

Review of thesis "THE ART OF STATIC: RUBEN ÖSTLUND - AN EXPLORATION OF FORM, FUNCTION & EXECUTION"

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This thesis tempts to analyze and understand the very special visual approach to moviemaking of Swedish director Ruben Östlund. By examining three of his films, Evan focuses on Östlund's aesthetics, which underwent an organic evolution, as the director became more mature and experienced.

Through a general introduction about filmmaking as such, this thesis quickly comes to the main point of all different approaches of visual storytelling: "to make the audience feel an emotion as an immersive experience". How Ruben Östlund manages to shoot movies with his personal "stripped back, minimalist visual language", evolving from strictly art house to major international success (Palm D'Or, Oscar nomination), is the topic of Evan's examination.

Next we find a characterization of Östlund's main theme of interest: it is a rather sociological than psychological view on "human flaws or weaknesses", "presenting human reaction or inaction to circumstances outside of a character's control". His main aesthetic techniques are also outlined here: the "observer's perspective", a distant static camera allowing to distance the audience from the scene; "organic compositions", trying to break with classic golden ratio rules and allowing a frame to be "naturally obstructed"; the longer-than-usual "Shot Duration" and "broken vignettes", a method of structuring are also mentioned.

In the following chapters, Evan concentrates on three of Östlund's films, pointing out the evolution in filmmaking this author went through. The titles are chosen very appropriate and hit the mark precisely:

Play: shifting from experimental to narrative

Force Majeure: an evolving style

The Square: mastering of form and function

In the concluding chapter Evan reflects upon the director's main thriving force, which he describes as "political commentary" and questions the limitations of at times too puristic cinematic language.

It was a pleasure to advise Evan Barry in writing this thesis and I'm very satisfied with the result. It is clever and informative, inspired and inspiring, at times difficult to read, but. Of course Evan has a huge advantage to be able to write in his mother language, but he is surely able to analyze and describe rather complex contexts in a quite astonishing way. It definitely shows that he is a highly cultivated and educated person.

I recommend to accept this thesis for the graduation commission's consideration and would suggest to evaluate it with grade "A".

MgA. Klaus Fuxjäger

11.9. 2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a cursive name followed by a stylized monogram or set of initials.