



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Hitchcock - Truffaut

A film by Kent Jones
Written by Kent Jones and Serge Toubiana

Length: 1h 20m

2015

OFFICIAL SCREENING - May 19 - 15h30 - Salle Buñuel

Kent Jones and Serge Toubiana will be in Cannes May 18-20

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

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Hitchcock - Truffaut

Summary:

In 1962 Hitchcock and Truffaut locked themselves away in Hollywood for a week to excavate the secrets behind the *mise-en-scène* in cinema. Based on the original recordings of this meeting—used to produce the mythical book *Hitchcock - Truffaut*—this film illustrates the greatest cinema lesson of all time and plunges us into the world of the creator of *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Vertigo*.

Hitchcock's incredibly modern art is elucidated and explained by today's leading filmmakers: Martin Scorsese, David Fincher, Arnaud Desplechin, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Wes Anderson, James Gray, Olivier Assayas, Richard Linklater, Peter Bogdanovich and Paul Schrader.

The Story

The Bible of Cinema. Released 50 years ago simultaneously in France and the United States, Truffaut's celebrated book based on his Hitchcock interview has accomplished the feat of being not only a good read that is accessible to all, but also *the* reference for innumerable filmmakers the world over, as relevant today as it was in the past.

The conversations between these two men profoundly altered the critical approach to Hitchcock's cinema around the world. Furthermore, the very conception of cinema in general was shattered. From then on, the filmmaker was seen as the true creator of his or her film through mastery of the *mise-en-scène*.

Thus this book significantly transformed the power balance between artists and the film industry. Truffaut considered the book a "*livrefilm*", referring to it as the "Hitchbook", finding that it unmasked an artist's secrets, revealing his conception of cinema and the world. This explains the stir that the book created when it was first released, its translation into many languages throughout the world, and the fact that many cinephiles have used it as a reference in the past and still do so today.

It is a story of the meeting between a young critic-cum-filmmaker (in 1962 Truffaut, then 30 years old, had completed three films) and a master of world cinema at the height of his fame (Hitchcock was putting the final editing touches on *The Birds*, his 48th feature-length film). It is also the story of a meeting between a French cinephile and a British filmmaker working in Hollywood at the epicenter of the studio system. Their dialogue is also a fruitful confrontation between two differing, and almost opposite ideas of cinema, as both an art and an industry.

When he solicited Hitchcock for a long interview about each of the films that punctuated his career, Truffaut had a very clear idea in mind. He wanted to **show American critics that they were wrong to underestimate Hitchcock's films**, seeing them only from an entertainment perspective.

The Kent Jones film, "Hitchcock - Truffaut", gives a very contemporary reinterpretation of Hitchcock's cinema. By highlighting the main topics with a large number of clips (legendary and lesser known) from Hitchcock's films, 10 contemporary cinema greats reiterate the esthetic, technical, and narrative questions at the heart of these conversations with Truffaut. And thanks to the original sound recordings of these discussions, it is as if **the book suddenly comes to life**: Hitchcock and Truffaut, with their intonations, hesitations, and laughter, answer **Martin Scorsese, Arnaud Desplechin, David Fincher, Richard Linklater, Wes Anderson, James Gray, Olivier Assayas, Kiyoshi Kurosawa, Peter Bogdanovich and Paul Schrader**, resurrecting this fabled one-week encounter and 20-year friendship.

“With this film, my intention is not to please cinephiles. I want the viewer to have the visceral revelation of what cinema is in all its most powerful beauty.”

Kent Jones

Background

Beginning

While a critic at *Cahiers du cinéma*, Truffaut met Hitchcock for the first time during the winter of 1954. Eight years later in April 1962, he wrote a long letter to Hitchcock that included the following:

“Since I have become a director myself, my admiration for you has in no way weakened; on the contrary, it has grown stronger and changed in nature. There are many directors with a love of cinema, but what you possess is a love of celluloid itself and it is that which I would like to talk to you about.

I would like you to grant me a tape-recorded interview which would take about eight days and would add up to about thirty hours of recording. The point of this would be to distil not a series of articles but an entire book which would be published simultaneously in New York and Paris, then, probably later, more or less everywhere in the world.”

Truffaut had his letter translated by Helen Scott, an interpreter and essential accomplice, without whom he confessed he would have never embarked on such a venture. Hitchcock responded with a telegram from California in French which translates:

“Dear Mister Truffaut, your letter brought tears to my eyes, and I am very grateful to receive such a tribute from you.”

The interview began on 13 August 1962, on Hitchcock’s birthday (his 63rd).

“Every morning, he would pick us up at the Beverly Hills Hotel to take us to his office at Universal Studios,” Truffaut wrote in the book’s preface. *“With each of us wearing a microphone and a sound engineer in the next room recording our voices, we kept up a running conversation from 9 to 6 everyday, achieving something of a track record as we talked our way through lunches.”*

The book had a considerable impact when it was released four years later, changing the opinion of the American press about Hitchcock, as well as Truffaut's image in the United States. But this experience also greatly reinforced the esteem and friendship between the two men. Every time Hitchcock visited Paris, Truffaut organized a dinner in his honor, inviting his friends (Jeanne Moreau, Catherine Deneuve, Michel Piccoli...). Hitchcock sent him scripts that he planned to make into films, asking for his advice. The two men maintained a regular correspondence. In the United States, Truffaut was invited to pay tribute to the master at official ceremonies in Hitchcock's honor, signaling a belated but real recognition of his artistic genius. In 1979 at the American Film Institute, Truffaut rendered an homage that was broadcast to millions of Americans viewers:

"In America, you respect him because he shoots scenes of love as if they were scenes of murder; we respect him because he shoots scenes of murder like scenes of love."

New Wave - New Hollywood. By seeking out Hitchcock, Truffaut pursued and concluded the logical sequence that began with a critical gesture initiated with his friends Rohmer, Godard, Chabrol and Rivette in the middle of the 1950's at *Cahiers du cinéma*. The goal: have Hitchcock recognized as a true master of film.

Released ten years later, the *Hitchbook* would play a pivotal role in the cinephilic formation of the "New Hollywood" influencing filmmakers such as Francis F. Coppola, Brian De Palma, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, William Friedkin and George Lucas.

From "New Wave" to "New Hollywood", the *Hitchbook* served as a "bridge" between two historic moments in world cinema.

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Creators and Producers

Kent Jones, writer director

Kent Jones is an internationally recognized writer and filmmaker. He is the author of several books of criticism, has been a regular contributor to *Film Comment* magazine for many years, and was selected as a 2012 Guggenheim Fellow.

He has worked with Martin Scorsese throughout the years on numerous documentaries - he was the co-writer of Scorsese's survey of Italian cinema, *My Voyage to Italy*, the writer and director of the 2007 film *Val Lewton: The Man in the Shadows* which Scorsese produced and narrated, and the co-writer and director with Scorsese of the Emmy-nominated and Peabody Award-winning 2010 film, *A Letter to Elia*. They are currently at work on a follow-up to *My Voyage to Italy*.

Jones co-wrote Arnaud Desplechin's *Jimmy P.*, starring Benicio del Toro and Mathieu Amalric, which screened in competition at the 2013 Cannes International Film Festival.

Jones currently serves as Artistic Director of The World Cinema Foundation. In November of 2012, he was appointed Director the New York Film Festival.

Serge Toubiana, co-writer

Former director and editor in chief of *Cahiers du cinéma*, **Serge Toubiana** has directed the Cinémathèque française since 2003.

An author of books on cinema, including a biography of François Truffaut, co-written with Antoine de Baecque (Gallimard, 1996), a book on Maurice Pialat (*Maurice Pialat, Painter & Filmmaker*, Somogy-La Cinémathèque française, 2013), he co-directed a feature-length documentary with Michel Pascal, *François Truffaut, Stolen Portraits* (1993), a portrait of the actress Isabelle Huppert (*Une vie pour jouer, (A Life for Playing)* MK2 TV/Arte, 2001), and was the co-writer of a movie about Gérard Depardieu (*Bursting with Life*, Arte, 2000). In 2013, he was the curator of an exhibition dedicated to François Truffaut at the Cinémathèque française.

Artline Films

Producer and Director **Olivier Mille** created the production company Artline Films in 1986. He has produced approximately 250 films (documentaries, TV dramas, feature-length films) for major French television channels or for cinema, in collaboration with a number of international partners. Artline Films focuses on ambitious productions with strong international potential, such as *Farewell Comrades !* (6 x 52' for Arte and 15 European countries), *The Black Sun of Hiroshima* (90' France 3, NHK, TSR), *The Killer's Opera* (90' France 3, RAI, Luce, RTBF), *Cosa Nostra* (90' France 2, BBC, Rai, YLE, SBS, Doclab), *Global Food* et *Global Drinks* (12 x 52' France 5, Planète, TV5 Monde, Stefilm,

YLE, RTBF, CBC), *Snow Business* (52', France 5, ORF, RAI, RTS, SVT, TV5 Monde, YLE, Navigator).

Cohen Media Group

In his role as President and CEO of Cohen Brothers Realty Corporation, **Charles S. Cohen** is one of the US's most important commercial real estate owners/developers, as well as an influential patron, innovator and visionary of culture and the arts. Formed in 2008 by Cohen, an executive producer of multiple Academy Award nominee *Frozen River*, Cohen Media Group, LLC (CMG) produces and distributes select films throughout North America. Recent and upcoming releases include the Kent Jones documentary *HITCHCOCK - TRUFFAUT* (Official Selection, 2015 Cannes Film Festival), 2015 Academy Award Best Foreign Language Film nominee, *Timbuktu* by Abderrahmane Sissako and Israel Horovitz's *My Old Lady*, with Maggie Smith and Kevin Kline. Past CMG releases include Rachid Bouchareb's *Outside the Law* (2011 Academy Award Best Foreign Language Film nominee), Benoît Jacquot's *Farewell, My Queen*, Ziad Doueiri's *The Attack*, based on the international best-selling book by Yasmina Khadra, and *The Last of the Unjust* from Claude Lanzmann, the director of *Shoah*. CMG's Cohen Film Collection (formerly the Rohauer Collection) includes some 700 cinema landmarks, including films by D.W. Griffith, Buster Keaton and Douglas Fairbanks, as well as foreign classics like Luis Buñuel's *Tristana*.

Data Sheet

Title	<i>Hitchcock - Truffaut</i>
Length	1h20
Year of production	2015
Director	Kent Jones
Writers	Kent Jones and Serge Toubiana
Editor	Rachel Reichman
Narrated by	Mathieu Amalric for the French version Bob Balaban for the English version
Original score	Jeremiah Bornfield

With the participation of:

Martin Scorsese
David Fincher
Arnaud Desplechin
Wes Anderson
James Gray
Richard Linklater
Olivier Assayas
Kiyoshi Kurosawa
Peter Bogdanovich
Paul Schrader

Produced by Olivier Mille and Charles S. Cohen
Associate producers: John Kochman and Daniel Battsek
Co-producer: Rachel Reichman

Executive production and post-production: Delphine Pineau, Cécile Croizat, Victoire Buff, Benjamin Landsberger, Elizabeth Hannah, Abi Sakamoto.

A production by Artline Films (Paris)
Cohen Media Group (New York)

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Unité Société et Culture
Martine Saada - Karen Michael

With the participation of - La Cinémathèque française
- Ciné+

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