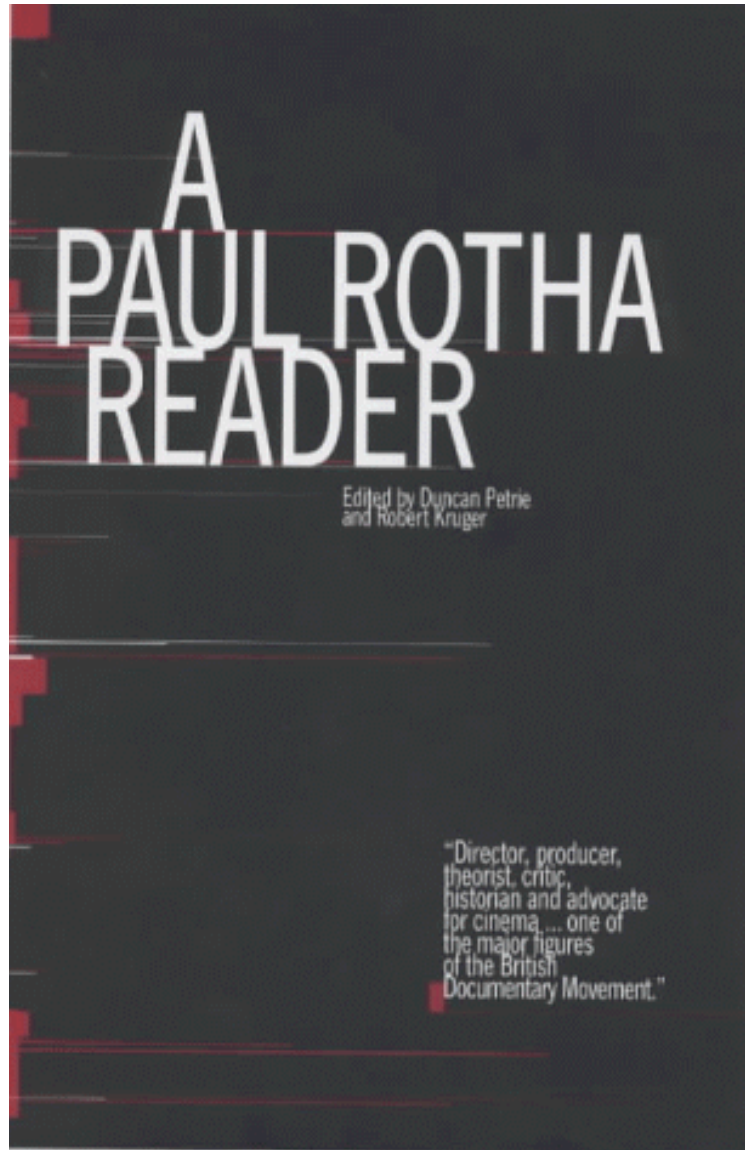


(Free and download) A Paul Rotha Reader (Exeter Studies in Film History)

A Paul Rotha Reader (Exeter Studies in Film History)

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From Brand: University of Exeter Press : A Paul Rotha Reader (Exeter Studies in Film History) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Paul Rotha Reader (Exeter Studies in Film History):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Docos On Rotha By Docos Rotha's place in documentary history lies in the early days in Britain - as a colleague of John Grierson, a documentary film-maker and a writer about film. His influence remains strong, in spite of his books having been out of print for some years. Apart from Eric Barnouw and a

couple of others, he is the only writer about documentaries capable of creating prose as stunning as the films themselves. Like the best film-makers, such writers make it look easy. Grierson would agree, as he wrote in his review of Rotha's 'Shipyard' in 1935: " (Rotha) is...our film historian; and he is the keeper of our conscience as much as the keeper of our records..... ". Incidentally, Grierson then goes on, in his usual blunt fashion, to criticise Rotha's films, calling them "impressionistic", a coda for "apolitical" and "superficial". (Grierson was wrong). Rotha was significant as a film-maker in the thirty years from 1933 - his credits include 'Contact', 'Shipyard', 'The Face of Britain', 'World of Plenty', 'Land of Promise', 'The World Is Rich' and 'The Life of Adolf Hitler'. For much of that time he was at the centre of Britain's documentary scene and he took to upon himself to document the documentarists. Much of what we know about Grierson and others from that time comes directly or indirectly from Paul Rotha. Thus it is as a writer, critic and diarist that Rotha will be respected in the 21st century. From his seminal and contrarian 'The Film Till Now' (1930), through 'Documentary Film' (1935), 'Rotha On Film' (1958) and the breath-taking 'Documentary Diary: An Informal History of the British Documentary Film', Rotha created not only a body of work but an essential part of the legend of the Grierson days. If documentary has a founding myth, Rotha was the shaman who interpreted it for lesser mortals. Petrie and Kruger's book returns Rotha's work to us after years spent searching second-hand bookshops. Most of the copies owned by film schools and libraries seem to have disappeared some time ago, lost to poor but obsessed students. It may not be the whole oeuvre, but this "best of Rotha" collection is a great start, with selections from the major works, woven together chronologically within sections to form powerful linear narratives on 'The Art of Film', 'Cinema and Britain' and 'Film Practice'. The editors also give us a very decent, forty-page introduction to different aspects of Rotha work, plus excellent bibliographies and filmographies. Libraries will need this book because of its utility as a documentary film course book. A lot of industry professionals will want to fill in the half-remembered fragments and remember why they entered the business in the first place. The next generation need to know the past to better create the future. (Docos)

Paul Rotha was one of the major figures of the British Documentary Movement, second only to John Grierson. He was also a prolific writer, beginning with his celebrated book *The Film Till Now*, published in 1930. This volume brings together an edited collection of some of his most important writings and addresses a variety of topics including the theoretical basis of cinema, the emergence of an intellectual film culture in Britain, the state of the British film industry and his own experience of directing and producing films.

Rotha's writing itself seems incredibly fresh and vibrant. A no-nonsense, clearly written personal view of filmmaking, the book is a pleasure to read and triggers off many a train of thought about the nature of documentary filmmaking . . . As a starting-point for discussion about the thinking behind documentary and the effect it can have on the viewer, it is a highly stimulating collection . . . The introductory chapters pull into focus Rotha's aims and intentions which remind the reader what documentary has the potential to do. To make us think. *Journal of Popular British Cinema*, Vol. 4, 2001