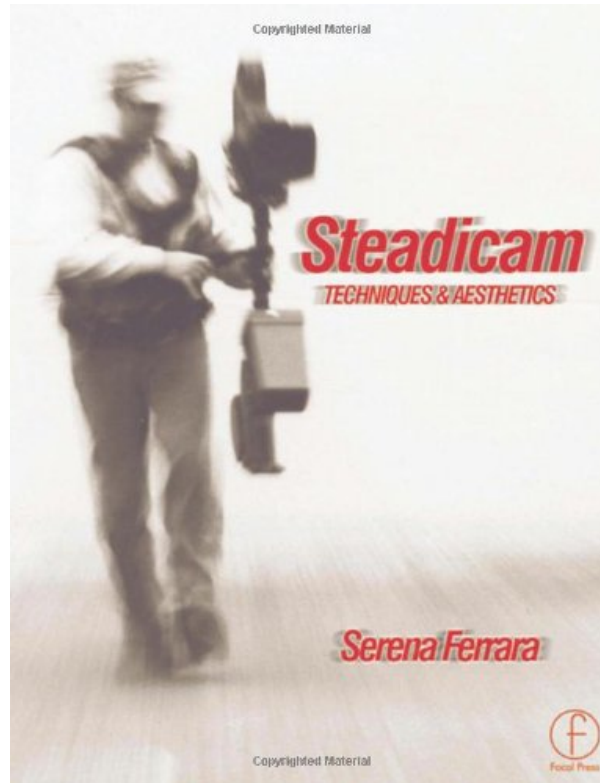


STEADICAM: TECHNIQUES AND AESTHETICS BY SERENA FERRARA



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Review

'An important and equally graceful book about what we jokingly called, and now are beginning to believe might actually be, the Noble Instrument.'

Garrett Brown

'An important and dynamic book... filled with history, technical diagrams, and insightful analysis of how the mechanism fits together. I love the wonderful anecdotes (extremely informative and often eloquent) and interviews... Brown wrote an amazing introduction that starts the book off with a bang!'

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ONFILM

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STEADICAM: TECHNIQUES AND AESTHETICS BY SERENA FERRARA PDF

In this unique study, Serena Ferrara examines the revolutionary impact of the Steadicam on filmmaking.

The Steadicam has freed-up the camera operator to follow a film's movement, wherever it is happening. Serena Ferrara explains the principles by which the Steadicam is operated and the impact it has on filmmaking, including the effects it can produce on screen, on a film's narrative, on its audience, and on the director's creativity.

Also featured are interviews with movie industry professionals, in which a variety of views of the Steadicam are presented in an open discussion. Interviewees include:

Garrett Brown
Giuseppe Rotunno
John Carpenter
Mario Orfini
Larry McConkey
Nicola Pecorini
Haskell Wexler
Ed DiGiulio
Vittorio Storaro
Caroline Goodall

Anyone involved in, or fascinated by, the process of filmmaking will find this an enlightening and inspirational study.

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Long time coming, but not as good as I'd hoped.

By Philip T Burchell

It is surprising that no-one had published a book on the Steadicam before now. Even this one has been a long time coming. Italian author Serena Ferrara originally published this in 1997, and it was finally released this year in an English version. A Doctorate in "History & Cinema" and her curiosity about the Steadicam led her to write a thesis on the subject, which later became this book.

After a brief but well written overview of the history, types and function of camera movement, the book does an excellent job documenting the invention of the Steadicam ... the evolution from first prototype to current models is shown in detail. This first section of the book covers basic principles of how the thing works, how it can be used together with it's limitations, and gives early examples from films such as "Rocky" and "Marathon Man". The Steadicam didn't really come of age until it was embraced by Stanley Kubrick on "The Shining" which is discussed at length.

The second section is called "Semiotics and Narrative" and leads into chapters such as "The Gaze of the Narrative Voice". Overall, there is a tendency to intellectualise, and this section in particular was a bit too bookish for me. However, many references to sources of information are given, along with an extensive

bibliography, so perhaps this style can be forgiven.

The third section holds a series of interviews which is perhaps the most valuable contribution of the book. Inventor and master operator Garrett Brown naturally features, along with an excellent discussion by Larry McConkey on his extended shots in "Goodfellas" and "Bonfire of the Vanities" and with DP's Haskell Wexler and Vittorio Storaro among others.

The book however, is limited by it's concentration of the evolution of the Steadicam as a brand. From 1993, Garrett Brown's original patents started to expire, allowing competitive manufacturers into the field. The most prominent of these, the PRO, is given scant recognition, others none at all, while the Panaglide ...is perhaps given more than it deserves. Important equipment such as remote lens controllers, gyro's and antlers hardly rate a mention. Even Cinema Products' own innovative "iso-elastic" arm is given little attention. The fact that CP went belly-up last year and the Steadicam product was acquired by Tiffen, is a glaring omission in itself.

Other grumbles? Not enough photo's of the thing in action was a big disappointment, and many that do appear are 10-15 years out of date. The Techniques and Uses section of the book could also be much stronger

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Five Stars

By T Crump

Great information

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