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**Edward Hopper and Film: The Interdiscipli-
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Candidate Number 55131

EDWARD HOPPER AND FILM: THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF HIS ART AND THE CINEMA



Dissertation submitted for the Degree of B.A Honours in History of Art
2014/15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER ONE: ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION BETWEEN HOPPER AND FILM	5
CHAPTER TWO: THE INFLUENCE OF FILM	15
CHAPTER THREE: HOPPER'S INFLUENCE ON FILM	
a) ABRAHAM POLONOSKY	34
b) HERBERT ROSS	42
c) WIM WENDERS	48
d) ALFRED HITCHCOCK	54
CONCLUSION	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY	69
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	73

INTRODUCTION

Influenced himself by the 1930's and 40's cinematic Hollywood blockbusters and film noir's, Edward Hopper (1882 – 1967) has inspired a generation of some of the greatest directors born out of the twentieth century. The artist has been continuously written about in the context of art history yet notably less so in the scholarship of film, which I strongly believe needs to be revised. By attempting to establish relationships between particular films and artworks in Hopper's oeuvre, I hope to show how the visual techniques adopted in cinema contributed to the work of Hopper and how in turn, his work encouraged similar aesthetic values in a new wave of film. To secure this connection, the frame work of American cinema and the complex affiliation between the disciplines of history of art and film studies, must be explored.

Hopper's association with Realism and the Ashcan School of artists situated him in a time where America was altering socially, culturally and economically. These changes encouraged artists, writers and musicians of the period to capture the newfound dynamism in modern American life. One of the most prevalent means of this artistic expression could be found through film which, curator of American Paintings at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, Carol Troyen explains 'had become a significant part of the American cultural experience.'¹ As an avid film-goer himself, Hopper was exposed to a period where directors were being recognised for their play with light and creative use of stark camera angles, which can be equally attributed to in the artist's work through his interest in voyeurism and perspective.

Film Noir² typically described the American crime dramas being produced during the period which borrowed visual qualities from German Expressionist cinematography. The eerie subject matter in many of the films can be seen to have been transported into many of Hopper's canvases, both having an emphasis on solitary or mysterious figures in isolated urban settings. We are often transported into offices, cinemas, homes and road sides where Hopper situates the viewer in an environment that offers more than just a location but a

¹ C.Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, Thames & Hudson, 2007, pp.111-209

² French for 'black film'

narrative that appears as if about to unfold. This enables us to understand how the cinematic elements which inspired Hopper's work then offered artistic influence, which British film critic Phillip French notes "became, consciously or unconsciously, pervasive"³ to legendary directors and cinematographer's in the latter half of the 1900s.

The term 'Hopperesque' is used by critics in reference to art, film or literature that evokes an atmosphere of the artist's paintings. To complicate matters, this concept can be applied to work that was produced during or after Hopper's time, where the boundaries of influence can become indistinct. In the final chapter of this study, the discussion of his impact is exemplified through the work of filmmakers Abraham Polonosky and Alfred Hitchcock; as well as the more recent works by Herbert Ross and Wim Wenders.

³ P. French, 'From Nighthawks to the shadows of film noir', *The Observer*, 25th April, 2004

CHAPTER ONE: ESTABLISHING A CONNECTION BETWEEN HOPPER AND FILM

'Among the artists whose development paralleled that of the cinema, none felt more intimately the impact of the new medium at successive stages and none has inspired such fascination in cinematographers as Edward Hopper.'

GAIL LEVIN, EDWARD HOPPER: AN INTIMATE BIOGRAPHY

Before unfolding Hopper and film, the interdisciplinary nature of art and film, or more specifically the scholarship of art and film in union must be discussed. The importance of defining these issues lies in the foundation of this essay, which strongly relies on their collaborative potential. Art Historian Diane Kirkpatrick, who specialises in contemporary art and the subject of new art media, observes that as art historians 'Our training in the creation of visual form, composition, style, iconography, and the place of visual art within society makes us uniquely qualified to investigate aspects of film...' Although this interpretation of skill may be particularly biased, it also highlights the importance of a history of the visual, which for film's origins, lie in the once debated art form of photography. Kirkpatrick continues her argument by analysing the roles of director and cinematographer, who together decide 'on details of lighting, color, camera angles, use of the camera to establish an objective or subjective viewpoint, movement of the camera (or lens), focus and depth of field, composition within the frame, and choreography of movement within a shot.'⁴ Many of the activities listed are equally associated with the position of an artist, except through one particular image rather than a sequence. It is this important aesthetic system which encourages the art historian's involvement in the two disciplines and thus why we seek to explore these connections further.

However, from a film scholarship perspective, the relationship between art and film does not seem so substantial. As previously noted in the introduction to this essay, there is little commentary from studies on cinema of the influence of art or how we can approach film simultaneously from an art historical approach. If we look at an analysis of a camera's potential

⁴ D. Kirkpatrick, 'Art History and the Study of Film', *Art Journal*, Vol.43, No.3, Autumn, 1983, pp. 221-222

through German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin (an outsider to our battle between art and film academics) we attain a new approach based on aesthetic theory and the roots of Marxism. He states:

The painter maintains in his work a natural distance from reality, the cameraman penetrates deeply into its web... for contemporary man the representation of reality by the film is incomparably more significant than that of the painter, since it offers, precisely because of the thoroughgoing permeation of reality with mechanical equipment, an aspect of reality which is free of all equipment.⁵

Benjamin's account suggests that art, even work defined as Realist, cannot comply with the same authenticity that is captured by the camera. He expands by noting 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.'⁶ This statement becomes difficult to contest if we take it too literally, as putting paint to canvas to create a scene of real life is in fact not a true depiction but a representation. However, this is not to say that an artist's subject cannot depict reality or that the work of a cameraman cannot be manipulated.

The body of film that will be discussed throughout this essay is indeed fiction, many of which born out of literature and arrive from the Hollywood studios. Although this is not the work to which Benjamin explicitly deliberates, he generalises the role of the camera in contrast to the function of art in a way which I feel to be unjust. If we take Hopper as an example of an artist who has been considered throughout the years to associate with Realism, we have to wonder whether it is fair to consider his work unrealistic because it takes form in the place of a painting rather than through the eye of a camera. In fact, this is why Hopper proves to be worthy of examination in comparison to film, as much of his oeuvre translates what was being permeated through film in the twentieth century.

Born in Upper Nyack, New York in July of 1882 Edward Hopper has become known for reflecting his personal vision of modern American life. Through exploring interior and exterior

⁵ W. Benjamin, Excerpt from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 1936 in A. Dalle Vacche, *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art History*, Rutgers University Press, 2003, pp.1-29, 33-34, 35-49

⁶ Benjamin, Excerpt from 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in C. Harrison and P. Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Wiley, 2003, pp.520-527

scenes in both urban and rural life, he strayed away from a style that contemporary artists were following. In 1899 Hopper began his studies at the New York School of Art and Design under teachers such as Robert Henri, the founder of the Ashcan School. Henri explained that 'As I see it, there is only one reason for the development of art in America, and it is that the people of America learn the means of expressing themselves in their own time and in their own land.'⁷ He had encouraged his students to explore the city and its people in order to attempt to define what was real.

What separated Hopper in his efforts of achieving this was his unique stance on voyeurism and subject. Rather than depicting life from street level, he became fascinated with elevated viewpoints which took the spectator out of their usual perspective of the city. This is particularly evident in his window scenes that depict the 'unobservant observed' such as *Night Windows* (**fig.1**) and *Room in New York* (**fig.2**). The recurring motif of Hopper's windows lends itself to his connection to film and shall be discussed in greater detail when looking at both his sources of influence and his effect on cinema. Art historian and distinguished specialist on Hopper Gail Levin, explains how these images were motivated by 'how much he enjoyed stealing glances into brightly lit interiors whilst riding the Elevated train around the city at night'⁸, therefore exploring the foundations of his relationship with the act of observation. American art historian and curator for the Whitney Museum of American Art Barbara Haskell, supports this by noting that Hopper's power in bringing such images to life lie in the strength that they 'trigger flashes of subconscious recognition in viewers, arresting their attention with an uncanny sense that they are witnessing something they had experienced before but had deemed too insignificant to remember.'⁹ As specialists in American art, both Levin and Haskell recognise this idea of observation as a part of everyday modern urban living as credit to Hopper for his ability to illustrate such significance. What unites the unknown figures in paintings such as these, is that they are part of a larger narrative

⁷ Robert Henri in H.B Weinberg, *American Impressionism and Realism 1885-1915*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1994, p.25

⁸ G. Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, Rizzoli, 2007, pp.3-48, 348-377, 421-463, 749-761

⁹ B. Haskell, *Modern Life: Edward Hopper and His Time*, Munich Hirmer, 2009, pp. 48-55, 222-227



1. Hopper
Night Windows
1928



2. Hopper
Room in New York
1932

heightened through the act of voyeurism. In Hopper's canvases we examine what it is the subject is doing, who they are, or what has brought them to their location. In film, these questions are often answered, but like the artist's work they begin with a single frame.

Hopper's frequent trips to Paris exposed him to European art and film, where he most likely adopted many of the unique attributes to his style that have come to be known as 'Hopperesque'. His voyeuristic tradition is reminiscent of the Parisian flâneur¹⁰ whilst his subjects have often been noted as evocative of Impressionist works. Art Historian Judith Barter notes that Hopper's exposure to contemporary French art provided him 'with an understanding of the humanity of modern life, contemporary material culture, and mood'¹¹ and is therefore why his work is so frequently associated with the idea of modern American life. However, whilst contemporary French artists regularly depicted busy street scenes, Hopper often removed pedestrians from his paintings. His solitary figures have greater impact on the environment within which we are observing, forcing us to question the figure and wonder about their story.

In the context of film and narrative, Professor of English and Film Studies, Lucy Fischer comments recalls the writing of art historian Robert Hobbs, who believes that 'In his art Hopper stops the narrative that constitutes... the montage of a movie to focus on strangely isolated stills. Seen by themselves these stills are mysterious and haunting. They evoke a desire for the rest of the narrative.'¹² Hobbs statement forces us to wonder whether this practice is simply an example of how Hopper was inspired by the plots of the crime thrillers he so frequently went to see or, if simultaneously, it is an example of the methods employed in the work of directors and cinematographers which can be credited to Hopper's influence?

German-born director Wim Wenders discussed how the act of voyeurism may have inspired filmmakers to develop a moment from one of Hopper's paintings. In a recent interview, he

¹⁰ Flâneur: derives from the French noun meaning 'stroller'. A strictly male description of a bourgeois figure that wanders the city, engaging with contemporary Parisian life.

¹¹ J.A. Barter, 'Nighthawks: Transcending Reality', pp.194-209 in Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.111-209

¹² R. Hobbs (Edward Hopper, Harry N. Abrams, 1987) in Fischer, 'The Savage Eye: Edward Hopper and the Cinema', in Townsend Ludington, *A Modern Mosaic: Art and Modernism in the United States*, University of North Carolina Press, 2000, pp.334-356

stated that the eerie qualities of the artist's work 'prompt us to think about what is going to happen next. I never knew paintings could have this quality. Usually... paintings often show a moment in time, so they suggest a story. But with Hopper, when you look at the same painting ten minutes later, you'd swear something happened.'¹³ This is most explicitly exemplified where the settings of the artist's paintings are used within a film's own narrative and then expanded. Such examples are the rendering of *Nighthawks* (**fig.3**) in Wenders' *The End of Violence* (1997) and in Herbert Ross' *Pennies from Heaven* (1981). Ross also recreated *New York Movie* (**fig.4**) within the same film. These works and their parallels with Hopper's paintings shall be further discussed in chapter three.

To understand the artist's connection to film, we must first consider the era within which Hopper found inspiration from the medium. In the text *The Remembered Film*, conceptual artist and writer Victor Burgin reflects on the writing of French, literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes (1915-1980). He discusses how the darkness of a movie theatre and the relaxed demeanour of the viewers surrounding him, were just as appealing as watching the film. For Barthes 'such attitudes of idle 'availability' represent what he calls the 'modern eroticism' peculiar to the big city.'¹⁴ Cinematic experiences such as these may also have served as a major attraction to many other metropolitan residents.

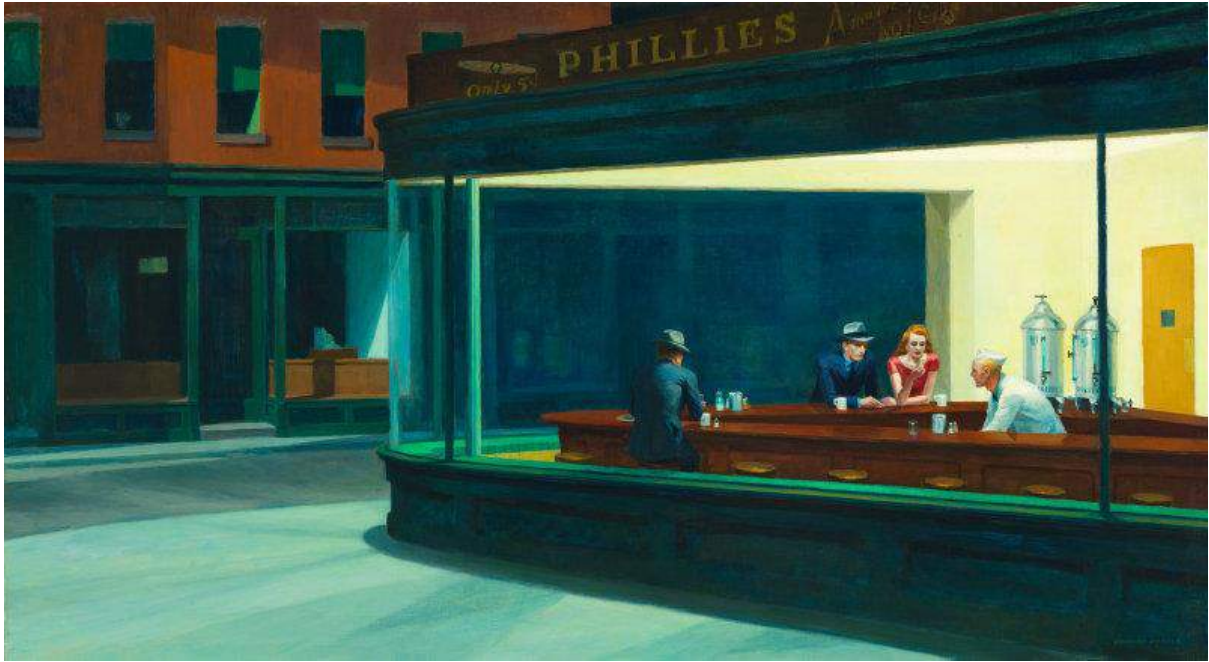
Troyen explains that cinema 'Following the crash of 1929... provided both escape and comfort. Movie theatres transported their audiences from the grinding insecurities and scarcities of their daily lives.' Troyen's observation confirms much of what Barthes' appeared to associate with film-experience. In her discussion of *New York Movie*, Troyen highlights how Hopper was out of work when he began his research for the painting:

Theatre, and especially film, had always been his refuge in the increasingly frequent times when he found it difficult to paint. In *New York Movie*, he depicts the theatre as a dream space, one that – if only for a few hours – sanctioned the risk-free imaginative entry into the world of others.¹⁵

¹³ Interview with Wenders in J. Devillers, *Edward Hopper and the Blank Canvas*, 2012

¹⁴ V. Burgin, *The Remembered Film*, Reaktion Books, 2004, pp.7-57, 109-110

¹⁵ Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.176-193



3. Hopper
Nighthawks
1942



4. Hopper
New York Movie
1939

In *The Remembered Film*, Burgin notes that 'It might appear that Barthes 'distracts' himself from the film, by behaving in the cinema much as he might when in the street... Barthes sees the darkness of the cinema as a particular form of organization of the darkness of the city at large.'¹⁶ Barthes' affair with the cinema correlates with Troyen's exploration of Hopper's experience of the movie theatre. It also suggests how Hopper's time spent in Paris was hugely influential on both his interest in film and his wider perspective on the activity of voyeurism, which became imbedded in his work and lifestyle.

¹⁶ Burgin, *The Remembered Film*, pp.7-57, 109-110

CHAPTER TWO: THE INFLUENCE OF FILM

“When I don’t feel in the mood for painting I go to the movies for a week or more. I go on a regular movie binge.”

EDWARD HOPPER

Hopper once admitted that he ‘could have painted more if he had not loved movies so much.’¹⁷ In the diaries of his wife Jo Nivinson (an artist in her own right), their regular attendance to local picture-houses is frequently cited.¹⁸ Cinema became an integral part of both Hopper’s work and leisure activity when he began completing illustration work for an advertising company in 1905. He was asked to design posters for silent films, watching them and then producing a single graphic image. In a television interview, Hopper stated that “Illustration really didn’t interest me, I was forced into it by an effort to make some money, that’s all. I really had no interest in it, I tried to force myself to have an interest in it, but it wasn’t very real.”¹⁹ His commitment to depicting the real is what evokes such power in his imagery and parallels the artist’s position to that of the filmmaker, who too aspires to create something that appears real to the viewer.

To understand how Hopper was influenced by film, particularly film noir, we must look at some of the characteristics and central motifs that defined this genre and how in turn they are reflected in much of his work. In film scholar James Naremore’s compelling text *More Than Night: Film Noir and its Contexts*, the fundamental basics of film noir are established by discussing the term’s connection to modernism. Defining film noir is challenging due to its different associations with cinema in France, Germany, Britain and the United States. Naremore suggests that much of American film noir’s origins lie in French ‘sophisticated film culture’ which equally exhibited ‘shadowy melodramas, set in an urban criminal milieu and featuring doomed protagonists who have behaved with sangfroid under pressure.’²⁰ His

¹⁷ J.A. Barter, ‘Nighthawks: Transcending Reality’, pp.194-209 in Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.111-209

¹⁸ Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, pp.348-377, 421-463, 749-761

¹⁹ Interview in Devillers’ *Edward Hopper and the Blank Canvas*, 2012

²⁰ J. Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts*, University of California Press, 1998, pp.11-95, 167-219

description already begins to stimulate Hopper imagery, recalling etches such as *Night in the Park* (**fig.5**) and *Night Shadows* (**fig.6**). More than their grey-scale colouring, these artworks parallel the metropolitan crime thrillers associated with film noir due to their city subject, elevated perspective and contrast of strong lighting in dark settings.

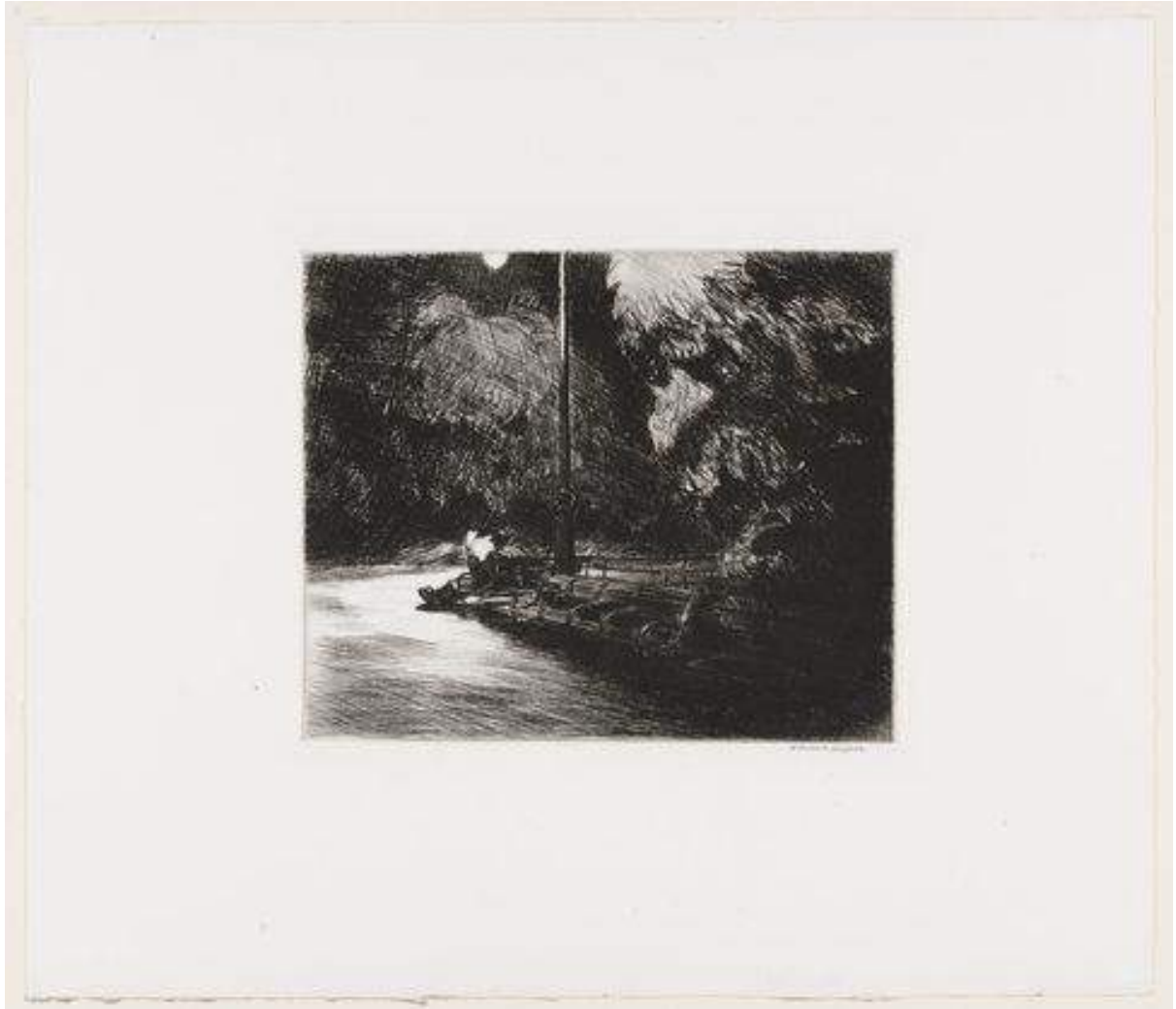
Naremore continues to discuss how spaces of urban modernity depicted by modernist artists became a source of inspiration to the films of the 1940s. Hopper was central to this commentary on contemporary society, represented through both his metropolitan scenes of New York and his depictions of Cape Cod, which showed the steady increase of elements of commerce in rural life. Beyond examples of modernity in an industrial sense, the artist observed the changes to modern existence in American society by depicting contemporary life, as demonstrated by his window scenes. This is similarly exhibited in both film noir and literature through a *topos* Naremore describes as ‘The Dark City’, which ‘oppressive and pleasurable, alienating and free... possessed many contradictory meanings.’ Symbolic of these new traditions were, as the scholar describes:

...narratives and camera angles... organized along more complex and subjective lines; characters were depicted in shades of gray or in psychoanalytic terms; urban women became increasingly eroticized and dangerous; endings seemed less unproblematically happy; and violence appeared more pathological.²¹

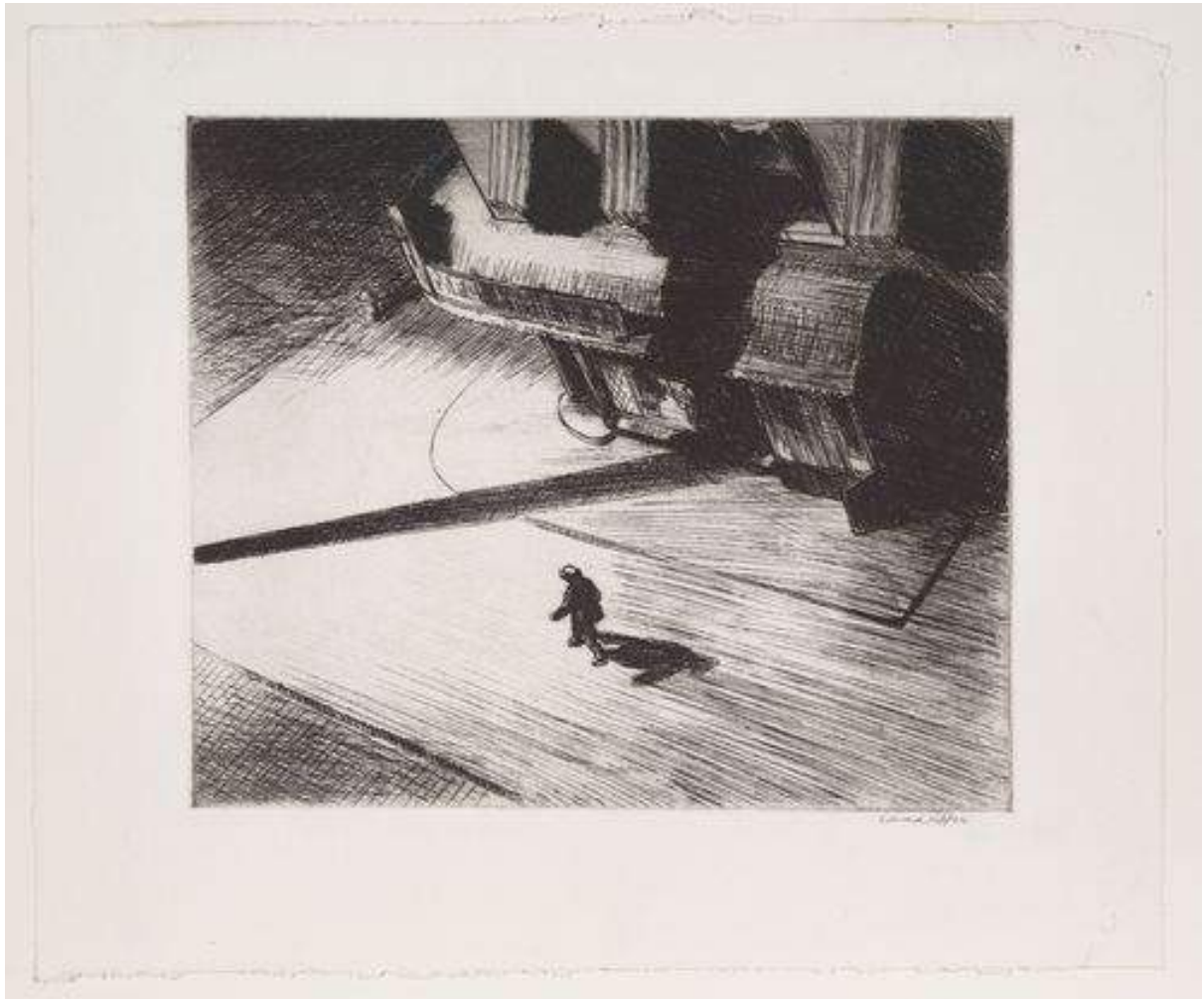
When looking at this characterisation, we can form an affiliation with Hopper, largely through his own use of themes, settings, figures and lighting.

Two images by Hopper which most clearly evoke Naremore’s description of ‘The Dark City’ are *Office at Night* (**fig.7**) and *Conference at Night* (**fig.8**) as the use of lighting and positioning of figures and objects all evoke stylistic tendencies found in film noir. Writer, artist and close friend of Hopper, Brian O’Doherty explored this in his essay, highlighting how film noir’s conventional cinematography was recognised by ‘the oblique cut of light across a background wall, its edge sharp as a guillotines’. He continues by stating that the two office scenes were ‘the most noirish paintings in Hopper’s oeuvre’ because ‘they are the closest to the arrested

²¹ Naremore, *More Than Night*, , pp.11-95, 167-219



5. Hopper
Night in the Park
1921



6. Hopper
Night Shadows
1921

narratives of movie still's'²². The lighting prompts suspicion in the observer, largely being indebted to the crime dramas that also used this technique, where we have similarly witnessed this curiosity; the forming of a plan in action or an inconspicuous exchange between two mysterious figures.

What both Naremore and O'Doherty establish are the overall parallels between art and film. In the case of Naremore who is explicitly discussing film noir, we must search (although not at too much difficulty) for the connections between film and the wider context of modernism in relation to Hopper. Whereas in the case of O'Doherty who takes an art historical approach, the recognition of Hopper and his dual links to film is established. Being able to identify these associations is the basis of this essay, and therefore becomes crucial to develop these notions further.

As discussed by Naremore, the city as location is both crucial in understanding noir film and Hopper. In the artist's metropolitan scenes, voyeurism becomes an integral element within urban life. Phillip French argues that 'the city' is in fact 'a heightened abstract notion rather than any particular metropolis' where 'voyeurism has been an unavoidable condition of urban living and moviegoing... They are epiphanic moments in someone else's life, stills from a movie we can't quite remember.'²³ His view supports the concept that a narrative within the canvas identifies with narrative within film. His proposed connection between film and the city introduces us to Nicholas Christopher's view of the city within film noir as 'a labyrinth of human construction', defining the labyrinth as being full of 'webs of human relationships', as 'a projection of the human imagination, and also a reflection of its inhabitants' inner lives'. He continues to discuss the representation of the city in its cinematic context and its frequent use of oblique lighting, obscure camera angles and tendency to produce scenes at night. Furthermore, he notes how a characters 'innermost conflicts and desires are rooted in urban claustrophobia'²⁴. We can identify with this notion when thinking about America's rapidly

²² B. O'Doherty, 'Hopper's Look' in S. Wagstaff, *Edward Hopper*, Tate Publishing, 2004, pp.82-97

²³ French, *The Observer*, April 2004

²⁴ N. Christopher, *Somewhere in the Night: Film Noir and the American City*, Simon and Schuster, 2010, pp.15-31



7. Hopper
Office at Night
1940



8. Hopper
Conference at Night
1949

growing population at this time, particularly in northern cities which were attracting immigrants from the South and overseas. Diverse changes were taking place, opening up a new perspective on social interaction and the affects this had on citizens. This evidence supports Christopher's described feeling of 'claustrophobia' due to the mass number of people living within such close quarters during the period of the late 1800's and early 1900s. His description of film-noir's representation of the city is undoubtedly illustrative of the aesthetic qualities produced in a Hopper canvas. The artist's regular use of harsh lighting within an evening, city setting accentuates the elusive nature of the figure within the painting. A key example which exhibits these techniques is *Nighthawks* (see fig.3).

Completed in 1942, *Nighthawks* explores the visual techniques which can be attributed to the films inspired by Hopper and the films Hopper was inspired by. The painting features three figures seated at a brightly lit diner in Hopper's neighbourhood of Greenwich Village, Manhattan. The guests are seated around a countertop whilst a young man serves them from behind an enclosed work area. The angle of perspective allowed the artist to include the surrounding deserted streets which are flooded with light from the interior. Much of Hopper's aesthetic formatting here exhibits the influence of film based on the emphasis of the horizontal rather than the vertical, in order to gain a wider perspective. Like a film still on a movie screen, Hopper's narratives often stretched across the canvas. In conjunction with this structuring, the effect of harsh lighting combined with the use of sharp angling allowed the viewer to approach his subjects from a viewpoint that suggests the observed are unaware of being watched.

In his text *Framed Visions*, Professor of Film and Media Studies, Gerd Gemünden references these methods in relation to *Nighthawks*. The composition 'creates the feeling of a sinister and nightmarish place, a place of stagnation and immense isolation but also of latent violence and threat of action.' The atmosphere created can undoubtedly be attributed to the crime dramas in film, television and literature of the 1930s and 40s, and for *Nighthawks* in particular, Ernest Hemingway's *The Killers*. Hopper definitively noted his appreciation for the text when he wrote to *Scribner's* magazine in 1927 after their publication of the short story:

I want to compliment you for printing Ernest Hemingway's *The Killers* in the March *Scribner's*. It is refreshing to come upon such a honest piece of work in an American magazine, after wading through the vast sea of sugar coated mush that makes up the most of our fiction.²⁵

In the opening of the plot, Hemmingway describes a diner at dusk and a group of three men that are seated at the counter. Gemünden notes that similarly to *Nighthawks* 'violence is impending but never actually takes place.'²⁶ In conjunction, O'Doherty, stated that Hopper 'admired Hemingway's sparse reductivism, with its inverse richness of implied content.'²⁷ These statements further contribute to the argument of awaiting narrative which Hopper's paintings prompt so vividly, whilst simultaneously demonstrating a cross-fertilisation of influence when in 1946 a film version was made based on the text. In the opening scene (**fig.9**), the visual similarities to *Nighthawks* are difficult to ignore. The American diner, dark streets, bright artificial lighting and male figures disguised by their low-hanging fedoras... Whether it was the descriptive influence of Hemingway or the painterly skills of Hopper that had the overall effect, the film's director Robert Sidomak undoubtedly looked at Hopper's painting as artistic reference for his film.

As demonstrated by *Nighthawks*, Hopper adopted much of the visual formalism which lies in the basis of noir film, particularly a wider angle of vision which Judith Barter calls 'a sense of contemporary life as a still shot.' The writer goes on to say that films such as Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar* (1931), William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931) and Richard Rosson and Howard Hawks *Scarface* (1932), all 'employed the cinematic techniques of early film noir, which included prominent use of angles, shadows, patterns of light, and scenes shot through and framed by windows and doorways.'²⁸ This is exemplified by stills from these films (**figs. 10, 11 and 12**) which present almost identical scenarios to Hopper's *Night Shadows* (**see fig. 6**). This may confirm a duality of influence or simply the pervasiveness of this technique throughout noir film, which ultimately inspired the famous etching.

²⁵ G. Levin, *Edward Hopper as Illustrator*, Norton Press, 1979, pp.7-26

²⁶ G. Gemünden, *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization, and the Contemporary German and Austrian Imagination*, University of Michigan Press, 1998, pp.1-40, 158-176

²⁷ Doherty, 'Hopper's Look' in Wagstaff, *Edward Hopper*, pp.82-97

²⁸ Barter, 'Nighthawks: Transcending Reality', pp.194-209 in Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.111-209



9. Opening scene of *The Killers*
1946



10. Film still from *Little Caesar*
1931



11. Film still from *The Public Enemy*
1931



12. (LEFT) Film still from *Scarface*
1932

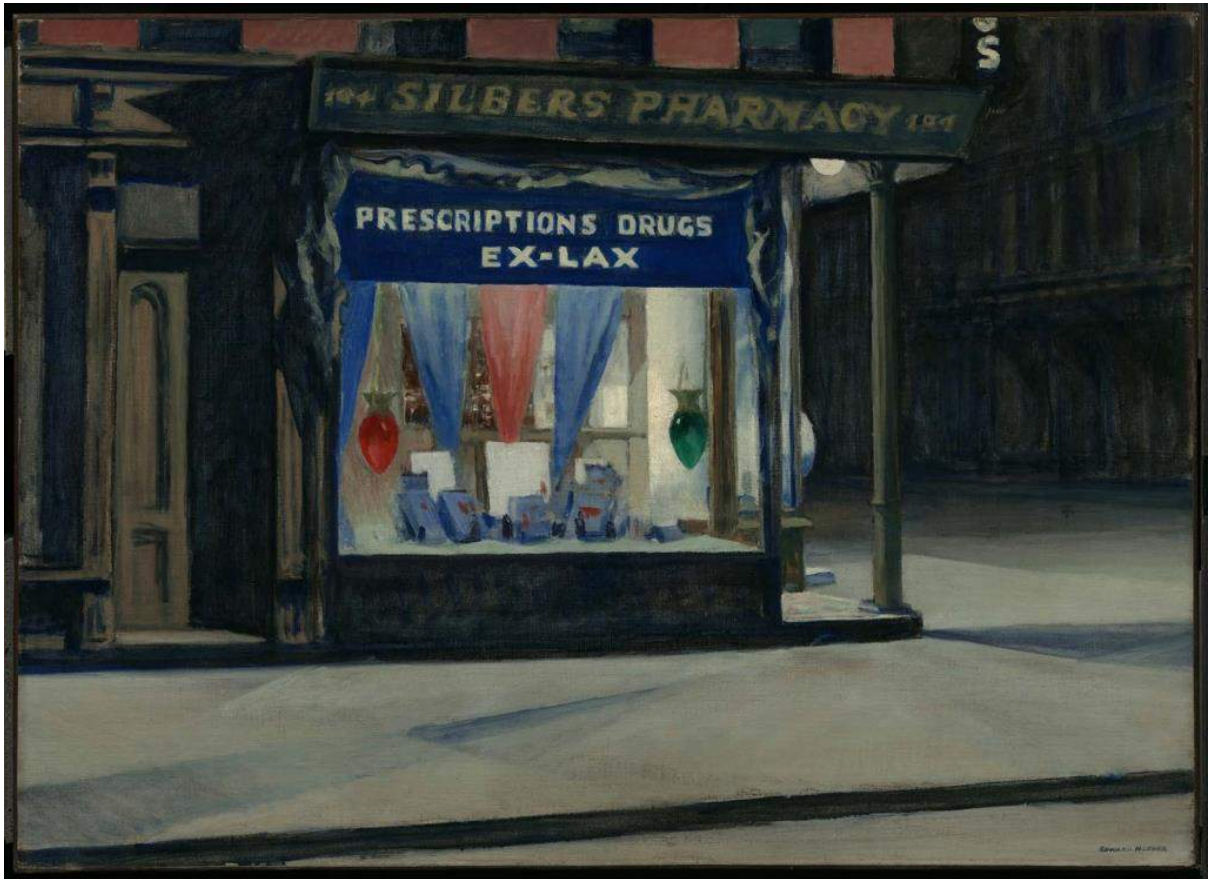
Each film also commented on modern American urban experience, shown through settings of diners, city streets and shops, which Barter claims ‘repeatedly found their way into Hopper’s paintings’ as he ‘valued the realistic settings and visual particulars that made these films both modern and uniquely American.’²⁹ Although this statement provokes the sort of imagery found in the artist’s works such as *Nighthawks* (see **fig.3**), I believe that the particular films that Barter references must be thought of as part of the wider category of noir film that inflicted artistic vision, rather than individual motivational sources. The reasoning behind this conclusion is due to the number of works completed by Hopper depicting urban locations before the release of such productions. For example, his hauntingly eerie, street corner *Drug Store* (**fig.13**) and unnervingly impersonal *Automat* (**fig.14**) were painted in 1927, only a few years before the release of the films listed. This highlights the visual common ground found in the genre during this period and how the body of work, rather than specific films, provided Hopper with aesthetic encouragement.

As a result of the constant stream of film releases, it becomes harder to determine whether the artist inspired the director or the reverse – throwing us into an area that requires further investigation. In a diary entry from September 1945, Jo speaks of Edward doing nothing since April, although often convincing ‘her to accompany him to the movies’³⁰ where one day they saw Elia Kazan’s *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945). Gail Levin notes how Hopper enjoyed many of Kazan’s films such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *On the Waterfront* (1954) and ‘Kazan, who could not have known of Hopper’s fondness for his work, cited Hopper in his memoir as one of the artists he most admired.’³¹ *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* suggests the possibilities of dual inspiration between Hopper and Kazan, particularly due to the filmmaker’s development on *Room in Brooklyn* (**fig.15**) and *City Roofs* (**figs.16 and 17**). The narrative takes place between the streets of New York and the confined space of the Nolan family’s small city apartment; echoing the figures in Hopper’s urban paintings, who almost seem bound to their location. In the apartment scenes of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, the window as a void appears to be a recurring theme, as exemplified in stills from the film (**fig.18, 19, 20**). As these clips show, the window often acts as a barrier between interior and exterior.

²⁹ Barter, ‘Nighthawks: Transcending Reality’, pp.194-209 in Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.111-209

³⁰ Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, pp.3-48, 348-377, 421-463, 749-761

³¹ Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, pp.3-48, 348-377, 421-463, 749-761



13. Hopper
Drug Store
1927



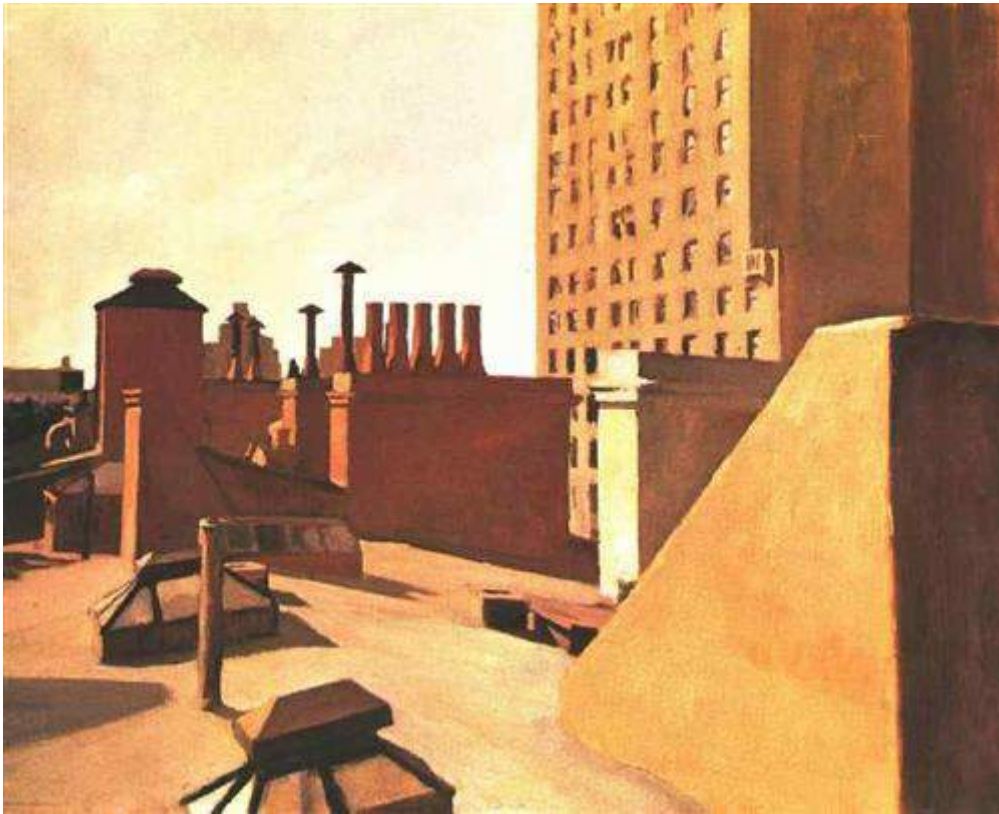
14. Hopper
Automat
1927

The feature of windows in Hopper's oeuvre is a subject that has been continuously dwelt upon by scholars and forms itself as a central motif in his influence and influences. However, as demonstrated by his contemporaries such as John Sloan and his *Night Windows* (fig.21) and the work of directors such as Fritz Lang's *The Woman in the Window* (1944) and Ted Tetzlaff's *The Window* (1949), it was not just Hopper who showed an interest into life behind these glass panes.

As both Kazan and Hopper worked simultaneously, the evidence and direction of channels of influence become unclear. However, as we are aware that Kazan was directly inspired by Hopper and Hopper likewise, I believe that this in fact exemplifies the importance of film noir on both mediums and how its overwhelming presence in American cultural society was being incorporated into both business and leisure for many of its most famous writers, artists and filmmakers.



15. Hopper
Room in Brooklyn
1932



16. Hopper
City Roofs
1932



17. Film still from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, 1945



18., 19., 20. Film stills from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*



21. John Sloan
Night Windows
1910

CHAPTER THREE: HOPPER'S INFLUENCE ON FILM

“To give everything a permanent form, to put things in their place... to overcome the emptiness, the anxiety and the dread by capturing them on a white surface. That’s what his work shares with the cinema. It lets Hopper, the story-teller, with a canvas on his easel, stand along the great painters of the silver screen.”

WIM WENDERS, *EDWARD HOPPER AND THE BLANK CANVAS*

The notable lack of study into Hopper’s influence on film can be restored by looking at his paintings which have contributed stylistically to cinema. As with the previous chapter, this means forming many of our own conclusions due to the absence of scholarship on the subject. Fortuitously, many of the directors which shall be discussed in reference to this matter have enthusiastically stated the impact the artist ensured on their work. The methods employed and expanded by Hopper from early film noir such as lighting, perspective and modern American subject are equally attributed to here in the argument of his creative repercussion, which is still expanding.

a) ABRAHAM POLONSKY

Although director Abraham Polonsky saw Hopper as a continuous influence throughout his work, his 1949 film *The Force of Evil* most distinctively displays how he dreamed his visuals to be ‘Hopperesque.’ His directions to cinematographer George Barnes were quite clear:

I tried to tell George what I was looking for, but I couldn’t quite describe that to a cameraman, because I didn’t know what to say. I went out and got a book of reproductions of Hopper’s paintings – Third Avenue, cafeterias, all that black-lighting, and those empty streets. Even when people are there, you don’t see them; somehow the environments dominate the people.³²

Polonosky draws upon one of the key elements that filmmakers took from the artist’s work: a sense of the unknown created through location. Professor of film history, Tom Ryall notes

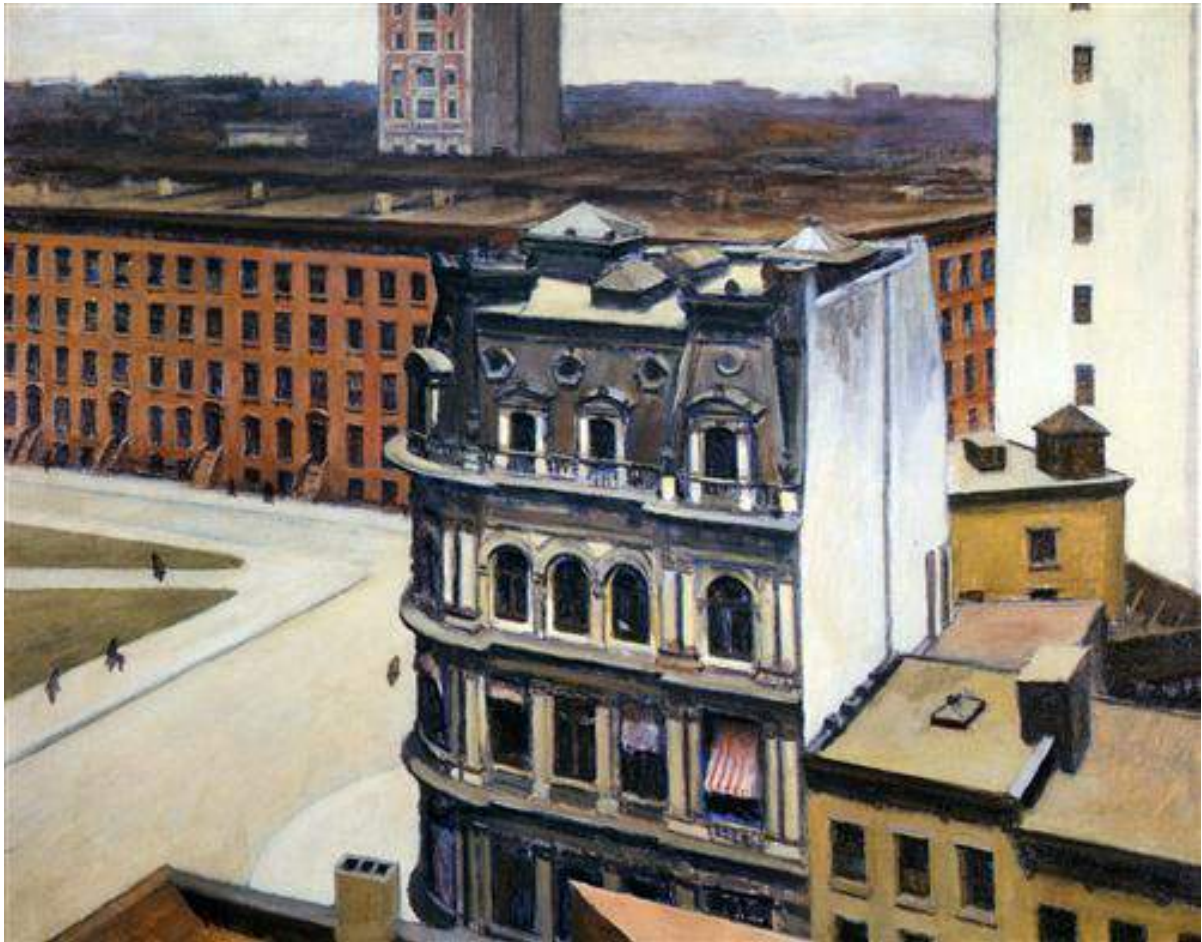
³² E. Sherman and M. Rubin, *The Director’s Event: Interviews with Five American Film-makers*, 1970 in A. Spicer, H. Hanson, *A Companion to Film Noir*, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp.158-174

that the opening scene to *Force of Evil* emits this through the director recalling Hopper works such as *American Village* (**fig.22**) and *The City* (**fig.23**). This observation is based upon the cameras elevated perspective of the metropolis, first examining the skyline; before looking down onto a busy intersection. I would argue however that these stills (**figs.24 and 25**) resonate better with images such as *From Williamsburg Bridge* (**fig.26**) and *New York Pavements* (**fig.27**) due to their attention to urban architecture.

Equally, the cinematography of Barnes and the canvases of Hopper bare similarities to the work of Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, who in their 1921 short film *Manhatta*, explore the relationship between photography and film through views of New York. Certain stills from the documentary, such as the busy Wall Street morning (**fig.28**) echo the opening to *Force of Evil* in terms of the panoramic camerawork and city subjects. Of most significance is a shot from *Manhatta* that appears almost identical to Hopper's *City Roofs* (**fig.29**) from its outlook to location, significantly creating a duality between all three projects.



22. Hopper
American Village
1912



23. Hopper
The City
1927



24. Film still from the opening scene of *Force of Evil*, 1949



25. Film still from the opening scene of *Force of Evil*



26. Hopper
From Williamsburg Bridge
1928



27. Hopper
New York Pavements
1924



28. Still from *Manhatta*, 1921



29. Still from *Manhatta*, 1921

b) HERBERT ROSS

After his death in 1967, Hopper's impact on art and cinematography only became more pervasive. Recreations of his paintings in film demonstrate the inheritance of his artwork across mediums and in *Pennies from Heaven* (1981), director Herbert Ross restored the life of *Nighthawks* (see fig.3), arguably Hopper's most influential painting on film, and the work that most explicitly exemplified the artist's love for the cinema; *New York Movie* (see fig.4).

Originally a BBC television broadcast by Dennis Potter, *Pennies from Heaven* was adapted by Ross to create a musical-film set in Depression-era Chicago³³. A review in *New York Magazine*, following the film's release, claimed that 'It features a view of human nature that is disturbing and sometimes repellent, yet you've got to see this thing. It's brilliant and ambitious...'³⁴ This statement could equally be applied to Hopper's city paintings that alluded to the social conditions of America such as *Early Sunday Morning* (fig.30) and *Nighthawks*. The first painting was completed in 1930 at the height of the depression. The desolate sidewalk, with nothing but the presence of the early dawn light, is symbolic of the lonely ambience surrounding the time. Hopper's *Nighthawks* was created at a time where America's involvement in the Second World War was at its greatest. Although Hopper failed to directly mention the consequence this time had on his subject for the diner scene painting, he did state that 'unconsciously, probably, I was painting the loneliness of a large city.'³⁵ In discussion of the painting, art historians Beth Harris and Steven Zucker comment that "It was a time of great fear and anxiety in America... Nobody knew which way the war was going to turn at this point. These are subjects that preoccupied Hopper for his entire career: images of loneliness and isolation."³⁶ Harris and Zucker's analysis contributes to the surrounding context and placement of both Hopper's artworks and Ross' scenes in Chicago.

³³ The Great Depression (1929-39) following the Wall Street Crash of October 1929. It was the longest period of Western economic downfall, leaving much of the American population in financial ruin.

³⁴ D. Denby, 'Dance, Fools, Dance', *New York Magazine*, 28th December, 1981

³⁵ E. Hopper quoted in K. Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Modern Artists*, Da Capo Press, 1962, p.134

³⁶ Podcast discussion with B. Harris and S. Zucker, 'Hopper, Nighthawks', The Khan Academy,



30. Hopper
Early Sunday Morning
1930

By looking at the scenes from *Pennies from Heaven* which have recreated Hopper's canvases in conjunction with the paintings (**figs.31 and 32**), the direct attributes to the artist's work are made clear. In the same review from *New York Magazine*, film critic David Denby comments:

In Gordon Willis's cinematography, the colors are basic neon-blue, red, and green against black – deepened into the richer hues of an Edward Hopper painting. Some of the frames are almost facsimiles of famous Hopper canvases, and the mood throughout – one of hard, bitter loneliness – is suffused with Hopper's sense of human isolation.³⁷

Denby highlights that the influence of Hopper was clear, particularly through colour and form but most importantly through the narrative lurking behind the canvas. The emulation of *New York Movie* arrives towards the end of the film where lead roles Arthur and Eileen are watching the 1936 box office hit *Follow the Fleet*. The scene begins with the setting of Hopper's painting, complete with the young usherette by the exit, surrounded by the grand architecture and décor of the cinema. It is unmistakably a direct translation of the image. However, what follows next unites the two works together, as Arthur becomes absorbed by the film, falling into a fantasy where he and his companion become part of its narrative.

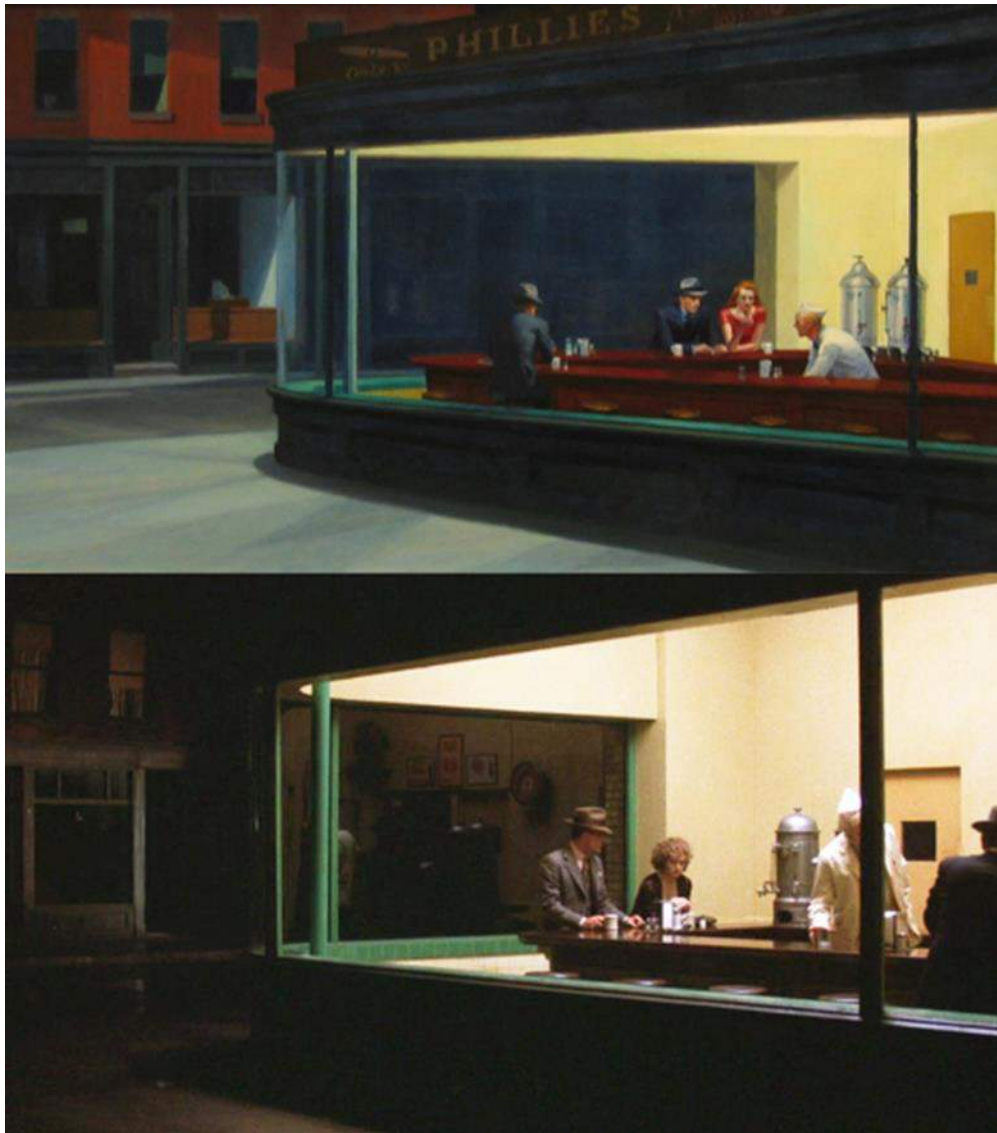
Highlighted earlier through the argument of Carol Troyen, small movie-theatres were becoming a place to escape from the harsh realities of everyday life; a place to indulge in an imaginary world. The cinema-worker in *New York Movie* has often been cited as seeking refuge from sensibility. Curator at the National Gallery (Washington DC) Franklin Kelly, has described her as “seemingly lost in her own thoughts”, calling the cinema a “place of a kind of escapism... leave the ordinary world and go into another world...”³⁸ Kelly's statement equally applies to the usherette and audience members featured in the film, demonstrated by Arthur and Eileen's excursion into fiction, thus linking the cinematic and narrative qualities of Hopper's work to this moment in *Pennies from Heaven*.

³⁷ Denby, *New York Magazine*

³⁸ F. Kelly, Podcast on 'Edward Hopper's New York', National Gallery of Art, September 2008



31. Hopper's *New York Movie* alongside a film still from *Pennies from Heaven*, 1981



32. Hopper's Nighthawks alongside a film still from *Pennies from Heaven*

The film's recreation of *Nighthawks* demonstrates a remarkable attention to the details within Hopper's canvas, from the salt and pepper shakers on the counter to the shop and apartment windows outside. Most importantly however, is the same use of rich browns and greens against the artificial light which floods the city pavement. What I believe Ross and Gordon Willis sought after in the setting for their scene was the tension and animosity which Hopper, consciously or subconsciously, captured in his painting. This is particularly emphasised by the male and female figures who sit closely together in the almost empty diner. There is no interaction between the couple, both appearing to be absorbed in other thoughts. In *Pennies from Heaven*, this scene marks the moment when the lead roles reunite after some time apart, emulating the same ambience created in *Nighthawks*. As well as being hypnotised by the artistic skill present in the canvas, it was equally the untold narrative of Hopper's works which interested both director and cinematographer throughout the film.

c) WIM WENDERS

In his 1997 action movie *End of Violence*, German filmmaker Wim Wenders too recreated the famous *Nighthawks* (**fig.33**). We first witness the staging as part of a film set, where the actress playing the role of the female diner explains that in the film, she intends to kill the waiter in the late-night café as revenge for her sister's death. The actress' companion states: "Hmm... sex, murder, revenge..." to which she replies "Good, old-fashioned American fun." Knowing the narrative of the film, you cannot help but conclude that Hopper's setting was deliberately chosen due to its modern American setting and implied action. In Wenders' film however, many of the essential details are removed, leaving us with only two figures and the inside of the diner. We do not witness the loneliness of the city outside, yet we still observe the scene through the window. I believe that this was the director's way of putting emphasis on the narrative, recognising that what takes place inside of Hopper's diner is the most compelling element.



33. Still from *The End of Violence* recreating *Nighthawks*, 1997

In an interview with Wenders, he explains why Hopper's work was so influential to filmmakers like himself:

"Hopper's paintings came into being when American narrative cinema was in its hay-day and you can interpret them with those movies in mind. All of them portray locations, all the scenes of the crime...The paintings either show the calm before the storm, or the disserted scene after a dramatic encounter".³⁹

Wenders' statement complies with the repeated presence of narrative within Hopper's paintings. Gemünden believes that the director had a fascination for 'how Hopper's art foregrounds the tension between drama and still-life, between narrative and image, and between the visual and the verbal in general.'⁴⁰ Wenders, known for his great involvement with German New Wave cinema⁴¹, admits that his interest in Hopper began in 1972 when he saw the artist's work in the Whitey Museum. He frequently visited the paintings when he moved to New York some years later, being particularly captivated by *Early Sunday Morning* (see fig.30). He says of the work:

"...each time I thought, when I looked at it again, that the picture would have changed somewhat: perhaps someone would be just crossing this street. It's the kind of picture in which one expects that a sudden movement will take place in the next moment and that it will change, that the light will change – for example, like a frozen image."⁴²

Gemünden summarises that for directors such as Wenders 'sceneries became scenarios.'⁴³ Along with Wenders' noted experience at the Whitney, this statement proposes that filmmakers; as artist's in their own right, saw an element in Hopper's work that awaited the rest of a narrative. This compulsion may have rested on the reminiscent aspects of noir film that were embedded within his canvases.

³⁹ Interview with Wenders in Devillers, *Edward Hopper and the Blank Canvas*, 2012

⁴⁰ Gemünden, *Framed Visions*, pp. 1-40, 158-176

⁴¹ A renaissance in German film from the 1960s-1980s. Influenced by French New Wave cinema, directors worked with low budgets to produce independent motion pictures.

⁴² Interview with Wim Wenders by Paul Puschel and Jan Thorn from *Prikker, Kultur, Chronik*, 1991 in Levin, *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, pp. 3-48, 348-377, 421-463, 749-761

⁴³ Gemünden, *Framed Visions*, pp. 1-40, 158-176

In *The Film of Wim Wenders*, film scholars Robert Kolker and Peter Beicken discuss how the director may have related to Hopper's oeuvre on a more personal level. They begin by saying that for Wenders 'the mission of the cinema is to create a self and discover an identity.' Hopper too believed, if not subconsciously at first, in expressing personal identity through his own work. Close friend, Brian O'Doherty said on the matter:

"Whenever I would question him, he would always say 'It's about me, it's about me.'... I think his art appears so objective but is very much a self-portrait. And it was a self-portrait with a quest. He was continually turning his eye inward as he paints outward, trying to find out who he is."⁴⁴

O'Doherty's account informs us that similarly to Wenders, Hopper hoped to establish some sort of self-discovery through his work. For the director, this journey may have begun when, at age twelve he was given his first camera and would situate 'himself at the window of the family's home, fixing the camera on the street below.'⁴⁵ This activity, and the interest in observing life from windows may have been what originally attracted Wenders to Hopper's work. The director stated that his 2006 film *Don't Come Knocking* 'was a tribute to Hopper'⁴⁶ because of this feature, which in contrast to other artists are 'holes... A room... scenes with a sinister feeling.'⁴⁷ The recurring dark ambience of Hopper's locations and sitters prove to be what inspired film and for Wenders, was best delivered through the artist's window scenes.

Before making his entry into the world of cinema, Wenders intended to become an artist, moving to Paris in 1966 to study painting. His knowledge of fine art is translated through his cinema, yet equally reflected through his collection of photography which he has continued with alongside filmmaking. *Woman in the Window* (**fig.34**) asserts Wenders' interest in windows in the city by capturing a young girl in a moment of contemplation in the midst of the downtown Los Angeles skyline. *Entire Family* (**fig.35**) could further validate Wenders' fascination with *Early Sunday Morning*, as he recreated the street scene in New Mexico,

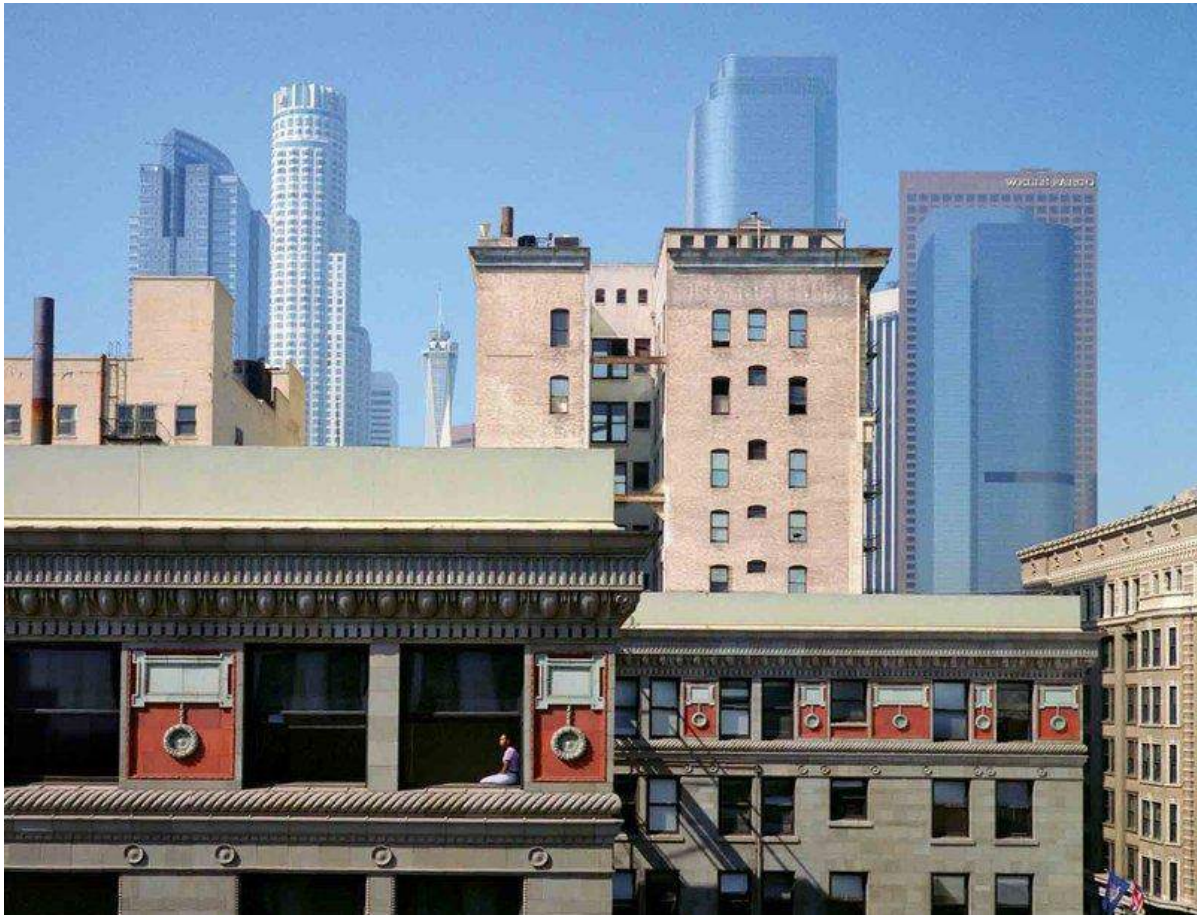
⁴⁴ B. D'Oherty interview in Devillers, *Edward Hopper and the Blank Canvas*

⁴⁵ R. Kolker, P. Beicken, *The Film of Wim Wenders: Cinemas as Vision and Desire*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 1-27

⁴⁶ Wenders quoted in Gemünden, *Framed Visions*, pp. 1-40, 158-176

⁴⁷ Interview with Wenders in J. Devillers, *Edward Hopper and the Blank Canvas*, 2012

successfully capturing the same emptiness found in Hopper's painting. Both works reaffirm Wim's enthusiasm for the artist's work as well as the aesthetic value of the vantage point that was clearly shared between them.



34. Wim Wenders
Woman in the Window
1999



35. Wim Wenders
Entire Family
1983

d) ALFRED HITCHCOCK

'Hitchcock did more to condition our perception of Hopper than anyone else.'

CAROL TROYEN, *EDWARD HOPPER*, 2007

Working throughout the twentieth century simultaneously, the careers of both Hopper and Alfred Hitchcock were inspired by the film which surrounded them. The noir genre that Hopper was interested in was Hitchcock's speciality, therefore making it difficult to answer who influenced who. However, as we shall see through this discussion, the artist's paintings were clearly embedded in Hitchcock's body of work and can be best explored through two of Hitchcock's greatest films *Psycho* (1960) and *Rear Window* (1954). This is not to say that we cannot place Hopper in connection to his other films such as *The 39 Steps* (1935), *Vertigo* (1958) and in particular, *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), which featured as part of the film programme that accompanied the 2004 Hopper retrospective at the Tate Modern (London).

Hitchcock frequently used windows within his films as a starting device to begin a scene, symbolic of entering into the lives of its characters. Demonstrated in the opening of *Psycho*, the camera enters a high-story window (**fig.36**) transporting us into a cheap hotel which Marion Crane (Hitchcock's lead female) and boyfriend Sam Loomins are visiting. This intrusion follows a shot of the Phoenix city skyline (**fig.37**) which recalls Hopper's *The City* (**see fig.23**). We witness the visual similarities through the elevated viewpoint, high-rising architecture and flat city roofs. More than anything, the suggestion of life taking place behind the windows is what intrinsically links them together. Art historian Margaret Iversen supports this idea by calling both Hopper and Hitchcock's interest an 'arbitrary intrusion... where the open windows of apartment buildings reveal embryonic narratives.'⁴⁸ Both artist and director had a fascination

⁴⁸ M. Iversen, 'In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny' quoted in L. Mamunes, *Edward Hopper Encyclopaedia*, McFarland, 2011, pp. 5 – 145



36. Still of window from *Psycho*, 1960



37. Still of Phoenix skyline in *Psycho*

with contemporary American life and the deeper issues that concerned the population. How Hopper used his commentary through art, Hitchcock equally did so through film. Beyond their fascination with windows, this was also translated through their use of architecture.

Hopper's most famous painting of early American architecture, *House by the Railroad* (**fig.38**) was openly credited by Hitchcock for the home of Norman Bates in *Psycho* (**fig.39**). Iversen, emphasises that it was 'the deeply disquieting quality of the work'⁴⁹ which attracted the director, and aside from the architectural similarities, the essence of each house is the loneliness that it emits. In the painting, we are separated from the house by railway tracks which appear to lack any sign of movement. This is similarly represented in *Psycho* by the isolated road (**fig.40**) where the Bates estate is situated. I believe this factor also reminisces Hopper's *Gas* (**fig.41**) due to the unsettling ambience present in both the artwork and film.

The long open road which stretches off into the distance in *Gas* provokes the feeling that once past the station, we will stumble upon the Bates Motel. Levin believes that the painting evokes 'the anxious feelings of isolation one can confront alone at nightfall on a country road' with the composition 'arranged to carry our eye past the brightly lit oasis into the dense, dark, and threatening woods beyond various places...'⁵⁰ Her description familiarise with the experience encountered by Marion who, in the blackness of night, notices the bright neon sign ahead of her. The existence of American modernity and industry are evident in both images. In *Gas*, through the illuminated bright-red petrol pumps and in the *Psycho* still; through the glowing red lights reading 'Bates Motel, Vacancy'. Their presence seems ominous, creating a contrast between urban and small-town America, appearing in both cases as warning signs: 'Do not come any further.'

Following Marion's arrival at the motel, we are then exposed to another scene reminiscent of Hopper. Whilst unpacking and thinking of where to hide her stolen money, Marion's setting alongside her pensive attitude (**fig.42**) recalls *Hotel Room* (**fig.43**). Both locations appear generic in their design and similarly feature a background window. Troyen has described the

⁴⁹ Iversen, 'In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny' quoted in Mamunes, *Edward Hopper Encyclopaedia*, pp. 5 – 145

⁵⁰ Levin, *Edward Hopper: The Art and the Artist*, pp.3-64



38. Hopper
House by the Railroad
1925



39. Film still of the Bates residence in *Psycho*



40. Film still of the roadside entrance to the Bates Motel, *Psycho*



41. Hopper
Gas
1940



42. Film still of Marion unpacking in a Bates Motel room, *Psycho*



43. Hopper
Hotel Room
1931

feature in the painting as ‘a black square, admitting nothing but darkness’⁵¹, contributing to the overall atmosphere of the canvas. However, what ultimately unites these images is the role of the female sitter. Working for the Edward Hopper Landmark Preservation Foundation, Lenora Mamunes believes that in *Hotel Room* ‘the blackness of the night, seen through the window, seems to mirror her mood’⁵². This description could equally apply to Hitchcock’s leading lady, as the feature of darkness in contrast to the bright interior enhances the unnerving quality of their character’s situations. Although we are unaware of the events which have brought Hopper’s figure to her hotel, as she stares down at a piece of paper, we can’t help but wonder its significance and what effect it may or might have had on her. The implied narrative suggests an impending circumstance, which brings us to Marion, whose actions have led her to the motel.

As Norman Bates watches his guest through a hole in the wall (**fig.44**), the concept of voyeurism reappears. This prompts a return to Hopper’s *Night Windows* (**see fig.1**) as the female figure, in a state of undress, is unknowingly being observed. Like the artist, the repeated motif was not an unusual occurrence in Hitchcock’s work. Film theorist Peter Wollen, addresses the theme’s purpose by commenting:

The act of watching dominates his films, both in the narration and in the narrative, in his style as director and in the relations between the dramatis personae. Hitchcock’s look is not the “neutral” look of simple sight...⁵³

The way that Wollen describes the director’s surveillance is not uncharacteristic of Hopper’s technique, which became a frequent act that ‘offered an innocent kind of thrill.’⁵⁴ This dichotomy can be best conveyed when considering Hitchcock’s 1954 film, *Rear Window*.

⁵¹ Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.176-193

⁵² Mamunes, *Edward Hopper Encyclopaedia*, pp.5-145

⁵³ P. Wollen, ‘Hitchcock’s Vision’, *Cinema 3*, Cambridge, 1969, pp.2 in M. Walker, *Hitchcock’s Motifs*, Amsterdam University Press, 2005, pp.15-25, 111-122, 164-178

⁵⁴ Troyen, *Edward Hopper*, pp.111-143



44. Film still of Bates watching Marion, *Psycho*

Looking at Hopper's work in a wider cultural context, *Rear Window* featured as part of a film series alongside the Whitney Museum's 1995 exhibition *Edward Hopper and the American Imagination*. To understand what makes it so valuable to the study of Hopper and film can largely be explained through the basis of the plot, which mirrored much of the artist's voyeuristic activity. Based on Cornell Woolrich's short story *It Had to be Murder* (1942), the thriller focuses on professional photographer L.B 'Jeff' Jefferies who, after breaking his leg, is confined to his Greenwich Village apartment. From his window he can look out to a small courtyard, which the rear windows of other apartments also back onto. Jeff slowly becomes captivated by the everyday activity of his neighbours, creating nicknames and narratives to their lives, until one evening he witnesses some unorthodox behaviour from a couple who live opposite. He begins to investigate their actions until he decides that things are more serious than he had originally thought.

In these circumstances, location is largely what brings the worlds of Hopper and Hitchcock windows together. In 1913 Hopper moved to Greenwich Village, making it unsurprising that we witness an increase in the production of his more urban scenes at this time. Presumably this was because his inspiration was, literally, right outside his window. Film scholar and

professor of sociology Murray Pomerance, discusses the importance of the neighbourhood to Hitchcock in his production of *Rear Window*:

...quite beyond the careful casting, scripting, and choreography, was the world of the apartment complex as it would appear to the contemporary viewer. New York's Greenwich Village, Hitchcock well understood, was an enclave of isolated and labyrinthine warrens, angular tiny streets, alleyways, and small apartment buildings set around city blocks in contiguity, so that their rear facades linked together to form closed courtyards of exactly the type we see in the film.⁵⁵

As demonstrated through Pomerance's statement, the director's attention to detail when portraying the location contributes to the 'Hopperesque' qualities seen throughout this piece of work. The scholar probes further to elaborate that '*Rear Window* becomes an intriguingly detailed portrait of American life, less a full-fledged landscape and more a set of artist's sketches delicately fleshed out in detail.'⁵⁶ He here directly links the intertextuality between film and art, crediting it's capabilities of influence to each other.

The scenes from the film which I believe best arouse Hopper's oeuvre are those depicting the characters of 'Miss Torso' and 'Miss Lonelyhearts'. If we turn our attention to a still of 'Miss Torso' (**fig.45**), we begin to think of Hopper paintings such as *Night Windows* (**see fig.1**). Similarly, images of 'Miss Lonelyhearts' (**fig.46**) remember other window scenes such as *Apartment Houses* (**fig.47**) and *Room in New York* (**see fig.2**). What appears to unite these compositions together is the framing, colouring and lighting adopted. Most importantly however, is the suggestion of life beyond these windows. This is most evidently presented in *Apartment Houses* which shows the close proximity between many city residents, making voyeurism an irresistible act to partake in. Hitchcock's Jeff confirms this behaviour as he becomes consumed with his neighbour's activity, as with Hopper and his own Greenwich Village acquaintances.

⁵⁵ M. Pomerance, *Alfred Hitchcock's America*, John Wiley & Sons, 2012, pp.18-70

⁵⁶ Pomerance, *Alfred Hitchcock's America*, pp.18-70



45. Film still of 'Miss Torso', *Rear Window*, 1954

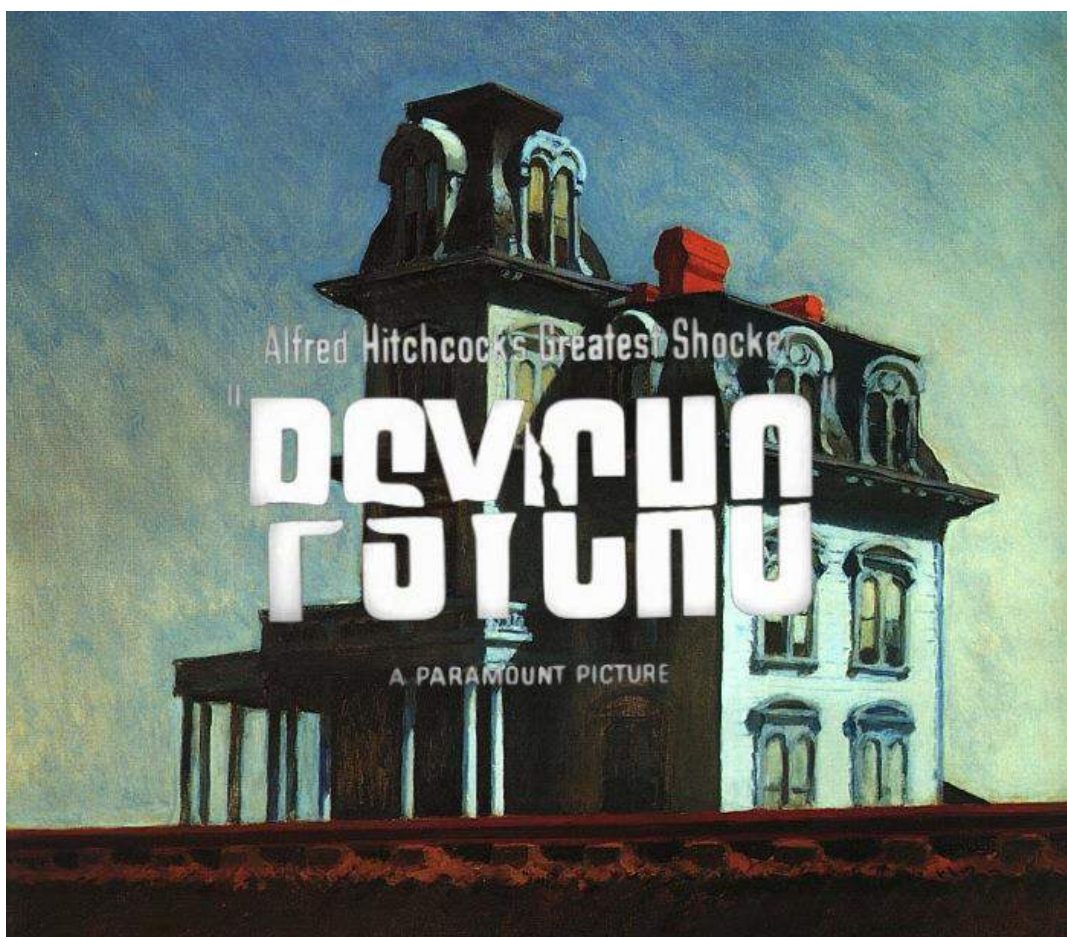


46. Film still of 'Miss Lonelyhearts', *Rear Window*



47. Hopper
Apartment Houses
1923

To conclude my discussion on Hitchcock, I would like to draw attention to the work of artist Mark McEvoy, who recreated movie posters of some of the director's most famous films using paintings by Hopper. Unsurprisingly, *House by the Railroad* (see fig.38) was used to illustrate *Psycho* (fig.48) and *Room in New York* (see fig.1) for *Rear Window* (fig.49). McEvoy acknowledges the existing connections between the work of Hitchcock and Hopper and in doing so blurs the boundaries of their disciplines, thus recognising the power of art and film in conjunction with each other.



48. Mark McEvoy
Title not known



49. Mark McEvoy
Title not known

CONCLUSION

In addition to Hopper's discovery of the film noir genre in Paris, its subsequent adoption by the Hollywood studios strongly impacted on the artist's view of modern American life. The genre prompted an element within his canvases that, through lighting, perspective, subject, form and colour; echoed many of the formal qualities found in the crime dramas he so frequently enjoyed. This is most prominently represented by Hopper's urban scenes, which adopt a parallel view to film noir of the city as a 'labyrinth', consumed by the interaction of its inhabitants. Hopper's interest in voyeurism is most explicitly presented through his use of windows, creating a metaphor that asks questions about his subjects. This attracted the attention of directors and cinematographers who, with their ability to transform image into film, continued Hopper's 'untold stories'. It was also Hopper's attention to the importance of location, perspective and lighting that played a key role in the inspiration to cinema, creating an ambience that felt particularly captivating. These factors create challenges in discerning the source and direction of influence as Hopper and directors discussed such as Hitchcock and Kazan, who although explicitly acknowledged Hopper's impact, were working contemporaneously. However, there is no doubt that later filmmakers, such as Wenders and Ross, were directly influenced and paid homage to Hopper's ideas.

Through this discussion I hope to have drawn attention to some of Hopper's greatest artworks, demonstrating his integral links to film both through his influence and his influences. Furthermore, I have attempted to highlight how fine art and film, as individual disciplines, can be manifested in the context of history of art to explore visual significance across both mediums. In my opinion, Edward Hopper, who experienced the arrival of film on contemporary society, is the most appropriate representative of discussing these issues, validating the intertextuality between them through his unintended effect on the cinema.

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List of Illustrations

1. Edward Hopper
Night Windows
1928
Oil on canvas, 74 x 86 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art

2. Edward Hopper
Room in New York
1932
Oil on canvas, 74 x 91 cm
Lincoln, University of Nebraska Art Galleries

3. Edward Hopper
Nighthawks
1942
Oil on canvas, 84.1 x 152.4 cm
Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago

4. Edward Hopper
New York Movie
1939
Oil on canvas, 82 x 102 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art

5. Edward Hopper
Night in the Park
1921
Etching, 34.5 x 39.7 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art

6. Edward Hopper
Night Shadows
1921
Etching, 17.5 x 21.0 cm
New York, The Museum of Modern Art

7. Edward Hopper
Office at Night
1940
Oil on canvas, 56.4 x 63.8 cm
Minnesota, Walker Art Center

8. Edward Hopper
Conference at Night
1949
Oil on canvas, 72.1 x 102.6 cm
Kansas, Wichita Art Museum
9. Film still showing the opening scene of *The Killers*
Directed by Robert Sidomak
1946
10. Film still from *Little Caesar*
1931
Directed by Mervyn LeRoy
11. Film still from *The Public Enemy*
1931
Directed by William Wellman
12. Film still from *Scarface*
1932
Directed by Richard Rosson and Howard Hawks
13. Edward Hopper
Drug Store
1927
Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 101.9 cm
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts
14. Edward Hopper
Automat
1927
Oil on canvas, 71.4 x 91.4 cm
Iowa, Des Moines Art Center
15. Edward Hopper
Room in Brooklyn
1932
Oil on canvas, 68.4 x 73.9 cm
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts
16. Edward Hopper
City Roofs
1932
Oil on canvas
Private Collection

17. Film still from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
1945
Directed by Elia Kazan
18. Film still from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
1945
Directed by Elia Kazan
19. Film still from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
1945
Elia Kazan
20. Film still from *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
1945
Elia Kazan
21. John Sloan
Night Windows
1910
Etching, 13.2 x 17.8 cm
Wilmington, Delaware Art Museum
22. Edward Hopper
American Village
1912
Oil on canvas, 66.04 x 96.52 cm
New York, Whitney Museum of American Art
23. Edward Hopper
The City
1927
Oil on canvas, 93.98 x 69.85 cm
Private Collection
24. Film still from the opening scene of *Force of Evil*
1949
Directed by Abraham Polonsky
25. Film still from the opening scene of *Force of Evil*
1949
Directed by Abraham Polonsky
26. Edward Hopper
From Williamsburg Bridge
1928
Oil on canvas, 73.7 x 109.2 cm
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

27. Edward Hopper
New York Pavements
1924
Oil on canvas, 62.9 x 75.6 cm
Virginia, The Chrysler Museum of Art
28. Still from *Manhatta*
1921
Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler
29. Still from *Manhatta*
1921
Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler
30. Edward Hopper
Early Sunday Morning
1930
Oil on canvas, 89.4 x 153 cm
New York, Whitney Museum of American Art
31. Hopper's *New York Movie* alongside a film still from *Pennies from Heaven*, 1981,
Herbert Ross
32. Hopper's *Nighthawks* alongside a film still from *Pennies from Heaven*, 1981,
Herbert Ross
33. Still from *The End of Violence* recreating *Nighthawks*, 1997, Wim Wenders
34. Wim Wenders
Woman in the Window
1999
Fine Art Premium-Print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 42.2 x 58 cm
35. Wim Wenders
Entire Family
1983
Fine Art Premium-Print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag, 42 x 58 cm
36. Still of window from *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
37. Still of Phoenix skyline in *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

38. Edward Hopper
House by the Railroad
1925
Oil on canvas, 61 x 74 cm
New York, Museum of Modern Art
39. Film still of the Bates residence in *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
40. Film still of the roadside entrance to the Bates Motel in *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
41. Edward Hopper
Gas
1940
Oil on canvas, 66.7 x 102.2 cm
New York, Museum of Modern Art
42. Film still of Marion unpacking in a Bates Motel room in *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
43. Edward Hopper
Hotel Room
1931
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 165.7 cm
Madrid, Museo Thyssen – Bornemisza
44. Film still of Bates watching Marion in *Psycho*
1960
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
45. Film still of 'Miss Torso' in *Rear Window*
1954
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock
46. Film still of 'Miss Lonelyhearts' in *Rear Window*
1954
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock

47. Edward Hopper
Apartment Houses
1923
Oil on canvas, 64.77 x 80.01 cm
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts
48. Mark McEvoy
Dimensions, location and title not known
<http://markmcevoy.tumblr.com/archive>
49. Mark McEvoy
Dimensions, location and title not known
<http://markmcevoy.tumblr.com/archive>