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Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System (Texas Film and Media Studies)

Emily Carman

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Emily Carman : Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System (Texas Film and Media Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System (Texas Film and Media Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fills in GapsBy Dr HAmazing focus and useful to fill in the sexist

gaps of Hollywood studies. That said, once I'd read the introduction, the other chapters were a bit more repetitive and ornate in detail than I personally needed. But your mileage may vary, and it's an important book. Glad I bought it. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This was a Christmas gift and truly enjoyed by Caitlin. My granddaughter is in UCLA'S PHD PROGRAM and Emily Carman is her advisor. This was a Christmas gift and truly enjoyed by Caitlin. She intends on getting it signed by the author, Thank You. Donna R. McCann

Runner-up, Richard Wall Memorial Award, Theatre Library Association, 2016 During the heyday of Hollywood's studio system, stars were carefully cultivated and promoted, but at the price of their independence. This familiar narrative of Hollywood stardom receives a long-overdue shakeup in Emily Carman's new book. Far from passive victims of coercive seven-year contracts, a number of classic Hollywood's best-known actresses worked on a freelance basis within the restrictive studio system. In leveraging their stardom to play an active role in shaping their careers, female stars including Irene Dunne, Janet Gaynor, Miriam Hopkins, Carole Lombard, and Barbara Stanwyck challenged Hollywood's patriarchal structure. Through extensive, original archival research, *Independent Stardom* uncovers this hidden history of women's labor and celebrity in studio-era Hollywood. Carman weaves a compelling narrative that reveals the risks these women took in deciding to work autonomously. Additionally, she looks at actresses of color, such as Anna May Wong and Lupe Velez, whose careers suffered from the enforced independence that resulted from being denied long-term studio contracts. Tracing the freelance phenomenon among American motion picture talent in the 1930s, *Independent Stardom* rethinks standard histories of Hollywood to recognize female stars as creative artists, sophisticated businesswomen, and active players in the then (as now) male-dominated film industry.

"Carman upends conventional wisdom in this valuable and informative historical study of the business practices of freelance actresses during the 1930s." (Publishers Weekly 2015-11-19) "*Independent Stardom: Freelance Women in the Hollywood Studio System* (published by University of Texas Press) tells a story that can shift perspectives on how Golden Age Hollywood operated." (The Shepherd Express 2016-01-29) "Carman's work is important, not only as an alternative history of Hollywood labor, but also as a guide for working women in early cinema." (Media Industries Journal) "Carman's study revises common conceptions of Hollywood stardom as a top-down process in which studios controlled stars and constructed their images and governed their labor with iron fists. Through really smart and sharp archival work, Carman fully reworks this picture and shows how a number of women stars in the 1930s were able to pretty much take control of their careers (what films to be in, what image to present to the public, etc.) and make of Hollywood a site of personal entrepreneurship as much as corporate strategy. This is a very important rewriting of Hollywood film history." (Dana Polan, Professor of Cinema Studies, New York University, and author of *Power and Paranoia: History, Narrative, and the American Cinema, 1940-1950* and *Scenes of Instruction: The Beginnings of U. S. Study of Film*) About the Author Emily Carman is an assistant professor of film studies in the Dodge College of Film and Media Arts at Chapman University.