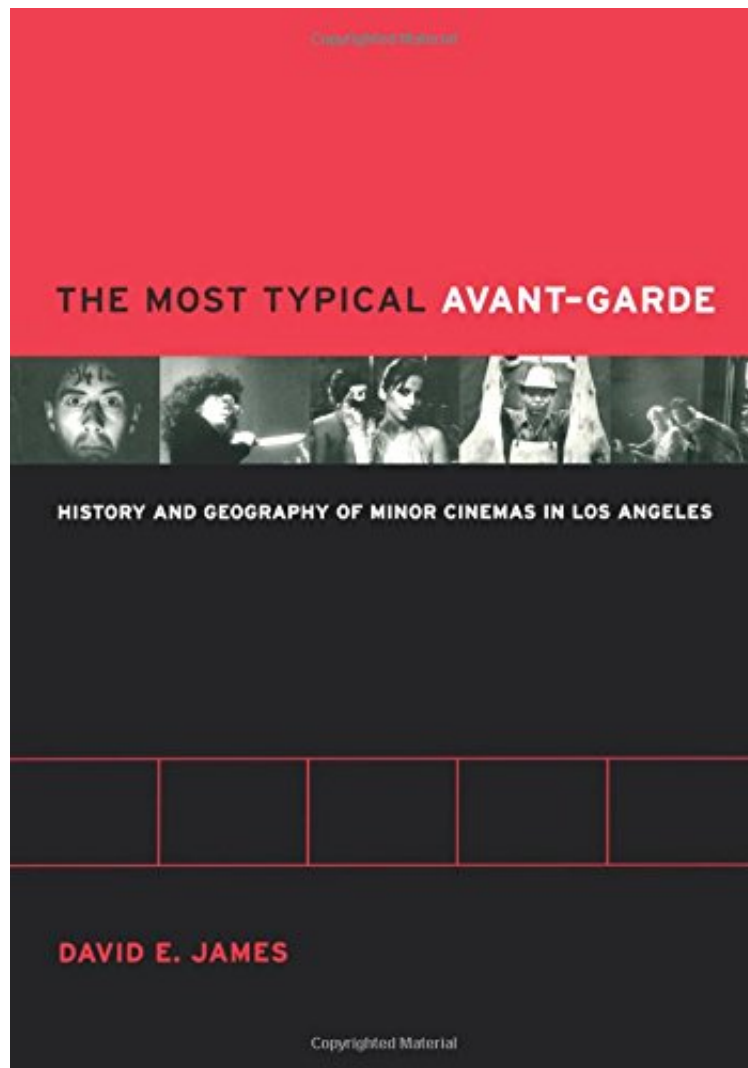


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# The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles

David E. James

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**David E. James : The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles:

6 of 9 people found the following review helpful. David James's Radical Act By Ozma Tahora In this brilliant and comprehensive history of alternative cinema in Los Angeles, David James performs a profoundly radical act-- he reclaims Los Angeles from Hollywood. For all of us who have been struggling daily, over months, years and decades,

and against all odds to produce cinematic works in the heavy shadow of "the industry", this amazing book is both moving and empowering. 5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Magnificent use of the art historian responsibilities. By Franck Moore: This work is an exploration of the classical (Robert Florey, Maya Deren...), modern and contemporary territories of the avant-garde cinema in Los Angeles and the West Coast. It reveals and explains a fascinating tradition of films as innovative as largely unknown, that build altogether something we could name the honor of the cinema. David E. James' book is deep, brilliant, imaginative, rich, subtle, sophisticated and perfectly clear. One can't imagine a more perfect use of the art and craft of a responsible historian of art, both responsible towards the freedom of art and towards the rigour of history.

Los Angeles has nourished a dazzling array of independent cinemas: avant-garde and art cinema, ethnic and industrial films, pornography, documentaries, and many other far-flung corners of film culture. This glorious panoramic history of film production outside the commercial studio system reconfigures Los Angeles, rather than New York, as the true center of avant-garde cinema in the United States. As he brilliantly delineates the cultural perimeter of the film business from the earliest days of cinema to the contemporary scene, David James argues that avant-garde and minority filmmaking in Los Angeles has in fact been the prototypical attempt to create emancipatory and progressive culture. Drawing from urban history and geography, local news reporting, and a wide range of film criticism, James gives astute analyses of scores of films many of which are to be found only in archives. He also looks at some of the most innovative moments in Hollywood, revealing the full extent of the cross-fertilization that occurred between the studio system and films created outside it. Throughout, he demonstrates that Los Angeles has been in the aesthetic and social vanguard in all cinematic periods: from the Socialist cinemas of the early teens and 1930s; to the personal cinemas of psychic self-investigation in the 1940s; to attempts in the 1960s to revitalize the industry with the countercultures' utopian visions; and to the 1970s, when African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, women, gays, and lesbians worked to create cinemas of their own. James takes us up to the 1990s and beyond to explore new forms of art cinema that are now transforming the representation of Southern California's geography.

"James's range and thoroughness are astonishing. Indeed, we who have worked at chronicling independent cinema will be disappointed with only one thing: the fact that we didn't write this remarkable book!" From the Inside Flap "The Most Typical Avant-Garde transforms our sense of the history and geography of American independent cinema, by demonstrating the many and varied contributions of filmmakers who have worked in and around LA. James's range and thoroughness are astonishing. Indeed, those who have worked at chronicling independent cinema will be disappointed with only one thing: the fact that we didn't write this remarkable book!" Scott MacDonald, author of the Critical Cinema Series