



SILVERSCREEN
PRIMARY
EDUCATION

The History of Science Fiction Cinema

By Adam Pepper

**Session 7:
1980s – Part 1
Spielberg, Carpenter New
FX & Replicants**



Welcome to Session 7 of this 'History of Science Fiction Cinema'!

Over ten weeks, we will journey through space and time to uncover the secrets behind some of the greatest science fiction stories, movies, directors and characters as we try to uncover what science fiction really is, and where it blurs with our reality today.

Session 7:

After the ground-breaking success of 'Jaws' (1975) and 'Star Wars' (1977), the movie makers were on the lookout for the next big blockbuster movie to crash the records! And, with the great strides ILM were making with special effects, science fiction becomes a genre ripe for exploring.

Franchises become big news, with 'Star Wars', 'Superman', 'Alien' and 'Star Trek' all providing us with multiple stories from the same universes, while the emergence of new directors like John Carpenter, James Cameron, George Miller and Ridley Scott mean that the domain of sci-fi isn't just for Messrs Lucas and Spielberg!

But it's also a time for the action star too! 'Mad Max' (1979) proved that sci-fi action could be just as successful as the more thoughtful, intelligent or family-friendly stories. 'Rocky' (1976) had proved a great Launchpad for Stallone and, with 'The Terminator' (1984), we were also now in a world where Schwarzenegger boomed across the screen!

The 80s was a time of directors, stars, stories and excess! But it also gave us some of our most iconic sci-fi cinema!

Useful information for Session 7:

John Carpenter

John Howard Carpenter (born January 16, 1948) is an American filmmaker and composer. Most commonly associated with horror, action, and science fiction films of the 1970s and 1980s, he is generally recognized as one of the greatest masters of the horror genre. At the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, the French Directors' Guild gave him the Golden Coach Award, lauding him as "a creative genius of raw, fantastic, and spectacular emotions".

Carpenter's early films included box office and critical successes like *Halloween* (1978), *The Fog* (1980), *Escape from New York* (1981), and *Starman* (1984). His other productions from the 1970s and the 1980s only later came to be considered cult classics, and he has been acknowledged as an influential filmmaker. These include *Dark Star* (1974), *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976), *The Thing* (1982), *Christine* (1983), *Big Trouble in Little China* (1986), *Prince of Darkness* (1987), *They Live* (1988), *In the Mouth of Madness* (1994), and *Escape from L.A.* (1996). He returned to the *Halloween* franchise as composer and executive producer of the sequels *Halloween* (2018), *Halloween Kills* (2021) and *Halloween Ends* (2022).

Carpenter usually composed or co-composed the music in his films.

James Cameron

James Francis Cameron CC (born August 16, 1954) is a Canadian filmmaker. He is a major figure in the post-New Hollywood era, and one of the industry's most innovative filmmakers. He often uses novel technologies with a classical filmmaking style. He first gained recognition for writing and directing *The Terminator* (1984) and found further success with *Aliens* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), and the action comedy *True Lies* (1994). He wrote and directed *Titanic* (1997), *Avatar* (2009) and its sequels,

with *Titanic* winning Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Film Editing. He is a recipient of various other industry accolades, and three of his films have been selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

Cameron co-founded the production companies Lightstorm Entertainment, Digital Domain, and Earthship Productions. In addition to filmmaking, he is a National Geographic sea tourist and has produced many documentaries on the subject, including *Ghosts of the Abyss* (2003) and *Aliens of the Deep* (2005). Cameron has also contributed to underwater filming and remote vehicle technologies and helped create the digital 3D Fusion Camera System. In 2012, Cameron became the first person to do a solo descent to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, the deepest part of the Earth's ocean, in the *Deepsea Challenger* submersible.

Cameron's films have grossed over \$8 billion worldwide, making him the second-highest-grossing film director of all time. Three of Cameron's films are amongst the top four highest-grossing films of all time; *Avatar* (2009), *Avatar: The Way of Water* (2022) and *Titanic* (1997) are the highest, third-highest and fourth-highest-grossing films of all time, respectively. Cameron directed the first film to gross over \$1 billion, the first two films to gross over \$2 billion, and is the only director to have had three films gross over \$2 billion.

In 2010, *Time* named Cameron one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Cameron is also an environmentalist and runs several sustainability businesses.



Films to look out for:

Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)

Superman: The Movie (1978)

Alien (1979)

Superman II (1980)

Escape From New York (1981)

Bladerunner (1982)

ET (1982)

The Thing (1982)

The Terminator (1984)

Aliens (1986)

They Live (1988)

Forthcoming Sessions:

- 1980s – 1990s – Action Stars, pulp throwbacks and franchise fun!
- 1990s Part 2 – Dinosaurs, meteorites, 'Welcome To Earth!' Bullet Time & 'Get Your Ass To Mars!'
- 2000s – Worlds of Wonder

