

Tricks of the Light:  
A Study of the Cinematographic Style of the Émigré Cinematographer Eugen  
Schüfftan

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## *Abstract*

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The aim of this thesis is to explore the overlooked technical role of cinematography, by discussing its artistic effects. I intend to examine the career of a single cinematographer, in order to demonstrate whether a distinctive cinematographic style may be defined. The task of this thesis is therefore to define that cinematographer's style and trace its development across the course of a career. The subject that I shall employ in order to achieve this is the émigré cinematographer Eugen Schüfftan, who is perhaps most famous for his invention 'The Schüfftan Process' in the 1920s, but who subsequently had a 40 year career acting as a cinematographer. During this time Schüfftan worked throughout Europe and America, shooting films that included *Menschen am Sonntag* (Robert Siodmak et al, 1929), *Le Quai des brumes* (Marcel Carné, 1938), *Hitler's Madman* (Douglas Sirk, 1942), *Les Yeux sans visage* (Georges Franju, 1959) and *The Hustler* (Robert Rossen, 1961). During the course of this thesis I shall examine the evolution of Schüfftan's style, and demonstrate how Schüfftan has come to be misunderstood as a cinematographer of German Expressionism. The truth, as I will show, is far more complex. Schüfftan also struggled throughout his career to cope with the consequences of exile. In this thesis I will also therefore examine the conditions of exile for an émigré cinematographer, and in particular Schüfftan's prevention from joining the American Society of Cinematographers. I intend to demonstrate how an understanding of cinematographic style can shed new light on a film, and to give renewed attention to an important cinematographer who has been largely ignored by film history.

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