

**FILM GLOSSARY**

**AERIAL SHOT:** An exterior shot taken from a plane, crane, helicopter or any other very high position. Also referred to as a BIRD'S-EYE VIEW. See SHOT.

**ANIMATION:** A form of filmmaking which consists of photographing individual drawings (cels) or inanimate objects (such as puppets or clay figures) FRAME by frame, with each frame differing slightly from the one before. When the images are projected at 24 frames per second, they appear to move (or are animated).

**ASPECT RATIO:** The ratio of the projected image's width to its height. The standard for Hollywood theatrical releases is 1.85:1. Shapes may vary, from the television standard, a nearly square ratio of 1.33:1 to a very long rectangle. In the 1950s, Hollywood attempted to attract new audiences by developing various kinds of wide-screen systems, such as CinemaScope and Cinerama, which average 2.35:1. The European ratio is 1.66:1

**ASYNCHRONISM:** A disparity between what is seen and what is heard. At its extreme, asynchronous sound is contrapuntal; that is, the sound contrasts with the image. For example, you see a train arriving while you hear a bird chirping. Contrapuntal or asynchronous sound was supported by Sergei Eisenstein as part of his larger theory of dialectical montage.

**AUTEUR:** The assumed or actual "author" of a film, usually identified as the director. Also sometimes used to evaluate and distinguish good directors (auteurs) from mediocre or bad ones.

**AVAILABLE LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**AXIS OF ACTION:** In CONTINUITY EDITING, the imaginary line that passes from side to side through the main actors, defining the spatial relations of the scene. The camera is not supposed to cross the axis at a cut and reverse the spatial relations. Ensures constant screen space and constant screen direction.. A term used in film production more than as a term in film analysis.

**BACKLIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**BIRD'S-EYE VIEW:** see AERIAL SHOT and SHOT.

**CAMERA MOVEMENTS:**

**CRANE SHOT:** A high-angle, moving shot photographed from a crane (a mechanical arm which carries both camera and camera operators).

**DOLLY, TRUCKING, OR TRACKING SHOT:** A shot taken from a moving dolly (a platform on a set of wheels). When the camera moves towards the subject, it is a "dolly in." When it moves away from the subject, it is a "dolly back" or a "dolly out." With the use of SteadiCams and other mobile cameras, a moving camera may not be mounted on a dolly in order to achieve the same smooth effect. One of the early effective uses of the Steadicam is in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, where the camera follows characters through the maze of the hotel.

**PAN:** A shot taken when the camera stays in one place (on a tripod, for example) but rotates or swivels

horizontally. Compare DOLLY SHOT, in which the camera moves bodily from one place to another.

**SWISH PAN:** A rapid pan that results in a blurred image. It usually begins and ends at rest.

**TILT:** A shot taken when the camera stays in one place (on a tripod, for example) but rotates or swivels vertically.

**CGI (computer-generated-imagery):** This can include photographed images that have been manipulated digitally or images designed on a computer from scratch. Often just part of the frame has been created via CGI, such as the background setting for astronauts floating in space. See SPECIAL EFFECTS.

**CHEAT CUT:** In CONTINUITY EDITING, a cut which involves continuous time from shot to shot, but which mismatches the positions of figures or objects.

**CINEMATOGRAPHY:** All the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase.

**CINÉMA VÉRITÉ:** An approach to documentary filmmaking which originated in France and was made possible through the development of light-weight cameras and portable recording equipment that allowed for smaller, more portable crews. In cinema verite filmmaking, the director, rather than imposing his or her views, allows the subject to speak. Cinema verite is a highly self-conscious or REFLEXIVE, form of filmmaking which often acknowledges the presence of director (either aurally or visually). Cinema verite films are often characterized by AVAILABLE (natural) LIGHTING, DIRECT SOUND, HAND-HELD camera, and LONG TAKES. Today, cinema vérité can be achieved in video or digital video as well as 16mm film.

**CLASSICAL EDITING:** Most Hollywood films make use of classical or invisible editing. These films preserve a sense of narrative continuity but also make use of cuts for emotional and dramatic purposes (for example, INSERT and REACTION SHOTS) which do not literally advance the action. The cuts are not literally invisible but are designed to be unobtrusive, so that the viewer rarely notices them. See CONTINUITY EDITING.

**CLOSE-UP:** see SHOT.

**CLOSURE:** The wrapping up of all narrative strands in a narrative film, so that there are no loose ends.

**COMPOSITION:** The arrangement of all the elements of a shot in relation to the frame.

**CONTINUITY EDITING:** a style of editing marked by its emphasis on maintaining the continuous and seemingly uninterrupted flow of action in a story. See also CLASSICAL EDITING. Also called Invisible Editing.

**CROSS-CUTTING:** Switching back and forth between two or more scenes in different locations that are occurring simultaneously in order to create the feeling of PARALLEL ACTION. For example alternating between a character nearing a waterfall and another character galloping to the rescue. In cases like the above last-minute rescue, tension is often increased by shortening the shots and accelerating the rhythm of the cross-cutting. Such an editing pattern also gives the spectators access to more information than any one character in the narrative. Also called PARALLEL EDITING.

**CUT:** The point at which one shot ends and the next begins. Usually made by splicing two pieces of film together. General approaches to cutting include: CONTINUITY EDITING, CLASSICAL EDITING,

CROSS-CUTTING, INTELLECTUAL MONTAGE, and MONTAGE. Specific types of cuts include: CHEAT CUT, CUT-AWAY, CUTTING ON ACTION or MATCH ON ACTION, PLASTIC CUT, and JUMP CUT. The terms “cutting “ and “editing” are synonymous.

**CUT-AWAY:** A shot of short duration that supposedly takes place at the same time as the main action but is not directly involved in the main action. See also REACTION SHOT.

**CUTTING ON ACTION:** Cutting from one shot to another view that carries or matches a movement and gives the impression of a continuous time span. Example: a character begins to sit down in a MEDIUM SHOT and finishes the movement in a CLOSE-UP in the next shot. Because the action begins in one shot and is carried over into the next shot, a visual bridge is created which distracts spectators from noticing the Cut. Also called MATCH ON ACTION.

**DAY-FOR-NIGHT:** see LIGHTING.

**DEEP FOCUS:** see FOCUS.

**DEPTH OF FIELD:** The range of distances from the camera within which the subject is in focus when a given lens is used. Wide angle lenses produce DEEP FOCUS or great depth of field, while telephoto lenses produce a shallow depth of field.

**DIEGESIS:** In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. It refers to all the events that characters are aware of or that are presumed to have taken place and actions in the story, including spaces not shown onscreen. See also DIEGETIC and NONDIEGETIC SOUND.

**DIEGETIC SOUND:** Any speech, music, or sound effect that originates from a source within the film's story. See also DIEGESIS, NONDIEGETIC SOUND.

**DIRECT CINEMA:** An approach to documentary filmmaking associated with American filmmakers from the early 1960s. In direct cinema, the filmmaker observes the action or subjects and meaning evolves out of the footage. Direct cinema is often characterized by AVAILABLE (natural) LIGHTING, shoulder-mounted camera, and DIRECT SOUND. An example of direct cinema is Frederick Wiseman's *High School*.

**DIRECT SOUND:** Sound which is captured and recorded during filming.. As a style it refers to films that do not add components such as sound effects or dialogue in the postproduction stage.

**DISSOLVE:** see TRANSITIONS

**DOCUMENTARY:** Nonfiction film that explores and/or documents the lived world and that uses representations of actual events and people as its raw footage.

**DOLLY SHOT:** see CAMERA MOVEMENT.

**DUTCH ANGLE:** see SHOT.

**DVD:** Digital versatile disc or digital video disc. A CD-sized optical disc designed to function as a data storage medium. Most recently released films are available in this format, which replaced the LASERDISC for home viewing.

**ESTABLISHING SHOT:** A shot, usually involving distant framing, that introduces the spatial relations

among important characters, objects, and settings in an entire film or in a scene. Often an **EXTREME LONG SHOT**.

**EXPOSURE:** The process of subjecting photographic film stock to any light intensity for a given time, resulting in an image once the film has been processed.

**EXTREME CLOSE-UP:** see SHOT.

**EXTREME LONG SHOT:** see SHOT.

**EYE-LEVEL SHOT:** see SHOT.

**FADE:** see TRANSITIONS.

**FAST MOTION:** Action that appears faster on screen than it could occur in reality. This special effect is shot by undercranking, or running the camera more slowly than usual (at less than 24fps in sound and 16-20fps in silent film).

**FILL LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**FILM GAUGE:** The width of a piece of film stock, measured in millimeters. Before home video cameras, home movies were generally shot in 8mm or Super-8mm. Low-budget films, unless shot in digital format, are usually shot in 16mm, and feature films are usually shot in 35mm; however some big-budget spectacles are released in 70mm.

**FLASHBACK:** A sequence inserted into the narrative "present" which depicts an action from the past.

**FLASHFORWARD:** A sequence inserted into the narrative "present" which depicts an action from the future.

**FLAT LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**FOCUS:** An object in focus has a sharp and well-defined image. Focus is mainly affected by the lens of the camera, the projector, and our eye. See DEPTH OF FIELD.

**DEEP FOCUS:** Objects in the immediate foreground, the midground, and at a great distance (background) appear in equally sharp focus at the same time,

**SHALLOW FOCUS:** Objects on only one plane are in focus, while objects in the background or close to the camera are out of focus.

**SOFT FOCUS:** Often used for romantic effect, all objects appear blurred because none are perfectly in focus. This diffused effect is also often used to photograph aging actors and actresses. Soft focus can be obtained with filters as well as lenses.

**FOLLOW FOCUS:** If the camera or the subject moves during the shot, the camera may have to be refocused during the take in order to keep the subject in focus. If it is done smoothly, the moving subject will always stay in focus. Often accomplished with a zoom lens.

**RACK OR SEARCH FOCUS:** The switching of focus during a shot from one person or thing to another. For instance, in filming a conversation between two people, the director can place them in the

same frame, one in the foreground and one in the background, and alternately keep one in focus, the other out of focus. Often accomplished with a zoom lens. This is a popular TV effect that can be seen in shows such as *NYPD Blue*, *Third Watch*, and soap operas.

**FOLLOW FOCUS:** see FOCUS.

**FRAME:** see UNITS OF FILM LENGTH.

**FREEZE FRAME:** A special effect in a shot, giving the effect of a halt in action or a still photo. This is accomplished by printing one frame many times, usually with an optical printer.

**FRONTAL LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**GENRE:** A type or category of film, such as the musical, the Western, the thriller, romantic comedy, or the science fiction film.

**GRAPHIC MATCH:** see PLASTIC CUT.

**HAND-HELD SHOT:** A shot made with the camera held in the hands or mounted on the shoulder rather than mounted on a tripod or other stabilizing fixture. Often used for CINEMA VÉRITÉ or for a cinema vérité effect.

**HARD LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**HIGH-ANGLE SHOT:** see SHOT.

**INSERT SHOT:** A shot, containing visual detail, that is inserted into a scene for informational purposes or to provide dramatic emphasis. It is almost always a CLOSE UP.

**INTELLECTUAL OR THEMATIC MONTAGE:** A type of editing which, through the juxtaposition or collision of contrasting shots or sequences, generates ideas in the viewer's mind which are more than the meaning of the shots themselves. Example: shot of a man, shot of a peacock = idea of a vain person. Intellectual montage is most often associated with the work of Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein.

**IRIS:** see TRANSITIONS.

**JUMP CUT:** Cutting together two discontinuous points of a continuous action without changing the set up. The result is that one often sees the same subject in two successive shots but in a different position. Jump cuts can be found in the films of Sergei Eisenstein, but it was Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* that created a vogue for jump cuts in the 1960s. Jump cuts are now a common feature of music videos and TV advertising.

**KEY LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**LASERDISC (LD):** An analog video optical disc format. The format was replaced as a consumer product shortly after the introduction of DVD in 1997. By the middle of 2000 most studios and distributors stopped distributing titles in the format.

**LETTERBOXING:** A method of formatting wide-screen films for some video and DVD releases. Black bars mask the top and bottom of the frame, producing an image with a wider ASPECT RATIO in the center of the frame. The result is that the letterboxed image closely matches the aspect ratio of the

original theatrical release.

**LIGHTING:** Light can be natural (daylight) or artificial. It can be flat (not highly contrasted in brights and darks) or full of contrast. Strong contrasts can create dramatic effects. Lighting is often dependent on what type of film stock is being used; for example slower speed stocks are less sensitive to light and may require artificial lighting. Many color and slower speed stocks are not "fast" enough to shoot an ordinary outdoor night scene. When a scene is shot with no additional lights, only AVAILABLE LIGHTING is used. In some cases a scene is shot in the daylight and filters are added to darken the scene to look like night. This is called shooting DAY-FOR-NIGHT.

**BACKLIGHTING:** Lighting characters from the side opposite the camera, creating a thin outline of highlighting on the actors.

**FILL LIGHTING:** Light from a source less bright than the KEY LIGHT, used to soften deep shadows in a scene.

**FRONTAL LIGHTING:** Light projected into a scene from a position near the camera.

**HARD LIGHTING:** Light that creates stark contrasts between the lighted and shadowed areas of a scene.

**KEY LIGHTING:** Light from one bright source. In the three-point lighting system, the brightest light illuminating the scene.

**SIDE LIGHTING:** Lighting coming from one side of a person or object, usually to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface tensions, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source.

**SOFT LIGHTING:** Light that avoids harsh bright and dark areas, creating a gradual transition from highlights to shadows.

**THREE-POINT LIGHTING:** A common arrangement using three directs of light on a scene: from behind the subjects (BACKLIGHTING), from one bright source (KEY LIGHT), and from a dimmer source opposite the key light (FILL LIGHT).

**TOP LIGHTING:** Lighting coming from above a person or object, usually to outline the upper areas of the figure or to separate it more clearly from the background.

**UNDERLIGHTING:** Lighting from a point below the actors.

**LIP SYNC:** Synchronization between the sound and its source in the film. If they don't match, they are "out of sync." See SYNC .

**LOCATION:** Any place, other than the studio or studio lot, where a film is shot. Shooting in actual settings is called shooting "on location."

**LONG SHOT:** see SHOT.

**LONG TAKE:** A shot of unusually long duration. In 1984, the average length of a shot was 8.4 seconds; a long take is a shot of significantly longer duration than the average. See, for example, the opening scene of Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* or of Robert Altman's *The Player*.

**LOW-ANGLE SHOT:** see SHOT.

**MATCH CUT :** see PLASTIC CUT.

**MATTE:** A mask which obstructs some of the light passing through the camera lens. It can be of a specific shape (e.g., a keyhole), which is then imposed on the film as a blank area while the photographic images are being exposed. Mattes are now most often produced with laboratory techniques rather than with a camera-mounted mask.

**MEDIUM SHOT:** see SHOT.

**MISE-EN-SCÈNE:** The arrangement of all of the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed. Mise-en-scène refers to the settings and props, costumes and make up, the arrangements of actors in relation to the setting, lighting, etc. Writers often speak of two key approaches to filmmakers' styles: *mise-en-scène* to describe what goes on within the frame and *editing* to describe the order and length of shots.

**MONTAGE:** The French word for editing. In the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s, montage meant INTELLECTUAL MONTAGE. 2) In Europe, the term is equivalent to editing. In Hollywood, the phrase "montage sequence" is used specifically to describe a sequence using rapid cuts, often SUPERIMPOSITIONS and DISSOLVES, to create a kind of kaleidoscopic effect and to telescope or shorten the passage of an extensive period of time.

**MOTIF:** Any unobtrusive technique, object, or thematic idea that's systematically repeating throughout a film in a significant way, like the song "Tara" in *Gone with the Wind*.

**MOTIVATION:** The justification for an element included in the film, its cause. This may refer to a character's action, clothing, make-up, lighting, etc.

**MULTIMEDIA:** An ambiguous term describing the combination of audio, video, and other information with graphics, control, storage, and other features of computer-based systems. Applications include presentation, editing, interactive learning, and games.

**NARRATION:** The process by which the plot conveys or withholds story information. The narration can be restricted to one character's POINT OF VIEW or it can be omniscient, encompassing more information than any one character possesses.

**NARRATIVE STRUCTURE:** The organization of a film's narrative building blocks as determined by the order of scenes and sequences. For instance, *Citizen Kane* is structured as a series of flashbacks alternated with the reporter's search in the present. Screenwriters often speak of a three--part structure to story construction: the setup, the complications, and the resolution.

**NEW MEDIA:** Media technology or a form of media communication that surpasses, enhances, and/or alters an already-existing technology; for example, DVD (digital) technology compared to LASERDISC and VHS (both analog) technologies.

**NONDIEGETIC SOUND:** Sound, such as underscored music on the soundtrack, that is not part of the world of the film's narrative. In other words, the characters do not hear it

**NONLINEAR EDITING:** Random-access editing of video and audio on a computer rather than physically cutting the film. Example of nonlinear editing systems (NLEs) include AVID and Media 100; nonlinear software packages include Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premiere.

**OFF-SCREEN (o.s.) OR OFF-CAMERA (o.c.) DIALOGUE:** Dialogue spoken by a diegetic character who is not seen in a particular shot. Compare with VOICE-OVER.

**180° SYSTEM:** Maintaining left-right spatial relations on screen by not letting cameras cross the AXIS OF ACTION. If the camera were to cross the axis, the spatial relations would be reversed.

**PARALLEL ACTION:** An effect created when two or more actions in two or more different locations are presented by CROSS-CUTTING between them. This alternation between actions proposes to the viewer that they are taking place at the same time. Also called PARALLEL EDITING.

**PARALLEL EDITING:** see PARALLEL ACTION.

**PLAN AMÉRICAIN:** see SHOT.

**PLASTIC CUT/DISSOLVE or MATCH CUT/DISSOLVE:** Framing in a successive shot an object which begins with a shape or contour similar to an image in the preceding shot. In Alfred-Hitchcock's *Psycho*, for example, the camera cuts from Marion Crane's eye to the shower drain. The circumference and location in the frame of the two circles are identical. The shots may be placed back-to-back (plastic cut) or one may dissolve into the next (plastic dissolve). Also called a GRAPHIC MATCH.

**PLOT:** In a narrative film, all the events that are directly presented to us, including their causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. The plot consists of the explicitly shown events and actions which are selected from the STORY.

**POINT-OF-VIEW (POV) SHOT:** A shot which represents what a character is looking at. It is seen more or less from his/her perspective and thus often increases the viewer's emotional identification with that character. A POV shot usually follows a shot of the person (whose view it represents) looking off-screen. This set up is often referred to as "motivated POV."

**PRIME LENS:** A single focal-length lens.

**RACK FOCUS:** see FOCUS.

**REACTION SHOT:** 1) A CUT-AWAY shot of a person reacting to the main action as a listener or spectator. 2) A shot giving a character's reaction to what he/she has seen in the preceding POINT-OF-VIEW shot.

**REAL TIME:** The actual time an action would need to occur as opposed to SCREEN TIME, like the sinking of the Titanic in *Titanic*. Real time is rarely preserved in film scenes and exists only within the individual shots of a film; actions that are unnecessary to the film narrative are often edited out.

**REAR PROJECTION:** A technique whereby the actors, sets, and props in front of the camera are combined with a background which consists of a translucent or blue screen on which a picture (moving or still) is projected from behind. In classical Hollywood films, this technique was often used when a scene took place inside a moving vehicle (see any Hitchcock film, but especially *Vertigo*). Sometimes called "back projection" or a "process shot."

**REEL:** see UNITS OF FILM LENGTH.



**REESTABLISHING SHOT:** A return to a view of an entire space after a series of closer shots following the ESTABLISHING SHOT.

**REFLEXIVITY:** Self-consciousness in a film that draws attention to its own construction (editing, camera movement, performance, etc.). Reflexive films often seek to remind the audience that it is watching a film. They can focus on the formal elements of film (such as the limits of the frame) or they can examine the social or political implications of cinema, such as the ways in which films often either objectify or marginalize groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality.

**REVERSE MOTION:** Screen action that runs backwards.

**SCENE:** see UNITS OF FILM LENGTH.

**SCREEN DIRECTION:** Whichever direction, left or right, the actor or object is looking at or moving toward, described from the audience's point of view. Most often CONTINUITY EDITING will maintain the integrity of screen direction.

**SCREEN TIME:** Duration of an action as manipulated through editing, as opposed to REAL TIME. An editor can use CROSS CUTS or CUT-AWAYS, for example, to expand or condense real time to give the film a different duration. For example, if we cut away for part of a movement, when we cut back we may have cut out a large chunk of the action. For other ways of manipulating time see: FAST and SLOW MOTION, JUMP-CUTS, REVERSE MOTION, and FREEZE FRAME.

**SEARCH FOCUS:** see FOCUS.

**SEQUENCE:** see UNITS OF FILM LENGTH.

**SEQUENCE SHOT:** see SHOT.

**SHOT:** A piece of film that has been exposed, without cuts or interruptions, in a single running of the camera. The shot is often regarded as the elemental division of a film. Shots may be categorized: 1) according to the apparent distance of the main subject from the camera (camera distance); 2) according to the angle of the camera in relation to the subject; 3) according to the content, nature or subject matter of what is being filmed (e.g., a reaction shot or a two-shot); 4) according to the means by which the shot is accomplished physically (camera movement).

#### **1. DISTANCES:**

**EXTREME LONG SHOT (XLS) :** A shot in which the scale of the object shown is very small; a landscape, a cityscape, or a crowd. Such an image is often used as an ESTABLISHING SHOT.

**LONG SHOT (LS):** A shot that shows a character in his or her entirety, filling most of the frame.

**MEDIUM LONG SHOT (MLS):** A shot in which an object that is 4-5 feet tall fills the screen vertically. A shot that shows a character from the shins up (also referred as a PLAN AMÉRICAIN).

**PLAN AMÉRICAIN:** A shot that shows a character from the shins up. Sometimes referred to as a MEDIUM LONG SHOT, especially when a character is not shown.

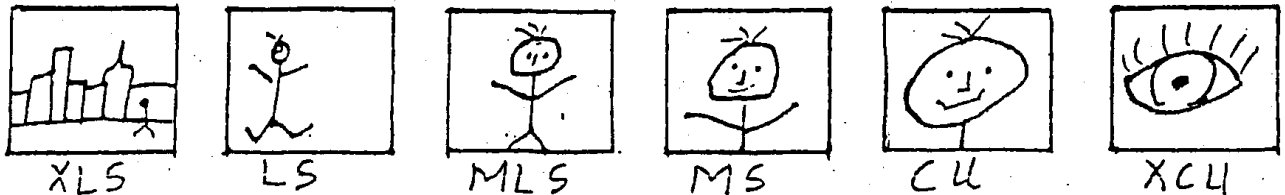
**MEDIUM SHOT (MS):** A shot that shows a character from the waist up.

**MEDIUM CLOSE-UP (MCU):** A shot somewhere between a MEDIUM SHOT and a CLOSE-UP; generally one that shows a character from the chest up and with some background remaining.

**CLOSE-UP (CU):** A shot in which the head of a person or the entirety of a small object is shown.

**EXTREME CLOSE-UP (XCU):** A shot that shows only a small portion or detail of a character's body (eyes, ears, mouth) or a tiny object.

**2. ANGLES (described from the camera's point of view):**



**HIGH-ANGLE SHOT:** A shot which looks down on a character or object from a height.

**LOW-ANGLE SHOT:** A shot which looks up at the subject.

**EYE-LEVEL SHOT:** A shot taken at the director's or the subject's eye level. This is normally between 5 and 6 feet but it can change according to director and cultural context. For example, Yasujiro Ozu's films were often shot at a level of three feet to replicate the eye level of someone seated on a tatami mat and Susan Seidelman's films are often shot at a level below five feet because she is shorter than the conventions allow.

**REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT:** A shot taken by a camera positioned more or less opposite from where the previous shot was taken. When reverse angles are alternated for dialogue sequences, the sequence is called SHOT/COUNTER-SHOT or SHOT-REVERSE-SHOT. It often looks like this:



**DUTCH, CANTED, or OBLIQUE ANGLE:** A shot in which the frame is not level; either the right or the left side is lower than the other, causing objects in the scene to appear slanted out of an upright position.

**3. CONTENT:**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT:** Often the opening shot of a film or a sequence, showing the location of a

scene or the arrangement of its characters. Usually an EXTREME LONG SHOT or a LONG SHOT. For example, classical Westerns normally open with a LONG SHOT of a conventional setting, such as Monument Valley.

**MASTER SHOT:** In classical Hollywood, a master shot referred to an entire piece of dramatic action which was first filmed in a single shot before being rephotographed in closer shots. An edited sequence was then constructed using the variety of shots. Today, a master shot can refer to a SEQUENCE SHOT, a complex take incorporating many distances and a lot of movement.

**TWO-SHOT:** Close-up or medium shot of two persons.

**THREE-SHOT:** Close-up or medium shot of three persons.

#### 4. MEANS:

**STATIC SHOT:** a shot in which the camera is immobile.

**MOVING SHOTS:** see CAMERA MOVEMENTS.

**SHOT/COUNTER-SHOT:** see REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT (under SHOT).

**SHOT-REVERSE-SHOT:** see REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT (under SHOT),

**SLOW MOTION:** The action appears slower on the screen than it could in reality. Achieved by shooting at more than 24fps (overcranking) or in the processing stage (with an optical printer).

**SPECIAL EFFECTS:** Artistic effects (such as wipes, split screens, matte shots, and rear projection) that are unobtainable from straight-forward motion-picture photography. and have been manipulated or combined. Special effects are added to a film or video in order to enhance the production by creating drama, enhancing mood, or developing story. See CGI.

**SOFT FOCUS:** see FOCUS.

**SOFT LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**STATIC SHOT:** see SHOT.

**STOCK FOOTAGE:** Footage borrowed from previous films or a stock library. It is often newsreel footage of famous people and events and other hard-to-shoot footage.

**STOP MOTION:** The method by which trick photography is created; 1) film is exposed one frame at a time, allowing time for the slight rearrangement of models, etc. between frames, and thus giving the illusion in the completed film of motion by something normally inanimate. This is how *King Kong* was made and Claymation is filmed. 2) The method used for TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY, which is extreme FAST MOTION (for example, one frame every thirty seconds). This is how flowers can appear on the screen growing, blooming and dying within a few seconds. 3) The camera is run continuously, then stopped; objects or people are removed; the camera is run normally again. Thus objects and people can be made to appear or disappear. This last effect was first used by Georges Méliès in *A Trip to the Moon* and other early films.

**STORY:** Our imaginary construction of all the events in the narrative including both what is directly presented and what we infer. See PLOT.

**STYLE:** The manner in which a film conveys its ideas; how the film conveys an attitude towards the material in cinematic terms. A film's style is influenced by mode of production, country, period, and conventions, and the particular director's artistic choices. There are broad styles, such as realism, expressionism, surrealism, but each filmmaker interprets the script in an individual style, making directorial choices related to camera work, sound, acting, editing, mise-en-scène, and the like.

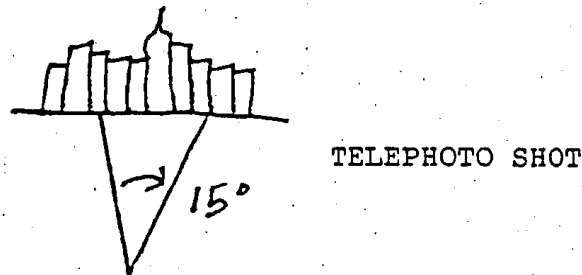
**SUPERIMPOSITION:** A multiple exposure in which two or more images are simultaneously visible over each other.

**SWISH PAN:** see SHOT.

**SYNC OR SYNCHRONISM:** Sound that is matched temporally with the movements occurring in the images, as when dialogue corresponds to lip movements.

**TAKE:** see UNITS OF FILM LENGTH.

**TELEPHOTO LENS:** A lens of long focal length with a narrow angle of view. it condenses space, flattens depth, and brings distant things close. Compare WIDE ANGLE LENS.



**THEME:** An overarching idea conveyed by a film (as opposed to the plot, which is what happens). Themes found in *Citizen Kane* include: the crushing weight of materialism, the contrast between Kane's public successes and his private failures, and the corruption of power.

**THEORY:** When applied to the cinema, a philosophical or aesthetic model which seeks to explain the basic characteristics of film. Film theory examines questions regarding the nature of cinema (What is cinema?) and how it expresses meaning (How does it communicate?).

**THREE-POINT LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**THREE SHOT:** see SHOT.

**TILT:** see SHOT.

**TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY:** see STOP MOTION.

**TOP LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

**THREE-POINT LIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

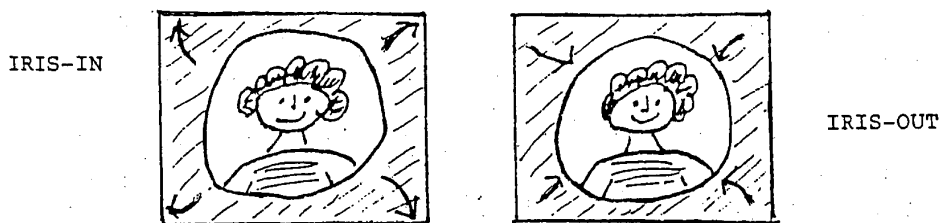
**TRACKING SHOT:** see SHOT.

**TRANSITIONS:** Besides cutting directly from the last frame of one shot to the first frame of another shot, the following transitions can be used to connect shots. They are created either in the camera or during editing:

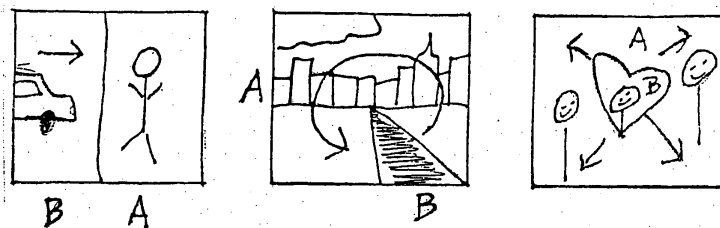
**DISSOLVE;** The merging of the end of one shot with the beginning of the next; as the second shot becomes distinct, the first slowly fades away. Thus, for a while, two images are SUPERIMPOSED. Also called "lap dissolves" and, in England, "mixes." A dissolve is a fade-out which overlaps a fade-in.

**FADE:** A shot that begins in darkness and gradually assumes full brightness is a fade-in. A fade-out gradually gets darker or fades to black.

**IRIS:** A round, moving mask that can close down to end a scene (iris-out) or emphasize a detail, or it can open to begin a scene (iris-in) or to reveal more space around a detail.



**WIPE:** A transition in which the second shot appears and "pushes" off the first one; usually the images are separated by a visible vertical line, but there are many variations of wipes. Three kinds of wipes:



**TWO-SHOT:** see SHOT.

**UNDERLIGHTING:** see LIGHTING.

### UNITS OF FILM LENGTH:

**FRAME:** The individual picture on a strip of film. FRAME also refers to the borders of the projected image.

**REEL:** 1) Physical object on which film is wound; 2) Length (in time) of film on a given reel. Reels vary according to the FILM GAUGE and the projector: reel changeovers in 16mm occur about once every 40 minutes, in 35mm every 20 minutes. Because raw-stock came on 10 minute reels in the silent era, directors often structured films in 10 minute sequences. In commercial theaters films are usually projected on platters. The whole film is spliced together after being shipped as separate reels.

**SHOT:** A piece of film that has been exposed without cuts or interruptions. (Defined in detail under its own alphabetical listing.)

**SCENE:** A dramatic action consisting of one or more shots and taking place in more or less continuous time and space. In a shooting script, specific locations, setups, and even shots may be numbered as scenes although, strictly speaking, they are not.

**SEQUENCE:** A dramatic unit comprised of shots or scenes linked together by a common idea or image. The sequence can span different times or location as long as its dramatic elements and structure are united. In non-narrative film, a SEQUENCE designates a unit held together by rhythm, composition, theme, or concept.

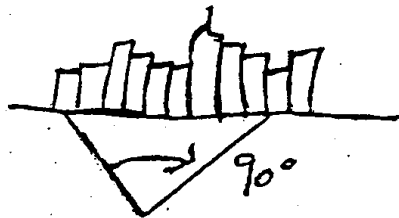
**TAKE:** One of the many recordings of a given shot. Most of the time, each shot in a film is photographed over and over again. The best version (or TAKE) of each shot is chosen for the final film.

**VIDEO:** The picture portion of a broadcast TV signal; an electronic signal making a TV picture. Formats include: VHS, Beta, Hi8, Digital Video, and Mini-DV.

**VIDEO CAMERA:** A camera which contains an electronic image sensor and records on tape rather than photographic film.

**VOICE-OVER (V.O.):** Narration, usually added in post-production, that occurs outside the immediate on-screen world of the film. Compare with OFF-SCREEN or OFF-CAMERA DIALOGUE.

**WIDE ANGLE LENS:** A lens of short focal-length with a broad angle of view. It exaggerates apparent depth of space and is often used for DEEP FOCUS shots. Compare to TELEPHOTO LENS.



WIDE-ANGLE SHOT

**WIPE:** see TRANSITIONS.

**ZOOM SHOT:** A shot taken with a zoom lens (i.e., a variable focal length lens which makes it possible to move visually toward or away from a subject without moving the camera). With a DOLLY SHOT, objects pass by the camera, giving a feeling of depth. With a ZOOM, the sensation is two-dimensional, much like coming close to a still photograph.

Revised August 24, 2011