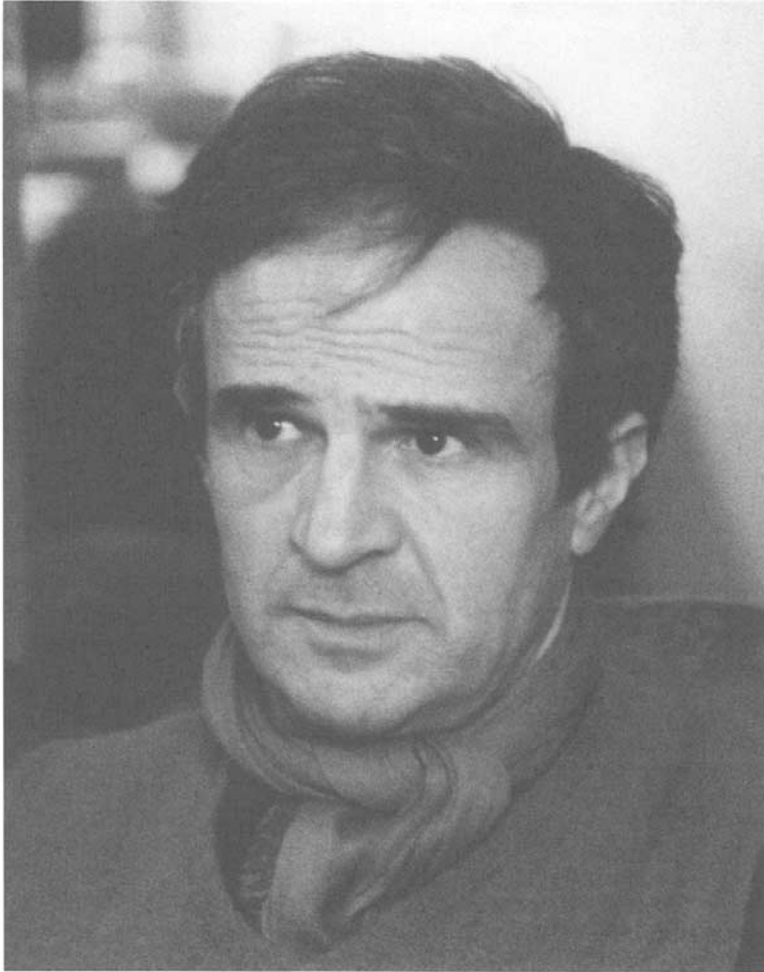


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Long considered the definitive study of this director's genius, *François Truffaut* returns to print in a revised and updated edition. With fresh insights and an extensive section on the director's last five films—*Love on the Run*, *The Green Room*, *The Last Metro*, *The Woman Next Door*, and *Confidentially Yours*—Annette Insdorf captures the essence and totality of his work. She discusses his contributions to the French New Wave, his relations with his mentors Hitchcock and Renoir, and the dominant themes of his cinema—women, love, children, language—and she explores his life in relation to his films, from *The Four Hundred Blows* to *The Man Who Loved Women*. As warmly human as its subject, *François Truffaut* immortalizes one of the cinema's most popular, prolific, and profound artists.

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For my parents

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Preface

THIS BOOK GROWS out of my deep affection and respect for the films of François Truffaut. It is from my teaching of “The French New Wave” and other courses in cinema at Yale that the study developed, and I see my role before the reader as continuous with my function before a class: to communicate and justify through close analysis my enthusiasm for the aesthetic and experiential richness of the subject. I address primarily those who are already aware of Truffaut’s talent and achievement and wish to explore the thematic and stylistic concerns that have emerged from his films. I hope this approach results in the tone of sympathy that characterizes Truffaut’s attitude toward his medium, his mentors, his material, and his performers.

Truffaut’s films constitute what he once termed “cinema in the first person singular,” and I have therefore tried to retain the personal context, effect, and purpose of his efforts. The first chapter serves as an introduction to the French New Wave and Truffaut’s transition from critic to director. After connecting three “Charlie” characters who are central to this movement in film history—Chaplin, Orson Welles’ Charlie (Citizen) Kane, and Charlie Kohler of *Shoot the Piano Player*—I move in Chapters 2 and 3 to Truffaut’s relationship to his mentors, Alfred Hitchcock and Jean Renoir. Here I discuss the films of his “Hitchcockian” period in the mid-1960s, *The Soft Skin*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Bride Wore Black*, and *Mississippi Mermaid*, and his more “Renoirian” endeavors: Part 1 of Chapter 3 contains close analyses of *Stolen Kisses* and *Bed and Board*, Part 2 of *Jules and Jim* and *Two English Girls*, and Part 3 an extended comparison of *Rules of the Game* and *Day for Night*.

The first section of Chapter 4, “Are Women Magic?,” deals with the images of women and love throughout his films, while the second part pays special attention to *The Story of Adele H.* and *The*

Man Who Loved Women. Chapter 5, “Les Enfants Terribles,” is an exploration not only of the importance of children in his work, but of his ongoing concern with the crucial acquisition of language in childhood. Chapter 6, “Cinema in the First Person Singular,” traces the autobiographical strain in his films, with the second section focusing on *The Man Who Loved Women*. Here I address myself to Truffaut’s growing preoccupation with literary texts and the depiction of the creative process. Chapter 7, “Images on the Run,” offers close analyses of his last five films.

The translations from French are my own, except where noted, and the films are identified by their American titles. For the use of stills, I wish to acknowledge Les Films du Carrosse, Janus Films, New World Pictures, and the Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive. Suzanne Schiffman and Josiane Couëdel were extremely helpful in arranging special screenings in Paris, as was Jeannie Reynolds at Yale Audio-Visual. I appreciate the academic and personal support of Harold Bloom, David Cast, Warren French, Jay Holman, Crosby Kemper, Sam Oberfest, Lillie Mae Rose, David Stannard, and Donald Yacoe. For the second edition, I must express appreciation to Bob Bender, Georges Borchardt, Monique Holveck, Madeleine Morgenstern, Paul Wagner, and Michael Webb; and for the third edition, Raymond Carney and Beatrice Rehl.

I am particularly grateful to Cecile Insdorf, David Lapin, Doug McKinney, and Edward Baron Turk, whose criticism and suggestions proved invaluable during revision of the manuscript. Finally, special thanks to my students for inspiration, and to François Truffaut for his accessibility and kindness.

ANNETTE INSDORF
New York, New York

Chronology

- 1932 François Truffaut born in Paris, February 6, the only child of Roland Truffaut, an architect, and Janine de Montferrand, a secretary; is sent to live with grandmother till eight years old.
- 1951 Enlists in the army for three years; then deserts on the eve of departure for Indochina. Released in 1953 for “instability of character” after six months in prison and hospital.
- 1953 Enters the Service Cinématographique of the Ministry of Agriculture. When he is fired after a few months, André Bazin enables him to begin writing film criticism for the recently founded *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Later he also becomes a film reviewer for *Arts*.
- 1955 Makes *Une Visite*, a short 16mm film, with Jacques Rivette and Alain Resnais.
- 1956 Assistant to Roberto Rossellini for two years; works on three of his unreleased films.
- 1957 Marries Madeleine Morgenstern, daughter of film producer and distributor Ignace Morgenstern, on October 29.
- 1958 *Les Mistons* shown at Brussels and wins an award. Makes *Une Histoire d'eau* with Jean-Luc Godard. Because of his articles attacking the Cannes Film Festival, Truffaut is banned from the Festival.
- 1959 *The 400 Blows* wins the Grand Prix at Cannes. Birth of daughter Laura. Script of *Breathless*, directed by Godard.
- 1960 *Shoot the Piano Player*.
- 1961 *Jules and Jim*. Birth of daughter Eva. Produces, co-scripts, and supervises *Tire au flanc*, directed by Claude de Givray.
- 1962 *Antoine and Colette*, sketch in *Love At Twenty*.
- 1964 *The Soft Skin*.
- 1966 *Fahrenheit 451*. Publication of *Le Cinéma selon Hitchcock*.

- 1967 *The Bride Wore Black.*
1968 *Stolen Kisses.* The Langlois Affair: when the French government dismisses Henri Langlois, head of the Cinémathèque Française, Truffaut helps to organize protests, until Langlois is reinstated. Along with Godard, is involved in closing down the Cannes Festival because of May 1968 uprising.
1969 *Mississippi Mermaid.*
1970 *The Wild Child. Bed and Board.*
1971 *Two English Girls.*
1972 *Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me.*
1973 *Day for Night.* Wins Oscar for Best Foreign Film.
1975 *The Story of Adèle H.* Publication of *Les Films de ma vie.*
1976 *Small Change.*
1977 *The Man Who Loved Women.* Stars in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, directed by Steven Spielberg.
1978 *The Green Room.*
1979 *Love on the Run.* American Film Institute tribute/retrospective in Washington and Los Angeles to celebrate Truffaut's 20th anniversary in filmmaking.
1980 *The Last Metro.*
1981 *The Woman Next Door.*
1983 *Confidentially Yours.* Birth of daughter Josephine with Fanny Ardant.
1984 Publication of the definitive version of *Hitchcock-Truffaut.*
Dies October 21 of brain cancer.

About the Author

Annette Insdorf is Professor and Chair of the Film Division of Columbia University's School of the Arts, as well as Director of Undergraduate Film Studies. She taught film history and criticism at Yale University from 1975 to 1988.

Dr. Insdorf served as François Truffaut's translator. She provided the voice-over commentary for the laser-disc package of Truffaut's films released by the Criterion collection, and was interviewed in the French documentary *François Truffaut: Stolen Portraits* (1993).

Her second book, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, is considered a landmark study in the subject. The revised edition, with a preface by Elie Wiesel, was published in 1990.

Born in Paris, Dr. Insdorf received her B.A. from Queens College and her Ph.D. from Yale University as a Danforth Fellow. In 1986 she was named *Chevalier dans l'ordre des arts et des lettres* by the French Ministry of Culture, and in 1993 she was "knighted" *dans l'ordre des palmes académiques*.

She has been a frequent contributor to the *New York Times* Arts and Leisure Section, and her articles have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Premiere*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Film Comment*, the *Boston Globe*, *American Film*, and *Rolling Stone*. Her film column appears regularly in *France Magazine*.

On television, Dr. Insdorf has served as host for *TéléFrance Ciné-Club* (a national cable-TV program); for *Years of Darkness* (a film series about the World War II experience shown by WNET/PBS); and for WNYC-TV.

Dr. Insdorf was the Executive Producer of "Shoeshine." Nominated for an Academy Award as Best Live-Action Short of 1987, it won a Grand Prize at the Montreal Film Festival. She also was Executive Producer of "Short-Term Bonds"—a short film that won a CINE Golden Eagle—and "Performance Pieces," named Best Fiction Short at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival.

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