

Is a filmmaker free to have an ethical practice, and what is the balance between authorship and participatory practice?

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Duration of video clip: 2 minutes and 5 seconds

Troubling question. How to how one goes about training students to think along these lines.

I think most young filmmakers want to be in an ethical relationship. I think other pressures come along that push them to make other kinds of decisions, so I think if you are considering what to do when someone is young and yet to be moulded, the impulse is a good one, it's not to be a hit and run kind of filmmaker. I was going to say journalist but that's unfair to journalists but that you know get "it's fast, do it now". You know there's another agenda operating, it's not where I think most people who are attracted to documentary are coming from so I think it's about nurturing that impulse that I think is pretty much inborn that if you're going to go out with the camera and meet with people, some of whom for all kinds of reasons may not be in a position - because they're in a traumatic situation, because they're not fully aware of the larger context in which something will be seen, they may not be in a position to give informed consent that the of a young filmmaker should be at least aware enough that there has to be a relationship formed, or nurtured, so that the decisions that are made are not going to be in somehow opposition to the needs of the of the subject and I think that's a reasonable thing to expect and to encourage, and then perhaps when other considerations, commercial or political or academic intervene that the filmmaker has a stronger sense of why it is they're doing what they're doing.

Well you know I think one when is always going to have the final say as a filmmaker whether you are the editor, or you hand it over to an editor with directions, so there's always going to be some authorship there, and guaranteed. But the idea of approaching the very project in which there is a greater sense of participation than just an authorial presumption, allows for a different kind of process, so I think one can satisfy one's ego needs without impinging on the needs of the subject, but ultimately you know the final edit is one's own. Now if you engage in a situation where there is some give-and-take in the editing or even after a fine cut is created then the question of authorship becomes much more collaborative, and I think that's also a reasonable outcome. I don't know that you have to suppress your ego in order to do responsible

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work. I think you have to acknowledge that that's always going to be there, but you can find ways in which, especially where there's an issue of informed consent, where you allow for the fact that perhaps your ego is only one of many.