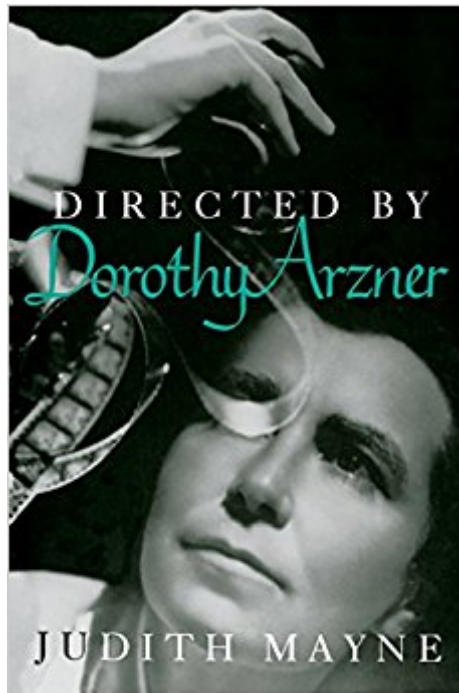




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Directed By Dorothy Arzner (Women Artists In Film)



Synopsis

Dorothy Arzner was the exception in Hollywood film history—the one woman who succeeded as a director, in a career that spanned three decades. In Part One, Dorothy Arzner's film career—her work as a film editor to her directorial debut, to her departure from Hollywood in 1943—is documented, with particular attention to Arzner's roles as "star-maker" and "woman's director." In Part Two, Mayne analyzes a number of Arzner's films and discusses how feminist preoccupations shape them, from the women's communities central to *Dance, Girl, Dance* and *The Wild Party* to critiques of the heterosexual couple in *Christopher Strong* and *Craig's Wife*. Part Three treats Arzner's lesbianism and the role that desire between women played in her career, her life, and her films.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The subject of close scrutiny by feminist film theorists for the past two decades, Arzner is arguably the most important woman film director in Hollywood history. From *The Wild Party*, starring Clara Bow in her first sound film, to *Dance, Girl, Dance*, with Lucille Ball, Arzner earned a reputation as a "star-maker." Mayne (*The Woman at the Keyhole*) here reviews Arzner's 16-year directing career, offering a feminist reading of her films that emphasizes their preoccupation with communities of women and the "performance" of gender, as well as their questioning of heterosexuality. Mayne also delves into Arzner's biography for evidence of how her identity as a lesbian affected her work,

and her research into Arzner's personal life reveals a moving picture of her ``unspeakable'' yet long and devoted partnership with choreographer Marion Morgan. Mayne's prose is revitalized whenever she turns to Arzner's life in and out of Hollywood, her reception by the press or her relationships with key artists such as George Cukor. Chapters on individual films are less convincing: the detailed plot summaries are tedious, and Mayne's repetition of a few underdeveloped points provoke the unfortunate suspicion that Arzner's material isn't rich enough to withstand such scrutiny. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1994 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"It is the first major study of Arzner's work since 1975 and, considering the depth of Mayne's research, will be the landmark study for many to come." - Lambda Book Report " ... brilliant and lively reading ... " - Feminist Bookstore News " ... displays an interpretive subtlety that does justice to Arzner's films themselves." - The Lesbian Review of Books " ... brilliantly written and constructed ... " - Gay Times "[Mayne explores] in fascinating detail how Arzner succeeded in becoming a director, how her films reflected a distinct sensibility and set of life experiences, and how she was portrayed in the popular media." - Steven Mintz, H-Net Book Review

Good book about a pioneer woman director.

ever in Hollywood! Women are far from challenged in Hollywood today, compared to this intriguing story. Some of the toughest and most creative people in movies were from the Golden Era of films. And women took their places proudly, with men being some of their greatest champions.

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