

**A LIMITATION IN FILMMAKING PRACTICE I HAVE
EXPERIENCED.**

8 mins

WHAT I WANT TO TRY?

8 mins

Why Theory within Practice?

Sin 1996 by Susanna Helke & Virpi Suutari

Tableau vivant confessions on everyday and mundane “crimes” or “sins”.

The concepts of **7 deadly sins** as a working tool.

The question risen from the convention:

the forbidden intervention and “directing”, forbidden mise-en-scène in documentary realism= **style of authenticity.**

The idea of “objectivity” as an non-intervetionist stance=**direct cinema.**



<https://vimeo.com/12792659>



Susanna Helke / Doctoral Thesis.

Nanookin jälki – Tyyli ja metodi dokumentaarisen ja fiktiivisen elokuvan rajalla. Taik Books 2006.

***A Trace of Nanook –
Cinematic Methods Intertwining Documentary and
Fictional Styles***



Cinema in between the two “family trees” (documentary and fiction)

**Robert J. Flaherty *Nanook of the North* as *documentaire joué*.
*Allakariallak as Nanook***

Enactement

Didactic dramas of the British Documentary Film Movement

***Jean Rouch docu-fictions, participatory ethonography,
cinema of play***

***Contemporary documentary Ulrich Seidl (mise-en-scène,
defamiliarization, excessive style)***

***Iranian New Cinema 1990s and 2000s: **cinema of observation**
Abbas Kiarostami, Bahman Ghobadi, Mohsen Makhmalbaf***

IMAGES OF HARMONY AND RUPTURE –

Documentary Film Reflecting Fractures in the Scandinavian Welfare State Ethos

A challenge: in wealthy societies, societal crises, defects and disparities are not necessarily manifesting themselves in a dramatic manner.

QUESTION OF “HOW”?

How invisible unravelling of the welfare state (neoliberalisation) can be cinematically captured?

CONVENTION

RUTHLESS TIMES – SONGS OF CARE (ARMOTONTA MENOA-HOIVATYÖN LAULUJA 2022) 90´.

**The invisible realities of political rhetorics:
econo-political "newspeak", lingo.**

Post-welfare state?

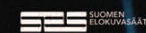
Immaterial values subjugated to material values.

RUTHLESS TIMES

Songs of Care



A documentary film with nurses and retiree citizens singing to protest the failings of the elderly care system.
What cannot be talked about has to be sung!



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Dokumentaarinen
elokuva ja hyvinvointi-
valtion murttumia

Toimittane
Susanna H
& Essi Viiti



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WHAT IS THEORY

Music theory.

Theory in science vs. theory in art?

WHAT IS A CONVENTION?

a rule, method,

or practice **established by usage;**

custom.

WHAT IS PRACTICE?

DIVISION OF LABOR: PRACTITIONERS
AND FILM SCHOLARS

MAKERS' THEORY? Theory as an expression of cinema principles

- ▶ **Sergei Eisenstein (1920s)**
- ▶ Early Soviet Cinema.
- ▶ Film Form, Film Sense
- ▶ Montage Theory.
- ▶ **Pier Paolo Pasolini**
- ▶ Expressionistic realism, cinema of poetry vs. cinema of prose.
- ▶ **French New Wave 1960s**, many filmmakers also worked as critics, Cahier du Cinema (Jean-Luc Godard etc.)

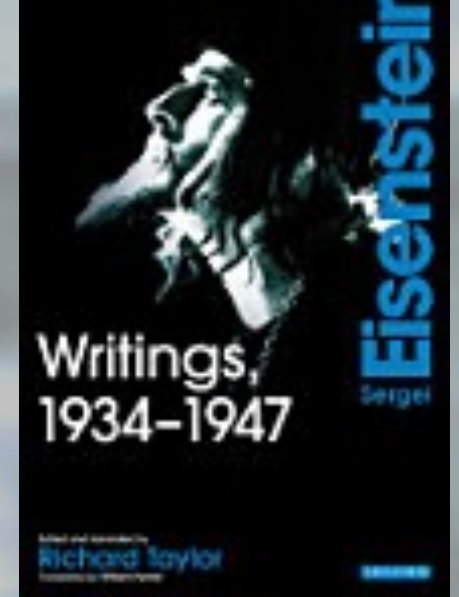
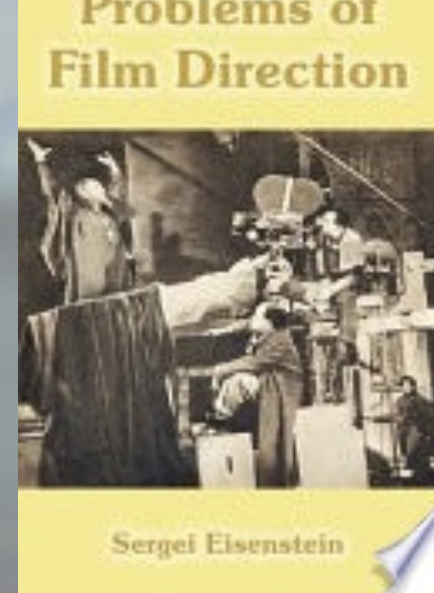
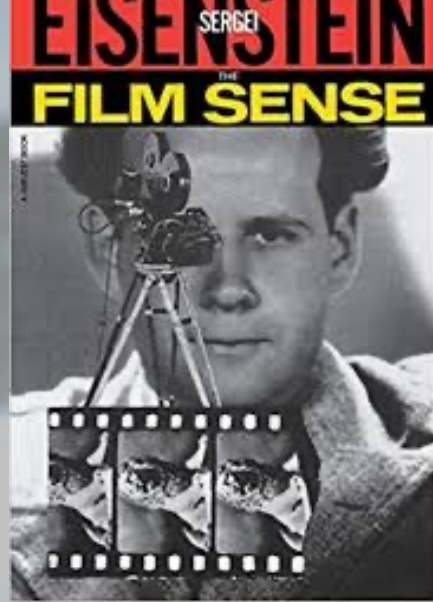
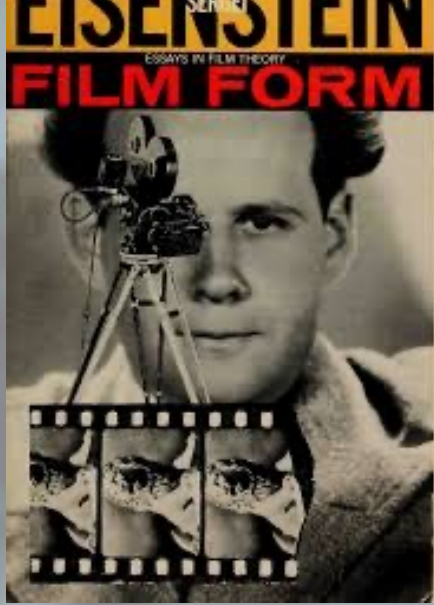
Sergei Eisenstein: theory of montage

**CREATING THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW ART FORM
THROUGH FILMMAKING AND THINKING
(THEORIZING)**

Tested, expressed and manifested his montage theory through his theoretical essays and films.

**ARTISTIC RESEARCH? MAKER'S THEORY?
THEORIZING WITHIN MAKING?**





A two volume compilation of essays written between 1928 and 1945 Eisenstein's film theory. Ed. Jay Leyda.

Essay compilation on Eisenstein's notions on film directing.

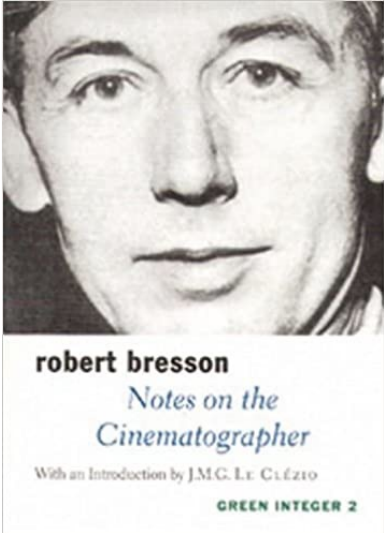
The essence and the potential of cinema lies in it's formal qualities, particularly in MONTAGE!!!

Early Russian Formalism 1920's and 1930s, Viktor Shklovsky, Roman Jakobson, Jury Tynianov.

Pejorative term "formalism" was attached to this "movement" during the Stalin era. Forbidden formalism!

FILM MANIFESTOS

- ▶ Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino: Towards a Third Cinema
- ▶ Dogma 95 e.g. Lars von Trier, Thomas Vinterberg



FILMMAKERS' STATEMENTS OF THEIR OWN AESTHETIC CINEMA PRINCIPLES

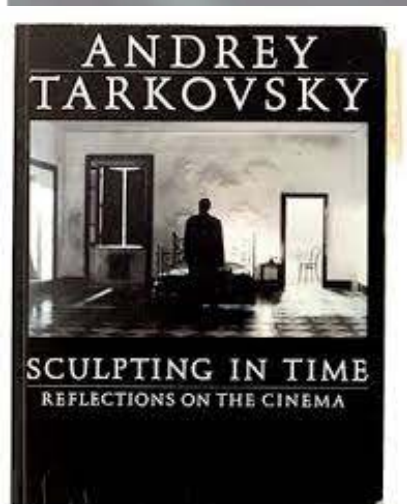
Robert Bresson *Notes on the Cinematographer* 1975

-aphoristic formulations of his cinema principles.

Andrej Tarkovsky *Sculpting in Time* 1985

"The dominant, all-powerful factor of the film image is *rhythm*, expressing the course of time within the frame.

When I speak of the aspiration towards the beautiful, of the ideal as the ultimate aim of art, which grows from a yearning for that ideal, I am not for a moment suggesting that art should shun the 'dirt' of the world. On the contrary! The artistic image is always a metonym, where one thing is substituted for another, the smaller for the greater. To tell of what is living, the artist uses something dead; to speak of the infinite, he shows the finite. Substitution . . . the infinite cannot be made into matter, but it is possible to create an illusion of the infinite: the image."



“The truth of cinematography cannot be the truth of theatre, not the truth of the novel, nor the truth of painting. (What the cinematographer captures with his or her own resources cannot be what the theatre, the novel, painting capture with theirs).”

“Provoke the unexpected. Expect it.”

— Robert Bresson, Notes on the Cinematograph



CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES

Joshua Oppenheimer *The Act of Killing* (2013)

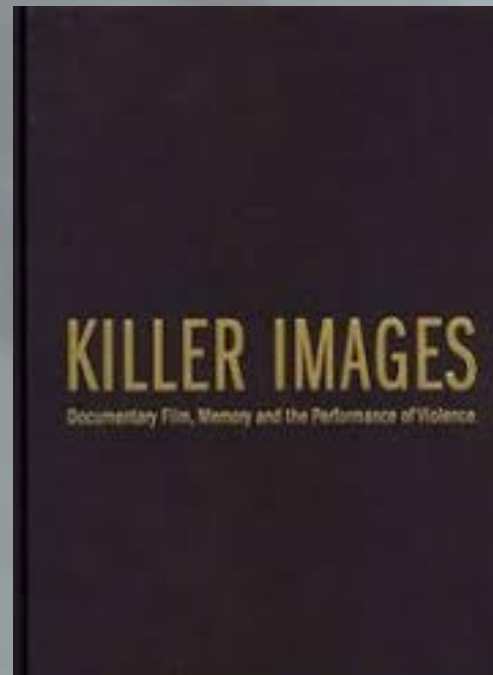
The Look of Silence (2014). Indonesian mass killings: the perpetrators & victims.

Killer Images

-research project
on genre and representation
violence.

Julian Gastaing Taylor & others

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY LAB
at Harvard University.



ARTISTIC RESEARCH

- ▶ Artworks as an “**outcome**” not just an “**object**” of research as in humanities (art research)
- ▶ **Making: method, content, context, outcome**
- ▶ Research on the arts (art as an object)
- ▶ **research for the arts** (art as an objective...technical, e.g. how to serve its betterment)
- ▶ research in (or within) art practice not just the object or objective but a **method of research**.
- ▶ **Paramount place of artistic practice as reserach!**

PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH

**TACIT KNOWLEDGE: MAKING THE
MAKERS KNOWLEDGE VISIBLE**

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE :

**SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS=QUALITATIVE METHODS+
PRACTICE-LED APPROACH**

THEORIZING **WITHIN** CINEMA/FILM
PRACTICE:

CATALYSING SOMETHING
IN THE MAKING RATHER THAN
CATALOGUING OR ANALYSING
SOMETHING THAT ALREADY EXISTS.

ARTISTIC RESEARCH QUESTION/S

- ▶ To specify the artistic or art-practice-led research question
- ▶ **ART** and **"Authorship"** don't not exist in a vacuum.

"Practice" is a cumulation of tradition and collective tacit knowledge.

- ▶ **Convention** = an **invisible set of rules** affecting any particular "practice".
- ▶ *Historically formed and re-enforced by education, industry & communities of practitioners.*

WRITTEN PART (MA THESIS)

- ▶ **OBJECTIVE:** Deepens your understanding of your own working processes + artistic, professional, practical, working process.
- ▶ **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THINKING AND REFLECTING YOUR OWN PRACTICE,** creates a foundation for the professional/artistic identity.
- ▶ **Critical contextualization** of the tradition and conventions.