



Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie

Eric Lichtenfeld

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For more than 30 years, the action movie has been the film genre that most represents Hollywood to the world, and represents the world to American audiences. Still, the action film has never received the critical attention it deserves. Studying its various trends and visual excesses, *Action Speaks Louder: Violence, Spectacle, and the American Action Movie* traces the genre's evolution and sources to reveal how it has come to assume its place of prominence in American identity and American life. With scores of in-depth case studies—including films such as *Dirty Harry*, *Death Wish*, *RoboCop*, *Die Hard*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Armageddon*, and *Spider-Man*—author Eric Lichtenfeld draws on film analysis, production histories, critical responses, studio marketing, original filmmaker interviews, and considerations of the genre's weaponry itself.

No previous book has taken on this subject with such rigor, and few genre studies of any kind synthesize critical reaction, studio marketing and advertising, and filmmaker interviews. Moreover, the action genre has never been studied with the dedication that critics have devoted to other genres, such as the Western, *film noir*, and screwball and romantic comedies. *Action Speaks Louder* provides a fresh perspective on the history and craft of a category of films that are among cinema's most popular, ones that certainly represent the movies' most primal form of fun.

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