

Notes Towards A Metaphysical Cinema Manifesto

Metaphysical Cinema challenges conventional narrative. Narrative is about ordered progress of meaning unfolding through protagonists. But after Hollywood exploited and abused cinema in the last century, the film world is now so wedded to story telling that this addiction is slowly killing contemporary cinema.

We call our filmmaking *metaphysical cinema*. This expresses our rejection of classical story telling that merely serves the dream machine function. 'Story' in this sense is a dangerous force, since the audience becomes a passive consumer of the cinema, which shrinks and reduces its potentiality. It ends up as any other industry product. The so-called narrative keeps being interrupted by the voice of propaganda, the voice of the pseudo objective mass media, and by the alienated individual status of being.

Narrative is important to us, but its function is negative. Metaphysical cinema wants to reveal a world beyond narrative. Our method is this —instead of looking at the object in the scene, we look to the shadow it casts. The shadow is the more basic reality: the emotional vision is written on those shadows.

Time and space in fragments, point of view: call this the fabric that makes up narrative reality. Metaphysical cinema is about the transformation of narrative reality. It uses narrative as a tool, not as an end. The psychological attitude that is revealed in classical narrative is that story is destiny. That story-telling is everything, that we as humans are defined by our stories, and our identity is given by story. This is close to the idea that identity is given by history. We - **the Metaphysical Syndicate** - say no to this kind of empire of the story. We say no to storyboarding where a voice is no longer a subjective voice; where a voice ends up as a non-reflective, unexamined manipulation of a God's Eye point of view.

You might ask—has this not been done before? Of course, it has been done partially, and in various ways. In the 50s and 60s, European cinema explored this visual potentiality, but it stopped in the 80s when the industrialized cinema of Hollywood came to dominate the global business.

So what do we support? We - **the syndicate** -- support a mosaic, reflective, plural-voice narrative. This is born from a post-industry mode of production, from a world of broken fragments of memory and recounting. Therefore, amongst the dust of the production power of mainstream cinema industry, our innovation is a cinema which:

1. is guerilla in style with a non-film crew, not hiding our humble financial status. We refuse the producer-managerial production structure.
2. takes in and uses all kinds of materials – documentary and TV footage, fictional conventions, text, home video, photos, tape recording, archives. We use all those possibilities in weaving our new narratives.
3. constructs its own comrade-based independent distribution network – through internet, film festivals, educational circuits, street events, bars, cafes, any venue where the Hollywood cinema doesn't have final control of the product.
4. is against cinema professionalism and studio professionalism. We embrace amateur cinema and the author. We prefer a cinema of non-perfection. We do not want a mediocre perfection or technical perfection. We prefer a provocative and fresh cinema with 'mistakes'. The mistake is unavoidable, so we embrace it with cautiousness and a spirit of self-criticism.

Finally, in contrast to the mode of operation of Hollywood – in which the viewer enters and is swallowed by the dream -- our cinema is the awakening of a lucid dream. A controlled abandon, a sober pandemonium, our vision is that of a crazed honesty falling headfirst into reality. The syndicate costs nothing except for the energy of those who chose to make the journey.

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