

Sussex University Workshop and Seminar

30 January - 1 February 2019

Course leader: Andy Lawrence

Location: Sussex Humanities Lab, First floor, Silverstone Building, School of Media, Film and Music, University of Sussex, Falmer BN1 9RH

Number of participants: 15

Documentary technique as research practice

Synopsis:

A camera and microphone work at the speed of light and sound, not only framing what occurs in front of the lens and around the pick-up but also preserving the embodied reactions of the filmmaker. Through participating in the confusion that surrounds human action a filmmaker can attempt to involve the audience in fieldwork experiences as they unfold. Filmmaking for fieldwork is thus an empirical art that uses new avenues in academic research, documentary and cinema practice to extend knowledge by dramatic means incorporating collaborative, observational, reflexive and expressive modes of storytelling. These classes cover all the stages necessary for the production of a documentary film from conception through preparation, production, post-production and distribution. Central to the method is a technique for recording human processes that demonstrates the unique potential of filmmaking as a tool for understanding human experience. We will also consider video editing and storytelling as analytic tools suitable to the exploration and expression of academic ideas and as a way to produce high quality and engaging films. Furthermore I hope to describe a way to combine words, images and ideas on a voyage of discovery.

About Andy Lawrence:

Andy is a senior lecturer and filmmaker-in-residence at the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester. He also teaches at the University of Bern in Switzerland, the Free University in Berlin, Germany and F4F™ courses at The Futureworks School of Media in Manchester, UK. Andy makes documentary films on subjects relating to anthropology and he experiments with new methods and technologies associated with filmmaking as a research method. He has made films

about childbirth, death, adolescence, old age, adventure and identity in the UK and in India as AllRitesReversed, as a production name for films that look at the uncertainty that surrounds these momentous life-changing experiences. A selection of these films can be viewed from his website together with other research, teaching and writing activities. Andy established Filmmaking For Fieldwork with Paul Henley to concentrate on the development of filmmaking as a research method.

Current ARR | F4F activities include: producing Martha-Cecilia Dietrich's film, *Horror In The Andes*, which explores how Peruvian filmmakers have resorted to horror fiction as a means to render and discuss the history and legacy of colonialism with local audiences: touring *Black Snow*, about England's worst ever mining disaster, recent winner of the AHRC award for best research film of the year. Andy is completing a book project, *Filmmaking For Fieldwork: an ethnographer's handbook*, soon to be published by Manchester University Press.

allritesreversed.co.uk | filmmakingforfieldwork.co.uk

Suggested background viewing:

One Long Journey

(86mins. dir. Andy Lawrence 2016: VHX)

<https://allritesreversed.vhx.tv/buy/one-long-journey?code=oljsussex>

The Lover and the Beloved: A Journey Into Tantra

(70mins. dir. Andy Lawrence 2011: DER)

<https://vimeo.com/38029382/1cf8ebfa79>

Suggested background reading:

Hassard, J. et al (2017) *A Visual Turn for Organizational Ethnography: Embodying the Subject in Video-Based Research*. Organizational Studies 00(0): Sage, London.

What to bring:

A laptop with pre-installed editing software (if you have one – otherwise equipment running Adobe Premiere CC2019 will be provided)

A portable USB3 or similar hard drive on which to store your rushes and project files.

Schedule:

Wednesday 30 January

2 - 2.30pm - Introduction: *Why Make a Documentary Film?*

Understanding human experience and its importance for academic research. What are the differences between filmmaking and a written approach? How do the stages in the production of a documentary film contribute towards the research process?

2.30 - 4pm – Clinic 1: *Your work*

Each participant will have the opportunity to present a 3-minute (max) summary of their work with one or two central practical questions or dilemmas that they are facing, to be addressed over the next two days. 8 participants will present in this clinic and those that remain will present tomorrow. The presentation is optional but you are encouraged to interrogate your practice to see where the weaknesses are.

Break

4.30 - 6pm - Research seminar: *From Nanook of the North to Clouds Over Sidra: documentary filmmaking and the research imperative.*

At some point in the summer of 1920, Robert Flaherty and his crew of native Inuit were sawing the side off an igloo in northern Quebec to accommodate the narrow lenses and small-format film stock used to describe Nanook's daily rituals to a cinema audience. One hundred years later, new 360° technologies are being used to promote empathy towards the lives of others through individualised virtual experiences. What has changed in the ways we interact with others through ethnographic fieldwork and what does the genre of documentary offer to the development of filmmaking as a tool for academic research and expression?

45 mins followed by Q&A chaired by Joanna Callaghan

6 - 7pm - *Drinks reception*

Thursday 31 January

9 - 10.30 – Clinic 2: *Your work*

The remaining participants will have the opportunity to present a 3-minute (max) summary of their work with one or two central practical questions or dilemmas that they are facing. The presentation is optional but you are encouraged to interrogate your practice to see where the weaknesses are.

Break

11 – 12pm - *Preparation and thinking about your field*

1. Assigning groups and equipment
2. Image and sound recording settings. (Use FX Mode 25Mbps 1920x1080 25p, 48K 16bit dual mono sound)
3. Manual image control (Focus, Shutter Speed, Exposure, White balance on automatic).
4. Sound recording - Microphone placement, monitoring and movement.
5. Tripod or handheld.
6. Communication between crew.

12 – 1pm - *'The Process Sequence'* - Independent group work to be recorded after lunch.

1. What is a process?
2. Why are processes important when attempting to explore and express human experience?
3. **Describing human experience through a triangle of emotion, strategy and impact:** How to bring the requirements of cinema and research together with a technique for recording human actuality through the empirical lens of a process.
4. Practical issues - Fieldwork relationships. Recording a variety of images and focused sounds. Thinking about the edit - coverage and shot types.

Lunch

2 – 4pm - *Filmwork and Fieldwork: A practical exercise that involves recording a simple process* (record at least thirty-minutes of material for a 4-minute (max) finished length film, using the techniques that we discussed before lunch.

Break

4.15 - 5pm – **Editing as an analytic tool.** Constructing documentary stories and exploring your research ideas.

1. The importance of sequencing images and sounds when constructing a film narrative *and* exploring a research idea.
2. The basic elements of narrative - hook, title, beginning, middle and end.
3. Exploring ideas and moving through cuts (workflow).
4. The importance of sound: split edits and leading sound.
5. Carrying an audience on your research journey: Narrative arcs, signposting and reflexivity.

7pm - Dinner

Friday 1 February

9 – 12pm – **Project editing** in Edit Labs 1 & 2, Silverstone.

With assistance from the course tutors. (**using your own equipment and software of choice, or machines provided with Adobe Premiere CC2019**)

Lunch

1 – 2.30pm - **Screening of group work** (4-minutes max) with summary feedback from the course tutor.

Break

2.45 – 4pm - **Clinic 3: *Your work***

In this open session participants can ask questions that relate to their own research and clarify any of the methods and ideas that have been discussed over the past two days.

End of workshop

Suggested further reading and useful guides:

Steven Ascher and Edward Pincus (2013) *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide For The Digital Age*. Penguin Books, London.

A definitive reference guide to the technical problems of filmmaking

Marcus Banks and David Zeitlyn (2015) *Visual Methods in Social Research* (2nd edition). Sage, London.

Erika Balson and Hila Peleg (eds.) (2016) *Documentary Across Disciplines*. The MIT press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England.

Elena Barabantseva and Andy Lawrence (2015) *Encountering Vulnerabilities Through 'Filmmaking for Fieldwork'*: *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*. 43(3) 911-930. Sage.

Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor (1997) *Cross-cultural Filmmaking*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London.

Craig Batty and Susan Kerrigan (Eds.) (2018) *Screen Production Research: Creative Practice as a Mode of Enquiry*. Palgrave Macmillan

Nancy N. Chen and Trinh T. Minh-ha (1994) *Speaking Nearby*. In Lucien Taylor (ed) *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays From V.A.R. 1990-1994*. Routledge, Oxford and New York. pp. 433-451

Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz (2009) *Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film, and the Exploration of Social Life*. Indiana University Press., Bloomington and Indianapolis.

Paul Henley (2006) *Narratives: The Guilty Secret of Ethnographic Documentary?* In Metje Postma & Peter Ian Crawford, eds., *Reflecting Visual Ethnography: using the camera in anthropological research*, pp.376-401. Intervention Press & CNWS Publications, Hoejbjerg & Leiden.

Paul Henley (2004) *Putting Film to Work: Observational Cinema as Practical Ethnography* In Sarah Pink, Laszlo Kurti and Ana Isabel Afonso, eds., *Working Images: Methods and Media in Ethnographic Research*, pp.109-130. Routledge, London.

Kevin MacDonald and Mark Cousins (1998) *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary*. Faber and Faber, London.

David MacDougall (2006) *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.

David MacDougall (Edited with an introduction by Lucien Taylor) (1998) *Transcultural Cinema*. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.

David MacDougall (1994) *Whose Story is it?* In Lucien Taylor (ed) *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays From V.A.R. 1990-1994*. Routledge, Oxford and New York. pp.27-36

Laura Marks (2000) *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1991) *When The Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Routledge, New York

Walter Murch (2001) *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing* (2nd edition). Silman-James Press, Los Angeles

Bill Nichols (2017) *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd edition). Indiana University Press

Bill Nichols (2016) *Speaking Truths with Film: Evidence, Ethics, Politics in Documentary*. University of California Press

Sarah Pink (2016) *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. Sage, London

Sarah Pink et al (2013) *Doing Visual Ethnography* (3rd edition). Sage, London

Gillian Rose (2016) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (4th edition). Sage, London.

Jean Rouch [1974] *The Camera and Man* in (2003) Jean Rouch, *Ciné Ethnography* edited and translated by Steven Feld. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.

Vivian Sobchack (1992) *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of the Film Experience*. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.

Christian Suhr and Rane Willerslev (eds.) (2013) *Transcultural Montage* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford.

Joram Ten Brink and Joshua Oppenheimer (eds.) (2012) *Killer Images: Documentary Film, Memory and the Performance of Violence*. Wallflower Press, London and New York.

Dai Vaughan (1999) *The Aesthetics of Ambiguity* in *For Documentary: Twelve Essays*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London.

Diane Walderman and Janet Walker (eds.) (1999) *Feminism and Documentary*.
University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.

Journals concerning documentary film as research practice:

[Anthrovision from VANEASA](#)

Publishes articles including audiovisual material and promotes innovative ways of writing within an academic framework.

[Visual Ethnography](#)

Frequently includes articles on audiovisual research methodology and older editions are open access.

[Sightlines Journal and Conference](#)

Primarily an audiovisual publication designed to showcase films made in a research context within the higher education sector. The filmmakers are usually academic staff or doctoral students, often but not always based in the screen production discipline.

[Sensate](#)

A peer-reviewed, open-access, media-based journal for the creation, presentation, and critique of innovative projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

[Journal of Anthropological Films](#)

Curated by the Nordic Anthropological Film Association (NAFA): offers a selection of ethnographic documentaries available for viewing and peer-review.