

Pauline Kael

Quotes

Art, Movie, People, Believe, Mean, Artist, Thinking, Television, Want, Country, Independent, Mistake, Taste, Ifs, Hero, Differences, Reading, Sometimes, Play, Past

One of the surest signs of the Philistine is his reverence for the superior tastes of those who put him down.

~Pauline Kael

Movies are so rarely great art that if we cannot appreciate great trash we have very little reason to be interested in them.

~Pauline Kael

The first prerogative of an artist in any medium is to make a fool of himself.

~Pauline Kael

Irresponsibility is part of the pleasure of all art; it is the part the schools cannot recognize.

~Pauline Kael

If I never saw another fistfight or car chase or Doberman attack, I wouldn't have any feeling of loss. And that goes for Rottweilers, too.

~Pauline Kael

The critical task is necessarily comparative, and younger people do not truly know what is new

~Pauline Kael

When a picture can't make it on its own, the producers pull in a 'controversial' message - the way a couple whose marriage is falling apart decide to have a baby.

~Pauline Kael

What this generation was bred to at television's knees was not wisdom, but cynicism.

~Pauline Kael

If there is any test that can be applied to movies, it's that the good ones

never make you feel virtuous.

~Pauline Kael

Protagonists are always loners, almost by definition.

~Pauline Kael

Trash has given us an appetite for art.

~Pauline Kael

Her only flair is in her nostrils.

~Pauline Kael

Moviemaking is so male-dominated now that they think they're being pro-feminine when they have women punching each other out.

~Pauline Kael

A mistake in judgment isn't fatal, but too much anxiety about judgment is.

~Pauline Kael

This movie is a toupee made up to look like honest baldness.

~Pauline Kael

There is something spurious about the very term 'a movie made for TV,' because what you make for TV is a TV program.

~Pauline Kael

Sex is the great leveler, taste the great divider.

~Pauline Kael

In the arts, the critic is the only independent source of information. The rest is advertising.

~Pauline Kael

Movies are our cheap and easy expression, the sullen art of displaced persons.

~Pauline Kael

Citizen Kane is perhaps the one American talking picture that seems as fresh now as the day it opened. It may seem even fresher.

~Pauline Kael

For a while in the twenties and thirties, art was talked about as a substitute for religion; now B movies are a substitute for religion.

~Pauline Kael

Kevin Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. The Indians should have called him 'Plays with Camera.

~Pauline Kael

Economy, speed, nervousness, and desperation produce the final wasteful, semi-incoherent movies we see.

~Pauline Kael

Good movies make you care, make you believe in possibilities again.

~Pauline Kael

A book might be written on the injustice of the just.

~Pauline Kael

For some strange reason we don't go to charming, light movies anymore. People expect a movie to be heavy and turgid, like "American Beauty." We've become a heavy-handed society.

~Pauline Kael

tasteful and colossal are - in movies, at least - basically antipathetic.

~Pauline Kael

The romance of movies is not just in those stories and those people on the screen but in the adolescent dream of meeting others who feel as you do about what you've seen.

~Pauline Kael

The words "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" which I saw on an Italian movie poster, are perhaps the briefest statement imaginable of the basic appeal of movies

~Pauline Kael

Movies that are consciously life-affirming are to be consciously avoided.

~Pauline Kael

I am mystified. I know only one person who voted for Nixon.

~Pauline Kael

What is getting older if it isn't learning more ways that you're vulnerable?

~Pauline Kael

a steady diet of mass culture is a form of deprivation.

~Pauline Kael

We may be reaching the end of the era in which individual movies meant something to people. In the new era, movies may just mean a barrage of images.

~Pauline Kael

Writers who go to Hollywood still follow the classic pattern: either you get disgusted by 'them' and you leave or you want the money and you become them.

~Pauline Kael

There is, in any art, a tendency to turn one's own preferences into a monomaniac theory.

~Pauline Kael

Is there something in druggy subjects that encourages directors to make imitation film noir? Film noir itself becomes an addiction.

~Pauline Kael

Imagining [The Wizard of Oz] without Judy Garland is a bit like dancing on wet cement: you can do it, but why would you want to?

~Pauline Kael

It seems likely that many of the young who don't wait for others to call them artists, but simply announce that they are, don't have the patience to make art.

~Pauline Kael

The worst thing about movie-making is that it's like life: nobody can go back to correct the mistakes.

~Pauline Kael

I live in a rather special world. I only know one person who voted for Nixon. Where they are I don't know. They're outside my ken. But sometimes when I'm in a theater I can feel them.

~Pauline Kael

Robert Redford ... has turned almost alarmingly blond-he's gone past platinum, he must be into plutonium; his hair is coordinated with his teeth.

~Pauline Kael

If there's anything to learn from the history of movies, it's that corruption leads to further corruption, not to innocence.

~Pauline Kael

McLuhanism and the media have broken the back of the book business; they've freed people from the shame of not reading. They've rationalized becoming stupid and watching television.

~Pauline Kael

Movies, far more than the traditional arts, are tied to big money. Without a few independent critics, there's nothing between the public and the advertisers.

~Pauline Kael

Reality, like God and History, tends to direct people to wherever they want to go.

~Pauline Kael

Being creative is having something to sell, or knowing how to sell something, or having sold something. It has taken over what we used to mean by being "wised up" knowing the tricks, the shortcuts.

~Pauline Kael

For perhaps most Americans, TV is an appliance, not to be used selectively but to be turned on - there's always something to watch.

~Pauline Kael

I believe that we respond most and best to work in any art form (and to other experience as well) if we are pluralistic, flexible, relative in our judgments, if we are eclectic.

~Pauline Kael

Vulgarity is not as destructive to an artist as snobbery.

~Pauline Kael

When I see those ads with the quote 'You'll have to see this picture twice,' I know it's the kind of picture I don't want to see once.

~Pauline Kael

If you use Hollywood as the test tissue for mankind, what could the prognosis be?

~Pauline Kael

Television represents what happens to a medium when the artists have no power and the businessmen are in full, unquestioned control.

~Pauline Kael

I'm frequently asked why I don't write my memoirs. I think I have.

~Pauline Kael

Great movies are rarely perfect movies.

~Pauline Kael

if you think it so easy to be a critic, so difficult to be a poet or a painter or film experimenter, may I suggest you try both? You may discover why there are so few critics, so many poets.

~Pauline Kael

Television as we have it isn't an art form - it's a piece of furniture that is good for a few things.

~Pauline Kael

What's disgusting about the Dirty Harry movies is that Eastwood plays this angry tension as righteous indignation.

~Pauline Kael

in show business there's not much point in asking yourself if someone really likes you or if he just thinks you can be useful to him, because there's no difference.

~Pauline Kael

The slender, swift Bruce Lee was the Fred Astaire of martial arts, and many of the fights that could be merely brutal come across as

lightning-fast choreography.

~Pauline Kael

If you're afraid of movies that excite your senses, you're afraid of movies.

~Pauline Kael

Movies have been doing so much of the same thing - in slightly different ways - for so long that few of the possibilities of this great hybrid art have yet been explored.

~Pauline Kael

We read critics for the perceptions, for what they tell us that we didn't fully grasp when we saw the work. The judgments we can usually make for ourselves.

~Pauline Kael

Really, it's not people who don't understand us who drive us nutsâ€”it's when those who shouldn't, do.

~Pauline Kael

It is a depressing fact that Americans tend to confuse morality and art (to the detriment of both) and that, among the educated, morality tends to mean social consciousness.

~Pauline Kael

Movies are a combination of art and mass medium, but television is so single in its purpose-selling-that it operates without that painful, poignant mixture of aspiration and effort and compromise.

~Pauline Kael

I felt as if I had attended the funeral of someone I didn't know.

~Pauline Kael

All our advertising is propaganda, of course, but it has become so much a part of our life, is so pervasive, that we just don't know what it is propaganda for.

~Pauline Kael

An artist must either give up art or develop.

~Pauline Kael

Art doesn't come in measured quantities: it's got to be too much or it's not enough.

~Pauline Kael

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