

The Lumiere Manifesto

Lumiere video arises from the tradition of the French Lumiere brothers. Credited with some of the first footage captured, in 1895, the Lumieres are also recognized for holding the first public film screening, showing ten shorts that lasted only twenty minutes total. At the time, Louis Lumiere stated, “The cinema is an invention without a future,” believing that everyday photography and video was ultimately nonsensical. Yet, we stand firm that Lumiere principles are essential to our existence as artists, media producers, visual creatures, and world citizens.

From a documentary perspective, and because Auguste and Louis Lumiere are thought to have produced the rudimentary firsts in this now well-known genre, founders of the field are essential to how we view our work today on a continuum. Lumieres emerge from the belief in filmmakers’ distinct points of view; appropriately, lumiere literally means “light” in English. Online video has now for years allowed the advancement of personal narratives and showcased the world through the eyes of other video producers. At best, we display an edited view of our worlds. At worst, we destroy important viewpoints through unnecessary editing.

We believe instead that everyday video brings together a collective consciousness and experience through which we all come to view a universal existence and see “light” in the world, even through personal darkness. Film lacking context and artistic modification in any way beyond perspective, technology, and equipment is essential in an era of unrestrained, theatrical Internet TV. We do not believe filmmaker’s geographical or psychological location to be an advantage any more than any other tool we can all employ. We believe in universal, important beauty and those who can attempt to replicate what their eyes and minds encounter. Inasmuch, Lumiere films require no explanation and are accessible to any audience with patience and an acceptance of the world we share.

We believe it is imperative that the filmmaker meets the world at eye-level and not from above. That is to say, life should be filmed as it happens on its own premise without any additional intervention. Only by opening the self to our surroundings can we be at the

right place at the right time. We do not believe in artificially assembled scenes or scripted action.

We believe in video as a tool for contemplation. As camera movement, zooming, cutting, and special effects merely function as distractions, the filmmaker should shun these techniques out of respect for the audience. Voice-overs and credit rolls have long been used to over-explain how to interpret video, whereas the creator’s interpretation is not the most valuable perspective. A sense of mystery should be the focus of publishing, without preaching. We believe video can only become truly meaningful if a viewer is forced to invest time, personality, and analytical capabilities in order to extract truth. The value of moving pictures are in their potential for a multitude of interpretations, not as insipid entertainment or propaganda.

For the same reason, we believe in the personal viewing experience afforded by the computer as it enables an individual and private relationship between the viewer and the video. This intimate consumption is not one the filmmaker should attempt to overcome by collective viewings; instead, it should be embraced and public presentations of the work as cinema or a television broadcast should be rejected.

As such, we propose and curate, as inspired by media evangelist Aske Dam and the remoscope collective, a collection of personal videos that adhere to the following principles (arguably the natural limits of the original Lumieres):

60 seconds max.
Fixed camera
No audio

No zoom
No edit
No effects

Works that follow these principles—Lumiere videos of today—are not intended to exist in competition with other film movements but seek to complement perspective film and observer documentary. There is no reason to repeat bad history.

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<http://videoblogging.info/>