

Cinema

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Walking along the History of Cinema

Most historians credited the birth of cinema to William Kennedy Laurie Dickson, an engineer from Edison laboratories who was credited for the invention of the film. This, along with instruments Kinetograph and the Kinetoscope composed one of the earliest moving picture system in the world.

Lumiere, however, made the first commercial motion picture camera in 1895. Lumiere invented the cinematographe, a camera, film processing and a projector all rolled into one. The main advantage of this equipment from that of Edison's lies on the convenience of the former. Lumiere's cinematographe is lightweight, suitcase-size and portable. Other devices followed, like those made by Robert W. Paul and Birt Acres, Max and Emil Skladanowsky, and others.

The Silent Era (1895 – 1929)

The first inventors of moving camera tried to capture images with accompanying sounds, but the first practical device to do such was only invented in the late 1920s. Movies in the first phase of the cinema history are short, void of movements and editing, and flat. The novelty, however, of seeing moving pictures during that time was enough to make cinema a thriving industry in many places in the world.

The films made during this era gradually changed from novelty into those which can be considered as art or literary films. This era produced classics like Broken Blossoms, Potemkin, and The Blue angel and names like Charlie Chaplin, Sergei Eisenstein, and Josef von Sternberg. The silent era eventually came to a halt in 1929 after the discovery of recording system that records sounds along with the images, albeit some silent films have been produced after 1929 like the City Lights and Modern Times by Charlie Chaplin.

The Sound Era (1930 – Present)

The sound era started when The Silent Era end – the introduction of synchronized sounds with the moving images. It started some time in 1926 with Warner Bros's Vitaphone system, which was followed by the likes of Movietone, Phonofilm, and Photophone. With the entry of audio in the movie industry and its success, all, even the reluctant producers, knew that this would be the trend for years to come.

The initial years of the era was greeted with fierce competitions among big film studios and long-term contracts for directors and actors. Studios also own large theatre chains that form a major part of their revenues, each with its system for music accompaniment like pianist, etc. Drive-in movies are also common. During the Great War and the World War II, movies were exploited by all camps for patriotism and propaganda purposes. Films about war, battlefield dramas etc. proliferate. After the war, storytelling by heroes and soldiers from the battlefield would be turned into movies. Old studio traditions were broken by the entry of TV in the entertainment industry in the 1950s. Such opening also freed directors and actors to look for movie and TV projects on their own, instead of being housed by studios. The 1960s brought down the old studio system, and movies began to be filmed in other locations, even in other countries. The 1970s highlighted graphic images of love, sex, and violence and gave rise to a new set of directors like George Lucas, Brian de Palma, and Steven Spielberg. During the 80s, movies were being watched more on VCR and other forms of home entertainment system and a major source of 'second venue' revenues for movie companies. The years thereafter were defined mostly by the rise of new, better and more realistic special effects, better home entertainment system thanks to VCD and DVD players, and the rise of more powerful independent filmmakers and, of course, the talented actors and actresses.