

Text for the catalog of the Film Festival Alternativa - Barcelona

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E la nave va

"The future of filmmaking lies with a new race of young individuals who will film by investing their own money, without being constricted by the material routines of the trade." Robert Bresson, Notes sur le cinématographe.

Bresson could see it quite clearly. If filmmaking has always been a solitary activity, then today, with filmmaking itself being called into question, this feeling of solitude is more acute than ever. Acute because "making films" and "filmmaking" have become two very different - perhaps incompatible - things ; acute because the revealing image has been replaced by visual flows.

We live in an age of information flows, with television and the internet as prime examples. The justification for this image overload is communication and connectivity - "Connecting People" you might say. But this runaway, onward march of the image is taking over a larger and a larger part of people's experience, and threatens to overwhelm it completely. People no longer build their life on personal experiences, but very early on take on a role, a character that fits easily into the screenplays created by the society of information flows. This loss of the intimate self leads to blinkered herd behaviour and destroys deep social bonds.

The relentless repetition and unrelenting speed of these flows exiles individuals - far more so than their human condition - to the pursuit of instant availability, instant viewing, instant enjoyment.

Exile... acute solitude. Paraphrasing Bresson, we could say that " the future of filmmaking lies with a new race of exiles who will film by investing their own money, without being constricted by the material routines of the trade." The medium or format is irrelevant ; the important thing is the exile, because in exile people forge their own path.

Modern-day filmmakers - and I mean real filmmakers, those who aim to make films rather than engage in the business of filmmaking - ought to say :

"I've been cast out. So here I am, wandering, forging my own path."

A while ago I had a dream. I was alone in a little boat coming into a small port. The weather was amazing. The village rose up high above the sea in terraces. Once I'd tied up to the boat, I stood for a moment on the quayside watching the water and soaking up the sun. It was then I realised there were other boats coming into port as well, all with just one person on board. I found that somehow reassuring, although I wasn't really sure why. After waving to a couple of them, I carried on walking up through the village towards the summit. Probably out of curiosity. Just to have a look. The narrow streets and step led to a little square surrounded by a low wall. In the centre, a huge tree cast a welcome refreshing shade. Leaning against its trunk to cool off and catch my breath, I looked around me. All I could see was the sea... 360° sea. Sparkling blue and sparkling green. Then I walked over to the wall and felt the warmth of the sun on my legs. Far below, seeing the dancing, sparkling spray, I realised it wasn't a village at all, but a huge boat slowing forging its way through the water.

Now I'd like to think the name of this village might be l'Alternativa.