
Documentary Summer School 2021

9-13 August 2021

Summary

Now in its **22th edition**, the Documentary Summer School (DSS 2021) is jointly organized by the Institute of Media and Journalism (IMeG) of the Università della Svizzera italiana and Locarno Film Festival, in collaboration with the Semaine de la critique. The DSS explores different research and production relevant issues concerning documentary cinema. Given the great pervasiveness with which currently images and representations spread, for some years the DSS has decided to focus on the theme of **ethics** in documentary filmmaking. Given the relevance of the topic, this year **a privileged space will be dedicated to the intertwining of ethics, gender, documentary** – and, generally, communication when it represents the other.

Contents

Images are everywhere, and the “insatiability of the photographing eye” (Sontang, S. 1977) has profoundly altered our relationship with the world. The photographer and documentary filmmaker Raymond Depardon once wrote that sometimes he felt ashamed of his profession: “Photographers are a bit like thieves, vultures, and voyeurs” (Depardon, R, 2006).

This 22th Documentary Summer School will reflect upon the role of images and stories in shaping our opinion of people and issues we do not experience directly and affecting our imaginary.

Day after day we are storing in our minds - most of the time unconsciously - millions of images and stories. What role do these images and stories play in creating our imaginary of “the other”, especially when we have few or no direct relationships with this “other”?

The respectful coexistence between people different in culture, sexual choices, origin, religion is becoming an issue of crucial importance in many countries.

Are there ways to communicate that can reduce rejection, distrust, offenses, misunderstandings? What kind of audiovisual representations – such as documentaries, reportages - could build bridges among people, and what other kinds are at risk of dividing people?

We are accustomed to images that, in an obvious attempt to attract our attention, emphasize what is strange, different, shocking or violent. Within these representations, the most usual and universal aspects of daily life are not portrayed and therefore they disappear from existence.

Based on this, the DSS 2021 will address a central area of reflection: the narrative choices filmmakers make to represent the "other" who is perceived as different, for some reason. Given the relevance of the topic, this year **a privileged space will be dedicated to the intertwining of ethics, gender, documentary – and, generally, communication when it represents the other.**

Format

This year's DSS **lectures** will be offered **online**. The DSS's main topic – Ethics and documentary filmmaking - will be addressed across different lectures:

- The ethics of representing the other - introduction and main issues – delivered by Cristina Lasagni, professor of Cinema and Documentary at Università della Svizzera Italiana and DSS Scientific Director.
- Participatory cinema and documentary – delivered by Andrea Segre, award-winner filmmaker who has directed over twenty films of documentary and fiction genre.
- Gender and documentary (Guest lecturer to be confirmed)
- Ethics of film funding – delivered by Nevina Satta, CEO Sardinia Film Commission.
- 2 Q&A with directors selected by the Semaine de la Critique

The DSS 2021 will also offer **private virtual screenings** of films **from the Locarno Film Festival** and from the **filmography of the DSS guests**. The selected films will be **connected to the daily lectures** and will be used to **support and feed the discussions**. Analyzing films through the contribution of scholars and filmmakers, the DSS 2021 will discuss the ethics of documentary filmmaking, the eventual ethics guidelines used by filmmakers and how these guidelines helped them keeping up with the challenges posed by the new media landscape. At least two of the private screenings will be devoted to the viewing of **films in the selection of the Semaine de la critique** followed by a live **Q&A with the director** of the film.