



**Free**

# Welcome to the first issue of One + One

## The Brighton Filmmakers Journal

One + One is comprised of interviews, essays and reports covering all aspects of film-making and film exhibition. It is unlikely that you will find film reviews in these pages; personal reflection and opinion are certainly present, but it is not our aim to give bite-size opinions on the merit of individual films. Instead, we want to encourage discussion and debate about approaches to filmmaking, and a deeper questioning into the nature, and future, of the production and exhibition of films. The articles collected here have been written by seven filmmakers working together in Brighton. The writers are contributing personal views and the magazine is edited by all contributors through group discussions.

One + One is not to be seen as separate from filmmaking, but is part of the process of making films. The articles have grown out of discussions and the practice of making films and they will feed back into it; criticism and analysis *is* filmmaking.

I hope you enjoy reading this journal. Please contact us if you would like to engage in conversation with us about anything relating to filmmaking; we can be contacted via email or you can meet us by coming to the Brighton Filmmakers' Coalition on Sundays (see the back cover for details).

**Daniel Fawcett**

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# My Independence is More Independent than Your Independence

## A Declaration by Daniel Fawcett

*“Art is always in danger and must be constantly reinvented in order to fend off the invasion of the mechanical, the constant march of monotony and cement.”*

-Hans Werner Henze

Developments in art are always married to developments in the tools and technology used to make it. Technology is always changing; each change gives artists new grounds for exploration. When people talk about the future of cinema and filmmaking, the focus of discussion is often on how digital filmmaking, HD, and CGI will allow filmmakers more control and more creative freedom. There is, however, one major flaw: even if the opportunity for more creative freedom and control is there, the environment is not. I propose an entire re-thinking of the attitude to how films are made and exhibited.

### I believe in film.

It is the art form of *now* – it is only now that it is starting to spread fully its wings and reach its potential as an art form. We are now in a position to be able to make films at very inconsiderable costs, and it is this that is the key to its future. It is time for film to be fully liberated from the weight around its neck – that is, money.

Film and money have been ever en-

twined, due to the vast amounts of money needed to make them in the past. But we are now in a new era: an era we have been slowly moving into since the invention of video.

Jean Cocteau once said:

*“Film will only become an art when its materials are as inexpensive as pencil and paper.”*

That time is here. We need the art of film more than ever today. Today’s culture is a tired man – he trudges along, overweight and sick, replete with things no longer good for him. He needs a new art. That art is film – but film made with an *attitude* that has barely been glimpsed before now. It is time for change.

There are more films being made now than ever before. Of course, many of

**“Film will only become an art when its materials are as inexpensive as pencil and paper”**

these films are being made independently of industry funding – but these films are *not truly independent*. Even those without the industry’s money behind them are *industry films* in attitude and approach.

We have two types of so-called ‘independent’ films now – those called ‘indie’ (but which are industry funded), and those

made without that funding but which still want to be picked up by a distributor and act as a *calling card* for the filmmaker to find work within the industry.

Most people who are making films ‘independently’ are doing so not out of choice but because they have been unable to acquire studio or institutional backing, and, in any case, still desire a place inside the industry.

I propose a new attitude and approach towards independence: an approach that rejects the old system of making films as a product; an approach that makes films without any intention of ever making money from them.

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### I reject the film industry.

I want no part of it. It is time for a parting of the ways. The *industry* may go its own way; I am on another path, with the *artists* – the true *independents*. Our path shall be the one that realises film’s potential as an art form – an art form that is still young, like a teenager that is allowed out on its own for the first time it is still finding its voice, it is an exciting time, it’s the start of its life as an adult.

Why is it important to separate money from art? The very hope of acquiring a distributor will affect the project. This effect may appear to be a small one, but it breeds an attitude that eventually manifests itself throughout one’s work. Even anti-commercialism is a marketable commodity today – this is secretly recognised by even the most stridently ‘anti-commercial’ filmmaker. A *true* anti-commercialism *has* to reject the very notion of making money, or it is a lie. True art cannot spring from any other conditions than a creator’s contempt for the pursuit of money through art. The desire to be anti-commercial? – *that is not*

*enough!* The filmmaker’s motivation must overcome this desire – there must be more: *the will to personal exploration.*

**“Embrace your independence and help others to do the same”**

My vision for the future of filmmaking is unashamedly Utopian, but I and others around me are already on the way to realising it. The first question will always be, How does the true filmmaker survive in a capitalist society? – *Want less*. It is simple: great artists have long lived simple existences. To be an artist is to put art at the centre of your existence.

The endurance of property places a demand on the artist that he will provide himself with some small material sustenance today – but the artist ought to count his material needs for far less than he has been taught to do so. *Learn* to live with *less*. The artist today must work for his sustenance. If he has no support from a source that believes in the *truth* of *profitless* film, then a separate day-job is necessary.

One ought to clean floors or serve coffee rather than look for a salaried place in the film industry, if it means that one’s art will remain uncompromised.

Do not misunderstand me: the artist must not live outside society – whom else should he *speak* to? He ought to be fully integrated in it and play a key part in it, but never forget that he is a seeker of truth, a questioner, an *explorer*. His *role* is to encourage change for a better future.

People need to believe in art again. People need to believe in people again. Whatever resistance to my ideas may come *will come* from those who have lost faith in humanity. I have hope; I will fight

for it. Art is needed; people with money ought to support the artist – but we do not need a *system* for this: *we must embrace chaos*. Systems occupy themselves with the minimizing of risk. We do not need *that!*

Too-keen organisation takes us back to the pages of tick-box criteria for funding that asks for commercial potential in return.

#### **We must maximize risk.**

I *do not* reject the films of the past, but it is time for change. I *do* reject most films of the present. We do not need just a new *content*, but a new *attitude* towards the purpose of film. New stories and styles are perhaps a part of the future, but if the only merit of a film is its ‘newness’, we should dismiss it as a work of gimmickry, going hand-in-hand with the will to feed the *fashionable* market. Gimmickry can be packed and sold. The future of art will not come from a mere surface ‘originality’, but a wholesale change in the very process of creation and the life attendant upon it.

I reject any money that asks for artistic compromise in return. But you say: *Why not compromise with the industry the*

*once, and use their money against them?*

I say: what of the danger that *one* compromise will become *two*, will become *ten*, will become...? And even should your first compromise be your last, I would remind you that a filmmaker cannot afford ever to take his or her eyes from their true purpose. Filmmakers must hold fast to their vision – *must protect it at all costs* – if there is to be any change at all.

I make films as non-profit experiments. I shall self-distribute my films and shall not demand a fee at screenings. I shall make DVDs and sell them to cover costs, but I won't discourage people from copying them. I shall offer free downloads, to ensure that there is access to the best quality versions of my work.

Film ought to be as freely accessible as art in public galleries and literature in lending libraries.

I urge you to join me on this journey: to make films true to your own vision, and not to use films as a passport into the industry or a way merely of trying to *please* an audience, be they funders, festival programmers, or the public at large.

Embrace your independence and help others to do the same.

# Hotel Bauen Shakes the Tentacles of the Old World and Emerges in a Freer One

## How to: Share - DIY - Copyfight - Occupy

**Matthew Hamblion**

*In 2003, in the wake of Argentina's worst economic crisis, the former employees of Hotel Bauen took over their bankrupted and neglected workplace and began to run it democratically.*

Constructed in 1978, with large government subsidies, for years Hotel Bauen was run into the ground by its owner, Marcelo Iurcovich, who took the profits for himself and failed to pay back the loans. When it was eventually forced to close in 2001, its 250 employees were fired, with little hope of finding work elsewhere.

Now, despite frequent legal difficulties, Hotel Bauen is a successful business - wages are equal across the board; large decisions are made by all of the employees; small decisions are taken on an individual basis, bearing in mind the overall ethic of the group. Marcelo Iurcovich claims to own the hotel, but the workers say that, since he never paid the loans back, it is technically owned by the government. The workers have promised

to pay the loans back if the government grants them ownership. All over Argentina - a country suffering from poor economic policies implemented by their government and approved by the International Monetary Fund - factories and workplaces have

been occupied in a similar manner and, in stark opposition to the capitalist system, run with a social responsibility.

Often, artists and other creators fail to fully recognise that they operate within an industry as unfairly and unsustainably structured as was Hotel Bauen's. While many creators are famously supportive in matters of social equality, a great many still consider it acceptable to portray their liberal fantasies or points of view from within the very institutions that deny them. Today, with the falling cost of equipment, production and distribution, and many industry leaders on the defensive, it is important to take a stronger stance for a fairer future. Here are some practices that may help to liberate you from your creative industry.

**“DIY is about creating the alternative that you would like to see now, rather than asking for handouts from established organisations”**

**Share.** The natural reaction upon reading a good book, hearing a good record, or watching a good film, is to share it with others. Humans, being social creatures, enjoy conversation and mutual experience. While, in wealthier circles, it may be pos-



Hotel Bauen

sible to buy a new copy of a book, album or DVD for each of your friends, for many people this would be impossible. So, inevitably, one increasingly dog-eared copy gets passed around a group. Your friend, enthused by the film you've lent her, may go out and buy a similar film, and share it with you. (Of course, what would make the most sense, *economically* speaking, is for each member of your group of friends to buy the film on DVD, and perhaps buy it again on iTunes, and then maybe one more time when it comes out on Blu-Ray.) File sharing on the Internet has taken this action - of passing media between friends

- and exploded its scale. It heralds vast possibilities for self-distribution and seizes power from mammoth entertainment corporations, giving it back to everyday people like you and me.

**DIY.** The punk movement in the 1970s saw the rise of a DIY subculture, with bands booking their own tours, and recording and distributing their own records. The result was that many small bands - which would have been deemed 'non-commercial' by major labels - achieved cult status. Since then, DIY has spread to other fields like publishing, crafts, independent game development, vehicle design, pirate broad-

casting and independent journalism. DIY is about creating the alternative that you would like to see now, rather than asking for handouts from established organisations that, naturally, have their own interests at heart. Once you begin to Do It Yourself, hitherto forbidden possibilities open before you and, today, it is easier than ever.

**Copyright.** The non-profit organisation Creative Commons allows creators to reserve some rights, but waive others, enabling them to experiment with how their work is received, and how it interacts with culture as a whole. It was set up to counter what Lawrence Lessig, founder of Creative Commons, calls "a culture in which creators get to create only with the permission of the powerful, or of creators from the past."

The popularity of illegal downloading cannot be denied. Unlike those at the top of the entertainment industry, who seek to maintain their cultural monopoly, we must engage with this development, and find new ways of surviving, rather than responding with hostility. As creators, we have a responsibility to see that our work is distributed in a fair manner, which doesn't result in people getting sued excessive amounts in damages (one American woman was sued \$100,000 for 24 illegal downloads) by entertainment groups.

**Occupy.** In the midst of an economic crisis, a wealth of disused and deteriorating properties will begin to spread across our previously vibrant towns and cities. The upshot of heavily commercialised arts and entertainment industries is a neutered and socially irrelevant product that exists in purely aesthetic or escapist realms. Now, as the capitalist entertainment industry fal-

ters and retreats, a wave of independent creators can take their place, opening new spaces that are free from property ownership. Here, they can explore new ways

**“ In the midst of an economic crisis, a wealth of disused and deteriorating properties will spread across our previously vibrant towns and cities ”**

to create and share their work, hastening experimentation and emancipation in a re-cessing economy. Ultimately, this should result in new ways of living, strongly opposed to the runaway economics that currently threaten the safety of the world and its population.

If you are creative and desire change, it isn't enough to disapprove of the industry from the inside. Presently, the tentacles of the old world - with its lavish excesses, unfair labour policies and environmental disasters; communists and capitalists; warmongers and terrorists - are choking a new, emerging world.

The principle struggle of our generation is to assert ourselves as socially and environmentally conscious individuals and create real freedom in our lifetimes. It is not simply up to factory workers and hotel cleaners to create equality in the workplace, but the exploited workers and consumers of all industries.

You must be bold - this is a way of life. Encourage social interaction; produce less, recycle more; think about property in a less rigid manner; explore alternative economics and reverse the flow of wealth from the bottom up to the top down. Support the workers of Hotel Bauen - their struggle is your struggle.

# Distillation of Life

## The Work of Jonas Mekas

Dan Childs

*I press play. The film starts, revealing the interior of a New York apartment. Some rather frantic jazz music is playing. An old man in a black fedora and loosely fitting blue cotton shirt sits back and pours a glass of white wine into a tumbler with great relish. He takes a sip and sets the glass down firmly on the varnished pine table top. He stands and moves out of frame briefly. The jazz music stops and he sits back down. His bright and mischievous eyes peer out of his bulbous, chelonian face. He takes another leisurely sip of wine and then begins to speak in a vital staccato with a strong Eastern European accent. He takes his time, choosing each word carefully and savouring its expression. He talks animatedly of a love affair with New York City; its seasons, memories, friends past and present, every so often pausing to refill his glass. With genuine zeal he proclaims his happiness.*

The man in the film is Jonas Mekas; writer, poet and oft-proclaimed godfather of American avant-garde cinema. Mekas is a living legend; a friend and contemporary of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Salvador Dali, Andy Warhol and John Lennon. He documented, in his own frenetic, kaleidoscopic style, the vibrant New York art scene of the 1960s and 70s. His films crackle with the excitement of the times.

To our 21st century eyes, saturated as

they are with rapidly changing images, Mekas' early films make sense in a way that they could not possibly have done at the time they were created. His first diary film, *Walden (Diaries, Notes, Sketches)*, was compiled from footage shot between 1964 and 1969, and contains scenes of his life in New York and the vitality of the avant-garde cinema community. Images such as a spring walk in central park or footage of Mekas himself in a cafe or having dinner are combined with candid shots of Andy Warhol, Hans Richter, Allen Ginsberg, John Lennon and Yoko Ono amongst others.

The film is loosely divided into seasons of the year, emphasising a sense of time passing. In effect five years are being pre-

**“To me, Mekas is like a dedicated lepidopterist and his camera is his net, and instead of placing his catches in a kill jar and presenting them silent and still behind glass, he presents them alive and intensified on screen”**

sented as one, and this kind of concentration of time becomes a running theme throughout most of Mekas' subsequent work. There are various technical effects employed throughout the film, such as changes in focus, exposure, shutter speed, jump-cuts and switching between colour and monochrome. White card intertitles written in black marker pen flash



Jonas Mekas, photo by Furio Detti

up sporadically to highlight or explain.

Whilst appreciated in avant-garde circles, the majority of viewers during the early days considered Mekas' films to be amateurish, pointless or obscure and edited in an apparently random fashion. It is this editing technique, whereby Mekas simply removes anything that he feels is superfluous until what is left is precisely what he feels should be there, that is his trademark. The results often look haphazard but every frame has been considered. It is a distillation of life. A life stripped of its usual blemishes and aberrations. The boring bits simply don't survive, and the resultant juxtapositions of images create a new kind of visual poetry. This of course, on one level or another, is how most artists work; cherry-picking from reality and constructing a hyper-reality that better harmonises with the human mind to assuage the anxiety caused by a less than perfect world. Art and its appreciation are, in general, a necessary human response to the fact that life, on the whole, doesn't

measure up to expectations. It is the mind striving for a clarity that does not exist in the real world; for a solid rock in an ocean of uncertainty. Mekas sees his New York film diaries as *“an attempt to correct the city, the land, to stress certain aspects and to suppress others, that is why the stress is on celebration, because that's what's lacking here today, I am making corrections”*.

This theme of correcting reality is carried through in his film *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania*, in which he returns to his homeland for the first time since he was displaced during World War Two, after he and his brother Adolfas were seized en route to University in Vienna by German military police. In the film he makes the symbolic journey from his home village of Semeniskiai in Lithuania to Vienna, just as he had attempted to do all those years before. It is done in an effort to correct the past, and the power of the question – how would my life have turned out? – is clearly felt.

In *As I Was Moving Ahead I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty*, there is an even stronger sense of nostalgia. The very name suggests a lack of willingness to leave the past behind; as if, whilst time is forcing him ahead, he is always looking back, always recording, always remembering. The film takes Mekas' recordings of his wife and children from 1970-1999 as its subject matter. *“I am in every frame in this film”* he confesses sadly as if not only lamenting the passing of those halcyon days shown on screen but also part of his own being that he has somehow left on the film.

To me, Mekas is like a dedicated lepidopterist and his camera is his net, and instead of placing his catches in a kill jar and presenting them silent and still behind glass, he presents them alive and intensi-

fied on screen. He collects these rare butterflies – a moment from a holiday spent with his wife and children or a lazy afternoon in Central Park – as if in an attempt to preserve them forever. Along with the obvious celebration of these special times there is also a barely perceptible sense that the filmmaker knows that they are irredeemable. This delicate lacquer of loss seems to make them all the more precious.

This method of selective preservation is similar to how real memories are laid down; expunging the frames that

don't make sense or don't fit the narrative trends that we have set for our lives. These frequent occurrences of subconsciously selective amnesia, when the irrelevant and the useless are repressed, are echoed in Mekas' work. It is this narrative distillation over generations that leads to the formation of myths and folk tales. It could be argued that Mekas' films act to create an intensely personal kind of mythology out of the raw material of his own life.

The centre of this mythology is always Lithuania. Mekas equates the country of his birth with the Garden of Eden. The fall of man is mirrored in his flight from the Nazis and his subsequent and ongoing displacement. He sees the events that he preserves on film as being "*fragments of paradise*". This idea is most clearly expressed in the film he dedicated to his daughter Oona entitled *Paradise Not Yet Lost*. In it he urges the two-year-old Oona, "*be idealistic, don't be practical. Seek the insignificant, small but essential qualities, essential to life*" and warns her that "*Paradise cannot be gained without a constant struggle, moment by moment*". It is this struggle that Mekas sees as the duty of the true Artist.

These days Mekas uses the medium of film to communicate where most people would use a telephone call or email. In fact many of his videos are titled as 'letters' to friends. He films himself talking about anything from Paris Hilton to aging and the nature of change. He will sit there in his apartment or in a bar with a glass

**“ It could be argued that Mekas' films act to create an intensely personal kind of mythology out of the raw material of his own life ”**

of wine and his camera on the table and tell you what he thinks and what he loves. Of course, now the rest of the world has caught up and video diaries are no longer considered avant-garde, but there is a genuine openness to Mekas' films and a combination of a palpable weight of experience and an indefatigably youthful charm that sets them apart from the myriad other video blogs available on sites such as youtube. It is as if the viewer were a dear friend who had just been welcomed into his home. You are invited to sit as guests at his table, share favourite parts of his beloved city and watch his children grow. His warm-heartedness is infectious, and his filmmaker's eye is always on the lookout for beauty in the world around him.

Mekas views it as paramount that the filmmaker should be free to capture and celebrate reality. At a lecture given at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1992, he delivered the following cautionary tale to illustrate his opinion on how true independent film and the movie industry are diametrically opposed.

"There is a tale according to which, after God created the world he looked at it and he thought it was great. So he creat-

ed cinema to record and to celebrate that world. But the Devil did not like that. So he put a money bag in front of the camera and said why celebrate reality if you can make money with this instrument? And believe it or not, all filmmakers ran after money. So God, to correct his mistake, created independent filmmakers and said you will make movies and you will record and celebrate life, and you will never make any money".

As Luis Bunuel stated in Mekas' own Film Culture Magazine in 1960 "*In none of the traditional arts is there such a wide gap between possibilities and facts as in the cinema*". It was out of the desire to redefine filmmaking as a pure art form and to remove the barbs of commercialism that Mekas and a group of likeminded artists who called themselves the New American Cinema Group, set up the *Filmmakers Cooperative* in the early 1960s, an artist-run, non-profit organization which would become world's largest circulating collection of avant-garde films. In the opening statement of the New American Cinema Group Mekas declared that "*The official cinema all over the world*

**“ Mekas uses art in a positive way to redress the balance between the celebration of life and its cynical, commercial exploitation ”**

*is running out of breath. It is morally corrupt, aesthetically obsolete, thematically superficial, temperamentally boring. Even the seemingly worthwhile films, those that lay claim to high moral and aesthetic standards and have been accepted as such by critics and the public alike, reveal the decay of the Product Film. The very slickness of their execution has become*

*a perversion covering the falsity of their themes, their lack of sensibility, their lack of style*".

These words ring as true today as they did almost fifty years ago, and beckon a new generation of filmmakers to help reinvigorate the oppositional spirit of independent cinema.

Mekas uses art in a positive way to redress the balance between the celebration of life and its cynical, commercial exploitation. His films stand against the capitalist machine, highlighting the truly important things in life; the joys of family and friendship, the magic of a snowy morning in the city or the first blossoming of spring. It is his gift to be able to weave all of these disparate, poetic images together, allowing the viewer to discover them as if they were seeing them through Mekas' own eyes. He continues a tireless collector always on the lookout for beauty in the world.

*This is how I see him as he mops his brow and decants the remainder of his bottle of wine. His satisfied eyes, twinkling out from under heavy octogenarian lids, alive in the knowledge that he has captured something of the essence of that humid summer's evening in New York; another butterfly in his well-worn net, ready to be shared with friends and strangers the world over. Mekas takes one last swig of*

*wine then stands and shuffles round the table. He reaches toward the camera and switches it off.*

# KICK IT OUT

## Interview with Ian McDonald

James Marcus Tucker

For the last year I have been working as a cameraman on a documentary for Brighton filmmaker Ian McDonald. *Justin* follows a year in the life of a group of campaigners who are trying to raise the issue of homophobia in football. Local artist and gay footballer Jason Hall set up the Justin Campaign and the film follows it, every step of the way - from inception to a big public event on the South Bank.

I asked Ian about the film and the filmmaking process.

**Q What got you interested in making this project?**

I had just made *Brighton Bandits*, a documentary on the city's gay football team. I made that film to dispel stereotypes that gay men do not play football and as a more human way of raising questions about homophobia in sport. For example, why are there not any out gay professionals when there is such a thriving gay football culture?



Ian McDonald

And why are there so few people even talking about this issue?

These were the questions that I wanted people to think about after watching *Brighton Bandits*. In fact it was a player from the team - Jason Hall - who really confronted these questions head on. This surprised me a bit because Jason was probably one of the most hedonistic and erratic players in the team. So when he approached me and said

he wanted to do something about homophobia in football, I was a bit taken back but also very encouraged. He seemed very focussed and determined to 'do something'. He was the one who said to me that it was soon going to be 10 years since Justin Fashanu committed suicide, yet nobody was talking about it. Well, we got talking about it with some of the other players, notably Paul Windsor and Gareth

Buckell, and with Geetha, the producer of *Brighton Bandits*. We decided that 'doing something' about Justin Fashanu might make a good documentary. Gradually, out of our discussions grew the idea of having a campaign to redeem the memory of Justin Fashanu and tackling homophobia in professional football and of making a documentary about that campaign. Anyway, that's how the film came about!

**Q A year into shooting, how is it progressing?**

It's going well. I was clear from the beginning that we would shoot for a year starting on May 2nd 2008, the tenth anniversary of Justin's death. The narrative thrust of the film is built around the ambitious goal of the campaigners to get the football authorities to mark May 2nd 2009 as Justin Fashanu Day.

Making the film without external funding has not been easy! It's all being done on goodwill and deferred payments. It's never easy to raise funds for any documentary, but I have been disappointed by the responses of some funders and commissioners who say quite openly that they would only be

interested in a project of this kind if we were going to 'name names' - but we are not interested in outing players, or in creating scandal and sensationalism. In spite of the lack of funds, we have kept going and now the shooting is nearly over.

**Q What changes have you noticed in your protagonist Jason over the time of filming?**

At the beginning of the campaign, Jason was enthusiastic and determined to do something about homophobia in football, but he had never been involved in political activism before. As a 'campaign-virgin' he was initially unsure about what he was getting into, and certainly nervous about putting his face

to what we thought at that time was quite a provocative campaign. But he has flourished along with the campaign. It's really been a life-changing experience for Jason. The campaign has a style and a voice that reflects Jason's character: sincere and energetic, fun and playful, yet provocative and even confrontational. It's not a typical campaign involving going on demonstrations, lobbying and meetings but a campaign that has involved lots of public events and interventions based around Jason's artwork and imaginative and unique football initiatives like the gay football festival in the centre of Brighton, and the creation of a campaign football team, the Justin Fashanu All Stars. But the other



From left to right Paul Windsor, Jason Hall, Gareth Buckell





guys, Paul Windsor and Gareth Buckell have also undergone dramatic life changing experiences during the course of the campaign. Gareth in particular is emerging as a very different person but you will have to see the film to find out more!

**Q Tell me a little about how you approach filmmaking or this film in particular. What kind of filmmaker are you? What is your style/aesthetic?**

I am still working this out. I didn't go to film school, so I do not have any formal training. I am largely a self-taught and intuitive filmmaker. I have learnt a lot from people around me,

especially my wife Geetha who is a filmmaker herself, and we work together on all of our film projects. When it comes to shooting and editing, I go a lot on instinct – with what feels right – which is often quite difficult to articulate. But I am searching for those moments of pathos, humour, beauty, honesty, vulnerability, humanity: in other words to go beyond the actuality to find the truth of any situation. I am clearer about what to avoid when making a film: things like making fun of people, sentimentality, sensationalism and didacticism. I don't think good docs tell people what to think, but rather what to think about.

It's important to always respect your subjects and never underestimate the audience.

I think the best documentaries are those stories that *have* to be told as a documentary: that need to work at the level of affect as well as intellect in order to be fully grasped and that have an aesthetic dimension that cannot be captured by words alone. This is why I started making documentaries. For example, my first film, *Inside the Kalari*, about the martial art of kalarippayattu from South India, was made after three years of academic research in India. For me the most compelling aspects of this ancient

form of body culture were the ambience of the kalari and the grace, rhythm and power of its form. I was able to portray this much better through a documentary than an essay.

**Q Are you just observing or are you involved in how the campaign develops? Is this a unique way of making a documentary movie do you think?**

I am of course observing the campaign but I am also influencing how it develops. The idea for a campaign emerged partly as a necessary mechanism for effective awareness raising activity, but also as a device to give the film a coherent narrative structure. It's also the case that thinking about the film has helped to shape the campaign. For example, the 'Justin Goal of the Season' competition was inspired by a filmic demand for campaigning activity that was engaging, dramatic and highly visual. And of course having contributed to the rise of the campaign, without the campaign there is no film. But The Justin Campaign is no conceit constructed for the purposes of making a film. Professional football is the last bastion of homophobia and the campaign will continue long after this

film has been finished. But it's also the case the campaign may not have happened without the impetus of the film. The film and the campaign are symbiotically related. I don't know if it is a unique way of making a documentary. It is certainly not a conventional approach, but this is the way it organically developed from the discussions with Jason, Paul, Gareth and Geetha over a year ago.

**Q What are the plans for the campaign/documentary in the future?**

The campaign will go on and you can check its progress on the website. As for the film, I am focussed on getting it finished. When there is no money and no commissioner waiting for the film, it is easy to let projects slide. So what-

ever other grand plans and dreams I have for this film, they are irrelevant so long as it is not finished. When it's done, of course I want the film to be seen in all the right places, at film festivals, public screenings, conferences and on TV. Part of my motivation for making documentaries is its potential to reach a wide audience and engage people who might otherwise not be prepared to think about issues like homophobia in sports. My hope is that this film gets people thinking about the issues of homophobia in football, and prompts them to reflect on how we can effect change in whatever aspect of our lives and society.

*To find out more about the Justin Campaign and the documentary, visit [www.thejustincampaign.com](http://www.thejustincampaign.com)*



Ingenu St John, Jason Hall, Ma Butcher and Johnny Woo with Jason's hand made bar football table

# Cinema and the Enlightenment to Come

## Part 1: Art and the Enlightenment Past

Bradleigh S. Tuque

*The following is the first part of a three part article; others follow in forthcoming editions.*

In the Renaissance and the ensuing Enlightenment, society was faced with radical shifts in science, religion, philosophy, politics, arts and technology. Through the Renaissance great figures (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli) set into motion a new idea of humanity that guided the gradual transformation of society from the medieval to the modern society we live now. They set forth to institute a new conception of Reason and a new conception of Order. Yet this journey from the Renaissance to now is not just a set of guiding ideas, these guiding ideas grow out of innovations of technology (e.g. the printing press), civil wars and revolutions. The combination of social upheavals, technological innovations and grand and guiding ideas set forth to shape a new world.

What was the function of Art in the making of this modern world?

On the one hand Art led us on a path towards truth, via reason. Art bound up with reason already existed for the ancients. Plato, the dramatist of reason, used script to present the philosophical dialogues of Socrates. However, in Plato's *Republic*, Socrates, in opposition to the tragic poets,

is prepared to banish art from the Republic. Aristotle, in contrast, would have no such thing. Aristotle defends the poets on didactic grounds. Art or theatre can teach us something about the virtues. For Aristotle, not only philosophy, but even dramatic art can teach us something. Theatre does not simply tell a story of others, the same story could be told of you! Theatre puts a mirror up to the audience so they can reflect on themselves. So through art as didactics we gain a long history of the rational life of Art from the philosophical novels of Henry Fielding to the political theatre of Brecht and Shaw.

Art as reason also manifests itself in the experimentations of Leonardo De Vinci. Here Art was raised to the level of

**“Art was a tool of revolution and social transformation which could resist the cold instrumentality of urban capitalist existence: survival and consumption”**

science. Artists in their desire to capture nature went beyond art into experimental science.

This idea resurfaces today. The radical visions of avant-garde and conceptual art usher in a revision of art's purpose and function. Art breaks from modern conventions and traditions and in some cases

seeks to become a scientific endeavour once again. Stelarc's forays into artificial body extensions and robotics exemplify this. His art pieces are art pieces and scientific experiments. Art is unified with science through “the experiment.”

In the Renaissance, of course, art is still very much tied up with glorifying God; the arts have a religious and transcendent function. Yet the decreasing influence of the Papacy and the increasing influence of ascetic Protestantism leads to a growing separation of art from religion. Art is increasingly seen as a “science” in its own right, which need not be justified by any outside forces, hence aesthetics. Yet aesthetics increasingly finds in art its own rationality quite distinct from didactics, religious glorification and scientific experiment. Art focuses “internally” on its own aesthetic form and the relation of this form to content. Art no longer seems to require some “external justification” (didactics, God, scientific experiment) one need only look at art itself, and through its form and content, come to realise the intrinsic power of art, poetics and aesthetic experience.

What is the social function of art as *aesthetic experience*? It had been easier to give an account of the social function of art as didactics, as glorification of God, as scientific experiment. But without these “external” justifications what was art there for? Was it ornamentation? Was it entertainment? Was it self expression?

Was it therapeutics? Was it liberation? Was it a form of secularised mysticism? Furthermore, was it political or apolitical? Moral or amoral?

Oscar Wilde's “art as self-expression” and William Morris's “arts as crafts” were political conceptions of art without being didactic. Art as self-expression and as craft posed an alternative to the alienating effect

of industrial production. Art as an alternative mode of production set itself against the existing order, through its ability to produce in a radically different way. Art came to suggest a different social order and even in its aesthetic formulation served to become a radical force for social change. This idea of art's power to revolutionise everyday life, became especially apparent in the avant-garde through surrealism, then through Situationism and eventually manifested as a driving force in the May '68 Paris riots. Art was a tool of revolution and social transformation which could resist the cold instrumentality of urban capitalist existence: survival and consumption.

In contrast, the aesthete who conceives art as amoral or apolitical and who focuses merely on form, or who advocates a crude reading of “art for art's sake” risks falling prey to “heartless sensualism” and the capitalist, who strives to transform art into commodity and art production into industry risks transforming art into a means for money, and in this respect devaluing art as art. The capitalist risks becoming a “spiritless specialist”, driven only by the desire for money and by “professionalism”, but by no artistic, or even human, passion.

*Now in our so-called age of the “specialist without spirit and the sensualist without heart” some say that we, once again, need a new enlightenment; a new conception of “reason” and a new conception of “order”. But we must re-discover these in a completely different form. If this is so then what does it mean to one of the great visual printing presses of our age: Film. What is the function of Film and what is its role in the Enlightenment to come?*

1 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Dover Publications: 2003) p182

# Letter to Derek Jarman

James Marcus Tucker

Dear Derek,

I sat down to watch your film namesake this evening on More4 - *Derek*. I could write about how this in itself is testament to the problem I perceive - many years ago, your films were at least shown on Channel 4. In the film, Tilda (your wonderful muse) writes you a letter - and as you are obviously receiving mail, here is another! Walking through the city, Tilda so rightly points out that we live in a very neat corporate world now. Maybe it has always been this way. But where is the antidote now? Where is the filmmaker extraordinaire injecting spirit and passion into this soulless, profit-driven and so neatly clean and focussed culture?

Isaac has done you proud. There are moments in his film about you when I could hear the TV sets being switched off in suburban homes because of the gaps left for breath. There were moments I cried, like when Tilda spoke of your spirit and generosity. There were moments I pined, like when the young beautiful men rode horses across the sardinian landscape in 1975. There were moments I felt a fraud when I realised how much you embodied everything I see as paramount to the life of an artist.

A while ago, *Vertigo* magazine highlighted for its readers the 'Athanasian oath'. It asks of filmmakers, "*do you swear that you will not let your eyes drift, that you will not close your ears to the truly beautiful and the truly horrible...*" And most importantly "*do you swear that you will not film a single frame that would not be like freshly baked bread; that you will not record a single millimetre of magnetic tape that would not be like clear water*". It was a speech made by Fernando Birri in Cuba in 1990, yet, could it not be speaking about your ethos - Derek? An ethos where every frame is recorded for the sake of this spirit and generosity Tilda loved you for.

I look to you so often still. I think of you when I look at the USA and its continuing 'problem' with homosexuality and its defiant stance against truly equal rights. I look to you when I see the images of hanging Iranian teenagers. I look to you when I see a bus-stop poster for the next Hollywood sequel - *The Revenge of the Quick Edits for Idiots* - or some such. I look to you when I watch Pasolini - how I can see the invisible baton handed down. I look to you when I hear, as I did yesterday, that doctors will be told to write notes for patients stating what they *can* do. It's the corporate machine gone so wild - our Thatcherite legacy - that even when ill, we are made to continue on as profit driven, cog-like productive citizens. Heaven forbid we stop to get well.



Still from *In the Shadow of the Sun*

Here's a question for you. Don't you think our problems with ASBO's and happy slapping, with the callousness and ignorance, with the demise of the left and the rise of the me, with the racism and the lingering homophobia, with the widening gap between rich and poor, with the desire for fame above service, the need for noise instead of substance, the profit instead of value, the owned instead of shared, derives from everything we can now recognise as the Thatcher 1980s? Fuck the 1960's - literally. Sexual freedom didn't get us into this mess. Sex isn't the problem and it never was. Young people feeling devalued, isolated, not part of the society (which she claimed didn't exist) continues to blight, and our continuing dismantling of the welfare state and blinding by America's post-Regan soulless greedy gloss entraps us further. Welcome to the 51st state for the 21st century.

The future, when I look to it, has an image of you fading. Like you, the old values I so cherish from the post-war era are disappearing. I'm 27, and wonder if I am the only young gay man asking for something more than Madonna records. Isaac's film brings you out of the boxes you inhabit at the BFI for a last look before you disappear forever. But not without a struggle from the remaining soldiers who continue to fight for your memory.

Yours passionately,  
James xxx

# Film Challenge Report

Group 1 Participants: Daniel Childs, Ndjimi Feumba, Liva Puce, Camille Nayrolles, Jill Ahrens, Emma Bailey, Fiona Hurd

Fiona Hurd

Faced with the film challenge themes of 'rivalry of kinsmen' and 'loss of a loved one' our group at first experienced a collective feeling of writers' block while before our eyes the other group appeared to be running with a wave of inspiration. But once the reality and scope of the challenge set in gradually the ideas began to flow and we started to glue them together with plots, locations and roles. By the end of the first evening we had a briefly assembled a plot, cast of players and a tight schedule, though there was enough time for a celebratory cocktail.

Fast forward to the next morning and we are lighting scenes, directing shots, finalising the plot details plus around twenty other tasks all at once, most of them unfamiliar to all of us. One day you're working a 9-5 the next you're trying to decipher the best angle for a close up - what?!

Our first day of shooting involved two locations, a bedroom and a bar, plus a couple of outdoor shots, finding locations in such a short space of time involved us pulling together as a team to pool resources, ideas and share networking skills. Par-

**“ I had never worked on a film project before, but when I took part in the 48 hour Film Challenge I got some hands-on experience in acting, lighting, camera work and editing. It was a great opportunity to meet individuals from such diverse backgrounds who all share a passion for film and then produce a short film together in such a short space of time. I'm definitely looking forward to the next Film Challenge and participating in other film projects which are currently starting to take shape ”**

– Jill Ahrens

ticipating in the film challenge really made you realise the amount of time, detail and planning that goes into making a film. Continuity and lighting became real issues to us especially when faced with such a tight deadline. Initially we had planned to film all on the scenes on Saturday and dedicate the whole of Sunday to editing. In reality this did not happen and it became apparent on Saturday that we would have to finish filming on Sunday, as it was not possible to carry on into the night as the scenes left to film required daylight.

Sunday morning and we are out on



Planning the shot

the pier, looking out to sea and blagging free rides on the dodgems, and eating doughnuts, all in the name of filmmaking of course! We manage to get the remaining shots filmed relatively quickly; a key skill which all of us learned on the shoot was the importance of scheduling and planning. Working out an efficient shooting itinerary is crucial to meeting time constraints.

The idea of democracy was what our group strived to achieve throughout the whole challenge and the editing was no

**“ I enjoyed the sense of camaraderie and discovery, and being put just slightly outside my comfort zone. It was great to have a finished piece of work created in such a short time, but it was the process that was most important ”**

– Dan Childs

different. After capturing the footage, the whole group watched it and decided as a collective which takes we wanted to use in the film. Next we started to piece all of the

scenes together in order to construct the narrative and explain our group's interpretation of the themes. A major event which came out of this process was right at the eleventh hour we decided to change the ordering of the shots which would immediately imply a different meaning to the original one. While this was happening one of our group members composed some original music for the film which was integrated into the final cut.

Nearing the deadline our whole team raced down to the Northern Lights to unveil our finished film to the other team plus assorted friends and family and the odd keen observer. The combination of excitement, exhaustion and adrenaline made the viewing even more memorable and everyone seemed pleased with the final result. The 48 Film Challenge gave everyone involved a great weekend providing experience, trials and a great opportunity to get to know members of the Brighton Film Coalition on a more personal level.

# Film Challenge Report

Group 2 participants: Daniel Fawcett, James Marcus Tucker, Toby Edwardes, Bradley Tuck, Anya Liatsko, Lucien Lawrence, Mustafa Sayed, Robert Dee, Tim Pieraccini, Ellen Rose

Tim Pieraccini

I took away three vital lessons from the first Coalition Film Challenge: try to do a paper edit as you work, get as many cutaways as you have time for and never trust anyone who seems to know where they're going. When we started on the Friday night, ten people were around the table pitching ideas for our group, but we lost a few to other commitments and ended up with a core group of about seven. Once the story was set and casting sorted (we ended up, as a matter of necessity, with an all-male set of leads), I took the idea away and knocked out a script in the small hours.

As it turned out I still got to sleep quite some time before Daniel, so he was possibly quite glad that his first scene enabled him to get back into bed, albeit with another man. I'd condensed the exposition down as much as I could, but there was still a fair bit of dialogue to learn, and lighting problems to overcome. The latter we solved with a colander taped to the light; the dialogue ended up propped in front of Daniel, concealed by the sheets despite my sometimes clumsy camerawork.

James had mentioned doing a paper edit (i.e. choosing the takes we wanted) as we went along, so we made a fairly careful note of which takes were best. James himself couldn't be present for the first session, but he was available

for phone consultation—which came in very handy indeed. The actual working method evolved reasonably democratically, with everyone pitching in ideas, but Daniel tended to be the final arbiter. It was he who insisted on doing some cutaway shots during Toby's makeup scene, which I felt were unnecessary (although my protest might have been prompted by a writer's horror at the idea of some dialogue being improvised...). But I was completely wrong; the extra shots were incredibly useful in the editing.

The second session was at Lucien's house, the domestic horrors of which I shall not attempt to describe. As usual, everything took longer than it should have



Some of group 2 at the end of the 48 hours

done, and after noshing down on chips and singing along to the Mills Brothers while waiting for James to arrive and save us with his technical expertise, we found that what were originally intended to be daytime shots would have to be done in the dark. But it worked out; Daniel memorised a fairly complicated closing speech, and despite there being a ridiculous amount of traffic for a narrow out-of-the-way road, we managed to get everything we needed.

We headed into town for the final shoot, filming near the northern lights and then doing some wandering about the lanes, shooting our pulse-pounding chase sequence. The very last pieces of filming involved a perilous crossing of the road around the Steine, Toby walking on the spot for five minutes (two more shots that weren't in the original plan—both worked brilliantly), and a surprisingly early wrap around one in the morning. I honestly hadn't expected to get any sleep at all...

Sunday was editing day, and it was only mildly distracting to have the other Film Challenge group filming in the corner of the very same room! The editing, undertaken by a smaller group, was very much a consultative process, but we owe the polished perfection of the finished edit entirely to Bobby, who worked with unbelievable speed and precision to pull it all together (he admitted to being helped enormously by the paper edit). In the end, we even *almost* made the deadline, arriving at the Northern Lights around 6.30, with the other group not far behind. And both films turned out to be thoroughly entertaining.

For me this was an entirely positive experience; everyone co-operated perfectly



Toby in the lead role

**“For me this was an entirely positive experience; everyone co-operated perfectly with no trace of ego”**

with no trace of ego, and everyone fulfilled a vital role at some point in the production. Toby was an energetic and generous leading man, Mustafa was a rock throughout in so many tiny ways, and without Anya we'd have no real record of the shoot—and we'd be without one of the best shrugs in screen history. Bradley coped admirably with some fairly awkward dialogue and came up with some gems during the editing.

But I did list three lessons I learned. Well - mentioning no names, but we did emerge near Queen's Park when we were allegedly en route down to the Northern Lights, and one member of the team managed to take me right around the block at the beginning of a walk to HIS OWN house!

Points to remember: write down your best takes, get those cutaways-and take a nap, kids.

# Contributors

Photography: Dan Childs

Text: Name a film that changed you



Daniel Fawcett

## The Garden - Derek Jarman

It was upon being shown a fuzzy VHS copy of this film one Sunday afternoon in 1998 by my uncle that I decided I wanted to make films. Never before had I considered that a film could be a personal expression and exploration of ideas; I wasn't inspired to make films that looked like *The Garden* but to make films that are as personal to me as *The Garden* is to Derek Jarman.



Matthew Hamblion

## Stop Making Sense - Jonathan Demme

Watching Jonathan Demme's most perfectly considered record of a most perfectly considered live performance by the Talking Heads was the first time I truly realised how I wanted to go beyond the ordinary in my own work. It is wholly joyful and celebratory; groundbreaking and relevant, but quite apart from po-faced 'experimentalism'.



Fiona Hurd

## Return to Oz - Walter Murch

The repeated watching of *Return to Oz* in my childhood years made me realise a film could be paradoxical, dark and tender, whilst guiding me on a fantastical journey of splendor, wonder, horror and suspense.



Tim Pierichini

## American Beauty - Sam Mendes

Four of us went to see it. Two of us hated it. But ten years on, *American Beauty* remains for me the film that still has a lingering ability to lift me out of the darkest mood--every time I see a plastic bag frolicking in the breeze...



James Marcus Tucker

## Mirror - Andrei Tarkovsky

At first, I was shown just one sequence from this film - a barn on fire in the background, water dripping in the foreground near camera, with a sound mix of both flames and water drops. I realised the true poetic potential of cinema.



Dan Childs

## Rear Window - Alfred Hitchcock

I come from a family of Hitchcock fans and the favourite was always *Rear Window*. The stylised rendering of a claustrophobic, clockwork little world, and the suspense that builds until you almost can't stand it anymore.



Bradleigh S. Tuque

## Dogville - Lars Von Trier

Lars Von Trier reveals the human condition with nothing but painted lines on a floor and a powerful confidence in his audience's imagination. The film challenged me to think about the dark sides of ourselves and the banality of evil in a powerful and innovative way.



Benoit Schmit

## Beetlejuice - Tim Burton

Beetlejuice, beetlejuice, beetlejuice!!!

# The Brighton Filmmakers' Coalition

The BFC meet every Sunday at 6pm; the meetings are open for anybody interested in filmmaking to come to and discuss projects and meet other filmmakers. There is also an opportunity for people to show their films or discuss their ideas and receive feedback and advice from other members. The meetings are informal and open to anybody with all levels of film experience.

We run quarterly film challenges in which films are made under rules/restrictions and in a set period of time in a collaborative way; these challenges are a great way to form new friendships and get hands-on experience of making a film in a supportive and un-competitive environment.

For more information please join our facebook page:

The Brighton Filmmakers Coalition OR email [d.j.fawcett@googlemail.com](mailto:d.j.fawcett@googlemail.com)

Please note our venue currently changes from week to week so please check facebook for up to date information.

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