

# Why feminist film theory should matter to art students.

Dr. Andrea B. Braidt  
Department for Theater, Film and Media Studies,  
Vienna University

# My Background

- Teaching feminist film theory for over 10 years
- Both at universities and at art universities
- Now teaching theory to students of theater, film and media studies

# Why fft matters to *all* art students?

- Film theory provides key access to central theoretical paradigms of the 20th century: semiotics, psychoanalysis, discourse analysis

Theory has gained so much importance for art students; it is central to build upon a well-grounded theoretical basis. Film theory provides these texts, eg. theory of the sign, representational theory, subject formation, etc. By studying fft, students learn to deal with difficult theory.

# Why fft matters to *all* art students?

- Feminist film theory is formative to film theory in general which, in turn, provides crucial analyses of narrative visuality.

Key texts of film theory like Mulvey (1975) or de Lauretis focus on gender construction through male gaze or narrative image. Critique of Western narrative systems intrinsic - bares the foundations of universal cirtique to all art forms.

# Why *fft* matters to *all* art students?

- Theorisation of gender thus intrinsic to the theory of the (moving) image.

Important for both students of film/media production, but also to other art students (arms length principle)

# Why fft matters to *all* art students?

- The tight connection between thinking feminist film theory and doing feminist film theory is perfect for the classroom.

Feminist film theorists also made films, trying to put their theoretical concepts into practice. Examples for productivity of theoretical concerns in artistic production (and vice versa) Eg. Riddles of the Spinx (Laura Mulvey), Reassemblage (Trinh T. Minh-ha), etc.

# Why fft matters to *all* art students?

- Queer theory is crucial within fft, as the discursive formations of sexuality are central issues in the human-centered medium of film.

Fft thus provides ample opportunity to discuss the constructedness and mediality of sexuality and gender identity in terms of artistic production.

# If we want students who

- ...can contextualise the latest theoretical hypes
- ...can make sophisticated connections between their reading and their art productions
- ...know about the centrality of thinking about the constructiveness of gender
- ...appreciate an effective teaching which combines tough reading with stimulating screening experiences



# we only need to

- integrate classes on feminist film theory into the art schools curricula.