



# One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema

*George Melnyk*

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With its beginnings rooted in the languages and cultures of the French and English, Canadian cinema has, over time, become more representative, reflecting the interests and aspirations of Canada's many diverse communities and identities. In *One Hundred Years of Canadian Cinema*, George Melnyk offers a twenty-first-century perspective on a fascinating film tradition, the distinctness of which has attracted the attention of the global cinematic community.

Melnyk's historical survey is comprehensive in its cinematic scope. He examines the achievement of dramatic, documentary, and experimental filmmaking from the earliest days until the present, giving due attention to the cinemas of Quebec and to the cultural, political, and theoretical trends that have shaped contemporary film in Canada. Following an interpretive approach, Melnyk explores the beginnings of a national cinema in the silent era at the end of the nineteenth century; the dynamics of the industry in the 1920s, which provide a model for the industry's overall development; the rise of the NFB; the birth of a successful feature-film industry in Quebec in the forties; the tax-shelter era of the seventies; Canada's achievements in animation; and the important contributions of key feature films and their directors in articulating insights into the cultural grammars found in Canadian society throughout the past century.

Drawing on the insights of scholars, critics, and filmmakers to provide a coherent appraisal of the state of the film industry and Canada's cinematic art as it enters its second century, Melnyk weaves the history of English and French Canada together in an attempt to understand the achievements and, ultimately, the failures of a 'national cinema'. From *Neighbours* to *Crash*, *Pour la suite du monde* to *Atanarjuat*, and *Goin' Down the Road* to *Maelström*, Melnyk argues passionately that Canadian cinema has never been a singular entity, but has continued to speak in the languages and in the voices of Canada's diverse population. It is only through an ongoing and deepening exploration of diversity in Canadian film that its survival and evolution can be ensured.

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