



Directed by Allen Smithee

Jeremy Braddock, Stephen Hock

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Allen Smithee specializes in the mediocre. He is versatile. He is prolific. And he doesn't exist. From 1969 until 1999, Allen Smithee was the pseudonym adopted by Hollywood directors when they wished not to be associated with films ostensibly of their making. Encompassing over fifty films of various stripes -- B movies, sequels, music videos, made-for-TV movies -- Smithee's three decades of work affords the authors of this volume a unique opportunity to reassess the claims of auteurism, both in its traditional guise and in the more commodified form it currently assumes.

Sometimes treating Smithee as an auteur in much the same way critics and scholars have treated directors as diverse as Douglas Sirk, Abbas Kiarostami, and Quentin Tarantino, the contributors reclaim new possibilities for auteurist filmmaking and film studies, even as they show what an empty display it has recently become. In accounting for this change, the essays in this volume employ innovative theories of authorship to recapture the subversive effect that auteurism once enjoyed. Thus the Smithee name becomes part of a larger discussion of the economics and history of pseudonyms in filmmaking -- notably in the blacklist of the 1950s -- as well as an opportunity to employ Jacques Derrida's theory of the signature to recover obscured economic and historic contexts within Smithee's films.

Unique in its focus, innovative in its approach, *Directed by Allen Smithee* argues that it is precisely through throwaway films such as Smithee's that recent Hollywood cinema can best be studied.

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