

Film is a magical medium. Now, that just sounds like movie-buff gushing, but it is accurate in the truest sense. Movies are full of misdirection, showmanship and even manipulation. Our job as filmmakers (in most cases) is to execute a narrative story through the combination of many subtle and even invisible techniques. What astounds and eternally fascinates me about film is what comes of such methodical and practical craftsmanship: an often poetic and deeply moving experience. Duality is very prevalent in movies, as we're often shown one thing and intended to feel another or again, simply, that from such technical reliance, art emerges. Film can be elevated to the status of fine art while simultaneously being valued in our society as one of our most accessible forms of entertainment. Some of you will note the contradiction there. But while art films tend to be over-intellectualized by critics and movies made strictly for entertainment tend to be undervalued by either their makers or their audiences, film can exist and indeed thrive in both environments simply because no matter how you slice it, movies are not an intellectual art. They are an emotional one. It is how we're able to walk into a theater, surrounded by strangers, and instantly forget we're watching fictitious characters deal with fictitious problems. It's how the man who is perhaps emotionally unavailable with his own family can cry big, fat tears at the end of "City Lights" every time he watches it. We feel for the characters, sympathize, bastardize and even project our own virtues upon them. This is truly what separates movies from any other art; the participation required from us as viewers and our willingness to suspend disbelief.

Technically speaking, the craftsmanship required is similar film to film; being able to compose shots, utilize grammatical rules properly (or disobeying them purposefully) and competently combining images and sounds in order to *present* a clear story and *suggest* a lingering, elusive subtext. But the choice on how to arrange these images and sounds is where the individual artistry lives. The Auteur Theory simply states that the director's personal artistic vision is so crucial to the final product that they're considered the author of the film. This style of filmmaking, more than any other, allows for the clearest vision in a movie, and historically, has allowed for films to reach loftier heights in regards to subject matter. However, and ultimately, no matter what school of thought in which you approach film, whether you make summer blockbusters or art-house avant-garde cinema, there's a unifying quality and that's the magic of creating entire worlds for our audience members, and inviting them to become part of the very fabric of our films.