes and heroines—were children when most of these historical features were first-run attractions in 1927-1963.

In the second part, dubbed the “new Hollywood,” movies from 1964 to 1975 celebrate the end of the continuity tradition, an outdated though appealing procedure now retired due to digital technology. Light on text and heavy on photos, what little narrative exists is enriched with personal anecdotes and colorful details that only industry professionals would be able to share.

In this excerpt, Angela Cartwright reminisces about her time on the set when she was a child:

A woman with a stopwatch wrote frantically in shorthand on a steno pad. People with pockets full of pins, scissors, brushes, and combs straightened my hair and adjusted my wardrobe. With a tape measure, a cameraman measured the distance from his camera lens to the tip of my nose while lights were shifted around the floor and words like key light and arc light rang in my ears.

Rather than dropping names and nominating films to draw an audience, which is an effective approach to marketing celebrities, a critic would do best to shove aside personal preferences. This one-of-a-kind book is a specialized view of an unforgettable period in the history of filmmaking, a time that only these classic idols would comprehend, for they are the ones who created it.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Winter 2015)

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