

**BFI Future Film member Joe Steen recommends
Hitchcock/Truffaut (2015, dir. Kent Jones)**



In 1954, film critic Francois Truffaut described what he saw as “a certain tendency of the French Cinema” that was steeped in dull conventionality and lacking in personality. Though it’s common to be wary of a certain tendency of French film criticism to veer towards elitism, figures like Truffaut and Jean Luc-Godard were, in fact, the biggest fans of the American movies that had crossed over the Atlantic to Paris. For Truffaut, Alfred Hitchcock was of one of cinema’s true visionaries. Adapted from the extensive interviews held between the two directors in 1962, Kent Jones’ documentary shows us the passion with which Truffaut sought to champion Hitchcock as an artist in desperate need of re-evaluation by the critics who dismissed him as “light entertainment”.

Those familiar with Hitchcock’s most famous pictures such as *Psycho* (1960) and *Vertigo* (1958) will marvel at the rare glimpses given into Hitchcock’s meticulous storyboarding and technical craft, and will surely appeal to both potential filmmakers and critics alike, or even both – like Truffaut. As such, it is essential viewing for anyone who ever sat in the darkness of a film theatre, looking as much behind the screen as in front. Kent Jones’ documentary is an immersive snapshot into the twisted yet formidable brilliance of Alfred Hitchcock and the weight of his influence, felt not only by figures from the French New Wave but a mass of contemporary directors. *Hitchcock/Truffaut* gives us a rich and broad series of insights from Wes Anderson, David Fincher, Martin Scorsese, just to name a few – an example of Hitchcock’s intoxicating legacy.

Truffaut was the critic’s director whose ultimate desire was to see a cinema of bold artistic statement, and was perhaps most intrigued by Hitchcock’s ability to pierce directly into the heart of the medium and enthrall the audience in fear, delight, or both. Perhaps the biggest cinephile in *Hitchcock/Truffaut* is Hitch himself, who, whether in his genius or eccentricity, saw moviegoers as much more sinister and voyeuristic than simply wanting easy action and entertainment. Much more than just a fascinating study of an innovative director, *Hitchcock/Truffaut* is a pure cinematic experience and a monument to not one but two of cinema’s most influential voices.