



Film Manifestos

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Old as cinema: the first film manifesto can be traced to 1898 (Matuszewski)

Calls to action for political and aesthetic changes in the cinema and the cinema's role in the world: **Cinema as a mean to reconfigure the world.**

They proclaim the end of the old regimes of representation and **the need to** wipe the slate clean and **begin anew.**

They have **diagnostic aspect** (how things are). They have a **corrective or propositional aspect** (how things should be)

Manifestos have had, in most cases, quite short life spans.

They can be seen as constituting **the earliest form of film theory.**

What kind of Theory?

Basic assumption: One cannot take moving images to be separate from the world, or to be simply a mirror or reflection of the real. Moving images are a constitutive part of the real: **as images change, so does the rest of the world.**

Catalyst for film practices: Calls to arms to change, destroy, and reimagine the cinema.

Intervention: The theory that the manifesto states must be also located in the social space into which it is intervening and which it thinks.

Aesthetics as action: postulate ways in which to reimagine the medium, how moving images intervene in the public sphere, and the ways film might function as a catalyst to change the world: **relationship between questions of aesthetic form and political discourse.**

Utopia...and dialogue?

Four different kinds of utopian writing (Jameson): “the manifesto; the constitution; the ‘mirror of princes’; and great prophecy, which includes within itself that mode called satire.” All four kinds of writing can be seen as means by which **to reimagine the world by calling a new world into being through the act of writing.**

Unilateral (Janet Lyon): The manifesto declares a position; the manifesto **refuses dialogue or discussion**; the manifesto fosters antagonism and scorns conciliation. It is univocal, unilateral, single-minded. It conveys resolute oppositionality and indulges no tolerance for the faint hearted.

Dialogical (Althusser): The manifesto is dialectical in nature, **mediating past and present, and calling a future into being.** Responses to previous ways of doing and thinking.

Some themes and examples.

Find and develop **new languages and functions for cinema.**

To make alternative forms of filmmaking acceptable. A cinema determined not by capital but by artistic vision is a recurrent claim.

Cinema as a medium through which to **rediscover the process of seeing.**

Ex Brakhage :

“Imagine an eye unrulred by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colors are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of ‘Green’?”

Some themes and examples.

Counteract hegemonical film industries a rethink the modes and means of production (National and Transnational Cinemas): **Give shape to an aesthetic, a political, a national movement.**

A protest and **call to arms against film policies.**

To denounce the escapism and ideology of Hollywood and criticize the celebration of the director as auteur. Instead to argue for a collective, politically engaged cinema. (Third Cinema)

Response to **under-representation** (African Cinemas) or to **mis-representations** (Black Audio Film Collective)

Redefining gender and sexual identities.

The **rise of digital technology** and its impact on the cinema.

The **fragmentation of screen sites** and the perils and possibilities that emerge from this development.

Now! (Santiago Álvarez, 1965)



<https://vimeo.com/426503747>