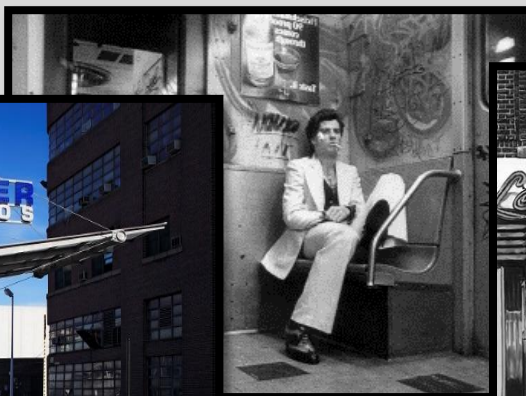
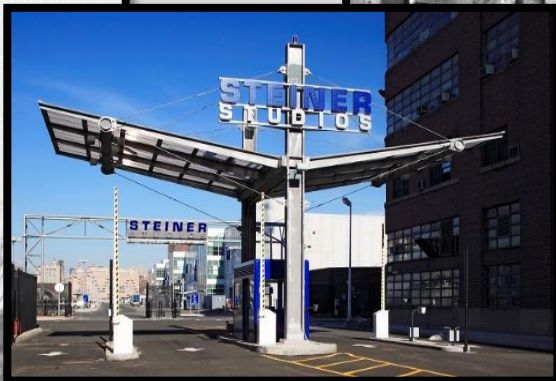




Brooklyn's Film History



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Where Did it All Begin?

Brooklyn's film history began with Vitagraph Studios (also known as The Vitagraph Company of America) in Midwood, Brooklyn. Founded by J. Stuart Blackton, and fellow filmmaker Albert E. Smith in 1897, Vitagraph Studios produced "hundreds of silent films — sometimes as many as eight a week" (Kalish). These silent films were of varying genres, including shakespearean, war movies, and comedy among others.



Vitagraph Films



Humpty Dumpty Circus



Humourous Phases of Funny Faces

Shortly after the company was founded, Vitagraph Studios decided to produce films with stop motion, an animation technique used to create the illusion of an object moving by itself. The first film in Vitagraph Studios and in the world to use this was *The Humpty Dumpty Circus*, where "a toy carnival was brought to flickering life" (Ashe).

Other films that Vitagraph Studios created with stop motion were *The Enchanted Drawing*, where a man with a pencil breathes life into a cartoon face, and *Humourous Phases of Funny Faces*, where multiple drawings on a chalkboard interact with each other. Years later, these films would inspire the creation of "Micky Mouse, Bugs Bunny, and scores of other classic cartoon figures" (Ashe).

Today, Vitagraph Studios is no longer in the buisness of creating films, however its building still stands as it is leased by Shulamith School For Girls, an Orthodox Jewish day school. The famous Vitagraph smokestack also still stands tall in Midwood, though it is currently in danger of being demolished according to the Daily News. Brooklyn activists hope to preserve the smokestack as some consider it to be a landmark that shows "[w]hat Brooklyn gave to American film history" (Kalish).





Which Locations Are Iconic?

Throughout Brooklyn's film history, several locations have become iconic purely for their inclusion in certain films. These locations range from Coney Island to Bay Ridge, each were used differently as film makers took advantage of the uniqueness of these areas.

One film that took advantage of the location being filmed in was *The Warriors*, a cult classic film released in 1979. In *The Warriors*, Coney Island was portrayed as a neighborhood popular for having different options of entertainment and was used as the Warrior gangs main base of operations. Throughout the film, the gang would explore areas around Coney Island such as Stillwell Terminal, AstroLand and the beach. One famous scene that occurred in Coney Island was underneath it's boardwalk where the antagonist clanked two soda bottles together and screeched his notorious line: "Warriors, come out to play."

Decades later, the cast of *The Warriors* would return to Coney Island and delve into the locations that were filmed for the movie once more. According to RollingStone magazine, "...The Warriors reunited on the Q Train on September 13th to take one last ride together to Coney Island, where hundreds waited at a fan-organized event celebrating the Walter Hill-directed film."

Another film that uses an area found in Brooklyn to its full potential is *Saturday Night Fever*. Released in 1977, *Saturday Night Fever* uses Bay Ridge throughout most of the film. According to David Chui of Brooklyn Based, one of the most famous places used in the film is Lenny's Pizza as it is still open today in Bensonhurst. It was featured in the beginning of the film where Tony Manero (the main character) enters to buy two slices of pizza and eats them sandwich style. Lenny's Pizza has gained popularity after all these years and has become somewhat of a tourist attraction due to its inclusion in the film. Another famous area used in *Saturday Night Fever* is the Odyssey club. located in 64th street, the Odyssey club was "where Tony reigns as undisputed champ of the dance floor with his electrifying moves" (Chui).





How Have These Locations Changed?

Since the release of *The Warriors* in the late 1970's, the amusement park in where many of the movies sequences were shot have changed quite a bit over the years. This is evident in AstroLand as according to the official LunaPark website, was closed and torn down in September of 2008, leaving only The Cyclone, Deno's Wonder Wheel and Parachute Jump. It would then be replaced by LunaPark in the summer of 2010 with new rides later on such as the Thunderbolt roller coaster in 2014.

Following the opening of LunaPark, several new chain businesses appeared in the same vicinity, such as Applebee's, Checkers, Peggy O'Neil's, and Wahlburgers, which opened this past summer. Also, a minor league baseball stadium named MCUPark opened in 2001, just a couple blocks down from LunaPark.

As for *Saturday Night Fever*, the changes that occurred mainly dealt with gentrification. According to Chui, the majority of the population in Bay Ridge consisted of Italians and Scandinavians when the film first released. However, decades later, the area would become more ethnically diverse as Arabs, Latinos, and Eastern Europeans started to appear.

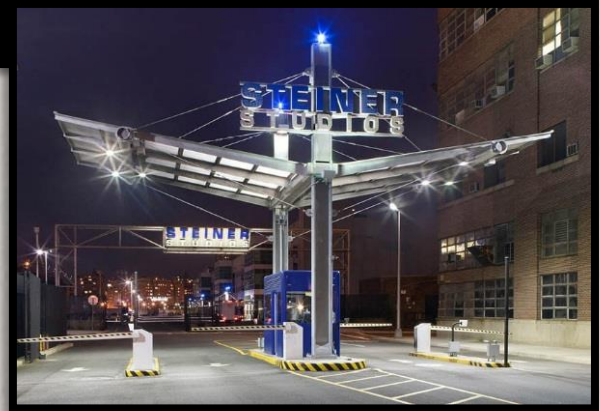
Meanwhile, the Odyssey club has turned into a large commercial building used for a Chinese restaurant. But before being turned into a Chinese restaurant, Chui states in his article that the building first changed into "a gay club called Spectrum in 1987 and then finally closed eight years later."





Who Creates Films Now?

Located in the Brooklyn Navy yard, Steiner Studios now takes over the film industry in Brooklyn as it is one of the most well-known film companies in the world. It first opened in November 2004 and is the first Hollywood style production and support facility in New York City.



According to the official Steiner Studios website, Steiner Studios was created with one of the best production factories by the finest minds in the film industry. The company produced multiple films, commercials, T.V shows, and photo shoots. The most notable projects include *Spider-Man 3*, *Men in Black 3*, *30 Rock*, *Sex in The City 2*, and the recent *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Recently, Brooklyn College has established a film school in Steiner Studios. According to Harry Maccormack of the Brooklyn Paper, the school will begin in the fall of next year with a roster of 69 students. Officials say it will be the first of its kind to be in a working film lot, "which means students will get first-hand experience in showbiz and foot in the door of the city's movie and television industry while they're studying" (Maccormack). The school also hosts a "star-studded" cast with names such as 21 jump street director Jonathan Wachs, actor Ethan Hawke, director Steven Soderbergh, director Darren Aronofsky, and actor Fisher Stevens.

Steiner Studios Films





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