



Bodies of Desire and Bodies in Distress: The Golden Age of Italian Cult Cinema 1970-1985

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In recent years, there has been an explosion of critical interest in the icons, genres and traditions of 1970s Italian cult film. Thanks to the international success of directors such as Dario Argento and Sergio Martino, and the influential giallo (thriller) cycle in which they worked, these unconventional and often controversial films are now impacting on new generations of filmmakers, scholars and moviegoers alike. *Bodies of Desire and Bodies in Distress: The Golden Age of Italian Cult Cinema 1970-1985* considers the current interest in specific Italian directors and cult genres, exploring the social, political and cultural factors that spawned a decade of cinema dominated by extreme, yet stylish, images of sexuality and violence. *Bodies of Desire and Bodies in Distress* situates the explosion of 1970s Italian cult 'excess' against the toxic backdrop of political violence and terrorist activity that produced shocking images of carnage and crime during this period. The volume also considers why the iconography of the sexually liberated female became recast as a symbol of fear and violation in a range of Italian cult film narratives. In addition, the book also analyses how longstanding regional distinctions between Italy's urban North and the much maligned rural South fed into sex and death cycles produced between 1970 and 1985. *Bodies of Desire and Bodies in Distress* profiles leading 1970s Italian directors and performers including Aristide Massaccesi (Joe D'Amato), Laura Gemser, and Dario Argento (who also provides an interview discussing his work and 1970s Italian society). The volume also provides case-studies of the giallo cycle, rape and revenge dramas, the Italian rogue cop series, post-apocalypse films, barbarian movies, and sex comedy formats. By considering the icons and genres from the golden age of Italian cult film alongside the crucial social and sexual tensions that influenced their creation, this book will be of interest to film scholars and cult movie fans alike.

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