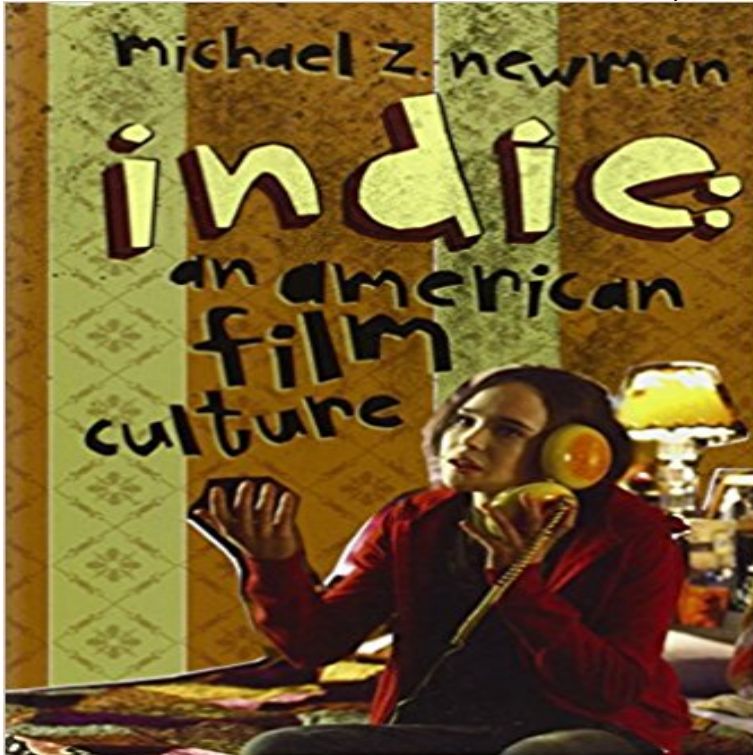


Indie: An American Film Culture (Film and Culture Series)



Americas independent films often seem to defy classification. Their strategies of storytelling and representation range from raw, no-budget projects to more polished releases of Hollywoods specialty divisions. Yet understanding American indies involves more than just considering films. Filmmakers, distributors, exhibitors, festivals, critics, and audiences all shape the arts identity, which is always understood in relation to the Hollywood mainstream. By locating the American indie film in the historical context of the Sundance-Miramax era (the mid-1980s to the end of the 2000s), Michael Z. Newman considers indie cinema as an alternative American film culture. His work isolates patterns of character and realism, formal play, and oppositionality and the functions of the festivals, art houses, and critical media promoting them. He also accounts for the power of audiences to identify indie films in distinction to mainstream Hollywood and to seek socially emblematic characters and playful form in their narratives. Analyzing films such as *Welcome to the Dollhouse* (1996), *Lost in Translation* (2003), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), and *Juno* (2007), along with the work of Nicole Holofcener, Jim Jarmusch, John Sayles, Steven Soderbergh, and the Coen brothers, Newman investigates the conventions that cast indies as culturally legitimate works of art. He binds these diverse works together within a cluster of distinct viewing strategies and invites a reevaluation of the difference of independent cinema and its relationship to class and taste culture.

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