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## **Lynch on Lynch** David Lynch , Chris Rodley

David Lynch erupted onto the cinema landscape in 1977 with *Eraserhead*, establishing himself as one of the most original and imaginative directors at work in contemporary cinema. Over the course of his career, he has remained true to a vision of the innocent lost in darkness and confusion, balancing hallucination and surrealism with a sense of Americana that is as pure and simple as his compelling storylines. In this volume, Lynch speaks openly about his films as well as about his lifelong commitment to painting, his work in photography, his television projects, and his musical collaborations with Angelo Badalamenti.

## **Lynch on Lynch Details**

Date : Published February 17th 2005 by Faber Faber (first published 1997)

ISBN : 9780571220182

Author : David Lynch , Chris Rodley

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Culture, Film, Nonfiction, Biography, Art, Media Tie In, Movies



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# From Reader Review Lynch on Lynch for online ebook

## William Prystauk says

Chris Rodley did a wonderful job trying to pry answers from David Lynch, especially regarding his more avantgarde approaches to storytelling. But have no fear, Lynch delivered in many ways and I appreciate his filmmaking even more.

The book covers Lynch's early life up to the film, *THE LOST HIGHWAY*. Of course I want an update to hear about *MULHOLLAND DRIVE*, *THE STRAIGHT STORY*, and *INLAND EMPIRE*, as well as the upcoming "Twin Peaks" series two - where Lynch directs every episode.

If you love Lynch, you will love the book - and if you don't like Lynch, you may give his art and film another go.

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## MJ Nicholls says

Whether a fledgling über-fan or a loving Lynchette, this extended interview is an amiable peep into the mercurial and uncompromising artistic realm of David, and will appeal to all. Chris Royle is respectful of Lynch's refusal to probe too specifically into the (anti-)plots for concrete meanings, and focuses on biographical convo with the odd illuminating insight here and thither about the astonishing imagery that characterises the director's most famous work. The charming mix of naivety, friendliness, and mild trauma that marks Lynch's persona comes across in the transcriptions, which include the colloquial quirks of his speech, and the occasional moment of aloof elusiveness one might expect from a man who seemingly possesses his own private channel into the subconscious mind. Lynch depicts the world of dreams and nightmares with more panache than any other filmmaker, and has consistently maintained a career-long tone of nagging terror and spookiness. He is also a talented painter and musician. Listen to the excellent LP *Crazy Clown Time* one night on a lost highway. (P.S. Covers everything to 2004).

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## Hamish says

I'm not what you'd call a big film buff, but about two years ago I developed an obsession with the work of David Lynch. It started slowly (with *Twin Peaks*, of course) until it's become this all-consuming fascination, not unlike when I first discovered Nabokov or Morrissey. And I think his films have consumed me so thoroughly because, at their heart, they're marvels of aesthetics.

So naturally I tore through this book in a few days (often at the expense of my thesis). It's very thorough and packed with nuggets of information that charmed and confused me. But part of me regretted reading it because Lynch's personality seems so at odds with his films, and part of me loved it for that same reason. His work is so bizarre and disturbing and unearthly (though also hilarious; people always seem to forget that when discussing him) that it seems impossible that it could come from the mind of a guy that regularly says "gee whiz." He comes off as this unbelievably naive, childish man who speaks predominately in folksy sayings from the 50s and loves wood made from rain forest trees and seems confused as to why people don't want the rainforest to be cut down to make this marvelous wood. He refers to everything as "great" and

"fantastic" and "wonderful," often while describing scenes of extreme violence or nightmarish images. He hates drugs but smokes like a chimney, guzzles coffee, refers to sugar as "guaranteed happiness" and has Denny's grand slams for breakfast.

I also think he's a genius. I often use that term lightly but I really mean it here. I think it's his naivety that gives him such an incredible enthusiasm for everything, so much so that he doesn't filter any of the darkness that hides behind his "aww shucks" exterior and pours out from his brain onto the screen. He's just excited to see it come out. And fortunately he has an incredible sense of aesthetics to pair with these ideas. I generally believe in the value of contemplation and consideration in the creation of art, but Lynch is one of the few (Dylan is another) that really works better when he's completely spontaneous and unfiltered. It's incredible to hear the stories behind *Twin Peaks* and *Mullholland Drive* and how he was able to roll with all of these punches, when exterior circumstances required unforeseen changes and somehow he was able to use those as opportunities to explore new ideas, rather than throw up his hands in disgust like I would've done.

He spends large chunks of the interviews essentially refusing to say anything about the "meaning" of his films, often claiming he doesn't know. This fits with the image of the guy who just puts all of his unfiltered ideas on screen; he didn't really bother thinking about them first. There was no reason to. And honestly, I'm with him on this. His works is filled with so many beautiful and unsettling and disturbing and unique and original images. It's telling that he regularly refers to his films as dreams. Why do they need to be explained? I get so irritated when people do things like insist that *Eraserhead* is just about a man's fears of fatherhood. That's an ordinary idea. Anyone could think of it. Why does attributing it to the film make the film better? How is that idea more valuable than the raw image of Henry stabbing his horrific monster child with a pair of scissors or the man in the planet pulling his levers? Simple ideas aren't art; the lady in the radiator singing "In Heaven" is art. Trying to mine those gorgeous images for some banalities is a worthless undertaking. The only "meaning" worth drawing from art is how the work relates to itself, not how it relates to the real world. That's why *Mullholland Drive* is so fantastic. The mystery of how the last 20% or so relates to the first 80% is part of the thrill, and once you solve it, it makes the whole thing that much more powerful (I re-watched it last night and cried at two different points). And that's what's so great about Lynch: His work isn't just experimental or "weird" for the ask of experimentalism or weirdness. He does it because it creates new and original ways of impacting the viewer emotionally and viscerally.

This review was all one big excuse to rant about Lynch (thanks for listening!). But to get back to the book, it's worth reading if you're more than a casual fan. If you're looking for answers to his mysteries, you'll be disappointed. If you want insight into his creative process, you'll find a good amount of that (though you'll be left wanting more). Discussion of the more technical aspects of film making reveals him to be a consummate craftsman who cares about every minutia of how his work is presented. He can occasionally be frustratingly oblique, but he can also be really, really funny. Would (and probably will) read again.

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## **María Belén Melena says**

Este libro de entrevistas resultó muy esclarecedor en cuanto a la obra y visión de Lynch. Si bien él se niega a dar una "explicación" o "interpretación" de sus películas, con este compendio es posible adentrarse en el universo lynchiano y entender las sensaciones que impulsaron el curso que tomaron sus creaciones. Chris Rodley, el compilador, es asertivo en sus comentarios y promueve el diálogo con alguien tan escurridizo y enigmático como David, además de que su conocimiento sobre cine facilita abordar puntos más técnicos y estilísticos.

Para mí, este libro no solo es de las lecturas más memorables de este año, sino que también es la mejor clase

sobre cine que he recibido en la vida. La experiencia de revisar cada largometraje de Lynch junto a sus comentarios y sus anécdotas menos conocidas resultó inigualable.

Estas entrevistas resultan, a mi modo de ver, esenciales para acercarse a este gigante del cine y son de gran disfrute.

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## **Tosh says**

A very good David Lynch book in that he doesn't explain his work, but tells his feelings and thoughts behind his films. There is a difference. Lynch I find is super intelligent and very articulate about his work. He knows the importance to stay silent for two things: He himself doesn't know why and more important it's the audience or viewer's task to figure out or just to feel the work.

David Lynch for me is a great American artist. And I mention American, because I feel he's unique in that sense and is actually quite conservative as well. I am not surprised that he's a Republican (as reported to be) because I think his viewpoint is conservative. And strange enough this is partly why he has that edge.

I feel he deals with symbols and therefore trusts or is attracted to those who speak in that manner. But in a nutshell this is the book to get on David Lynch. From the horses mouth to your ear.

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## **Rupert says**

One of the best books on an artist's creative process that I've read in recent memory. I have to confess at times I've had moments of feeling like Lynch is a con man - like when I watch "Lost Highway" (which most of my friends really love), but mainly I love him and seeing "Eraserhead" and "Blue Velvet" the first times changed my life. This book truly, deeply goes into Lynch's vision and process and shows him to be religiously dedicated to getting across on film - or now video - the inner feelings or shadows he's chasing.

The portion on the long complicated, at times heartbreaking making of "Eraserhead", which took six years to complete, is epic. How almost no one believed in him even after it was made, he was almost completely broke, and yet it also was one of the best times in his life because he was lost in a fully realized micro-world of his own creation.

And you got to love Mel Brooks for his part in championing Lynch for "The Elephant Man". and nailing it on the head when he said after "Ordinary People" won the Oscar over "The Elephant Man": "Ten years from now 'Ordinary People' will be an answer a trivia question, but 'The Elephant Man' will be a movie that people are watching and discussing." Right motherfucking on.

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## **Gastón says**

Libro de entrevistas a David Lynch que se hicieron a lo largo de muchos años. Se divide por películas. Va desde los comienzos de su carrera (cortometrajes como "La abuela" o "El alfabeto") y llega hasta Mullholand Drive.

Quizás vino un poco tarde la traducción (12 años después) porque Lynch cambió en muchos sentidos y lo que dice en las entrevistas ya no es tan así. Sin embargo está bueno leerlo porque se ve que Chris Rodley

charlaba con él apenas salían sus grandes películas, lo cual es meritorio porque se nota la frescura que tiene al responder.

¿Qué decir de él? Personalmente es uno de los artistas que más me atrapa y este libro me ayudó a comprender un poquito más. Hay algo que admiro mucho y es su lógica del "no sé": ¿qué significa esto? no sé, ¿por qué hiciste eso? no sé, ¿a qué se debe tu obsesión con las identidades partidas? no sé.

Responder de esa manera y admitir que uno tampoco sabe lo que hace me parece hermoso. De hecho lo considero crucial al momento de realizar arte. "Saber todo arruina la experiencia" dice. "Cuanta más oscuridad se junta, más es la luz que se ve" afirma.

Interesante libro para conocer un poquito más sobre su universo personal. Creo que las obras hablan mejor pero vale la pena tener ciertos datos que permitan guiarnos.

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## Brad says

“David’s films are more of a sensation than a story.” (126)

-Isabella Rossellini

Three-and-a-half stars. As fans of David Lynch know, the director is not one to speak about the meanings of his films. (The closest readers get is co-writer Barry Gifford’s own pseudo-explanation of *Lost Highway* on page 215.) Yet, David Lynch as a character himself is totally captivating to hear and watch in interviews. (For example: the 90-ish minute storytelling session in the extras of *Eraserhead* DVD or the 2016 documentary, *David Lynch: The Art Life*) To read interviews with him isn’t the same without his distinct voice, but still this was a page-turner. How Lynch’s brain works is bound to be far more interesting than any secrets he could divulge about his films.

In addition to learning what makes Lynch tick, readers get a a great glimpse into other projects Lynch had wanted to make (or still wants to make) and other projects (short film, television, commercial) that make up Lynch’s chronology.

(view spoiler)

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## Robert Vaughan says

I've always been a fan of David Lynch- the multi-artist- admire his talents in film-making, art, music and other mediums in which he expresses a continuous vision that is often inexplicable. Editor Chris Rodley does an admirable job discussing with Lynch his own films, especially given that this is a director who is known for his tight-lipped interviews. Also excited for a new "version" of Twin Peaks forthcoming. Welcome back, Log Lady!

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## Becca says

There was a lot about David Lynch I already knew, but this autobiography (which takes the form of a series of interviews) just reaffirmed all the things about him that I love. There is something mesmerizing about getting into the head of an artist so utterly committed to his discipline. And I learned that Lynch really likes exclamation points.

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## Allen Riley says

The story of David Lynch's creative development: trust, charm, patience.

For Lynch, making art always comes down to "It is what it is." The trick is to have enough patience and trust in your own thinking to become conscious of "what it is", to let "it" be, and then to respond honestly to it. You just have to have faith in your own way of doing this. And if nobody likes your movie, well, "that's a sadness." It really just comes down to luck, and whether or not other people love the same ideas you love. But, you need to keep "falling in love with ideas" anyways.

Eraserhead was made over the course of five years, during which time Lynch dealt with the pressures of debt, having a child, having his family doubt him, and having his school pull funding from the project. He never compromised in spite of how ridiculous he must have seemed. Many times, Lynch explains in the chapter on *Blue Velvet*, it takes many years for vague ideas to form and come together into a script. Then, it's important that enough time is spent with actors and on the set to "go into that world" and let the ideas grow even more.

This is a better book than *Catching the Big Fish* because it focuses on Lynch's artistic process rather than his zealous promotion of the proprietary Transcendental Meditation method. In his mind, meditation takes priority over everything else: if people learn to "dive within", they will experience pure bliss and strengthen their ability to "catch" big ideas. However, Chris Rodley is able to keep Lynch on track in telling the story of his own creative development.

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## **Suvi says**

In 2007 I was in Paris on a school trip. Our schedule (believe or not, a schedule, in Paris...) included a visit to the David Lynch art exhibition. At that time I was completely oblivious as to who he is, I just connected him very vaguely to Twin Peaks after I saw his scribbles related to the show. When I got to the actual paintings, my only thought was: wtf. They were dark and very weird, and I didn't like them that much. It was broad daylight and I was completely creeped out.

Anyway, I don't remember the following journey into the world of David Lynch but I can say that although I'm still not sure about his art, I adore his works. Even though I don't necessarily always understand what the hell is going on, I very much enjoy getting into the dream-like world of his. Like he himself says, you need to make up your own conclusions and experience his movies. I completely agree that it's not necessary for the director to explain his movies, people are not that stupid. I think they just don't always trust their own judgment and brains, and want everything ready and already chewed.

I also respect Mr. Lynch quite a lot, because he just wants to do his thing, and if someone happens to like his art, great. It's always interesting to find out what an artist has to say about the process of creation and the body of work itself. I mean, I'm not an artist myself, but I do love art and these kinds of books would be a great addition to my book shelf.

Oh, and I must be one of the very few who actually thinks that the baby in *Eraserhead* looks adorable. Like E.T. on drugs!

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## **Jacob Dill says**

Any artist should read this book. I'm not a filmmaker at all but reading Lynch's ideas on creativity and the process of making the art you see in your head has helped me as a musician and songwriter/arranger. It helped me get over the "Is my art/work original enough" conundrum that effects a lot of artists and musicians. To paraphrase Lynch's ideas on creativity, he basically says, "Don't think about it, just freakin' get it done already! Who cares if the end result may doesn't seem original if you like what you've created, you f\*\*king jackass!"

Lynch comes across as sort of an egotistical ass but I think that a lot of great artists have to be in order to produce what is in their head.

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## **Andy says**

Quite a lot of amazing gems in here; it's great to re-read this years and years after I first read the pre-revised edition, and especially now, after *The Return*!

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## **Paul says**

Solid 24k gold all the way through. Some of the more hilarious things actually said by Lynch include:



"I'd like to bite my paintings, but I can't because there's lead in the paint. Which means I'm kind of chicken."

"One time I used some hair remover to remove all the fur from a mouse to see what it looked like – and it looked beautiful."

"It was so fantastic. And I had my paper route! And soy beans. I was really into soy beans then. They're very hard to digest – I wouldn't recommend them, really!"

"I was building sheds, and whenever you can build a shed, you've got it made."

"No, the burning nipples weren't in the script . . . the actress told me this trick, and I said, 'You gotta do that, and I'll tell you where.'"

"I was with the engineer, Arty Polhemus, and I was laughing so hard that something exploded. It was like a light bulb blew up in my stomach, and that was the end of my stomach wall."

"Well, I had ants in my kitchen; they were sugar ants, but they were coming in for water. So I made a small human head of cheese and turkey and encased it in clay, and mounted it on a small coat hanger."

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