

Recommended Filmmaking Books

My lynda.com Fundamentals of Video: Cameras and Shooting is just a starting point for a film education. You've still got a long way to go to true filmmaking enlightenment. Understand this: Learning the craft of filmmaking is a life-long process. (There's a reason why most of the people at the top of their game have grey hair; it takes that long to master it.)

Some lessons won't make sense until you shoot, but some of the mistakes you make while shooting won't make sense until you read. The number one resource that will give you the most bang for your buck is knowledge. Whether you're in a film school or self-teaching, you should begin building a filmmaking reference library.

Here are some of my personal recommendations to help you get the ball rolling, starting with my own two film books:

The Shut Up and Shoot Documentary Guide

by Anthony Q. Artis

A one-stop shop written by a guerrilla filmmaker, for guerrilla filmmakers. You will learn how to make your project better, faster, and cheaper. The pages are crammed with 500+ full-color pictures, tips from the pros, resources, checklists and charts, making it easy to find what you need fast.

The Shut Up and Shoot Freelance Video Guide

by Anthony Q. Artis

The Shut Up and Shoot Freelance Video Guide is an easy-to-read crash course in the ins and outs and the hundred little details of creating video works for hire. This ultra-friendly visual field guide for freelance videographers picks up where The Shut Up and Shoot Documentary Guide leaves off and gives you detailed practical production strategies and solutions not found anywhere else on: marketing videos, music videos, wedding videos, music performance videos, live event videos, corporate videos, and more. 700+ illustrations.

Bare Bones Camera Course for Film and Video

by Tom Schroepel

I highly recommend this book to anyone new to cinematography. It's a self-published underground classic not available in too many stores, but it is online. True to its name, this book offers simple, clear, cartoon-illustrated instructions on the fundamentals of screen grammar and cinematography. I never fully "got" a lot of the things I read in other film books and heard in lectures until after I read this book. God bless Tom for finally explaining it to the rest of us.

What They Don't Teach You At Film School: 161 Strategies to Making Your Own Movie No Matter What

by Camille Landau and Tiara White

These smart women, who have obviously already been there and done that, have compiled a great collection of ultra-practical tips on the countless little things that frequently trip up filmmakers in the process. These are purely practical tips on the psychology, reality, and delicate daily minutia of filmmaking that you would only pick up from painful experience or by having the foresight to study a book of wisdom like this.

The Guerilla Filmmaker's Movie Blueprint

by Chris Jones

This is one the most practical and comprehensive film books I've ever read. It breaks down who does what, reviews equipment packages, and lays out the filmmaking process step-by-step. It also features some very informative interviews from industry insiders that we don't usually hear too much from. And it's all in plain English. It's an invaluable reference guide for anyone making an indie feature.

Documentary Storytelling for Video and Filmmakers

by Sheila Curran Bernard

Now that you've got an overview of the process and a technical grasp of the genre, you may want to dig deeper into the meaning and nuances of documentary work. This book will help you understand the many visual, aural, and cerebral techniques and subtleties of telling a documentary story. It also features in-depth interviews with several notable names in documentary filmmaking.

Directing the Documentary

by Michael Rabiger

This is the definitive comprehensive text on documentary filmmaking. It's a bit thick, but it pretty much has to be to thoroughly cover all aspects of documentary filmmaking from history to theory to production practices. It includes student exercises as well.

Ultimate Film Festival Guide

by Chris Gore

Not many film books live up to their title, but this one really is the "ultimate" book on film festivals and festival strategy. Apart from the standard contact info and deadlines, Chris gives you tips on the flavor of

each fest, self-promotion, and the application process. If you're planning on entering festivals, you should start with this book.

Television Production

by Gerald Millerson

This is the definitive book for the practices of television. From 3-camera shoots to blocking and editing, this book lays out and illustrates the entire world of TV production. If you want to work in "the little screen," then you'll want to read this book.

The Documentary Filmmaker's Handbook: A Guerilla Guide

by Genevieve Jolliffe

The latest entry in the guerrilla filmmaking handbook series turns the focus to docs. Heavy on interviews with industry insiders from directors to distributors and all the players in between, Genevieve shares detailed knowledge of the documentary process.

The IFILM Digital Video Filmmaker's Handbook

by Maxie Collier

From my fellow Down and Dirty filmmaker and good colleague, who was one of the very first authorities on DV filmmaking, this title gives beginning filmmakers an inspirational overview of the digital filmmaking process. It covers the creative and technical aspects and features a candid case study of the digital guerrilla documentary, Paper Chasers.

Development Girl: The Hollywood Virgin's Guide to Making It in the Movie Business

by Hadley Davis

If you have any inclination at all to work in the industry in any type of office setting, you can't afford not to read this humorous book, which chronicles the ins and outs of Hollywood workplace culture. Following Hadley's advice you can avoid the most common newbie mistakes and go from office runner to department head in half the time.

Spike Lee's Gotta Have It **by Spike Lee**

This is Spike's first film book and still my favorite of his series. It contains a script, interview, and diary of his struggle to make his first feature. It's a real study in the intense hustle, focus, and hard work it takes to pull off a low-budget indie feature.

How I Made a Hundred Movies in Hollywood and Never Lost a Dime **by Roger Corman**

This is a great autobiographical text by one of my idols, the B-film godfather, Roger Corman. Before I was even born, Roger was keeping it "down and dirty" and cranking out quality films on ridiculously low budgets. Ron Howard, Martin Scorsese, and Francis Ford Coppola all started with Roger and if they all had lessons to learn from him, so do we.