

Documentary Cinematography assignment: Creative restrictions

What and why?

This film exercise assignment consists of experimenting with restrictions as creative, expressive, and cinematographic tools. The question we are exploring is how/if different restrictions, parameters, or frames of action can be generative of ideas and of creative engagements with, and exploration of, the real. The setting of limit/parameters aim to improve creative skills, versatility in the representation of reality, capacity of adaptation, and ultimately expand your skills as “director of cinematographic reality.”

How?

Working in pairs, students will decide on a place, person, being, process, or phenomenon they would like to engage and film during the course.

Students will work together on devising certain restrictions/limits (they can also be thought as parameters, conditions, protocols for action, etc.). Some examples of parameters could be setting up a small number of maximum shots to be filmed during the exercise, a limiting number of camera positions, a particular fieldwork method, etc. You name it.

You might want to think what these parameters/restrictions could bring about. Why are you setting those parameters? Are you aiming to explore/express something with them? To have no expectations or to just play are very valid reasons, but this is also an opportunity to explore how creative methods and modes of representation render documentary realities differently.

The number and nature of those restrictions/limitations are set by the students-pairs. Some restrictions/parameters should be thought and discussed beforehand. Importantly, your approach should also be adjusted to your field-visit, observations, and characteristic of the place.

Even though there is plenty room for experimentation, remember that we are in a documentary course, whatever that means....

Other practicalities.

The final exercise should have a duration of 3-6 minutes, although shorter or longer exercises are also allowed. Remember that you will only have around 35-40 minutes for final presentations. Please make sure that we'll have plenty room for discussions within those 40 minutes.

Bring your exercise in a hard drive/pen drive to class or upload it somewhere. The screening will be in Odeion on Thursday 9 and Friday 10 March.

Pre-assignment for the film exercise.

Think about a place/location/site, person, being, process or phenomenon with which you would like to engage and film during this course. Please have your choice(s) ready for the first day of class. The place could be a street corner, a building, a backyard, a bus stop, a location from your film project, etc. It's really up to you. The same applies to filming people, beings, or processes. Think about possibilities that attract you. One important aspect to consider is accessibility. The ideal situation is that you will visit and film more than once during the course, helping to construct a stronger and deeper relation to the subject than if you were only filming once. You can bring more than one option. We will discuss them on the first day of class, and students will select some for their film exercises.