

Seminar

5

Sydney Seminar for the **Arts and Philosophy**

Is it Possible to Think in Images?



Cinema is often regarded as a form of entertainment, as an artistic representation of the world, or as a source of visual and narrative pleasure.

We often talk of the power of cinema to open up new horizons, to enable us to experience the world of a character or milieu, or to create fictional worlds that we can enter as though into a dream. Whether in narrative cinema, experimental film, or in documentary, the power of the cinematic image to expand our horizons of experience is undeniable.

Cinema, however, can also be understood as a way of thinking in its own right: as a way of posing questions, exploring ideas, and transforming our experience. Cinema can be a way of forcing us to think, and to think differently, all through the use of sound and image. Film theorists and philosophers have often drawn upon films to illustrate various theories or ideas, from psychoanalysis and semiotics to theories of gender

and personal identity. The more challenging question is whether film is less a vehicle for ideas than an independent medium for thinking in visual and narrative terms. How does cinema “think” in images? What can films explore that other artistic media fail to capture? Can films be “philosophical” in their own right? How do films speak to our lived ethical, social, and cultural concerns?



This seminar will explore these questions from a variety of perspectives, bringing together, a film theorist with a particular interest in film as philosophy, Lisa Trahair, an Australian filmmaker Daniel Ross, who has co-directed a film related to philosophy, an Australian filmmaker, Janet Merewether, whose documentary film *Jabe Babe* 'merges fiction and non-fiction forms to inhabit the heightened technicolour world of the tall woman, the outsider, to provoke questions about society's desire for sexual, visual and genetic conformity', and Peter Keough, a distinguished American film critic who has edited a work on the interrelation of sex, violence, and censorship in film.

Each participant will speak, or demonstrate ideas, for 20 minutes, with 10 minutes of question time.

(Coordinator), Anthony Uhlmann (UWS); (co-convenor) Louise D'Arcens (University of Wollongong); (co-convenor) Robert Sinnerbrink (Macquarie University); (co-convenor) Gabrielle Carey (UWS); (assistant coordinator) Andrea Curr.

Patrons/Advisors: Stephen Barker, Herbert Blau, Bruno Clément, J. M. Coetzee, Paula Latos-Valier, Terence Maloon, Wayne McKenna, Robyn Nevin, Paul Patton, Peggy Phelan, Andrew Riemer, Kathy Woodward.

Seminar 5:

Is it Possible to “Think” in Images Rather than Words?

Wednesday, June 22, 2005, 2:30pm-4.30pm

Filmspeak Program, Sydney Film Festival

Statement Bar

State Theatre, Market St, Sydney

Admission Free

The Writing and Society Group at the University of Western Sydney
in association with The 52nd Sydney Film Festival present:

Is it Possible to “Think” in Images Rather than Words?

Convenor:

Robert Sinnerbrink (Philosophy, Macquarie University)

Panel:

Lisa Trahair (Film Studies, UNSW)

Daniel Ross (Filmmaker, Philosopher, Australia)

Janet Merewether (Filmmaker, Australia)

Peter Keough (Film Critic, The Boston Phoenix, USA)

For further information on this event please see our website:

www.uws.edu.au/sydneyseminar

If you would like to receive information about future events, please
email us at sydneyseminar@bigpond.com and provide email details.

