



Do the Movies Have a Future?

David Denby

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***The New Yorker* critic, one of our most important film writers draws from a selection of his published pieces over a dozen years to examine the art, business, and future of what used to be America's primary popular entertainment and is now an endangered species.**

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the movies, once America's primary popular art form, have become an endangered species. *Do the Movies Have a Future?* is a rousing and witty call to arms. In these sharp and engaging essays and reviews, *New Yorker* movie critic David Denby weighs in on "conglomerate aesthetics," as embodied in the frenzied, weightless action spectacles that dominate the world's attention, and "platform agnosticism," the notion that movies can be watched on smaller and smaller screens: laptops, tablets, even phones. At the same time, Denby reaffirms that movies are our national theater, and in this exhilarating book he celebrates such central big movies as *Avatar* and *The Social Network* as well as small but resonant triumphs like *There Will Be Blood* and *The Tree of Life*.

Denby joyously celebrates what remains of the shared culture in romantic comedy, high school movies, and chick flicks; he assesses the expressive triumphs and failures of auteurs Quentin Tarantino, the Coen brothers, Pedro Almodóvar, and David Fincher. Refusing nostalgia, he mines the past for strength, examining the changing nature of stardom and the careers of Joan Crawford, Otto Preminger, and Victor Fleming, and the continuing self-invention of Clint Eastwood. And he recreates the excitement of reading two critics who embodied the film culture of their times, James Agee and Pauline Kael.

Wry, passionate, and incisive, *Do the Movies Have a Future?* is both a feast of good writing and a challenge to fight back. It is an essential guide for movie lovers looking for ammunition and hope.

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