

The Legend Lives On

James Dean, as one film critic stated, personified “the glamour of delinquency” with his slouched posture, pouting lips and sullen expression. To filmgoers then and now, he serves as the voice of the rebellious teenager, unloved and misunderstood by his parents.

Because he died only a week after completing *Giant* (1956), his third major film, he remains frozen in time; the spiritual leader of his and succeeding generations. Dean was only 24 when he totaled his silver Porsche, dying instantly. He lived fast and died young. Like Valentino and Monroe, Dean has come to represent a specific time and character.

What makes Dean’s reputation unique is that his immortality rests on two films, *East of Eden* (1955) and *Rebel Without a Cause*. In both he portrayed a restless, anguished teen, rebelling against his parent’s middle-class standards. Viewers related to his rage against a world that was hypocritical, more concerned with appearances than realities.

Dean did not have to dig very deeply for his characterization. His own childhood was sad and disruptive. His mother died when he was eight and his father sent him to live with relatives on an Indiana farm. He escaped into the world of make-believe, first with bit parts in Hollywood movies (*Sailor Beware* (1952), *Fixed Bayonets* (1951), and *Has Anybody Seen My Gal* (1952)) followed by a stint in the Actor’s Studio in New York. While at the Actor’s Studio, Dean like his contemporary Marlon Brando, became a disciple of “the Method” which turned him into a new type of leading man, emotional and flawed.

After appearing in two plays on Broadway, Warner Bros. offered him a screen test which led to his role in *East of Eden* which was quickly followed by *Rebel Without a Cause*. In his final film, *Giant*, Dean also played an outcast in society, but one who ultimately becomes a business tycoon, aging 50 years during the course of the movie. Because his death in real life occurred before the film was released, audiences watching his performance were aware that this would be all that they would have of Dean. His youth and vibrancy onscreen made his death all the more shocking. His performance was sharpened and heightened by his abrupt and tragic ending off camera.

What has sustained the fascination with James Dean all these years? His talent. His style has not dated even 50 years after *Rebel Without a Cause* was made. He created one of the iconic American screen characters: the tortured, rebellious teen. Aspects of the character he created can be seen in Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate* and even in Johnny Depp’s outcast Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

James Dean lives on.



L. A. PLAYING ITSELF

Rebel Without a Cause took Los Angeles by storm from March 30 to May 26, 1955. See if you know any of these “Rebel” filming locations!

7529 Franklin Avenue, Hollywood
(house - opening sequence)

Getty Mansion, 641 S. Irving Blvd., Hancock Park
(abandoned mansion - demolished 1957)

Griffith Park Observatory, Los Feliz
(planetarium and ending of film)

John Marshall High, 3939 Tracy St. Los Feliz
(portion of the interiors of Dawson High)

Santa Monica High, 601 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica
(exteriors of Dawson High)

Warner Brothers Burbank Studios, Burbank
Stages 1, 6, 7, 8 & 9

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Mail this application with a check to: **Alex Film Society**

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- Individual - \$35
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Please list your two favorite films:

Coming Events

Saturday, **April 28** at 2 & 8 pm only



DUCK AND COVER!!

Come April 28th, watch the skies, but do NOT stay home!

You'll want to hide out at the Alex Theatre for this special screening of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) starring Tippi Hedren, Rod Taylor, Suzanne Pleshette and Jessica Tandy.

A modern thriller based on true events, *The Birds* was Hitchcock's first film for Universal.

In addition to the film and a cartoon, we'll be offering our usual assortment of unique props, guests and ancillary materials. Check the website for more info.

Note: Due to anticipated construction at the Alex Theatre in the Summer of 2012, our schedule of events is still being settled. Please visit our website alexfilmsociety.org for details on our summer events.

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Alex Film Society

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