

'For too long, the term "art cinema" has suffered from slippery, I-know-it-when-I-see-it usage. Incisively and intrepidly, Geoff King dissects this contested category, deliberating on the diverse, yet codified ways of attributing cultural value to film drama.' *Mattias Frey, Professor of Film and Media, University of Kent, UK*

'Here's a book film studies has long needed. Geoff King is sensitive to nuances of both text and context and he introduces fruitful terms like the "heavyweight" film. Essential reading for anyone interested in art cinema!' *Michael Z. Newman, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA*

'With *Positioning Art Cinema*, Geoff King deftly executes a delicate intellectual manoeuvre: writing nonjudgmentally about critical judgments. The book navigates the subjective and contradictory terminology that surrounds a range of films, filmmakers and modalities framed as distinct from perceived mainstream entertainments. Never drifting into schematic taxonomy, King shrewdly unpacks the proliferating categories that scholars, critics and filmmakers themselves have used to assign cultural value to cinema.' *Mark Gallagher, Associate Professor of Film and Television Studies, University of Nottingham, UK*

Art cinema occupies a space in the film landscape that is accorded a particular kind of value. From films that claim the status of harsh realism to others which embody aspects of the tradition of modernism or the poetic, art cinema encompasses a variety of work from across the globe.

But how is art cinema positioned in the film marketplace, or by critics and in academic analysis? Exactly what kinds of cultural value are attributed to films of this type and how can this be explained? This book offers a unique analysis of how such processes work, including the broader cultural basis of the appeal of art cinema to particular audiences.

Geoff King argues that there is no single definition of art cinema, but a number of distinct and recurrent tendencies are identified. At one end of the spectrum are films accorded the most 'heavyweight' status, offering the greatest challenges to viewers. Others mix aspects of art cinema with more accessible dimensions such as uses of popular genre frameworks and 'exploitation' elements involving explicit sex and violence. Including case studies of key figures such as Michael Haneke, Pedro Almodóvar and Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, this is a crucial contribution to understanding both art cinema itself and the discourses through which its value is established.

Geoff King is Professor of Film and TV Studies at Brunel University London, UK.

ISBN 978-1-78831-018-5



9 781788 310185

Cover image: *The Weeping Meadow* (2004; Theo Angelopoulos)  
© Moviestore Collection Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo  
Cover design: [www.paulsmithdesign.com](http://www.paulsmithdesign.com)

I.B. TAURIS

LONDON · NEW YORK

[www.ibtauris.com](http://www.ibtauris.com)

Positioning Art Cinema



Film and Cultural Value

Geoff King



# Positioning Art Cinema

Film and Cultural Value

Geoff King



I.B. TAURIS