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| Jacobs, Lewis (1906-1997) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Lewis Jacobs (1906-1997) was an American film critic, historian, and filmmaker. Jacobs initially studied painting and design, and his first foray into cinema was through the Philadelphia Cinema Crafters, an amateur film club founded in the late-1920s (The first record of its existence in the Amateur Cinema League dates from 1928). In 1930, he cofounded the short-lived periodical *Experimental Cinema* with poet and fellow cine-enthusiast David Platt. Much of the content of *Experimental Cinema* dealt with Soviet montage film, but it also contained essays on filmmaking aesthetics, international directors, and workers’ film societies both in the U.S. and abroad. The final issue in 1935 was largely devoted to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Que Viva Mexico!* and published Eisenstein’s full scenario for the film. During the 1930s, Jacobs was involved with leftist film organizations in New York and made several documentaries and experimental films, including *Footnote to Fact* (1934). Jacobs began publishing film criticism during this period in *The New York Times*, his articles frequently focusing on directors like D.W. Griffith. In 1939, he published *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History*. A technical, industrial, and aesthetic history; like Jacobs’s newspaper criticism, the book pays special attention to key American directors. Jacobs continued making films into the 1960s, wrote and edited books on the aesthetics of cinema and on documentary, was an early contributor to *Hollywood Quarterly* (subsequently renamed *Film Quarterly*), and taught film at the City College of New York, New York University, and the Philadelphia College of Art. |
| Lewis Jacobs (1906-1997) was an American film critic, historian, and filmmaker. Jacobs initially studied painting and design, and his first foray into cinema was through the Philadelphia Cinema Crafters, an amateur film club founded in the late-1920s (The first record of its existence in the Amateur Cinema League dates from 1928). In 1930, he cofounded the short-lived periodical *Experimental Cinema* with poet and fellow cine-enthusiast David Platt. Much of the content of *Experimental Cinema* dealt with Soviet montage film, but it also contained essays on filmmaking aesthetics, international directors, and workers’ film societies both in the U.S. and abroad. The final issue in 1935 was largely devoted to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Que Viva Mexico!* and published Eisenstein’s full scenario for the film. During the 1930s, Jacobs was involved with leftist film organizations in New York and made several documentaries and experimental films, including *Footnote to Fact* (1934). Jacobs began publishing film criticism during this period in *The New York Times*, his articles frequently focusing on directors like D.W. Griffith. In 1939, he published *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History*. A technical, industrial, and aesthetic history; like Jacobs’s newspaper criticism, the book pays special attention to key American directors. Jacobs continued making films into the 1960s, wrote and edited books on the aesthetics of cinema and on documentary, was an early contributor to *Hollywood Quarterly* (subsequently renamed *Film Quarterly*), and taught film at the City College of New York, New York University, and the Philadelphia College of Art.  [File: Lewis Jacobs-Still Footnote to Fact.jpg]  Figure 1 Still from *Footnote to Fact* (1934) Selected Writings[[1]](#footnote-1) *Since D.W. Griffith: A Critical Survey of Hollywood’s Leading Directors and Their Work* (1935)  ‘Experimental Cinema in America' (1947)  *Introduction to the Art of the Movies* (1960)  ‘World War II and the American Film’ (1967)  *The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History; With an Essay, Experimental Cinema in America 1921-1947* (1968)  *The Emergence of Film Art: The Evolution and Development of the Motion Picture as an Art, from 1900 to the Present* (1969)  *The Movies as Medium* (1970) [Eds.]  *The Documentary Tradition: From Nanook to Woodstock* (1971) [Eds.] Filmography as Director[[2]](#footnote-2) *Another Time: Another Place* (1964)  *Gothic Art* (1960)  *The Rise of Greek Art* (1960)  *Face of the World* (1960)  *Ages of Time* (1960)  *Fibers and Civilization* (1959)  *The Stylists* (1957)  *Old Art, New Magic* (1957)  *The World that Nature Forgot* (1956)  *Case History* (1956, released 1964 as *Another Time…*)  *The Book of Job* (1945)  *Ode to a Grecian Urn* (1954)  *The Raven* (1954)  *Matthew Brady: Photographer of an Era* (1953)  *Buma: African Sculpture Speaks* (1952)  *A Sculpture Speaks* (1952)  *Lincoln Speaks at Gettysburg* (1950)  *Birth of a Building* (1950)  *Sunday Beach* (1947-48)  *From Tree Trunk to Head* (1939)  *Hopi* (1935)  *Underground Printer* (1934, with Thomas Bouchard)  *Synchromy* (unfinished, with Mary Ellen Bute and Joseph Schillinger)  *Footnote to Fact* (1934)  *The Scottsboro Boys* (1933, with Leo Hurwitz and Leo Seltzer)  *Commercial Medley* (1933)  *Scottsboro Trial* (1932, with Tom Brandon)  *Western Pennsylvania and Kentucky Miners’ Strike* (1931, with Joseph Hudyma and Tom Brandon)  *Mobile Composition No. 1* (1928, with Jo Gerson and Louis Hirshman)  *Transition* (1927, unfinished, with Jo Gerson and Louis Hirshman) |
| Further reading:  (Amberg)  (Horak)  (Russell) |

1. Jacobs published extensively in newspapers, film magazines and journals, and books. This list contains his books and some of his key essays. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Drawn from the appendix of Jan-Christopher Horak, ed., *Lovers of Cinema: The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945*. Jacobs also wrote screenplays in the 1940s and 1950s. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)