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Filmic Performance – Authenticity and The Apple

Margherita Sprio

Abstract

Performance is overtly untheorised within the debates that surround film studies even though ideas about realism are very well rehearsed. What might be some of the issues raised by the scrutiny of film performances within the wider context of the visual arts? How might issues of performed authenticity relate to contemporary concerns that mark out reality as being the problem of the moment? As the work of both Samira Makhmalbaf (*The Apple*, 1998) and Abbas Kiarostami (*Close-Up*, 1990) testifies, contemporary Iranian cinematic practices very often utilise the idea of restaging lived experiences. Non-professional actors re-perform their 'original' experiences and the director creates a narrative from these authenticities. In this context, the feature film format is refigured in order to re-think the role of the performative and the nature of truth within the realm of the moving image. Power relations and the ethics of realism are further complicated through the explicit manipulation by the film director and overt interventions both within and outside the film. This paper will look at the historical context for this form of realist performance by making connections between this contemporary practice and earlier models of film and performance.

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