

Cinema and Ethics: An Introduction

Saito Ayako (Film Studies)

French film theorist Christian Metz once said that every film is a fiction film. American documentary studies expert Bill Nichols declared that every film is a documentary film. There is some truth to both statements. Yet, when one examines a film, what is at issue is the difference between them. Whether *Nanook of the North* (1922), *Land without Bread* (1933), *Triumph of the Will* (1935), or *Fighting Soldiers* (1939), documentary film has oscillated between aesthetics and ethics.

This year's program entitled "The Ethics Machine: Six Gazes of the Camera" is an attempt to confront such concerns. It was conceived by festival programmer Fujioka Asako and longtime festival collaborator Abé Mark Nornes. Along with two renowned white male documentary specialists, Mark and British film/media scholar Brian Winston, I will join the program as an Asian woman, a layperson in this field. This sort of unexpected teaming is one of the pleasures and joys of this international film festival. The discussion is to be centered around the issue of film and ethics.

Different from the usual teach-ins after screenings and symposiums organized by scholars with presentations, this program aims to elicit dialogue between filmmakers and audience, promoting impromptu discussions. The three of us will serve as mediators, so to speak, to facilitate the dialogue and discussions. The six gazes referred here are the frames of reference to examine the relationship between the camera's gaze and the world it captures in documentary film, and as follows: the endangered gaze, the interventionist gaze, the humane gaze, the accidental gaze, the professional gaze, and the helpless gaze. In documentary film, the relationship among the filmmaker, the camera, and the subject the camera films affects the audience much more and more directly than that in fiction film. What is at stake in the genre of documentary film that confronts us, in the space of a festival in which filmmakers and viewers engage in direct dialogue? I hope we can generate an exciting space and time to share the issues in question.

■ Events

Discussion: Ethical Conundrums and the Filmmaker 【EM】

Guests: Joshua Oppenheimer, Hara Kazuo

..... 10/13 15:00–17:00 [M5]

Discussion: Six Gazes of the Ethics Machine 【EM】

Panelists: Abé Mark Nornes, Saito Ayako, Brian Winston

..... 10/14 12:50–14:50 [M5]

Discussion: Disaster Films and Ethics 【EM】

Discussion led by Saito Ayako

..... 10/15 16:00–17:30 [M5]