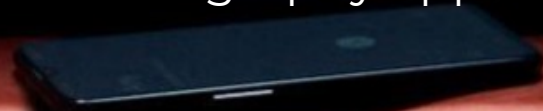


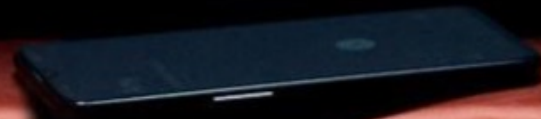
Every Second Day

Alternative Visual Strategies of the Female Gaze in
Cinematography applied in a Social Spot



Every Second Day

a man kills his (ex-) partner in Germany.



„Indeed, the camera isn't a neutral agent because the world it films and the people who film it aren't either. It adds human emotion and pain, but it also adds the biases and problems that come with society.“

(Holguin, 2021)

How can violence against women be depicted in film through the lens of the Female Gaze in order to present a respectful and authentic portrayal of the female experience?

Project Overview

1. Feminist Film Theory

- Introduction to key concepts, Focus on the *Male Gaze*

2. Film Analysis

- Case studies: *Bombshell*, *The Accused*, *Irreversible*
- How formal elements shape representation of violence

3. Developing Alternatives

- Exploring visual strategies for the *Female Gaze*

4. Artistic Implementation

- Creation of the anti-violence social spot: "Every Second Day"

Male vs. Female Gaze

- Male Gaze (Laura Mulvey, 1975): woman as object of desire

"In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 11)

- Female Gaze: focus on female subjectivity, emotion, experience

Techniques That Objectify Women On-Screen

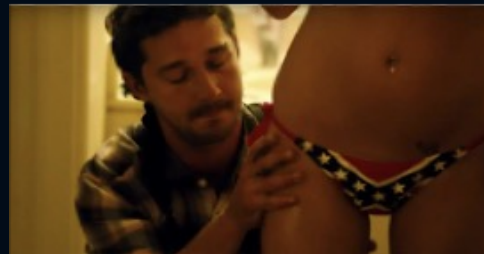
1. **POV Shots:** Female characters shown from male character's perspective, reinforcing his dominance
2. **Framing:** Close-ups fragment the female body into sexualized parts
3. **Camera Movement:** Slow pans eroticize and objectify the female body
4. **Lighting:** Soft light idealizes female faces, stripping emotional depth
5. **Narrative Function:** These techniques render female characters passive and reduce their agency



James Bond 007
– *Die Another Day*
(Tamahori, 2002)



*Valerian and the City of a
Thousand Planets* (Besson, 2017)



"American Honey" (Arnold, 2016)



"The Lady From Shanghai" (Welles, 1947)



Portrayal of Violence against Women – Challenges

- APA (1984): explicit portrayals of violence against women as **sexual stimuli for male viewers**
- **Explicit depictions** of sexual violence run the risk of reducing female characters to **objects** of sexual arousal (Wagner, 2015)
- Problematic **conflation of violence and sexual arousal** (Goleman, 1984)
- Stylistic choices often contribute to a **eroticized portrayal** of the victim or act of violence (Reifenberger, 2013)
- **Aesthetically reproducing patriarchal structures** (Koch, 2007)

Portrayal of Violence against Women – Scene Analysis



Film poster for *BombsHELL* (2019)
Source: IMDb
(<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6394270/>).

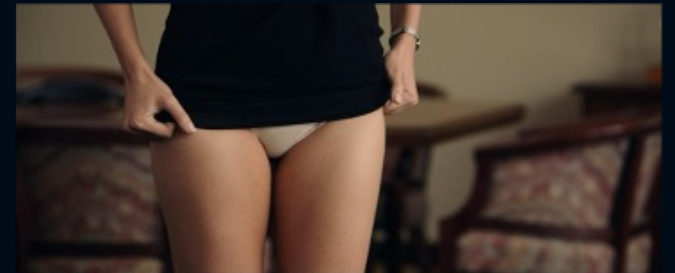
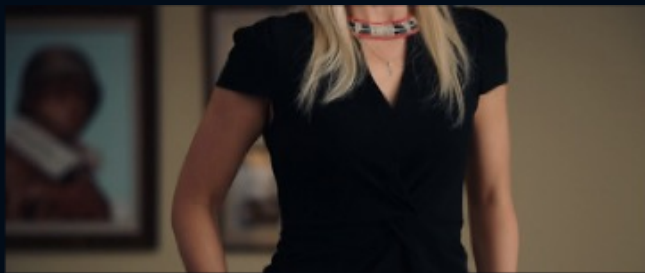


Film poster for *Irreversible* (2002).
Source: IMDb
(<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0290673/>).



Film poster for *Angeklagt* (1988).
Source: IMDb
(<https://www.imdb.com/de/title/tt0094608/>).

“Bombshell” – Jay Roach, 2019



Film Stills “Bombshell” (Roach, 2019, 00:38:54 - 00:40:05)

***“The Accused”* – Jonathan Kaplan, 1988**



Film Stills “The Accused” (Kaplan, 1988, 01:28:44 - 01:29:07)

***“Irreversible”* – Gaspar Noé, 2002**



Film Stills “Irreversible” (Noé, 2002, 00:43:57 - 00:52:58)

Portrayal of Violence – Scene Analysis

- **Explicit or graphic depiction**
- Construction of a perpetrator perspective or a voyeuristic, outside point of view
- The female body as an object for display and the violent situation as a visual spectacle:
 - The fragmentation of the female body by close-ups of specific body parts
 - Camera movements, such as body pans
 - POV shots from the perspective of the male figures or objective voyeuristic observer's perspective, on the exposed, suffering female body

Portrayal of Violence – Scene Analysis

- Visual techniques create a dynamic in which the female characters are made **hyper-visible through a voyeuristic, objectifying** male gaze—while their **subjective experiences remain invisible**

Alternative Visual Strategies - Beyond Spectacle

- **Survivor's POV** fosters empathy (Williams, 1995)
- **Subjective, handheld** camera techniques (Herrmann & Klocke, 2020)
- **Implicit Representation**: metaphorical or symbolic imagery, omission, verbal recollection (Kotthaus, 2015; Bacon, 2015)

Alternative Visual Strategies - Beyond Spectacle

„*Women Talking*“ – Sarah Polley, 2010

- violent act is not shown
- camera focuses visually on the "before" and "after"
- Survivor POV
- Violence presented as Flashbacks in the female characters Memory



Frame grabs of „*Women Talking*“ (Polley, 2022, 00:00:55 - 00:01:24)

Alternative Visual Strategies - Beyond Spectacle

„Dexter“ Season 5, Episode 10 – Keith Gordon, 2010

- Use of suggestive imagery
- Camera focuses on the emotional responses of other characters
- Indirect depiction prompts viewers to imagine the violence themselves



Frame grabs of *„Dexter“* (Gordon, 2010, Season 5, Episode 10, 00:17:40 - 00:17:54)

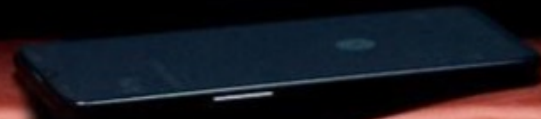
Every Second Day

Social Spot – Orange the World UN Women Germany 2024



Visual Design Strategies

- Focus on subjective experiences and emotions of the female character
- Avoid the perpetrator's perspective
- Abstract and implicit visual representations



Symbolic Embrace – Reflection Relationship Dynamic



Stills *"Every Second Day"*, 2024

Symbolic Embrace – Reflection Relationship Dynamic



Stills *"Every Second Day"*, 2024

Living Room – Emotional State



Stills *"Every Second Day"*, 2024

Living Room – Emotional State



Stills *"Every Second Day"*, 2024



Still *"Every Second Day"*, 2024



Still *"Every Second Day"*, 2024



Still *"Every Second Day"*, 2024

Visual Design Strategies

- Lighting, camera movement and color create indirect subjective perspective & reflect inner state
- Abuse implied, not shown
- Abstract, implicit portrayal of violence: Omission, metaphorical & symbolic depiction
- Physical , blurry, non-lingering imagery
- Emotional proximity instead of objectification
- Eye-level camera work

Explicit depiction & female perspective

"I may destroy you" – Explicit Violence through POV Shots



Frame grabs of *"I May Destroy You"* (2020, Coel & Miller, 00:29:09 - 00:29:41)

Deconstructing Visual Habits

- Not about a new dogma
- Challenge norms, create alternatives

Time for your thoughts...



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