



Akira Kurosawa (Critical Lives)

Peter Wild

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‘Most directors have one film for which they are known or possibly two’, Francis Ford Coppola has said. ‘Akira Kurosawa has eight or nine.’ Through his many masterpieces such as Rashomon, Seven Samurai, High and Low, Yojimbo, Kagemusha and Ran, Kurosawa’s (1910–1998) work has influenced the most acclaimed directors working today, from George Lucas and Steven Spielberg to Martin Scorsese. His groundbreaking innovations in both cinematography and editing, combined with his storytelling, have made him a cinematic icon.

This book both evaluates Kurosawa’s films and offers a view of the man behind the camera, covering his family life and his legendary place on the global film-making stage. Throughout Kurosawa’s career there were repeated criticisms both from within his own country and abroad: he was too influenced by Western cinema; he was not authentically ‘Japanese’; he was too sentimental, naive, arrogant or out of touch. This new study helps us to understand Kurosawa – the man and his films – in his contemporary context.

An adroit evaluation, Akira Kurosawa will be essential reading for cinephiles, culture students and general readers alike who are interested in the work of this highly influential, masterful director.

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