

FIL 253: WEEK III NOTES (9/19/22)



Last week, we heard Bertrand Tavernier proclaim that “*Here, the history of invention stops, and the history of filmmaking begins...*” Not long after images began to move, filmmakers harnessed the creative potential of this technology to produce illusions only possible in the new world of filmmaking.

One of these filmmakers was [Georges Méliès](#), the “**Magician of Cinema**,” who brought dreams to life with his fantastical films. [[22 min documentary: The Magic of Méliès](#)] *What man of our time could live without magic, without a little dreaming?*”

- In short films such as [The Four Troublesome Heads](#) (1898) and [The Living Playing Cards](#) (1905), he attracted audiences with cinema wizardry, often working as a **total filmmaker** involved in all aspects of production.
- One of Méliès’s most significant cinematic achievements is the 14-minute long 1902 classic [Trip to the Moon](#), which took audiences on a journey into outer space. As an adaptation of Jules Verne and the first science fiction movie, the film uses complex storytelling with an aesthetic that feels artificially arranged.
 - Martin Scorsese [paid tribute](#) to this classic in his cinematic love letter, *Hugo* (2011). So did Syracuse film student Alex Smithline in [A Trip to the Mooooon](#) (2018). *Think about the potential of cinema that is aware of its own history...*

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In anticipation of your upcoming **Collaborative Homage Project**, we looked at several examples of filmmakers who used the [short film format](#) in creative ways to acknowledge and consider the past in new ways.

- In [Lumiere and Company](#) (1995), 40 international directors were asked to make a short film using the original [cinematographe](#) invented by the Lumières. ([Trailer](#))
 - [Merzak Allouache](#) | [Abbas Kiarostami](#) | [Zhang Yimou](#) | [Helma Sanders-Brahms](#)
- Writer and researcher [Emma Piper-Burket](#) edited a love letter to female filmmakers through her video essay, [The Life of a Woman, Directed by Women](#), tracing a legacy back to Alice Guy-Blaché.

The past, though it may seem distant, lives on when we remember it. Magic tricks performed over a century ago have not lost their appeal in the present. In fact, simple illusions conjured by [Méliès](#) repeat themselves throughout [history](#) and continue [today](#).

Could it be that in the twenty-first century, the spectacle of [TikTok](#) (and formerly, [Vine](#)), is becoming the new [cinema of attractions](#), with its short-form stories, theatrical tricks, newly accessible technology, and experiments with [film grammar](#)? Cinema magic is more accessible than ever before. What will you do with the magic in your pocket?

CINEMATHEQUE / JOURNAL ENTRY

Special Screening of [Breathless](#) (1960) in honor of [Jean-Luc Godard](#)

Tuesday 9:15pm -11:15pm | Shemin Auditorium | Attendance Optional but Encouraged

Extra Credit Journal: Submit a reflection of 200-300 words to TurnItIn that considers the following:
As a young filmmaker, what can I learn from watching *Breathless*?

Required:

THROUGH FILM WE FIGHT ON:

[Syracuse University Human Rights Film Festival](#)

Featuring “outstanding films about human rights and social justice from around the world.”

Pick **at least 2 of the below screenings to attend** (more, if you are able!) Then, reflect on your experience at the festival, and write about the films you saw in a **300-500 word** journal entry. What impact did they have on you, and why? How is it possible to “fight on” through film? Upload this to TurnItIn by **Sunday at midnight**.

Thursday 9/22: [Tantura](#), 7 PM in Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium, Newhouse 3 + Filmmaker Q&A

Friday 9/23: [Framing Agnes](#), 7 PM in Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium, Newhouse 3 + Filmmaker Q&A

Saturday 9/24: [Hidden Letters](#), 1 PM in Shemin Auditorium, Shaffer Art Building - + Virtual Filmmaker Q&A

Saturday 9/24: [Aftershock](#), 4 PM in Shemin Auditorium, Shaffer Art Building + Filmmaker Q&A

Saturday 9/24: [Rehana Maryam Noor](#), 7 PM in Shemin Auditorium, Shaffer Art Building

Upcoming Assignment

Collaborative Homage Project — Now that you have researched the early cinematic pioneers such as Georges Méliès, Thomas Edison, the Lumieres, and Alice Guy-Blaché, your task is to collaborate in groups of 3-4 to make a short **60-90 second homage**. You have the freedom to interpret this assignment in your own creative way (as an homage, tribute, love letter, critical reflection, reference...) You may choose to focus on one early filmmaker, or more than one. Most importantly: play, have fun, and work well together as a team.

- This project will be due at **midnight on Sunday, October 2**. One person from your group will upload the project as a video file (labeled with everyone's names) to a shared Google Drive folder.
 - Along with this, each group member should turn in a **short individual reflection** with a brief artist statement and a reflection on the following: What was your experience with the collaboration process?
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Reach out to an instructor if you have any questions!

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