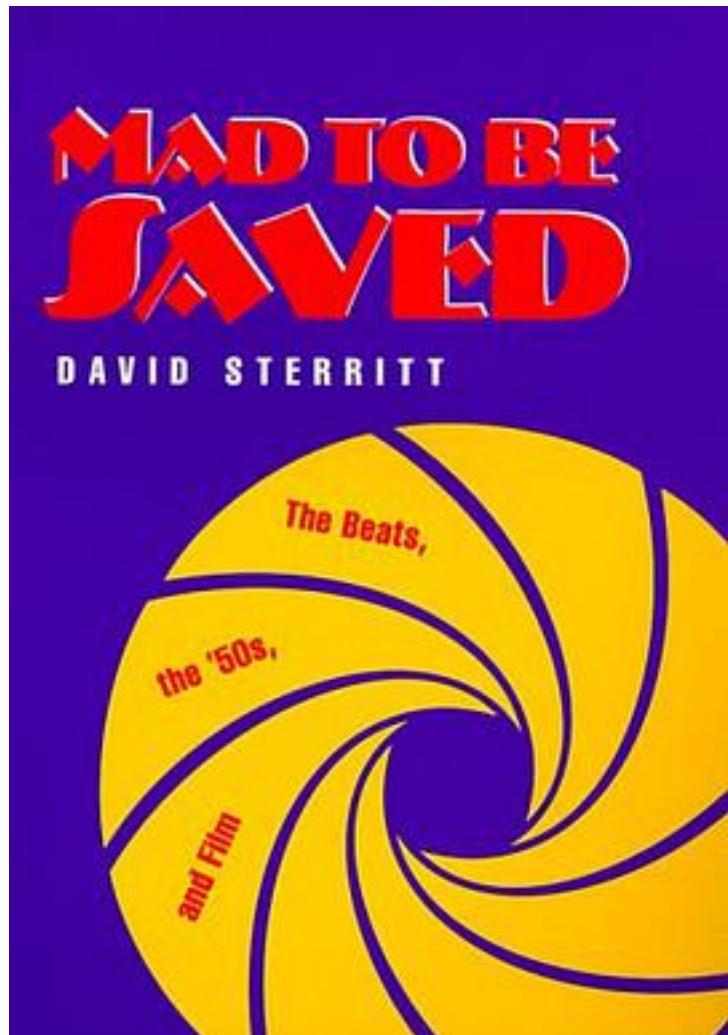


Mad to Be Saved



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Film critic David Sterritt presents an interdisciplinary exploration of the Beat

Generation, its intersections with main-stream and experimental film, and the interactions of all of these with American society and the culture of the 1950s. Sterritt balances the Beat countercultural goal of rebellion through both artistic creation and everyday behavior against the mainstream values of conformity and conservatism, growing worry over cold-war hostilities, and the "rat race" toward material success. After an introductory overview of the Beat Generation, its history, its antecedents, and its influences, Sterritt shows the importance of "visual thinking" in the lives and works of major Beat authors, most notably Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs. He turns to Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory to portray the Beat writers-who were inspired by jazz and other liberating influences-as carnivalesque rebels against what they perceived as a rigid and stifling social order. Showing the Beats as social critics, Sterritt looks at the work of 1950s photographers Robert Frank and William Klein; the attack against Beat culture in the pictures and prose of "Life" magazine; and the counterattack in Frank's film "Pull My Daisy," featuring key Beat personalities. He further explores expressions of rebelliousness in "film noir," the melodramas of director Douglas Sirk, and other Hollywood films. Finally, Sterritt shows the changing attitudes toward the Beat sensibility in Beat-related Hollywood movies like "A Bucket of Blood" and "The Beat Generation"; television programs like "Route 66" and "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis"; nonstudio films like John Cassavetes's improvisational "Shadows" and Shirley Clarke's experimental "The Connection"; and radically avant-garde works by such doggedly independent screen artists as Stan Brakhage, Ron Rice, Bruce Connor, and Ken Jacobs, drawing connections between their achievements and the most subversive products of their Beat contemporaries.

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目录:

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