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VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AS AN EDUCATIONAL EXERCISE AND ARTWORK**Roman Shyrman***Honored Art Worker of Ukraine, Professor^a;**Associate Member^b;**e-mail: rom_nat@ukr.net; ORCID: 0000-0003-4900-7791**^a Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Kyiv, Ukraine;**^b National Academy of Arts of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine***Keywords:**documentary film;
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technology**Abstract**

The purpose of the article is to analyze the importance of training exercises in video surveillance for the creative abilities' development of film and television directors; to prove the necessity and usefulness of such exercises not only for documentarians but also for feature film and animation directors; identify specific methods of the director's work on video surveillance. **The research methodology** is based on a theoretical analysis of the work of outstanding film directors, in particular films and evidence on the nature of documentary films by Hertz Frank and Frederick Wiseman and analysis of Ukrainian and foreign observation films. **Scientific novelty.** The role recognition of film and video surveillance as a basic element in the education and training of cinematographers; determination of characteristic features and fundamental differences of work on screen observations in comparison with work on other types of the screen works. **Conclusions.** The article analyzes the importance of video surveillance for the creative imagination development of students-directors. The importance of observations has been proved for the work of directors working in all types of cinematography from documentaries to feature films and animation. Examples of directorial work strategies on video surveillance are given, which are fundamentally different from the methods of creating other types of screen works.

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Problem statement

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) is believed to be not only a classic screen

detective but also a metaphor for movie watching. The protagonist, chained to a wheelchair due to a broken leg, begins to look at his yard, the windows of the

house opposite and what the neighbours are doing. He is almost invisible to others. And a spectator is watching pictures of the neighbours' lives in the dark cinemas. With binoculars and a camera with a long-focus lens, it constantly resizes frames. His observation leads to the fact that he exposes the crime that took place nearby.

Recent research and publications analysis

Hitchcock's film is also a kind of model for the creation of a documentary film-observation, where the author seeks to be an invisible observer of the various life situations development. Victor Kosakovsky's film "Quieter!" is an almost 100% embodiment of the principle of *invisible view through the window* (2003). The director used a camera mounted on the windowsill to observe the life of the lane where he lived for a year.

The observational film is not only a mandatory training exercise for future directors in the first year of university. It is also a significant and important segment of professional documentary films.

In his seminal study, *Introduction to Documentary Film*, Bill Nichols (2001) identified film video surveillance as one of the six major types (or directions) of a documentary film: "In a documentary film, we can identify six ways of depicting reality, which is a kind of subgenres of the documentary, which can be: poetic, explanatory, actively involved in events, observational, reflective and performative".

The vast majority of films are a combination of different authoring approaches and strategies. This classification can help authors better structure their own works, understanding the established practice and established approaches to

different types of documentary filmmaking. Nichols constantly emphasizes the certain conditionality of all these distinctions and the artist's right to his own creative search.

American documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman, "Oscar" winner, three "Emmy" winner, winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival has been making films that have been classic video surveillance for decades. However, the very titles of his works are *High School* (1968), *Legislative Assembly of the State* (2007), *National Gallery* (2014), *Ex Libris. The New York Public Library* (2017) can to surprise and raise questions: how these objects (mostly social infrastructure objects) can interest the audience and why the documentaries born there become real works of art?

One of the fathers of Italian neorealism, Cesare Zavattini, wrote that the first and most superficial reaction to everyday reality was boredom:

"It is clear that it is time to learn to consider a cinematic spectacle not only to show something extraordinary but also to demonstrate something very ordinary. In other words, the viewer may be impressed by the awareness of the importance of what he saw every day, but never noticed before. It is not easy to turn these facts into a spectacle: the intensity of human imagination is needed both by those who make the film and by those who watch it". (Bogemskii comp., 1989)

A talented director can reveal drama and spectacle, conflicts and emotions, even where no one expects it, to see in an everyday event or situation its deep, even philosophical dimension.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the importance of training exercises in video surveillance for the creative abili-

ties development of film and television directors.

Main research material

Jean Epstein wrote:

"I want films in which nothing happens, but nothing special happens. Do not be afraid, there will be no mistakes. The most modest detail conveys the sound of imaginary drama ... How much sadness can be removed from the rain! How much purity is there in this country yard, when the room lovers are surprised by the alienation that has come? The door closes like a gateway to fate. There is the dispassionate eye of the castle slits" (Iampolskii comp., 1988).

Filming an observation documentary is one of the most important practical directorial tasks. Prominent teachers and mentors (not only cinematographers but also artists, writers and theatre artists) constantly urged students: "look and listen to the world around you, to yourself, speak in your own voice, do not repeat after others".

Leonid Trauberg (1977) in the book "The film begins..." gives the following example: "I often asked my guests in Vance, "writes Henri Matisse," whether you saw the acanthus by the side of the road? Nobody noticed this plant... The first step to creativity is to see everything as it really is, but it takes constant effort".

Observation is extremely important for the professional skills development of future filmmakers, no matter what further specialization in feature, documentary, animated film or television they choose. Practice shows that the ability to observe, see, hear and record features of human behaviour, phenomena and state of nature, vivid manifestations of social life can

be educated and trained. These skills are necessary for creative imagination development and become a solid foundation for any of the boldest bursts of imagination.

Vsevolod Meyerhold called on young directors to constant training. Among other things, he suggested going as often as possible to travel the unfamiliar streets of his city in order to closely monitor passers-by (their behaviour, appearance, psychological state), unfamiliar houses and courtyards and what is happening there: "And during these travels, you will see thousands of interesting things that you have not noticed before, because of this you will have excitement, and along with the excitement the imagination will start working. It is simply impossible and unnecessary to fantasize. Fantasy should come from something you saw and because you were excited about what you saw" (Meyerhold, 1968). Meyerhold was by no means an ardent realist in his work. But he believed and proved to his students that any fantasy should be based on a solid foundation of observation and the ability to see and hear what is happening in real life.

The experience of many film directors testifies to the validity of this point of view. And there are not just documentarians. Yuri Norstein, the author of *The Tale of Fairy Tales* (1979), which has been repeatedly hailed as the best-animated film of all time, says that the old house in his film is the house next to which the director lived as a child. That's how he stayed in his memory. And the image of the girl and the atmosphere of the impressive shots with her participation appeared thanks to the photo of Norstein's little daughter, which he took on a sunny morning in the garden.

Terry Gilliam, whose films are characterized by stormy rises of fantasy, testifies:

"I grew up in a wonderful place: there was a lake, two steps from the house, a forest just behind the house, on the opposite, there was a cornfield and behind it a swamp. There was no TV in the house, only books and a radio. All this together is extremely conducive to the development of imagination and all that I can now invent, I already invented as a child". (Gilliam, 2010)

Krzysztof Zanussi says that in a lot of his films, which took place at different times and in different places, he created characters similar to members of his family:

"Images of my parents often appeared in my films, and my father even more often: I argued with him, quoted him, mimicked his manners, and then trembled when he came to the premiere. But the same thing happened every time: my father did not recognize himself, although my other characters reminded him of someone from our acquaintances or relatives". (Zanussi, 2015)

Returning to the creation of student documentary films-observations, we note that they are quite capable of turning from educational exercises into real artworks. As, for example, happened in the summer of 1964, when a third-year student of the Faculty of Directing VDIK Sergei Solovyov (in the future he will make films *One Hundred Days After Childhood*, 1975; *Assa*, 1987; *Gentle Age*, 2000) came to the Hermitage and saw that Leonardo da Vinci's painting "Madonna Litta" is not like all the others. It hung not on the wall, but on a bracket that was attached perpendicular to it. That is, being behind the picture, you could invisibly observe the facial expressions of those who looked at Leonardo's work. This spectacle impressed the student Solovyov. He wrote the screenplay

for the ten-minute documentary *Look at the Face*, which was soon shot, and described how high-art people meet and fail to meet. This short film was a milestone in the development of the then documentary film.

For all the conventionality of the existence of any rules in art, the directors of observational films are mostly guided by some common principles.

The first of them is the main one: the directors of observational films are especially meticulous in making everything that happens in front of the camera a real, not a staged spectacle. The director should not artificially organize life in front of the camera. According to Richard Lycock, who was Robert Flaherty's assistant when he was young, he was upset, when he was forced to shoot some scenes from the documentary *Louisiana History* (1948) as a play, with written lyrics and rehearsals: "And it happened that after filming such scenes, Flaherty told us:

"But this is extremely bad!!!" He was forced to do so, firstly, because of the primitiveness of the filming technique and, secondly, because his films were to be liked by a wide audience. But we also knew a completely different Flaherty. Flaherty, who could watch wild animals for hours, watched the rig waiting for the oil fountain, waiting for the storm to approach. Here he did not interfere in the course of events, did not try to control them. He obeyed the events. And, in my opinion, this is the best thing he has done". (Drobashenko ed., 1967)

Without interfering with the events in front of the camera, the director has the right to his own interpretation of what he is shooting and editing. Any shooting, the size choice of the plan and the selection of what falls and does not fall into the

frame are all these reflects the subjective view of the director. Editing allows the director to demonstrate his attitude to the events, phenomena or characters that caught his attention.

Most directors of observation films focus on the visual solution of their works. They avoid behind-the-scenes author's text; try to do without any verbal explanations and overt declarations of the author's point of view. Too often, directors use long shots that preserve the real flow of time.

Observational filmmakers do not film live direct interviews. The authors' conversations with the characters destroy the feeling that real life is fixed. If the characters talk to each other in an observation film, it's organic and appropriate. But when they turn to the authors, it breaks the conditional boundary between them.

Specially written music is almost never used in observation films. A lot of directors consider the musical accompaniment in this case an artificial intrusion into the real world of film. If music was played during the filming (the characters themselves sang or played, the music was played on a radio or TV), this is acceptable and organic. But to use music as an emotional author's commentary, many directors consider it superfluous.

Of course, the above methods of work are not inviolable rules. Through rehearsals and searches, the directors made sure that this approach to making observation films is quite fruitful. But the artist can work at his own discretion; look for his own ways of expression to achieve the best result.

The characters or objects of video surveillance can be a variety of characters, situations, objects and phenomena are all that attracted the attention of the director. For example, the object of video surveillance can be:

One man as in Hertz Frank's film *Ten Minutes Older* (1978), where the hero was a little boy watching a puppet show.

Two people as in Valentin Vasyanovich's film *Twilight* (2010), where observations were made of an old grandmother and her elderly son.

A lot of people as in the film by Sergei Loznitsa *Austerlitz* (2016), where the camera watched the tourists visiting the former concentration camps.

An animal is as in the film *Gunda* (2020) by Viktor Kosakovsky, where the heroine is a pig.

A phenomenon of nature or some inanimate object as in the films *Rain* (1929) and *Bridge* (1927) by Joris Ivens.

A social institution is as in the movie *Ex Libris. National Public Library of New York* (2017) by Frederick Wiseman.

One of the problems, that arises when creating observational films, is that many of the events that once impressed the authors and witnessed were likely not to happen again. It is extremely risky to expect that the film crew will be lucky and accidentally something interesting will happen in front of the camera.

But many events occur with some regularity. According to some rituals or even the laws of nature.

Joris Evans has been watching for months when it rains in the city. Hertz Frank watched the reflection on the face of a child who saw a scary tale in a puppet theatre for the first time in his life. Viktor Kosakovsky watched what his young son would do when he first saw himself in the mirror (according to psychologists, this is an extremely important moment when a person begins to realize his identity). Bert Haanstra watched the people and animals at the zoo show remarkable similarities in behaviour, habits and reactions.

Each of these events could not fail to occur. Each of these directors knew exactly what to watch. Each idea had an interesting, meaningful, multifaceted potential. Each story had its hidden or overt conflicts. The cute kid not only smiled gently at his reflection but angrily attacked him, considering him an enemy or rival. The people and animals in the zoo are so similar externally and internally that it is not clear who is really the king of nature and which of them should be kept behind bars.

Unlike a feature film, a detailed script at the beginning of the work on the observational film is almost non-existent. This distinguishes observation even from other types of documentary cinema. Because, for example, such documentaries as explanatory (this term of Bill Nichols refers to cognitive or popular science films according to our usual classification) require a carefully written script. And in some cases, the creation is not only literary but also a directorial script.

At the beginning of the work on the observational film (if it takes place in a professional studio) the director should write a concise synopsis, which will set out what exactly attracted his attention and prompted the creation of the film, what exactly he will watch. It will identify the objects of observation, possible (expected) events, place and timing of filming, the necessary technical means, etc. This is necessary at least in order to determine the timing of production and plan the necessary costs. But, real, careful and meticulous work on the dramaturgy of the work, on the script will be conducted during the filming, in accordance with what the camera will record. Work on the script will continue during the review and study of the footage. But the main part of the work on the script will be during the installation period.

This technology is well demonstrated by the story of the creation of the film *Dear Juliet...* (2003) by Hertz Frank.

In the spring of 2005, H. Frank visited KNUKiM and gave a master class to students of the Faculty of Film and Television. Much of this master class was about the film "Dear Juliet...", shot by Hertz Frank in one day. Returning from the International Film Festival, he drove to Verona. And he saw an old house where Shakespeare's Juliet allegedly lived. Her bronze sculpture has been installed in the courtyard. This house and yard have become a place of tourist pilgrimage. A huge number of tourists want to be photographed with the bronze Juliet, grabbing her chest and it seems to guarantee success in love. The meeting struck Hertz Frank. He stayed in Verona for a day. And the next day, the eighty-year-old director shot a 24-minute observation film.

During the master class, Hertz Frank spoke about the origin and implementation of his plan:

"Life there took place, so to speak, on different levels. In addition to adults, there were children below eye level. Birds live there, and it turned out that one chick fell out of the nest, like once Juliet herself, and she jumped underfoot and it's even lower, then he was almost crushed. And in order to understand what is happening in this courtyard, it was necessary to rise as high as possible to see the overall plan... There were a lot of people in this yard; everyone was filming, so no one paid attention to me, I was almost invisible, I was a hidden camera. There were a lot of people like me with video and cameras, but no one knew what I saw. However, everything depended on this: what I exactly see in this story ... I suddenly felt in this

courtyard how the unfortunate Juliet the image of love and became a victim of mass culture. People lose their individuality and turn into a crowd. And only the Japanese retained mental restraint and they allowed themselves only to touch the hand of Juliet... I realized that this courtyard is not only a tourist place but also a mirror of culture... There are four levels of shooting: the pavement (chick), children, adults, balcony and the fourth floor, from which the total overall plan is taken". (Frank, 2009)

The film *Dear Juliet...* ends with an episode where, in the evening two visitors, not noticing anything or anyone, diligently and sincerely write a letter to Juliet and then stick it to the wall of the house. And when night comes and the last tourists disappear, the gates open, a fire truck arrives and with powerful fire hoses erase from the walls this and many other letters to "dear Juliet", pasted with chewing gums. The next morning it will all start again. The gate will be opened. The crowd will rush to the middle of the yard. It will be fun to take pictures with Juliet and write letters to her asking to help in love.

Frank started working on the film without a script. He did not know that the stunned Japanese, frozen in place, would watch the roaring crowd. Those people will almost crush the chick on the pavement. That some couple will stay in the evening to write a letter to Juliet. He had no idea exactly where these shots would be in the final construction of the film. But he understood why he was struck by this spectacle, why he turns on the camera and what he wants to focus on the audience. And the script was created during the installation.

A lot of filmmakers working in this type of film are creatively arguing with com-

mercial Hollywood film-making formulas. No wonder one of the classics of the genre of filmmaking, Frederick Wiseman, when asked what his next film, what message he sent to the audience, answered in the words of philosopher Samuel Goldwin: if you have a message then send a telegram. Ambiguity is not the same as ambiguity.

Frederick Wiseman, who is constantly making films about the functioning of various social institutions (school, hospital, city hall and museum), has his own, original strategy of work:

"For me, each of these establishments is a kind of play space, a kind of tennis court. I'm interested in almost everything that happens in this field... On the one hand, in the normal functioning of these institutions, in the communication between its representatives, I try to see some drama, psychology, etc., and on the other hand, their everyday life reminds me of fragments of "natural life", practically, so to speak, an object of natural science. After all, in a sense, my paintings are real chronicles, even chronicles of social existence". (Maizel, 2006)

Wiseman's film *Ex Libris. The New York Public Library* (2017), which was awarded the FIPRESCI Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 2018, is just such a film. The first superficial association of the library with a warehouse or storage of books, the same desks, endless shelves, cabinets and forms has nothing to do with a real modern library. In Wiseman's film, the main thing is not books that he will shoot very rarely. There are a lot of extremely bright and enthusiastic people. The spectacle of so many smart, talented, variously gifted, intelligent characters is simply amazing. It turns out that the library is a place to exchange thoughts, emotions, dreams and

fantasies. The director is not afraid of long synchronicities of artists, actors and philosophers during creative meetings with library visitors. Already at the beginning of the film, a scientist polemically argues that atheists in America should receive the same respect as adherents of traditional religions, later, the young author will read his modern work, unlike “what makes young people fall asleep” (someone’s child will cry loudly throughout the performance), the sign language interpreter will demonstrate acting skills in translating a theatrical play. The library management will discuss at the meeting the need to attract homeless people to the library, and what to do if one of them decides to go to bed to rest or stay overnight in these unique halls. Library call centre operators will answer a variety of telephone questions, from the role of unicorns in ancient English literature to finding traces of a relative who came from Europe to America by steamer in 1910.

Frederick Wiseman says:

“The writer has all his imagination and I’m limited to the footage and the editing possibilities. However, editing for me is like writing a novel. The minimum amount of material I ever shot for the film was 75 hours. The maximum was 160. While editing, I am reliving the filming process, and this living is a way that allows me not only to select the right episodes but also to build them in the right order. In essence, this process is the opposite of how a feature film is made. In a feature film, you start with a script, and in a documentary (in my case, at least) you end with a script. When you realize that you have a script and it indicates that the film is complete”. (Maizel, 2006)

Joris Evans has been making a film about rain for several months. As soon as it

started to rain somewhere in Amsterdam, his friends called him and the cinematographer went on a bicycle to film. Hertz Frank filmed his boy in the theatre (that is, the entire film) in ten minutes. However, this was preceded by four years of training. Victor Kosakovsky photographed his son in front of a mirror for less than an hour. But he managed to make the film only on the second attempt. He wanted to shoot an episode when a child first sees himself in the mirror in one shot. But at the crucial moment, the mother called the child, and the shooting was disrupted. The director waited until he had another child, grew up a little, and then the dream film was shot. Frederick Wiseman spends four to six weeks filming each film.

Summarizing the above, it should be said that in many cases, directors came across the objects and characters of their observation films almost by accident. Roman Bondarchuk was working on a completely different project when he learned about the work in a remote village of two men elected by the locals in order to maintain order and security. The director went to the scene. Familiarity with what was happening in the village exceeded all his expectations. The director created a vivid observation film *Ukrainian Sheriffs* (2015), which won the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival. Director Iryna Tsilyk took part in the art project *Yellow Bus*, which aimed to help talented children in the east get acquainted with cinema art and take the first steps in making films. There she met a talented family consisting of a mother and four children living on the front line. In these extreme conditions, the mother tries to do everything possible to ensure that the children not only survive in a difficult military atmosphere. Anna involves children in art. They make music and make movies. Director

Iryna Tsilyk was impressed by this family. And she started making an observation film about them. The director says that even after starting filming, she did not know what to focus on. There were several options for how to make a film about two sisters, about the survival of locals in difficult conditions, about Anna, a mother of four children. But later (filming lasted two years), she decided that the core of the film should be the story of the creation of this family's amateur film about the war. Family discussions of the upcoming film were filmed, as well as work on the storyboard with arguments about the necessary size of certain plans, the shooting itself and even the premiere of the film. One of the girls goes to Kyiv and takes exams at the university's faculty of cinematography. It also found its place in the film. The whole, the dramatic story did not appear before the shooting but was created during a long time of working on the film. The director of the film *Earth, Blue as*

an Orange Iryna Tsilyk received the award for best director of a documentary film at "the Sundance" Film Festival (USA).

In both cases, both Roman Bondarchuk and Iryna Tsilyk found the heroes due to the fact that they were charged with searching for such people and situations where video surveillance can bring bright results. In both cases, the directors had the opportunity to observe the characters for a long time in conditions that provided for a variety of events and the corresponding reactions and actions of the main characters.

Therefore, the importance of working on observation films during training cannot be overestimated. The gained experience and skills will be useful not only to directors but also to cameramen, sound directors and journalists. Educational observation films can be real works of art. And sometimes, as history shows, even turn into high-profile events in the world of professional cinema.

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ВІДЕОСПОСТЕРЕЖЕННЯ ЯК НАВЧАЛЬНА ВПРАВА ТА МИСТЕЦЬКИЙ ТВІР

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Анотація

Мета дослідження – проаналізувати значення навчальних вправ з відеоспостереження для розвитку творчих здібностей режисерів кіно і телебачення; довести необхідність і корисність таких вправ не лише для документалістів, а й для режисерів ігрового кіно та анімації; визначити специфічні прийоми роботи режисера над відеоспостереженнями. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на теоретичному аналізі творчості видатних кінорежисерів, зокрема фільмів і свідчень щодо природи документального кіно Герца Франка та Фредеріка Уайзмана, аналізі українських та закордонних фільмів-спостережень. **Наукова новизна** полягає у визнанні ролі відеоспостереження як базового елемента у вихованні та навчанні кінематографістів; визначенні характерних особливостей і принципових відмінностей роботи над екранними спостереженнями, порівнюючи з роботою над іншими видами екранних творів. **Висновки.** У статті проаналізовано значення відеоспостережень для розвитку творчої яви студентів-режисерів. Доведено важливість спостережень для творчості режисерів, що працюють у всіх видах кіномистецтва – від документалістики до ігрового кіно та анімації. Наведені приклади стратегій режисерської роботи над відеоспостереженнями, що принципово відмінні від методів створення інших видів екранних творів.

Ключові слова: документальне кіно; відеоспостереження; прихована камера; сценарій; творча ява; технологія відеоспостережень

