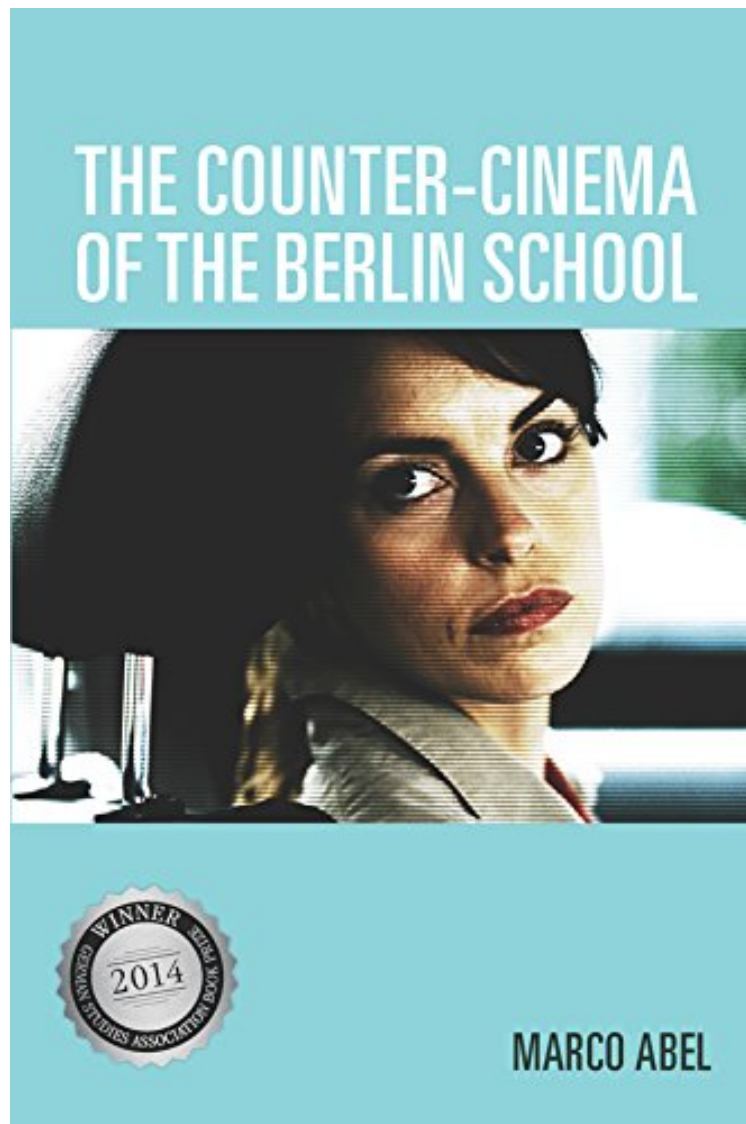


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The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School (Screen Cultures: German Film and the Visual)

Marco Abel

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Marco Abel : The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School (Screen Cultures: German Film and the Visual) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Counter-Cinema of the Berlin School (Screen Cultures: German Film and the Visual):

The contemporary German directors collectively known as the "Berlin School" constitute the most significant filmmaking movement to come out of Germany since the New German Cinema of the 1970s, not least because their films mark the emergence of a new film language. The Berlin School filmmakers, including Christian Petzold, Thomas Arslan, Angela Schanelec, Christoph Hochhusler, Ulrich Kehler, Benjamin Heisenberg, Maren Ade, and Valeska Grisebach, are reminiscent of the directors of the New German Autorenkino and of French cinema des auteurs of the 1960s. This is the first book-length study of the Berlin School in any language. Its central thesis - that the movement should be regarded as a "counter-cinema" - is built around the unusual style of realism employed in its films, a realism that presents images of a Germany that does not yet exist. Abel concludes that it is precisely how these films' images and sounds work that renders them political: they are political not because they are message-driven films but because they are made politically, thus performing a "redistribution of the sensible" - a direct artistic intervention in the way politics partitions ways of doing and making, saying and seeing. Marco Abel is Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Abel's close readings of (the Berlin School) films outline the ways in which the attempt to map "the very sociopolitical, economic, cultural, and emotional forces that have paralyzed post-wall Germany" is realized in an effort to create a body of films that, rather than purporting to speak for Germany, instead prompts its audience to reconsider what Germany is or could be. FOCUS ON GERMAN STUDIES WINNER, GERMAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION BOOK PRIZE, 2014 Impresses through its theoretical ambition, wide-ranging archival research-including in-depth interviews with many of its key directors-and lucid analyses of films, making a convincing case why these films matter. . . . This newest wave of German cinema has attracted its fair share of critics, but Abel can claim to have written its definitive account. (His book) has the makings of an instant classic. -GSA Prize Committee FILM BOOK OF THE MONTH, December 2013, HHPRINZLER.DE They are bound together by no manifesto, have no common training, live in different places, and the directors even reject the label that has been given them. . . . (Yet) their films have aesthetic parallels; they distinguish themselves formally from the German mainstream. Abel . . . engages with them (here) on a high theoretical level: America has discovered the Berlin School. -Hans Helmut Prinzler A seminal reference work for all scholars working in the field of German Studies. By virtue of his meditations on form, texture, and aesthetics, Abel's work deserves to be seen alongside the work of John Orr in its thoughtful reflections on contemporary cinema's innovative engagement with reality. JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN STUDIES Abel considers each filmmaker's body of work in its entirety, a remarkable achievement in its own right. (This book) covers all the (Berlin School's) major films, filmmakers, and developments to date. Future scholarship will certainly need to reckon with it. . . . (It) puts the Berlin School on the map of film and media scholarship. FILM QUARTERLY The big payoff of the book is the care with which Abel devotes himself to the individual filmmakers. He applies no standard scheme, but instead thoroughly analyzes the career and most important films of each He succeeds in presenting portraits that are very rich. . . . Deep and convincing interpretations and insights arise into a film movement and its way of thinking. FILMBLATT From the Back Cover "Marco Abel's invaluable new book sharpens our focus on the energies and incentives that have produced the remarkable films of the Berlin School. Its exponents, claims Abel, are acutely aware of the present state of things and yet, as filmmakers, willfully untimely and nonsynchronous in their approaches. With ethnographic patience and critical poignance, they register the conditions of existence in postwall Germany and postmillennial Europe in order to disclose aporias and intimate unrealized possibilities. As Abel demonstrates, they are less concerned with representing the real than in rendering things visible and, with utopian resolve, making the provisional quality of the status quo apparent. The subtlety and nuance of Abel's readings allow this extraordinarily rich body of work to resonate with a haunting intensity and a suggestive freshness."--Eric Rentschler, Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University