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An Irreducible Otherness

Citation for published version:

Davie, E & Lie, T 2009, 'An Irreducible Otherness' *DOX - European Documentary Magazine*, vol. Summer 2009, no. 82, pp. 8-10. <<http://issuu.com/trulslie/docs/dox82e>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

DOX - European Documentary Magazine

Publisher Rights Statement:

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Survival Song, (2008) Yu Guangyi



story and, of course, I would like to help this family to have better conditions for their daily life. So I think something will or has to change with our consciousness. But it is so difficult to have a direct impact on the situations, like you are mentioning.

TI: *When people in the west become voyeurs, look and feel, but then just let them be in their Otherness, it doesn't help, does it?*

– For instance is *Bidal* only possible for me, because it's made by an Indian man, because of its specific ethical points of view?

At the same time we cannot be naïve any more like we have been. The beginning is to improve the memory, the consciousness of where we are living. After seeing *Encirclement*, I am disturbed enough to understand the system we are living in with more detail. It is a tricky system. We are in a deep crisis, but if you look around and read the newspapers they want to re-enact the system. Nothing will basically change. They just want to heal the wounded points. That's all. It could be a fantastic opportunity really to ask questions, to change some values we are living in.

"I believe in influences between the fiction tradition and the documentary tradition"

TI: *Actually there have been practically no articles in the newspapers discussing the economic system. Do you think we will see it in coming documentaries?*

– I hope so. *Encirclement* is a good example, but documentaries need a little time of reflection. We see more and more documentaries searching, asking unconventional, disturbing questions. Political cinema wants to know what is really going on. Cinema no longer says that tomorrow we need a socialist revolution. That was the time of Pao-lin.

ED: *Is a part of that the creation of a space for an audience to empower themselves?*
– Absolutely.

TI: – *You have been talking about different trends like the "I" cinema, autobiographical and biographical films. Here in Lyon, Susan Mogul shows her autobiographical works. Aren't these the types of films that don't see the Other, but focus more on one's self, making one blind to Otherness?*

– No. It's part of the field of cinema. With Mogul, for instance, these narcissistic films, I think, are part of creation. I like novels where people are reflecting about themselves, I like diaries. Why not?

ED: *Maybe it is about the Other too. Her films say so much about Los Angeles, and she too is a document, in a sense.*

– She is. I like to feel the taste of authenticity – these are Vision du Reel films. More and more documentaries, especially in America, want to tell a story – and the storytelling system becomes more important than the raw material. Many times they edit against what they really have got, because the storytelling structure becomes more important.

– I believe that cinema is an impure art. It's made out of many influences: the history of painting; of architecture; of music; of drawings; of literature; and a little bit like opera. I believe in hybrid compositions. I believe in influences between the fiction tradition and documentary tradition, because the fiction tradition helps many documentaries tell a story: how to have main characters, conceive a dramaturgy – and more fictions today know they need the taste of documentary.

I believe in the moment of cinema. What is the moment in cinema? It is a piece of time I can believe in, because cinema is made to laugh, to cry, to dream and to sleep.

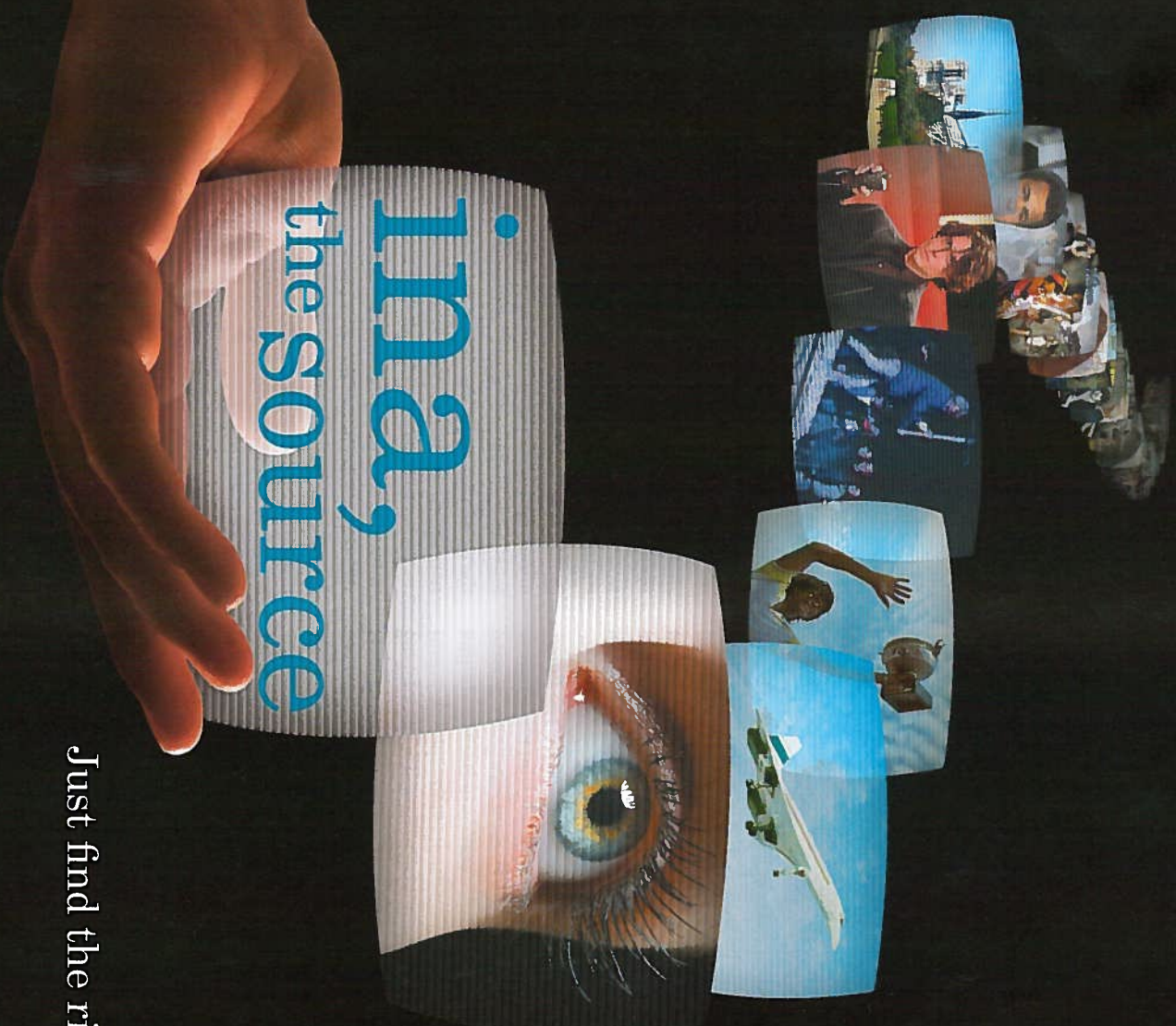
ED: *Why sleep?*

– Because of dreaming. You can be in a theatre watching a film, sleep a little bit, and then come back to the film. Cinema has to do with something different than just watching with your eyes. It takes you into another space. I believe in cinema as an element we need for reconsidering our utopias. We've lost our utopias. I believe deeply that cinema du reel, creative documentary, is really the beating heart of today's cinema, cinema as a whole. It's the beating heart of creation of the seventh art, i.e., the art of cinema. 3

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