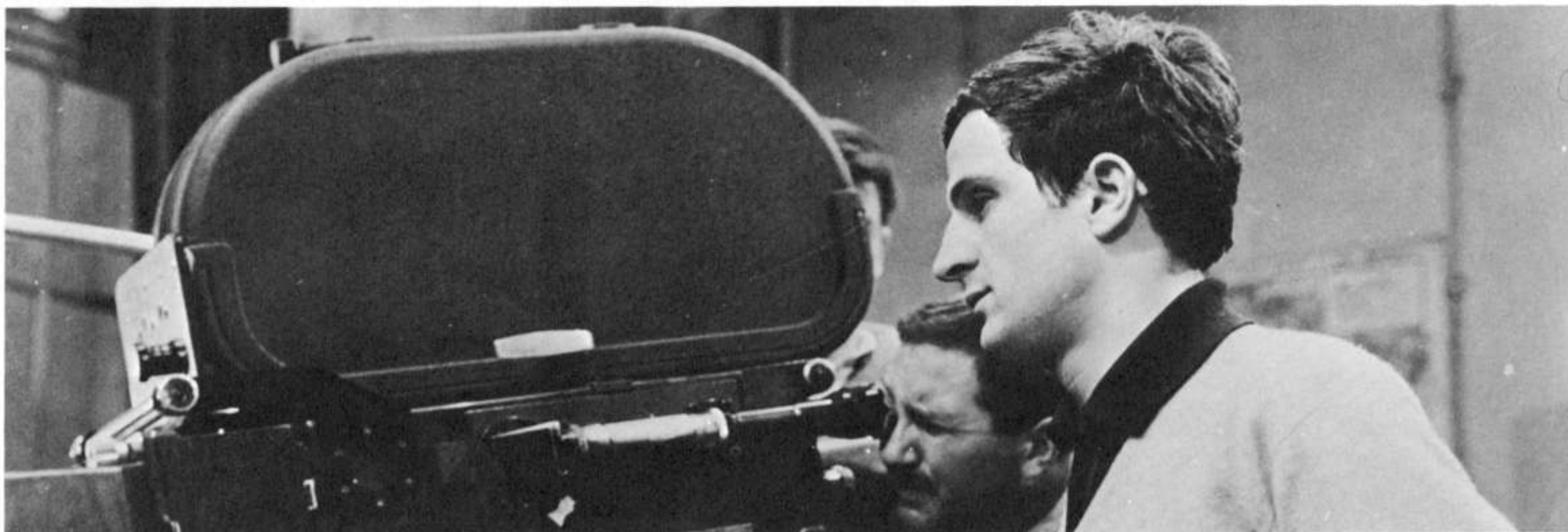


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THREE BY TRUFFAUT





Truffaut at work directing his first feature film, *THE 400 BLOWS* (1959), which has become the landmark of the French new wave.

THREE BY TRUFFAUT

Although the *new wave* movement in France produced numerous young directors — sixty-seven in 1959 and 1960 alone — none has achieved quite the consistently brilliant or prodigious career of François Truffaut.

After a turbulent youth, often truant from school and frequently in the cine-clubs of Paris, Truffaut met the prominent French film critic, André Bazin. He was engaged by Bazin as a writer for the avant-garde monthly *Les Cahiers du Cinema* in 1953. His scathing attacks on the stagnant situation of French cinema and his vehement defense of the “director as author” theory aroused controversy in French film circles. This experience in theoretical hassling helped mold Truffaut’s keen critical and aesthetic principles into a solid structure and provided a broad base for the subsequent departures of his cinematic imagination.

The quiet, lyrical romanticism of his first short film, *LES MISTONS* (1957) — in sharp contrast to his caustic writings — surprised and pleased the audiences which had anxiously awaited it. *THE 400 BLOWS* (1959), Truffaut’s first feature film, followed in a similarly pensive manner but was markedly audacious in its thematic substance. Overtly autobiographical, the film depicts the harsh impact of an alienating world on a young spirited boy. The child finds his unfaithful parents fluctuating between warm understanding and hidden resentment; his lot at school is reproach and punishment. Inevitably, he turns to delinquency, is captured and confined to a reformatory — until he escapes. Truffaut treats his subject with such startling objectivity that the film manages to remain wholly untainted by the sermonizing which autobiography so often induces. The disquieting final frozen shot of the boy, silently con-



A scene from *THE 400 BLOWS* (1959) in which Truffaut pays his own special tribute to Ingmar Bergman: the boys point to a photograph from the Swedish director’s *MONIKA* (1952).



A scene from *SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER* (1960). Truffaut directs famed Charles Aznavour in this existentialist romp.

fronting the viewer with a questioning stare, remains one of the-most haunting images in modern cinema.

In *SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER* (1960), Truffaut changed pace radically and indulged his every experimental fancy, ostensibly to please only himself. He blends comedy, pathos and dramatic suspense into a fusion, half thriller and half parody in style. Onto a simple story line of how a concert pianist became a piano player in a bar, Truffaut hangs a gangland kidnapping, a suicide and a gun fight. He spoofs American gangster movies with cinematic puns and a wild assortment of devices favored by Hitchcock and Aldrich. More than being an escapade in experimentalism, *SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER* boldly professes Truffaut's faith in cinema and his affection for making movies.

JULES AND JIM (1961) achieves a cohesion of the romantic overtones of *THE 400 BLOWS* and the experimental flamboyance of *SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER*. Two good friends share the love of a beautiful woman who wants and accepts both of them, even if she must die and kill to do so. The engaging brilliance of Truffaut's imagery brings into focus a nostalgic portrait of a menage-a-trois, living joyously, yet on the brink of tragedy. Though Truffaut does not fail to present the sorrowful consequences of love, with all its ambiguities and irresolutions, he also lifts a toast to the joys of loving. *JULES AND JIM* is Truffaut's masterful tribute to the visionary romanticism of Renoir.

Each of these three films is unique in presentation and successful as entertainment. They are all complex and rewarding expressions of life and ideas. Together, they present an astonishingly broad spectrum of technical accomplishment and creative energy.



The exuberance of *JULES AND JIM* (1961) is clearly illustrated in the free and wild race of Jeanne Moreau, Henri Serre and Oskar Werner.



On the set of JULES AND JIM (1961), the French director and French actress, Jeanne Moreau, provide their own special clowning.

A FILMOGRAPHY OF FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT

- 1954 — A VISIT
- 1957 — LES MISTONS
- 1958 — UNE HISTOIRE D'EAU (Shot by Truffaut, script and editing by Jean-Luc Godard)
- 1960 — Produced PARIS NOUS APPARTIENT (Directed by Jacques Rivette)
- 1959 — THE 400 BLOWS
- 1959 — Wrote original story of A BOUT DE SOUFFLE (Jean-Luc Godard)
- 1960 — SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER
- 1961 — Produced, collaborated on script and supervised direction of TIRE AU FLANC
- 1961 — JULES ET JIM
- 1962 — LOVE AT TWENTY: Episode ANTOINE ET COLETTE
- 1964 — THE SOFT SKIN
- 1967 — LES MISTONS: 1967
- 1966 — FARENHEIT 451