Back to the 80s

LIFE MOVES PRETTY FAST...

- ALIENS - BLADE RUNNER - BACK TO THE FUTURE - BLADE RUNNER - DO THE RIGHT THING - DESERT HEARTS - ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK
- 30 FILMS, SPECIAL EVENTS, TALKS, VIDEO RENTAL, LOUNGE - AND MORE.

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If there’s an overarching theme to Hollywood cinema in the 1980s, it’s the return to the conservative values of the 50s after the revolutionary tumult of the late 60s and 70s. Hollywood studios were swallowed up by vast global conglomerates and businessmen reasserted their control over artists. Reagan—a 50s movie star—was elected President in 1980, after campaigning with the slogan “Let’s Make America Great Again”. He preached a return to Eisenhower-era values and rates. Blockbusters and their sequels. The genre revisionism that inspired movies like Blue Velvet subverted the reactionary impulses of the time; and that the conformity of mainstream cinema created a vacuum in which a more diverse and experimental independent film scene could take root: John Sayles, Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee, Donna Deitch; Wayne Wang, and many others were able to expand the cinematic conversation. TOM CHARITY, VIFF CENTRE PROGRAMMER

In many ways we are still living with the legacy of these shifts. But if the culture in the 80s was about Mad Max, the Terminator, and Die in L.A., now it’s clear that there were still films of artistic vision and reach being made within the context of very different parameters. Some of us discovered this endlessly ingenious Oedipal comedy when it came out in 1985. Some of us weren’t born yet. But we all experience the movie in the present tense. Day scenes are every bit as coated in nostalgia as the 50s scenes, from Huey Lewis on down. The movie hasn’t changed. But we are not the 80s.

There was movement in the 80s. The place on the map, the role of the artist, was in flux. New ideas were quick to follow suit. Strong men like Sylvester Stallone (First Blood), Arnold Schwarzenegger (The Terminator), and Stallone (Rocky, Rambo) and David Lynch (Blue Velvet) gave way to pastiche and parody. MTV, advertising and video recorders influenced the aesthetics of the day: movies moved more quickly, lest anyone fast forward; photography became glossier, primed for the freeze frame.

Clear that there were still films of artistic vision and reach being made within the genre. In the 1980s, the L.A. noir produced Chinatown, which became icons for a new conservatism. The downbeat, introspective films of the 70s died out. In their place came slick, fast-paced escapism: the American Wayfarer discourses of Paul Verhoeven (Near Dark), Kathryn Bigelow (Blue Velvet), Paul Verhoeven (Robocop) and David Lynch (Twin Peaks) (Near Dark, Robocop, Blue Velvet) subverted the reactionary impulses of the time; and that the conformity of mainstream cinema could take root where avant-garde and experimental ideas were quick to follow suit. Strong men like Sylvester Stallone (First Blood), Arnold Schwarzenegger (The Terminator), and Stallone (Rocky, Rambo) and David Lynch (Blue Velvet) gave way to pastiche and parody. MTV, advertising and video recorders influenced the aesthetics of the day: movies moved more quickly, lest anyone fast forward; photography became glossier, primed for the freeze frame.
COMEDY
BACK TO THE FUTURE · THE BIG CHILL · THE BLUES BROTHERS
DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN · DINER · LOST IN AMERICA · SOMETHING WILD

DRAMA
BULL DURHAM · HEAVEN’S GATE · THE KING OF COMEDY · PLATOON · RAGING BULL
THE RIGHT STUFF · STREETS OF FIRE · THE STUNT MAN

CRIME & SUSPENSE
ATLANTIC CITY · BLOOD SIMPLE · BLUE VELVET · BREATHLESS · FATAL ATTRACTION
FIRST BLOOD · MIDNIGHT RUN · ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA · SCARFACE
TO LIVE AND DIE IN LA · WITNESS

HORROR & SCI-FI
ALIENS · AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON · BLADE RUNNER: THE FINAL CUT
BRAZIL · ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK · A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET · THE ROAD WARRIOR
ROBOCOP · THE SHINING · THE TERMINATOR · THEY LIVE

INDIE
DO THE RIGHT THING · DOWN BY LAW · HOLLYWOOD SHUFFLE · MALA NOCHE
MATEWAN · PARIS, TEXAS · REPO MAN · SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE

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HAIRSPRAY · THE PRINCESS BRIDE · RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK
WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT