

Out of Sentimentality for Film

There once was a time when a take during a film production was so valuable. It had value because a take was to be contained on a strip of celluloid film, which was, and still is, costly and required time for it to be developed and reviewed. A film director had to wait before he/she could actually see the final outcome. As a result, takes were carefully orchestrated and prayed upon. I still remember working with super 16mm film: one take for each shot.

In this digital age, however, celluloid films are deemed by young filmmakers of my generation as “limiting” and “inconsistent”. Perhaps celluloid films are “limiting” and “inconsistent,” but the experience of using celluloid to make a film is unforgettable and extremely rewarding. Because film puts the filmmaker into the mindset of “one take for each shot,” the filmmaker must critically approach each shot before arriving on set. As a result, the final film is reinforced tightly by its own theoretical background composed by the filmmaker. Hence, films back in the days had much more variety in terms of style. And the director’s vision was really absolute, not just on paper.

I want to make sure that I have nothing against digital cinema. Digital filmmaking is cheap, fast and takes up no physical space – qualities that are ideal for independent filmmakers with vision. What I am against, however, is that filmmakers exploiting the digital technology without critically approaching cinema. Digital filmmaking is done so fast and non-critically approached films are harmful – the combination of two is scary.

Young filmmakers must develop their own style through critical approaches that are done individually and independently – more the better. What the film industry has done to the development of cinematic styles is brilliant but dark. When Hollywood began to dominate the global film market and established its style to the world, it categorized the other styles of filmmaking as “art films”. But there is no such thing as “art film”. Let’s put it logically. We all agree that cinema is art. So “art films” are “art within art” that are more art than other films that are already art? It makes no sense. But the industry is clever because the term “art film” intimidates the audience. The audience think that “art films” are ‘difficult,’ ‘philosophical,’ ‘deep,’ etc., which makes the demand for any styles of filmmaking other than that of Hollywood extremely low. Hence, Hollywood has a strong grip on controlling the development of cinematic styles and film industries of different cultures. Here, we can redefine “New Wave” as a brief time gap before a nation’s film industry becomes like that of Hollywood.

Do not worry if your film will be pretentious or artsy. Just let them be pretentious and artsy. And do not make films to satisfy the audience. Think instead that you are giving the audience something new to choose – a new style, a new taste. Hollywood robs the audience from having choices – it is a violation of the basic human rights. The industry burns from the top – watch your heads.

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