FREEDOM AND WANT SEE (1969–79)

Political cinema around the globe and the rise of the blockbuster in america

TYPES OF CAMERA SHOTS AND ANGLES

Close-up

A close-up shot is a shot taken of a person or object at a close range, in order to capture the minute details of the subject. This shot is tightly framed and t**akes up most of the screen, as it is usually used to frame a character's face in order for the audience to see what type of emotion is being conveyed.** In addition to serving as a tool used to evoke a character's emotional state of mind, the close up shot **is also used to reveal details or information about objects or the setting the film is set in. For example, close-up shots are often used to indicate to the audience that they should pay attention to a certain motif or symbol that is being carried throughout the film.**

Extreme Close-Up

An extreme close-up shot, is when the surface area of the frame is filled by a subject's face. In other words, the subject is tightly framed, or shown in a relatively large scale, causing their face to be cropped within the frame. This type of shot is often referred to a choker as well, which is when a shot is framed just above the eyes and right below the mouth. **Extreme close-ups are a powerful way to convey the emotion that your subject is feeling, without the need of the character saying much. Much like the use of a regular close-up shot, an extreme close-up can be used to guide the viewer's eyeline and show them an object or motif that is pivotal to the narrative of the**

Medium Shot

A medium shot, or waist shot, indicates that it was captured at a m**edium distance from the subject. It is often used for back and forth dialogue within a scene as it allows the viewer to have a solid view of each character within a film. This shot is known as the 'sweet spot' shot, as it allows for both the details of your subject to be seen in addition to the surrounding setting the scene is taking place in. As a result, using a medium shot can help the viewer depict the body language of the characters in the film and how they are interacting with the environment around them.**
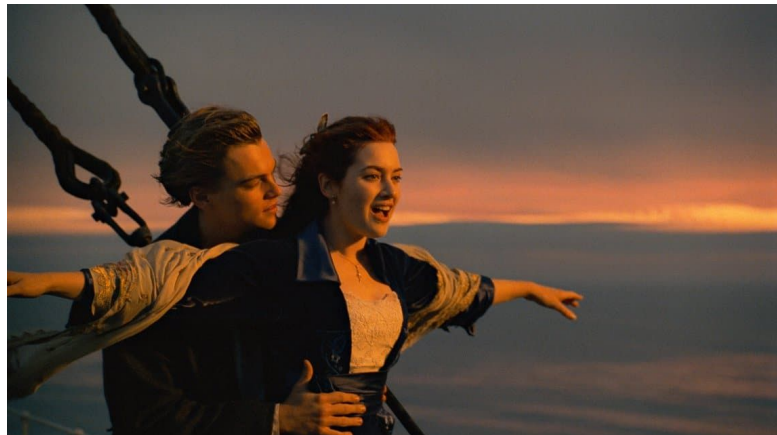
Long Shot

The long shot, also known as the **wide shot,** is often times used as an **establishing shot in a film, as it normally sets the scene and the character's place within it.** This type of camera shot, **shows the full length of the subject while also including a large amount of the surrounding area of the film setting. Some of the most recognizable and iconic scenes in movies, are those that were shot as a long shot. Furthermore, when filming a movie solely from a distance that includes only long shots, it can give a sense of separation between the film itself and the audience. For example the 2019 Oscar winning film, Roma, was solely filmed in a series of long shots. This film technique causes the audience to feel isolated and like they are only allowed to be on-lookers into the story being presented to them, rather than being immersed in the narrative being told.**

Extreme Long Shot

Taking the long shot one step further, the extreme long shot, or extreme wide shot, is when the view is so far from the subject that **he/ she isn't necessarily the focus anymore, but rather the surrounding area is.** Also used as an establishing shot within a film, the extreme long shot, i**s designed to show the audience where the action is taking place. Furthermore, an extreme long shot can also be used to demonstrate the scale of what is going on in a scene. This type of shot is often used in war-type films, as they allow for a lot of the setting to be seen at once.**
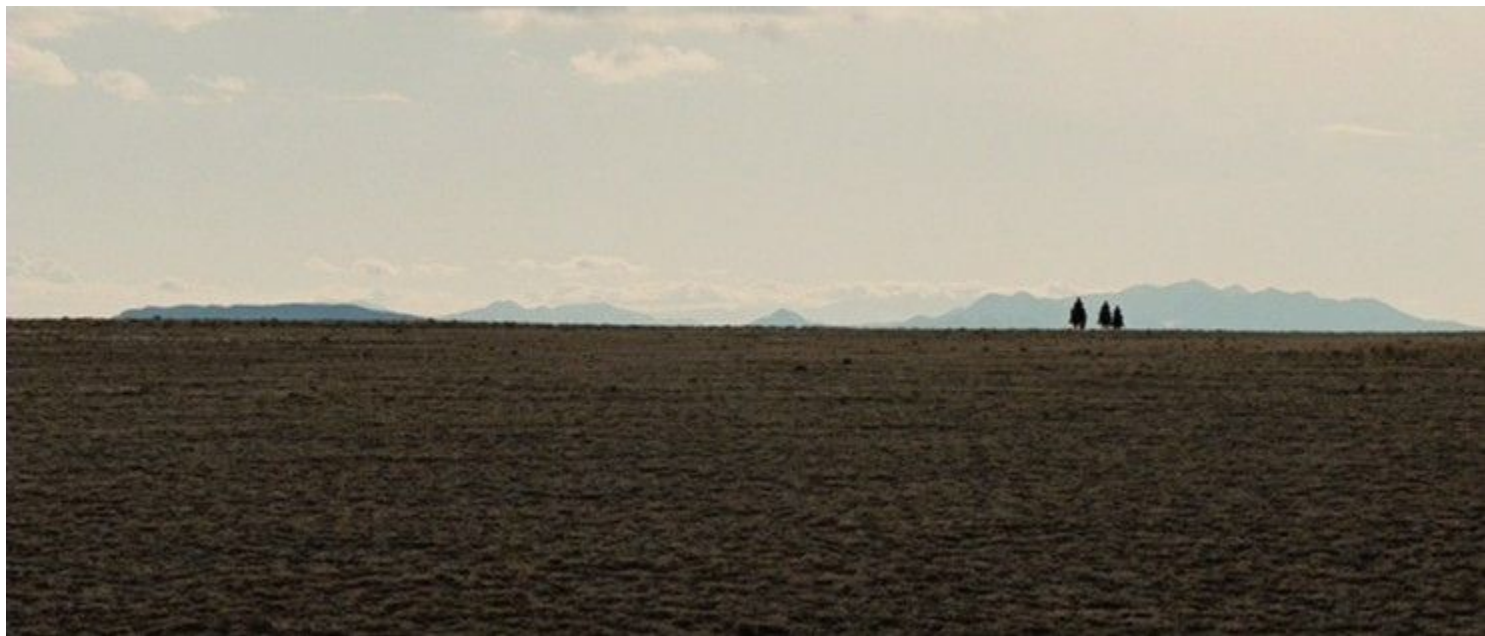
Angle Shots in Film

High-Angle

A high-angle shot is a cinematography technique where the camera **points down on the subject from above. This type of shot is used to make the subject or object below seem vulnerable, powerless, or weak. This camera angle is most commonly used in horror movies to indicate a sense of entitlement the camera has over the subject below. Other messages a high angle can convey include: danger, depression, and shock. When using a high angle shot this causes the audience to have a subjective camera view by asserting themselves to have the viewpoint of the person in 'power'. Additionally, a high camera angle shot can also provide an overview of the scene itself, which allows the viewer to get a better understanding of where the setting of the film is taking place-- possibly giving them a new perspective of how they view it.**

Low-Angle

A low-angle shot is when the camera is positioned **low on the vertical axis, below the level of the eyeline, and looks up at an object or subject above.** This camera angle evokes a psychological effect by making the subject above, which the camera is angled at, **look strong and powerful.** In addition, the use of a low angle shot can make the **'hero' of your film seem vulnerable and cause the viewer to have a relatable feeling to a character that usually seems unstoppable.** Another common way this angle is used, is to increase the **perceived height of an object-- as when something is filmed from a low angle is causes it to appear quite larger than it actually is.**

Over the Shoulder

The over the shoulder shot, is most commonly used in film **when two or more characters are talking to each other in conversation. This type of shot is used to establish eyeline of where each character in the scene is looking, and is most commonly framed through a medium or close-up shot. This type of shot can also be used to indicate to the viewer that a specific character in the film sees something that the other characters might not yet see. For example by playing with the depth of field in your scene, you can draw the attention of your viewer to look at something in the distance that a character is witnessing first hand. In this case, a great depth of field would be used by causing the foreground to be blurry, and the background to be in focus.**

Bird's Eye

The bird's eye view shot, or an aerial view shot, is when the camera is located up above, overhead, capturing the action going on below. In today's day and age, these types of shots are most commonly captured with a drone in order to be able to get the full view of what is happening down below. In various different types of cinematic works, **bird's eye shots are used as establishing shots to give context of where the setting of the film is, in addition to being used as transition shots to show what exactly is going on in a setting from an aerial view. These types of shots are commonly used in films where the location each scene plays a pivotal role in the narrative.** However, despite being able to capture this type of shot on a drone, it is also possible to capture a bird's eye shot from the top of a structure or building, such as a bridge or skyscraper.

Dutch Angle/Tilt

The Dutch angle/tilt is more of a stylistic approach to cinematography. In order to execute this, you must tilt your camera to one side, which results in a frame that is not level. This type of camera angle is used mostly to create a dramatic effect within a film and can evoke a series of different emotions. The Dutch angle can heighten psychological distress and tension, which in turn, creates a cinematic environment that creates suspense and a sense of thrill. Additionally, filming a scene in this angle can make your audience feel disoriented, uneasy, and sometimes even a sense of drunkenness.

These advanced camera shots, or angles, are used in film to convey an effect or emotion rather than exemplify a sense of space. Before filming, cinematographers will write out their shot list in order to plan how each scene of their film should be shot.

New Freedoms

At first the momentum of 1960s innovation continued into the 1970s. The bandwagon of **explicitly personal filmmaking**, of s**exual freedom, references to earlier cinema, of abstraction, of ambiguity, quest for meaning, open-endedness, self-consciousness, of the idea of a shot as a unit of time**, all those giddy tropes of 1960s counter-cinema kept on rolling. Looking back now we can see that their days were numbered, but at the time, few could tell.

"It seemed that the new freedoms created their own problems. However, boundaries continued to be rolled back: **France's president said on television that there should be an end to censorship;** European, American and Japanese cinema became more sexually explicit than ever before; Indian film featured its first ever on-screen kiss in Satyam Shivam Sundaram/Love Sublime (Raj Kapoor, 1978);"

Bernardo Bertolucci (15:14 - 19:00)

[The Conformist](#)/[Il Conformista](#) (Italy) (245). **Set in 1938, during Italy's fascist regime, it told of a man trying to prove that he is normal and heterosexual. His way of doing so is to marry and join the Fascist movement. Under their instruction he assassinates his former professor, a father figure and a decent man. Exploring the relationship between sexual and political repression**. Cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, an intellectual with theories about the meaning of different colours, became as central a figure here as Raoul Coutard did with Godard and Truffaut a decade earlier. He took the **choreographed style of the musicals and melodramas that Bertolucci so "admired and applied them with rigour to the director's story. Bertolucci's central character, the repressed fascist, was psychologically, as imprisoned as Bresson's characters. Bertolucci and Storaro's exhilaratingly liberated filming style was the embodiment of what he had lost.** The Conformist was not only a major intellectual and aesthetic achievement, but **one of the most influential works of the early part of the decade.** Godard had used dance numbers in films before The Conformist but by introducing such visual pleasure into his work, Bertolucci made New Wave filmmaking seductive.

Bernardo Bertolucci

The film was widely seen in America and became a touchstone for young directors like Francis Coppola who would later hire cinematographer Storaro for Apocalypse Now (USA, 1979). His fellow Italian-American Martin Scorsese saw its **mix of thematic complexity and visual utopianism as a breakthrough, a double act of seduction and repulsion. This idea that the surface of a film, its form, could express the fascination we feel for brutality and self-destruction became central to his seminal film Taxi Driver (USA, 1976).** That film's writer, Paul Schrader, would imitate The Conformist in American Gigolo (USA, 1980) (246).

America in the 1970s

In America itself, the deaths of Malcolm X, Jimmi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Polanski's wife, Sharon Tate, had a **sobering effect on what some saw as the excesses of the 1960s**. **Four hundred colleges went on strike in 1970 in protest at the Vietnam War and at one, Kent State University, four were shot dead.** The Watergate scandal of 1972–74 showed that the US Republican Party and the CIA were involved in bugging the Democrats Party's offices. As a result, President Nixon was forced to resign. **The artistic influence from Europe, the decline in attendance amongst older filmgoers, feminism and the debates about Vietnam together produced a film community more divided than at any time**.

America in the 1970s

The new films had few heroes or romances, their endings were often ambiguous or left open. The insecurities, social upheavals and new creative influences produced three interwoven trends out of which emerged some of the best American films ever made. **The first of these was the dissident trend: the direct continuation of the New Wave challenge to conventional cinema. The second was assimilationist: many filmmakers found a way of applying new ambitious filmmaking schemas within traditional studio genres. The third, was a revival of the pure entertainment of the 1930s and 1940s, and changed not only the American film industry, but much of Western production and exhibition.**

Cinemas at the end of the 1960s were closing at an unprecedented rate. Warner Bros. was bought by a company that owned car parks and funeral parlours. United Artists was acquired by a car rental and insurance business. In the early 1970s, 15.8 million movie tickets were sold per week in the US, compared to 78.2 million in 1946. The movie industry was more "on its ass than any time in its history."3 20th Century-Fox lost $77m in 1971 alone. MGM survived only because its string of Las Vegas hotels were profitable. Just one in ten films was making money. A sign of how insecure the studios were is that when two of the major television stations, CBS and ABC, started making what would soon be called "TV movies", industry leaders tried to sue them claiming that they were monopolizing by making and showing films, exactly what the moguls themselves had done until they were forced to sell their cinemas.

Francis Coppola (2:17:00 - 2:20:00)

Francis Coppola, the third great Europe-influenced experi-menter in American cinema of the early 1970s, was less oppositional than either Hopper or Altman. An Italian-American who was born in Detroit, he studied film at the influential University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). From the start there was something of Orson Welles about him. He was prodigiously talented, interested in all the arts, not just film, flamboyant in his ambitions and, latterly, not averse to self-destruction. After his time with Corman he made mainstream but unsuccessful films for the Hollywood studios. His Wellesian interest in power and hubris won him an Oscar for his screenplay for Patton (1970), which led to him being hired to direct the film of a bestselling book about an Italian-American mafia family The Godfather.

The Conversation (1974) took the long lenses of Lelouch and the implied voyeurism of Altman and stretched them to their logical conclusion. More than any film of the 1970s **it enquires philosophically into the nature of such lenses by telling the story of a professional surveillance expert who accidentally captures on audio tape a conversation between apparent lovers (250). The expert, played by Gene Hackman, lives alone and interacts little with human beings so becomes obsessed with a mystery on the tape. In doing so he becomes more inward still and almost has a breakdown."**

Francis Coppola (2:17:00 - 2:20:00)

Alfred Hitchcock and Michelangelo Antonioni has addressed similar themes but new, highly directional microphones and ultra-long lenses made plausible Coppola's idea of getting so lost in the fragments of other people's behaviour that your own life dissolves. Only a filmmaker who has spent hundreds of hours in an editing suite would understand the dangers in such absorption, perhaps, so The Conversation did not initially engage large audiences and was at first a flop. But it was released just as the Watergate political surveillance scandals were coming to a head and soon was seen as an essay in the paranoia which ensued.

"We were fighting to open up the form."
Scorsese

Martin Scorsese (2:21:10 - 2:23:00)

He used film to express more directly than any other US filmmaker of the time **the rituals, violence and excitement of the world in which he grew up**. Born in 1942 and brought up in New York City's Little Italy, frequent **childhood illnesses detached Scorsese from participating fully in the life of the streets but increased his opportunities for observing it.** He made Mean Streets (USA, 1973) **a layered anthropological work which transcribed onto the screen the behaviour of the men Scorsese knew.** It starts with its main character Charlie (Harvey Keitel) holding his finger in a flame in a church and confessing his sins, then follows this with a jump cut sequence of Keitel's head falling onto a pillow. Said Scorsese, **"The whole idea was to make a story of a modern saint in his own society, but his society happens to be gangsters.**

Martin Scorsese

De Niro and Scorsese had known each other as kids and met up in adult life in the house of a critic friend. In 1976, they would each become the most respected in their professions because of their collaboration on a screenplay about a **Vietnam veteran driving around New York in a taxi – a metaphorical iron coffin.** The screenplay was written by the author of a book on Ozu, Bresson and Dreyer, who was banned from seeing films in his youth, who drank heavily like his main character, Travis Bickle, who lived in his car. **The screenplay leapt out of him, the writer, "like an animal", as he put it, and was completed in a matter of days.** The film was Taxi Driver, the writer was Paul Schrader. When De Niro is making a phone call to a woman he has become infatuated with, but who does not reciprocate, **Scorsese tracks his camera away from him to look down an empty corridor because, as he later explained, it was too painful to watch the scene. The horizontal move is again Godardian. Its emotional wisdom is closer to Mizoguchi's clear withdrawal from his characters' agony."**

Martin Scorsese

Taxi Driver was a huge success with critics and public alike. The new directors' storming of the Hollywood citadel seemed too easy. They were pushing at an open door. Never before had American filmmakers been taken so seriously as artists and, inevitably, fragile personalities like Scorsese's were somewhat damaged as a result. He started taking cocaine and his health deteriorated.

Gordon Parks (2:31:00 - 2:34:00)

The second, perhaps more important ethnicity which finally entered mainstream American cinema at this time was not socially related to them at all. It began when a **fifty-seven-year-old former baseball player and photographer made The Learning Tree (1969). Gordon Parks, the youngest of fifteen children, was born in Kansas and wrote novels in France. One of them was about growing up on farms in 1920s Kansas. Nothing strange in that, except that both the lead character and the director of The Learning Tree, the film based on it, were black and the 1920s idyll was plagued by racism. After years of protest, of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, mainstream American cinema – in this case Warner Bros. – had finally opened up to black experience. Gordon Parks was the first black director to "direct a studio film, eighty-four years after the birth of the movies.**

There had been black directors before – Oscar Micheaux in the 1920s. Black character actors appeared in Gone with the Wind and Casablanca (1942) and in films of the 1950s. Dorothy Dandridge, Harry Belafonte and then Sidney Poitier were distinguished exceptions to the whiteness of closed romantic realism. **By the end of that decade liberal white directors addressed black themes in issue and problem pictures but only in 1969, four years after Ousmane Sembene's The Black Girl (Senegal, 1965) became the first film directed by a black person in Africa itself, did America follow suit. The gentleness of The Learning Tree did not detract from its historical importance, a fact acknowledged in its registration in the National Film Registry of the US Library of Congress.**

Francis Coppola -The Godfather (1972)

Francis Coppola at first looked down on The Godfather because it was an adaptation of a violent, popular novel. As his interest grew, he clashed with his producer over casting and hired cinematographer Gordon Willis, explaining that he wanted a simple style like an old movie, no 1970s long lenses, no helicopter shots. It was tableau filmmaking", said Willis, "where the actors move in and out of frame, very straightforward. **The film extended the range of the gangster film in several ways. Its story comprised five sections or acts rather than the usual three. It was based around a family – the Corleones – rather than a few individuals. Its profile was the rise and rise of the Corleones and the transfer of power from the Don (Marlon Brando) to his son Michael (Al Pacino) rather than the morally more acceptable rise-and-fall form of most gangster pictures.** This failure to denounce, this accumulation of power, left the film open to charges of amorality – even fascism – in later years. Visually, Willis underexposed the imagery, rendering it darker than was the norm (260). He lit Brando from overhead to create shadows in his eye sockets. "This was considered unsophisticated "cated but prevented audiences from seeing the eyes of the Don. The low lighting levels also meant that focus was shallow, constraining actors to certain minimal movements, internalizing their performance. Though Coppola thought it would flop, the film was a vast success, **the most influential gangster picture of the 1970s, if not of the entire post-war era.**

Third Cinema

Building on such ideas and in particular the radical work of Brazilian and Cuban directors of the 1960s, two Argentinean filmmakers wrote a manifesto for non-Western filmmaking which was highly influential. **"Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World"** by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino argued that throughout most of the history of the medium, film had been a commodity. Filmmakers in the developing world should reject this history and start again, that argued, treating cinema as a weapon to fight oppression, a revolutionary tool. Their approach was Marxist. "Their ideas were built on by others and a new categorization of the stages of film history emerged: First Cinema was Industrial and commercial, lasting from the earliest days of narrative film until around 1958; Second Cinema was the modernist art movies of individual creative directors like Godard, Antonioni, Bergman and Fellini and had its heyday between 1959 and 1969; Third Cinema was political modernism, opposed to both industrial and autobiographical art cinema, and would come to the fore in non-Western countries after 1969. The simplifications of this model are clear to anyone who has looked at the subtleties of closed romantic realism and its interplay with its alternatives. Nonetheless the idea of Third Cinema influenced the course of African, South American and Middle-Eastern cinema of the 1970s.

Youssef Chahine (1:41:31 - 1:45:56) (2nd)

"The most popular images of Africa in cinema until the late 1960s were those of Tarzan movies, where blacks are usually mysterious figures in the background, or John Huston's The African Queen (USA, 1951), which is told from the point of view of white people and missionaries. In the north of Africa, Egypt's master director Youssef Chahine had, for more than a decade, been challenging this mainstream formula. Long before German filmmakers in the 1970s did so, in films like Cairo Station (Egypt, 1958) he used the form of American melodrama but moved to other areas of content. At the first Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia in 1966 he said, "Freedom of Expression is not given, it is taken".17 After Israel defeated his country 1967 and claimed large sections of its land, his semi-detachment from Western cinema became politicized. "For me the Third World is England, France, the USA," he later said. "I'm the first world, I've been here for 7,000 years." The Sparrow/Al'usfour "(Egypt, 1973) was a stunning expression of this stance. It follows the stories of a young policeman and a journalist whose lives interweave and overlap in the house of local hostess, Bahiyya, and culminates with Egypt's premier, Nasser, announcing on television that Israel has won the Six-Day War and that Egyptian territory has been lost. Chahine captures the shock effect of this on the lives of ordinary Egyptians with astonishing vividness. His ending – tracking shots of Bahiyya running through the streets shouting "We won't accept defeat" – sounds crudely propagandistic but is one of the greatest moments in the whole of Third Cinema."

Masao Adachi

[Japanese Red Army / PFLP : Declaration of World War - Film by Masao Adachi & Kôji Wakamatsu](#) (1971)

(11:35)

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