

Intercultural Mobile Film Brafftv Workshop

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CINEMA *UPLOADED*

- Today the freedom and easiness that digital recording devices provide have enabled us to choose a space in which to wander freely and to capture the most unexpected events of our daily life. Even mainstream news media relies on mobile images to cover some events. Besides, digital camera effects are “stroboscopic, narcissistic, and even hyper-realistic” (Varda). We have this possibility to document these crucial moments and at the same time express our own point of view, instead of accepting a reality portrait made by mainstream media.
- The web is changing film. Independent cinema has achieved a rebirth because of the Internet, which today has become a new space used by filmmakers around the world to experiment, innovate, express, exhibit, share, and distribute audiovisual content. The whole interactive process of making, mixing, choosing, uploading, commenting, recommending and reacting is what is truly revolutionizing the industry. Film is becoming more and more a collaborative, social activity.
- Interculturality, as an experience of living between two or more cultures, conceives new forms of knowledge and thinking. How do we to explore the temporal and spatial intercultural “zones” (imagery and real world) and initiate a different mode of production and practice? More and more artists and filmmakers envision their works in an in-between space of perception and experience.

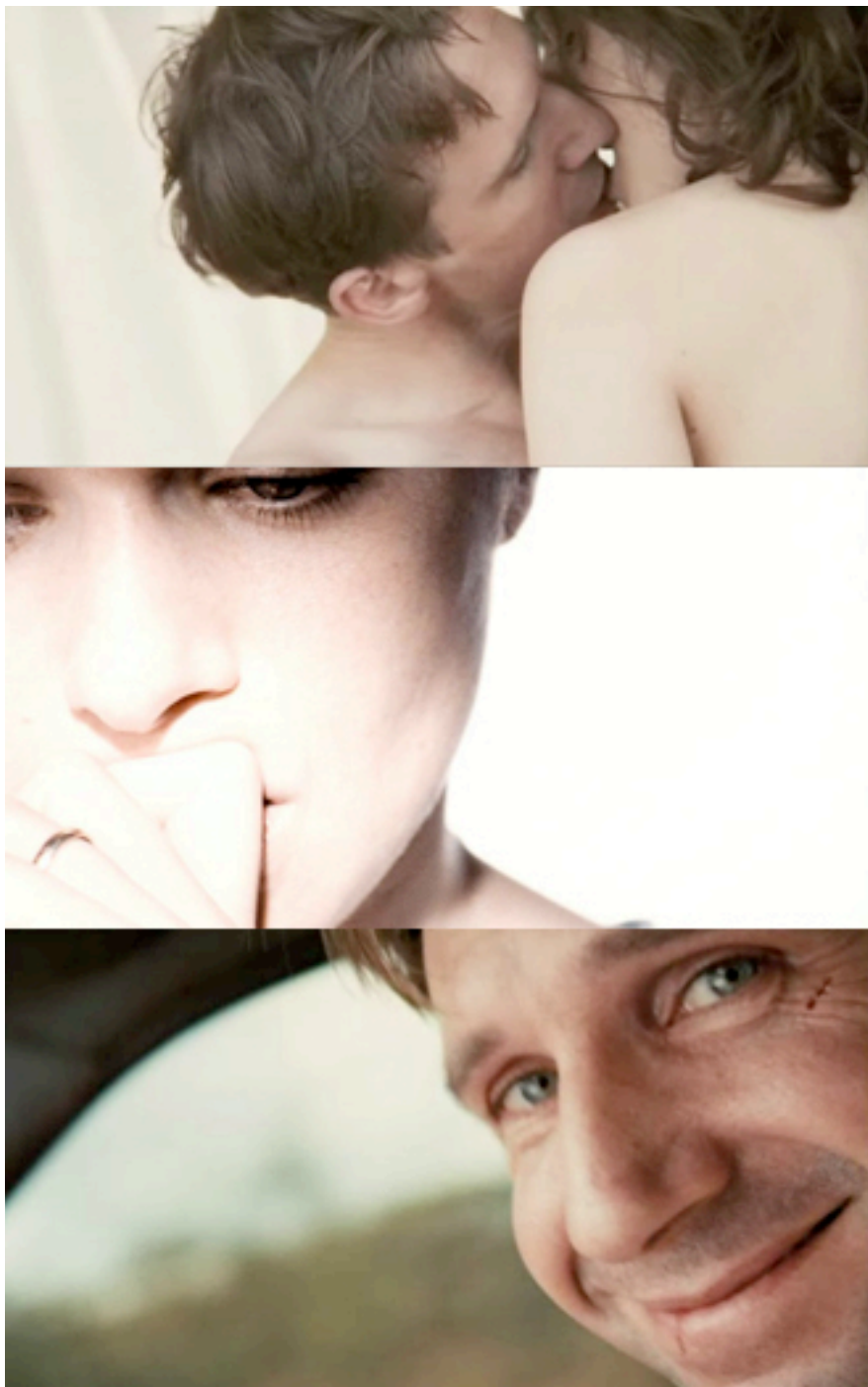




Intercultural cinema presents a great variety of possible ways to comprehend, know, and represent the world through the experience of displacement. In this way, filmmakers create original approaches to cinematographic resources and language, such as frame, montage, interactions between audio and video, polyphony of voices, music and accents in an attempt to represent the experience of living between two or more cultural regimes of knowledge, or living as a minority.



These new small cameras, they are digital, fantastic. Their effects are stroboscopic narcissistic, and even hyper-realistic. (4'20'')
Agnès Varda, *The Glaners and I* (FRA, 2000)



“...são momentos mais íntimos, sem muito diálogo, apenas improvisação e clima. E, como não precisamos da equipe, os atores podem ficar sozinhos se gravando, conseguindo um tom realmente íntimo. O Dogma propõe que o ator faça seu próprio figurino e maquiagem, mas poderiam ter dado este passo à frente, propondo que os atores também fizessem a câmera. Tem funcionado,” Fernando Meirelles sobre o uso da webcam em *The Constant Gardener* (2005)



Workshop goals:

- to acquire an understanding on intercultural issues depicted in contemporary cinema
- to develop an intercultural “story” to be filmed by a mobile recording device
- to encourage the links between two distinct cultures, such as Brazil and Canada, utilizing a daily device as a mobile phone and the online social networks through image

This workshop intends to show the strengthening ties between diasporic communities and intercultural approaches to collaborative web-based video platforms (as YouTube) and the video use of mobile phones, and how this convergence facilitate the apparition of new communities of “filmmakers” with an artistic or a critical social dimension, using technology at their disposal.

Splitscreen: A Love Story by JW Griffiths



- Nokia Shorts 2011
- <http://vimeo.com/groups/nokiashorts>
- Pocket Films Festival
- <http://www.festivalpocketfilms.fr/>

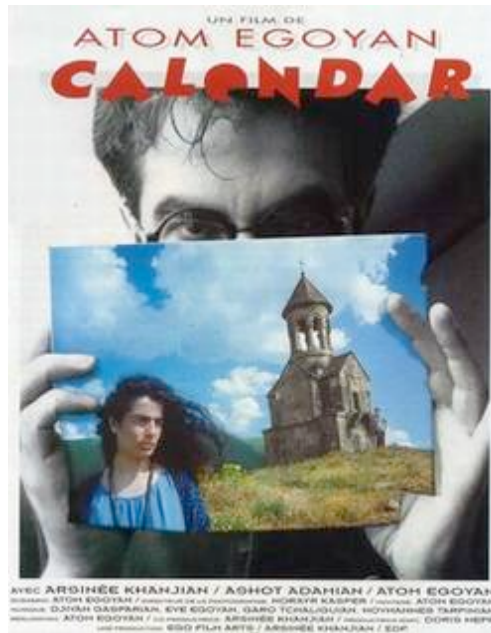
- The most important factor in crafting films for cell phones is being able to tell a quick story and to use the mobile phone as a unique street camera, not a happy snappy version of a 16mm Technicolor camera.
- Filmmakers need to realize and figure out the visual limitations of a 2-inch screen
- "You're not going to make a short film that is character-based. It would be more caricature-based," Joe Miale said. "It's going to have to be like a commercial, like a really short punch line kind of a film."
- "A good pocket film means recording personal happenings, or someone's personal way of observing the world," Masaki Fujihata, Pocket Film Festival
- "They differ to television episodes by being simpler, with short scripts, less movement and closer shooting to make the impact on the phones stronger," says mobisodes's producer, Tsuya Yuuzi.



Assignment

- Each participant is invited to create a **mobile film** (utilizing a mobile recording device: cellphone, webcam, iPod, or smartphone), which can explore the audiovisual techniques of intercultural films; investigate an intercultural subject; or narrate an experience of interculturalism.
- The best film will be screened at Brafftv's UpTo3 session and the three best films will be available at Brafftv website.
- Preferably for videos: up to 3 minutes in length.
- Deadline: Sunday, October 2nd, 1 p.m.
Carlton Cinema





Why intercultural cinema? by Laura Marks:

- “Intercultural films and videos offers a variety of ways of knowing and representing the world. To do this they must suspend the representational conventions that held in narrative cinema for decades, especially the ideological presumption that cinema *can* represent reality (Mercer 1994b, Deleuze 1986).”
- “Intercultural cinema draws from many cultural traditions, many ways of representing memory and experience, and synthesizes them with contemporary Western cinematic practices.”
- “..cinema is able to evoke the particularly hard-to-represent memories of people who move between cultures, by pointing beyond the limits of sight and sound” (p.129).
- If haptic visuality works with sense memory, how can media-makers encode sensation into their work when each of us has a different set of sense experiences?



Calendar (CAN, 1993)
Atom Egoyan
8' and 1:03'

- “Intercultural cinema is a movement insofar as it is the emerging of a group of people who share the political issues of displacement and hybridity, though their individual circumstances vary widely.” (p. 2)
- “...intercultural cinema is ceasing to be a movement and becoming a genre, that is the body of works with shared concerns about style and content.”
- “Film is grasped not solely by an intellectual act, but by the complex perception of the body as a whole” (145).





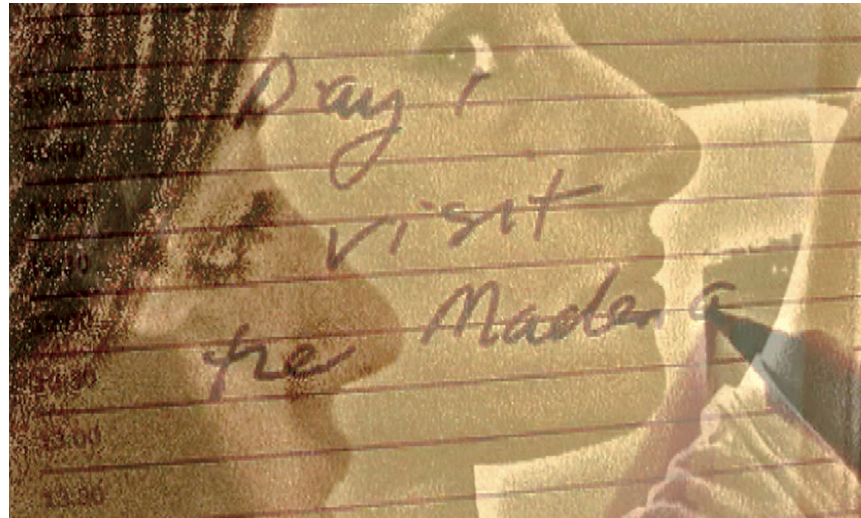
Yasujiro Ozu (Japanese filmmaker)

- “Intercultural indicates a context that cannot be confined to a single culture. It also suggests movement between one culture and another, thus implying diachrony and the possibility of transformation. Intercultural means that a work is not the property of any single culture, but mediates in at least two directions. It accounts for the encounter between different cultural organizations of **knowledge**, which is one of the sources of intercultural cinema’s synthesis of new forms of expression and new kinds of knowledge.” But it’s never a “political neutral exchanges” between the cultures. (p. 6)

“‘Culture’ is something that travelers bring with them more consistently than ‘nation’; it is the stuff that passes through national borders and transforms nations from within.”



- “Intercultural cinema appeals to the limits of naming and the limits of understanding, and this is where it is most transformative.” (p. 21)



- “Many works of intercultural cinema begin from the inability to speak, to represent objectively one’s own culture, history, and memory; they are marked by silence, absence, and hesitation... marked by a suspicion of visibility, a lack of faith in the visual archive’s ability to represent cultural memory... opening toward the exploration of new languages, new forms of expression.” (p. 21)
- “Intercultural cinema moves backward and forward in time, inventing histories and memories in order to posit an alternative to the overwhelming erasures, silences, and lies of official histories.” (p. 24)

Why are ethical issues central to documentary filmmaking by Bill Nichols:



- “Every film is a documentary.” Could we rethink this sentence saying that “every film is a fiction”?
- Film can give “evidence of the culture that produced it and reproduces the likenesses of the people who perform within it”

Two types of films:

- Fictions – “offer worlds for us to explore and contemplate”
- Documentaries – social representation – “give tangible representation to aspects of the world we already inhabit and share.” They “offer us new views of our common world to explore and understand.” p. 2
- “Interpretation is a matter of grasping how the form or organization of the film conveys meanings and values. Belief is a question of our response to these meanings and values.” p. 2

Visual Anthropology by Marcus Banks

Invisible camera:

“Even the classic ‘invisible cameras’ of modern industrial societies are socially located and see from a particular, socially constructed point of view. [...] [this camera] is a social actor and is inevitably involved in the social drama that unfolds before it. Its very presence confers importance and significance on the scene it reveals, to the viewer if not to the participants.” (p. 18)





- “I do not intent to speak about, but nearby,”
Trinh T. Minh-Ha in *Reassemblage* (Doc, 1982)



- ✓ Trinh T. Minh-ha describes *Reassemblage* (1982) in her book ‘*Cinema Interval*’ as an “interrogation” - an idiosyncratic (if not compositionally radical) approach to the ethnographic study of contemporary Senegal that seeks to erase the filmmaker's intrinsic interpretation of the recorded rituals through unsynchronized repetition of audio and visual imagery, using variations in shot placement (a methodology articulated in the comment “different views from different angles - the ABC of photography”) and in the incorporation (or exclusion) of the non-diegetic soundtrack that, in its intrinsically abstract rhythms, nevertheless, convey the empirical essence of the quotidian.

Cultural identity and cinematic representation

by Stuart Hall



Emerging cinemas:

- “Who is this emergent, new subject of the cinema? From where does he/she speak? The practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write – the positions of *enunciation*”. (p. 704)
- “Instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact, which the new cinematic discourses then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation”.
- “We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always ‘in context’, *positioned*”.

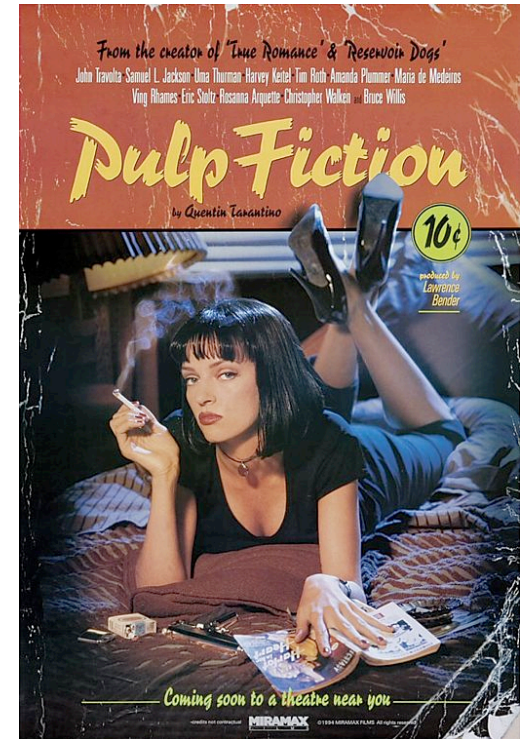
Another look by Catherine Russell:



- Ethnographic film becoming art!
- From Flaherty to Minh-ha, filmmakers have struggled to find a means of representing “culture” that is in some way appropriate to the intercultural experience. (p. 13)
- The utopian project of experimental ethnography is to overcome the binary oppositions of us and them, self and other, along with the tension between the profilmic and the textual operations of aesthetic form. (p. 19)

Plot and Conflict

- A sequence of events, causally related
- What happens in the story
- Plot is the element that describes the structure of a story. It shows arrangement of events and actions within a story.
- PLOT. The main incidents of a NARRATIVE; the outline of situations and events thought of as distinct from the characters involved in them or the themes illustrated by them.
- Conflict is the dramatic struggle between two forces in a story. Without conflict, there is no plot.
- Story = Character Development + Plot
Plot = Introduction + (Crisis + Resolution) + (Crisis + Resolution) + (Crisis + Resolution) + Crisis + Climax + Final Resolution (Denouement)
- **Classical narrative** (the most dominant Hollywood narrative)
 - usually appears as a three-part structure: the presentation of a situation, the disruption of that situation (often as a crisis or confrontation), and the resolution of that disruption.



Plot Structure

- Exposition
 - Background
- Rising action
 - Complication
- Crisis
 - Moment of highest tension or indecision in primary conflict
- Climax
 - Resolution of the crisis; rest of action inevitable
- Resolution/denouement
 - Tying up of loose ends



Plot Components

Climax: the turning point, the most intense moment—either mentally or in action

Rising Action: the series of conflicts and crisis in the story that lead to the climax

Falling Action: all of the action which follows the climax

Resolution: the conclusion, the tying together of all of the threads

What is Conflict?

A clash between opposing forces, usually forcing the main character into a dilemma.



Four Types of Conflict

1. Individual Conflict

This type of conflict finds the main character in conflict with another character, human or not human.

One person in opposition with another

Typically the simplest and least interesting kind of conflict



2. Social conflict

- This type of conflict has the main character in conflict with a larger group: a community, society, culture, etc.
- one person vs. a larger group;
- Almost always present and significant





3. Natural conflict

- This type of conflict finds the main character in conflict with the forces of nature, which serve as the antagonist.
- Typically, this kind of conflict involves some form of nature;
- Depending on one's perspective, it could be a conflict with God.



4. Self or Inner conflict

- The main character experiences some kind of inner conflict.
- A person in conflict with himself;
- Generally, the most interesting and significant when it is present;
- Often the person in conflict doesn't realize it.

How Character is viewed through Conflict

- Protagonist
 - Central character in central conflict
- Antagonist
 - Whoever or whatever opposes the protagonist



Syd Field (1982) describes the construction of a screenplay according to three acts (see next slide):

1. Setup
2. Confrontation
3. Resolution.



Plot

Cooper & Dancyger (1994) suggest two basic plot structures for the short film:



1. The Journey Structure: In which the protagonist sets out in pursuit of a goal.
2. The Ritual Occasion Structure: In which “adventure finds the main character in his or her situation” (p. 8).

- Act I

- According to Field (1982), the first act (or *setup*) must be directed toward arriving at the first “plot point” and accomplish three tasks within the first 30 pages or so. These are...

1. Set up the story.
2. Introduce the main character.
3. State the dramatic premise.
4. Establish the situation.



- Act II

- Just as the first act is directed toward the goal of arriving at the first plot point, the second act must be directed toward arriving at the second plot point. The task of the second act is to show the confrontations that stand between the protagonist and his/her goal in approximately 60 pages.

- Act III

- Act three completes the narrative paradigm by bringing the protagonist from confrontation to ultimate resolution. Just as Act I was directed toward arriving at plot point 1, and Act II was directed toward arriving toward plot point 2, Act III is directed toward arriving at the resolution.

Plot Point I



- Field (1982) defines a “plot point” as “an incident or event that ‘hooks’ into the action and spins it around into another direction” (p. 192). In other words, the first plot point is an event that serves as a segue between the setup and the confrontation.

Plot Point II

- Similar to the first plot point, the second one is an event that segues between Act II and Act III. However, in this case, the event brings the events of the narrative back on track for the third act, leading to the climax of the film.