

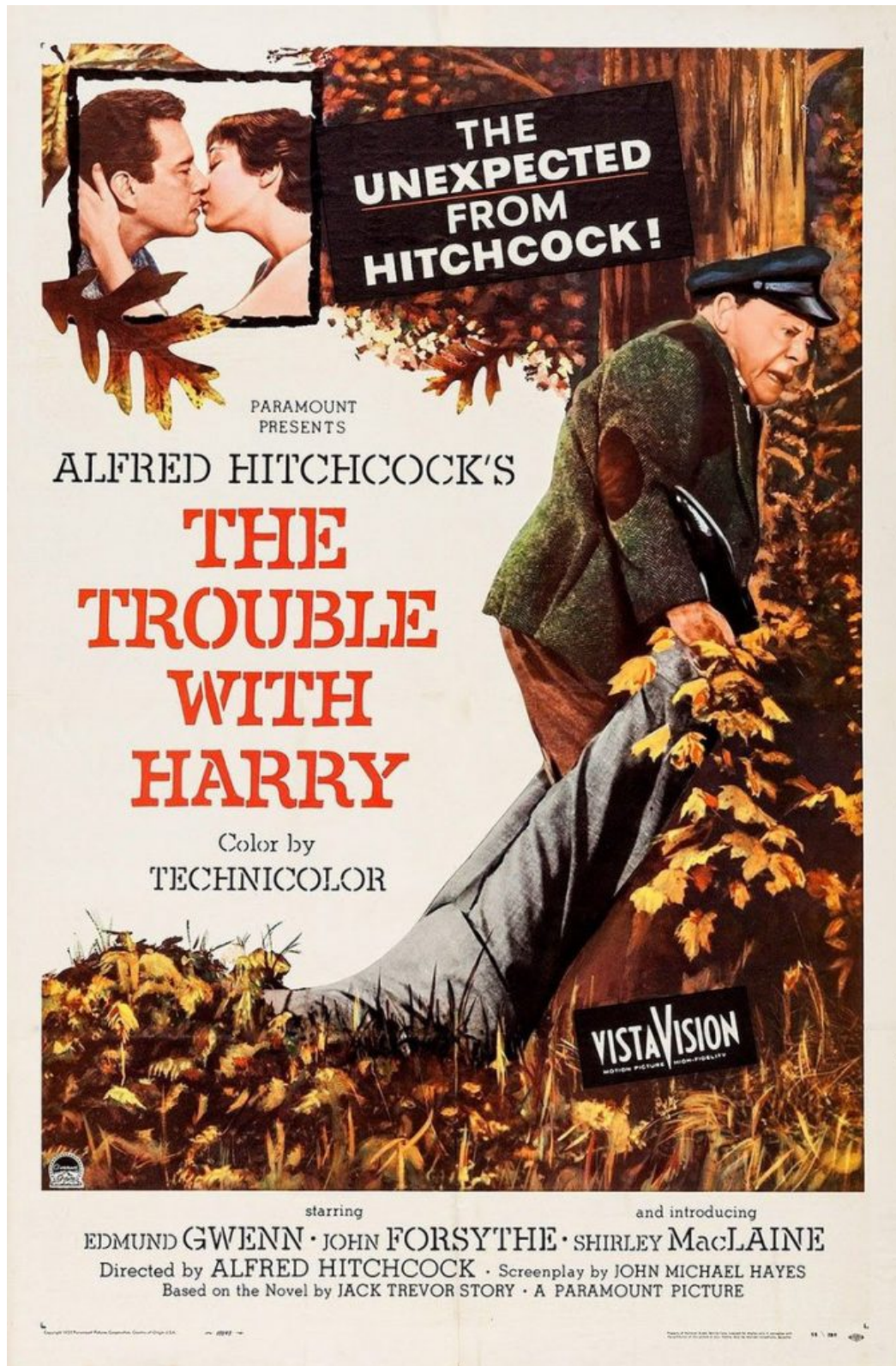
The artist as detective

I am watching *The Trouble With Harry*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

The main character, outside of the dead Harry, is Sam Marlowe (SAM Spade, Philip MARLOWE), an artist who acts like a detective. Based on a 1950 novel by Jack Trevor Story who, interestingly, also wrote Sexton Blake stories who was originally based on Sherlock Holmes, the archetype of “detective” for many. Saul Steinberg’s opening sequence is excellent!

Marlowe is a painter who feels unappreciated and comments that his work would sell better in Manhattan. His calm style of elicitation reveals the reality of the situation that the characters find themselves in and he even sketches a realistic funerary portrait of Harry when he initially finds him. This visualization is composed much like a mug shot with a tight frame on the face.

My point here is that in 1950 a character who is introduced initially as a canvas painter, an artist, an abstract expressionist artist, is easily acceptable as the “detective” by the audience. This shows how artists were seen not as bohemian eccentrics; rather, the artist is here visualized as someone who easily “solves” the case and has access to hidden truth.



And I missed it at first but here is Hitchcock's cameo as he walks by the very out of place rich guy who is interested in Marlowe's paintings.



The poet, the artist, the sleuth—whoever sharpens our perception tends to be anti- social; rarely “well-adjusted,” he cannot go along with currents and trends. Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (1967)

Source: <https://www.idonthaveacoolname.com/the-artist-as-detective/>