



Adult Learning Within Reach

Member Lecture – 24 June 2021

Summer film club: understanding Film Noir
Rob Miller, Media studies consultant

Questions answered post-lecture

Q1 Was the artwork in the pulp magazines also influential on film noir?

I think so, particularly use of silhouette in many of the images, and also on book covers.

Q2 What was the point of the matches flicked into life?

Not sure what this question is but yes, lighting matches were part of the chiaroscuro effect.

Q3 Were the femme fatales always either innocent almost to the point of naivety or outright wicked?

Again, for me the femme fatales were never innocent, or naïve. They may have been driven in that direction as a result of 'life circumstance' but were generally negative representations, but characters that I have sympathy with.

Q4 Would the French series 'Spirale' be considered part of the film noir genre?

More Police Procedural (like Luther) but employing noir conventions.

Q5 Isn't Josephine perhaps the femme fatale? Isn't Lauren the female version of the flawed, slightly shabby detective?

Yes, in this film roles are more subverted.

Q6 Would you consider 'Kiss Me Deadly' to be true noir?

Yes, but more than that – it quite heavily influenced the French New Wave.

Useful links and further reading

[Paul Schrader's notes on Film Noir](#) – Good background reading on the elements of Film Noir