



Akira Kurosawa (Reaktion Books - Critical Lives)

Peter Wild

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“Most directors have one film for which they are known or possibly two,” said Francis Ford Coppola. “Akira Kurosawa has eight or nine.” Through masterpieces such as *Kagemusha*, *Seven Samurai*, and *High and Low*, Akira Kurosawa (1910–98) influenced directors from George Lucas and Steven Spielberg to Martin Scorsese, and his groundbreaking innovations in cinematography and editing, combined with his storytelling, made him a cinematic icon. In this succinct biography, Peter Wild evaluates Kurosawa’s films while offering a view of the man behind the camera, from his family life to his global audience.

After discussing Kurosawa’s childhood in Japan, Wild explores his years as an assistant director at a new film studio and his early films during and after World War II before he won international acclaim with *Rashomon*. While surveying Kurosawa’s impressive career, Wild also examines the myriad criticisms the director faced both within his own country and abroad—he was too influenced by Western cinema; not authentically Japanese; and he was too sentimental, naïve, arrogant, or out of touch. By placing Kurosawa and his films in the context of his times, Wild helps us to understand the director and the reproaches against him. Cogent and concise, *Akira Kurosawa* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the work of this masterful filmmaker.

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