



# What is Cinematography?

WITH JIM SOTO

# The Magic of Cinema



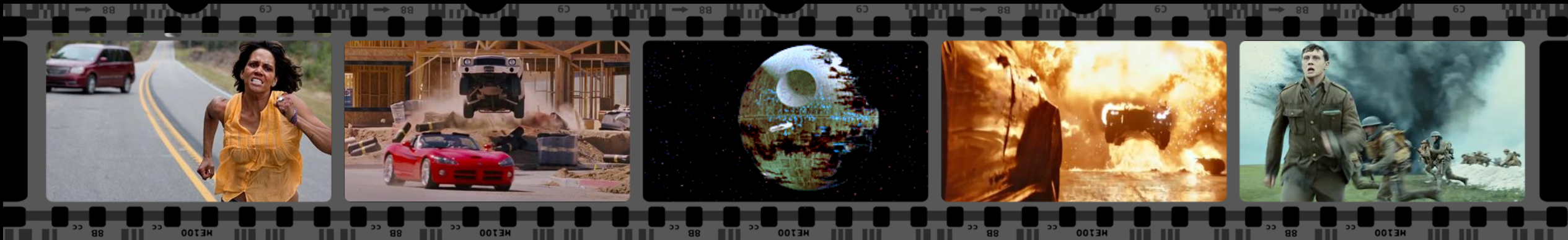
Cinema has a way with us. It might trigger something special in us and inspire us to a greater, more empowered lives. It affects us, transforms us, provokes us — more viscerally, than any other art form can. Let's enjoy a montage on the power of film!

# About Cinematography

Most agree with the following definition of cinematography:

The art or technique of movie photography, including both the shooting and development of the film. (from Greek: *kinema* "movements" and *graphein* "to record")

Notice that it is defined as both an art and a science (technique) although they are completely different approaches.





# An Art Form?

As an art form cinematography is very subjective and personal. It has to do with innate talents and personal preferences. It can be used to bring out the emotion and mood of different scenes and communicate a range of ideas and feelings to the viewer.



# A Science?

As a science it is objective and precise. Cinematography wouldn't be possible without advances in the fields of optics, photography, and sound engineering. As a matter of fact, the progress of cinematography comes mostly from the technological advances of the past two centuries.



# A Language?

Ask yourself: From what source do you consume most of the information out there? books? discourse? or cinema?

Do you see where we're going with this? If in a written sentence something as simple as a comma can change its entire meaning, could there be a cinematic equivalent in a film? The answer of course, is yes! That is why this course is so important. You need to sharpen your visual literacy skills the same way you do with any linguistic grammar.

Films speak to us. Cinematic language is like any other means of communication.

We know that we must learn to read before we can attempt to enjoy or understand literature, but we tend to believe, mistakenly, that anyone can read a film. Anyone can see a film, it's true. But some people have learned to comprehend visual images—People who are highly experienced in film—who are highly literate visually see more and hear more than people who seldom see movies.







**An education in the “language” of film opens up greater potential meaning for the observer, so it is useful to use the metaphor of language to describe the phenomenon of film.**



# Defining Cinematic Language

The language of cinema is that of light and shadows, of frame composition and camera angle, of color and sound. As in any other form of self expression, everybody has their own way of doing things.

The particular way of doing a thing is called style.

Film language is all the techniques filmmakers use to tell a story on the screen — including camera distance, angle, and movement; editing; and sound. These elements allow filmmakers to tell a story in a variety of ways. The way the filmmaker tells the story is called style.

# The Goals

1. The goal of cinema is to entertain, inspire, and provoke emotional and intellectual responses from audiences through the art of storytelling, visual imagery, and audiovisual techniques. It serves as a means of artistic expression, cultural reflection, and communication, offering a diverse range of narratives and perspectives to engage, educate, and entertain viewers.



Everything Everywhere All at Once (2022)

2. The goal of cinematic language is to effectively convey stories, emotions, and ideas through the use of visual and audio elements. It aims to create a unique and immersive experience for the audience, employing techniques such as camera angles, editing, lighting, sound design, and narrative structure to communicate and evoke specific responses.



The French Dispatch (2021)



# RESHOOT

1. What is cinematography?
2. Is it an art or a science?
3. What is the language of cinema?
4. Explain how cinematic language is like any other means of communication.
5. What is the ultimate goal of a movie?
6. What is the ultimate goal of film language?



Next:

# CINEMATIC STYLES

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