

# FILM APPRECIATION (Notes)

## WHAT IS CINEMA ?

Cinema or motion picture is the art of moving images, a visual medium that tells stories.

## BUT CINEMA IS A LANGUAGE

- Every element of a visual image can carry meaning,
- Visual images can be « read » like other texts,
- The position of elements within the image, the colours used and the lighting can all affect interpretation,
- Camera distance (eg close-up, long shot, etc), camera angle and camera movement all affect meaning,
- The number and order of shots affect meaning.

## BASIC FILM GRAMMAR

- A frame is a single still image, it's like an alphabet letter,
- A shot is a single continuous recording made by a camera, it's like a word,
- A scene is a series of related shots, it's like a sentence,
- The transitions between the scenes (cut, dissolve...) are like punctuation,
- A sequence is a series of scenes which together tell a part of the story, it's like a paragraph.

## RULE OF THIRDS

- Composition rules and conventions are older than cinema and photography,
- Most of them have been used for thousands of years in painting,
- The rule of thirds is a basic composition principle that adds dynamism to your image.

## CAMERA MOVEMENTS

- Camera movements can add dynamism to your shots,
- It is better to use camera movements to reveal new information,

- However, camera movements can be distracting or even annoying when overused or used without a reason.

## **CAMERA ANGLES**

- Low angle is captured from a camera placed below the actors eyes, looking up at them. Low angle makes characters look dominant, aggressive, or ominous.
- In a high angle, the camera is above the subject, looking down. This position makes characters look weak, submissive or frightened. They are also good POVs of an submissive, or frightened. They are also good POVs of an adult looking at a child.

## **DEGREE RULE**

- Set the scene and establish your characters in space in order for the viewer to follow the action,
- Two characters in a scene should always have the same left/right relationship to each other,
- If you don't follow the rule or break it intentionally it disrupts the scene and intentionally, it disrupts the scene and disorients the audience.

## **IMPORTANCE OF SOUND**

- The importance of sound should not be underestimated,
- Moving image soundtracks can have four elements: music, sound effects, voice and silence. All of these contribute to meaning,
- Sound effects are two types: « atmosphere » (ie continuous sound ) and « spot effects » ( ), ie short sounds),
- Sound – particularly music – can set the mood of a film and establish its generic identity (eg comedy, thriller),
- Sound can affect not only the way viewers interpret the images but also what they actually think they can see,
- Off-screen sounds can help to create the impression of screen sounds can help to create the impression of three-dimensional space,
- Silence can also have a powerful effect on the interpretation of a sequence.