

City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940's

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HARDCOVER OCTAVO

The late Otto Friedrich enlivened the pages of many newspapers and magazines with his vigorous prose. His journalistic ability to convey complex material in a vivid, accessible manner is evident in *City of Nets*, a mordant portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s. (Originally published in 1986, it's the middle volume in a trilogy of superb urban histories that also includes *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* and *Olympia: Paris in the Age of Manet*.) Friedrich drew on his voluminous reading of everything from celebrity bios to trade-union history to create a unique synthesis that, for a change, depicts Tinseltown not as a dreamland floating above American reality, but as a city subject, like any other, to economic and political forces. Friedrich mingles enjoyable gossip with hardheaded analysis of Hollywood's often unsavory industrial underpinnings, including studio heads' willingness to rely on gun-wielding gangsters to solve their labor problems. There's no other movie book quite like it; Rita Hayworth's divorce proceedings against Orson Welles follow hard on the heels of a gruesomely detailed description of Bugsy Siegel's execution. The '40s were the decade of Hollywood's decline: a blacklist prompted by anticommunist hysteria shut out some of its best talent, while a 1948 antitrust consent decree ended many of the business practices that made the studio system so profitable. Friedrich's brilliantly selective use of colorful anecdotes and revealing details perfectly captures a decaying, but still glamorous, culture. --Wendy Smith This dazzling story of Hollywood during the 1940s is a social and cultural history of the movie capital's golden age. Its cast includes actors, writers, musicians and composers, producers and directors, racketeers and labor leaders, journalists and politicians in the turbulent decade from World War II to Korea.

Other Books

Ronnie and Nancy, Six years in the making -- with unprecedented access to Nancy Reagan and the couple's closest friends -- here is the first volume in the definitive portrait of the remarkable, career building partnership between Ronald Reagan and Nancy Davis. Celebrity insider and *Vanity Fair* special correspondent Bob Colacello reveals the social history of Ronald and Nancy Reagan as no one ever has before, from the formation of their unique alliance through their rise to the heights of power. Colacello exposes facets of their marriage that have always been hidden from public view. Ronald, born into modest circumstances in rural Illinois, and Nancy, raised in a fashionable enclave of Chicago, both learned early on the value and importance of cultivating the right friendships. Over the years, they perfected their social skills into an art form, becoming one of the film industry's most talked-about power couples. But Hollywood was only the beginning....

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