

## The Eisenstein Reader

*From Brand: British Film Institute*  
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**From Brand: British Film Institute : The Eisenstein Reader** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Eisenstein Reader:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Man on FireBy Kevin KillianA great friend of mine loaned me this book when I was preparing to write about what Tom Canning has dubbed the "Cinema of Attractions," and traced the concept back to one Eisenstein used in several of his essays. Happily enough they all appear in this book, which saved

me from having to go through the complete FOUR VOLUMES of his writing, which might have been rewarding, I suppose, but at the time, too daunting even to contemplate. Like the other reviewer, from way back in 2000 when this compilation must have been new on the shelves, I was impressed by the editorial policy by which Richard Taylor worked, for having to encapsulate and to represent fairly a big 25 years of Eisenstein's writing on a huge range of subjects can't have been easy. Beyond the range of subjects, there's also to consider that Eisenstein changed his mind freely, and the man who wrote "The Problems of Soviet Historical Film" in 1940 is not the same fellow who so blithely and expansively wrote in 1925 on "The Problem of the Materialist Approach to Form" (though now that I think of it, he seems continually concerned with the "problematic," you might say, doesn't he? It's as though his dialectic worked only when prompted from one direction, the question mark his iconic sign). There's also the difference between the theoretical speculations of a stage director hovering over film as an undiscovered treasure, and the weary wisdom of a prematurely aged man who had lived through the regimes of both Moscow and Hollywood, a man who had beaten swords into ploughshares, and ploughshares back into swords for that matter, a man nearly beaten down by fate. The arc of the book has a rainbow shape sharp as a Giacometti, and yet the individual aphorisms of the director ("Music is acting by other means") are like Zen koans, stuffed to capacity with meaning, beseeching the reader to tease them all out, like Robert Bresson's writing, except maybe a bit more bombastic--like Bresson flambee perhaps. 7 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Eisenstein In His Own Words By A Customer This book is a compilation of what Richard Taylor considers to be Eisenstein's most important and relevant writing, not only on film but also on Russian history, politics, and Eisenstein's eclectic influences. While I think the book is very well put together, Eisenstein's writing itself can be esoteric and hard for the reader to decipher. However, if you can get past Eisenstein's puzzling language, you can glean a great deal of valuable insight into the work of a man who has been called one of the most influential directors of all time. I was most interested in Eisenstein's writings on other art forms that informed his film making, particularly Kabuki theatre and Japanese Haiku. However, if this is your first time reading about Soviet cinema, I would recommend starting with some of Taylor's other works such as *The Film Factory* or *Inside the Film Factory*.

Presents, in a concise form, a selection of Sergei Eisenstein's significant writings. The texts, drawn from the BFI's "Selected Works of Eisenstein", address subjects including sound, film language, and his theories of "montage". This reader provides an accessible introduction to Eisenstein's work.

"A valuable contribution to Eisenstein studies." -- British East-West Journal  
Language Notes  
Text: English (translation)  
Original Language: Russian  
From the Back Cover  
Legendary director Sergei Eisenstein has unquestionably emerged as cinema's most influential theorist and author of some of the most important aesthetic writings of the twentieth century. For the first time in one volume, "The Eisenstein Reader" presents in concise, chronological form his most significant work - including his famous theories of montage and articles on subjects as diverse as sound, film language, and Russian history. The selections range from early writings on his great silent masterpieces "The Strike, October" and "The Battleship Potemkin," to later works, hatched in the increasingly hostile and paranoid environment of Stalin's Soviet Union. Drawn from the acclaimed four-volume "Selected Works," this collection, which includes a new introduction and explanatory notes by Richard Taylor as well as many illustrations, further illuminates the startling originality, diversity, and power of the greatest and most flamboyant of all Russian filmmakers.