



Kim Longinotto: theorising the female gaze in relation to inter-subjectivity and the auteur in documentary practice

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Paper Title:**Kim Longinotto: theorising the female gaze in relation to inter-subjectivity and the auteur in documentary practice****Abstract:**

Longinotto's observational style of documentary filmmaking where there is little or no voice-of-god narration and the camera seemingly follows a series of tableaux, can tend to position the camera, and the documentary filmmaker, as a passive observer. This paper argues that although Longinotto's style echoes vérité aesthetics (which erroneously suggest impartiality) her approach is necessarily partial. Longinotto's collaboration with a key figure in the place where she is filming and her entwined connection with her subjects and their shared goals, means that the camera, and Longinotto, function as active participants as opposed to passive observers. The term active witness is therefore a more apt way of describing her observational style since partiality and inter-subjectivity are central to Longinotto's documentary practice. Her films contrast with other, often male, documentary filmmakers who make their authorial presence and performative engagement in the film apparent. Instead, Longinotto privileges the aims and objectives of her subjects. By doing so, perhaps paradoxically, this becomes her authorial style.

With examples from several of her films, this paper argues that the camera in Longinotto's films, with its distinct female gaze emanating from Longinotto and her female collaborators, becomes an additional tool for the film's participants in achieving their goals as they actively challenge oppressive patriarchal systems and practices.

This paper offers a model for considering Longinotto's work by framing it in relation to inter-subjectivity and the female gaze (Ettinger, 2001) and how this coalesces with but also challenges classical auteur theory.

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Dr Jolene Mairs Dyer is a Lecturer in Media Production at Ulster University. She has research interests in collaborative documentary filmmaking/visual practice in post-conflict societies (particularly in post-agreement Northern Ireland) where the ownership of the material is shared between producer/director and the storyteller.

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