

Hollywood Takes the Plunge: A Detailed Survey of 164 Wide Screen Movies

The transition from the traditional 1.33:1 aspect ratio to the wider 1.85:1 and 2.35:1 formats marked a significant turning point in the history of filmmaking. This shift, which began in the early 1950s, was driven by a number of factors, including the rise of television, the increasing popularity of foreign films, and the desire to create a more immersive experience for moviegoers.

This article provides a detailed survey of 164 wide screen films released between 1953 and 1960. The survey examines the technical, aesthetic, and economic factors that influenced the adoption of wide screen, and it provides an overview of the different wide screen formats that were used during this period.

The transition to wide screen was made possible by a number of technical advances, including the development of new lenses, projection systems, and film stocks.



CinemaScope 3: HOLLYWOOD TAKES THE PLUNGE A Detailed Survey of 164 Wide-Screen Movies

by John Howard Reid

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Lenses

The first wide screen lenses were developed in the early 1950s by Panavision and CinemaScope. These lenses were designed to project a wider image onto a larger screen, and they allowed filmmakers to create a more immersive experience for moviegoers.

Projection Systems

The transition to wide screen also required the development of new projection systems. The first wide screen projectors were installed in theaters in the early 1950s, and they allowed theaters to project a wider image onto a larger screen.

Film Stocks

The transition to wide screen also required the development of new film stocks. The first wide screen film stocks were developed in the early 1950s by Kodak and Eastman Kodak. These film stocks were designed to produce a wider image with less distortion, and they allowed filmmakers to create a more immersive experience for moviegoers.

In addition to the technical factors that influenced the adoption of wide screen, a number of aesthetic factors also played a role.

Composition

Wide screen allowed filmmakers to compose their shots in a more dynamic way. The wider frame gave filmmakers more space to work with, and it allowed them to create more visually interesting compositions.

Movement

Wide screen also allowed filmmakers to create a greater sense of movement. The wider frame gave filmmakers more space to move the camera, and it allowed them to create more dynamic action sequences.

Scale

Wide screen also allowed filmmakers to create a greater sense of scale. The wider frame made it possible to capture more of the surroundings, and it allowed filmmakers to create a more immersive experience for moviegoers.

In addition to the technical and aesthetic factors that influenced the adoption of wide screen, a number of economic factors also played a role.

Competition

The rise of television in the early 1950s posed a significant threat to the movie industry. In order to compete with television, movie studios needed to find a way to make their films more attractive to moviegoers. Wide screen was one of the ways that studios tried to do this.

Prestige

Wide screen was also seen as a prestigious format. The use of wide screen was associated with big-budget, quality films, and it helped to attract top talent to Hollywood.

Cost

Wide screen was more expensive to produce than traditional 1.33:1 films. However, the higher production costs were often offset by the increased box office revenue.

A number of different wide screen formats were used during the 1950s and 1960s. The most common formats were:

CinemaScope

CinemaScope was developed by 20th Century Fox in 1953. It was the first widely used wide screen format, and it was used on a number of popular films, including "The Robe" (1953), "The Ten Commandments" (1956), and "Ben-Hur" (1959).

Panavision

Panavision was developed by Panavision in 1954. It was a more versatile format than CinemaScope, and it was used on a number of popular films, including "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955), "North by Northwest" (1959), and "The Magnificent Seven" (1960).

VistaVision

VistaVision was developed by Paramount Pictures in 1954. It was a high-quality format that was used on a number of popular films, including "White Christmas" (1954), "The Ten Commandments" (1956), and "The Sound of Music" (1965).

Todd-AO

Todd-AO was developed by Michael Todd in 1955. It was a high-quality format that was used on a number of popular films, including "Oklahoma!" (1955), "Around the World in 80 Days" (1956), and "Cleopatra" (1963).

The transition to wide screen was a significant turning point in the history of filmmaking. The wider frame gave filmmakers more space to work with, and it allowed them to create more visually interesting compositions, create a greater sense of movement, and create a greater sense of scale. Wide screen also helped to attract top talent to Hollywood, and it helped to make movies more attractive to moviegoers.

Today, wide screen is the standard format for feature films. It is used on almost all films that are released in theaters, and it is also used on many films that are released on home video. Wide screen has become an essential part of the cinematic experience, and it is likely to remain so for many years to come.



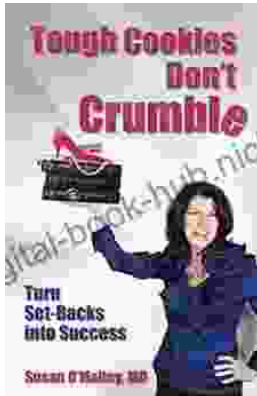
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