

cinemini
europe



How to create a meaningful
film experience with

TÉR



A project on film education for 3-6 year old's

From a very young age, children are open to many different forms of art. Film, as an audiovisual medium, is particularly attractive and accessible for almost all children. Children not only enjoy moving image and easily engage with narrative films and documentaries, but also actively respond to abstract and experimental films, which give them a lot of room for imagination.

Children see movies on a daily basis. How can we make film watching a meaningful experience? How and what can we teach children in a very early age about film and media, since the early years are the most formative? We try to answer these questions on a practical way in Cinemini Europe, a film education project with films, activities and teaching materials for children between 3-6 years old.

With Cinemini Europe we want to give children and care takers the opportunity to discover the diverse world of moving image in a meaningful and fun way. We believe it is not primarily about understanding film, but rather experiencing it. By watching, playing and reflecting on moving image, we want to stimulate the development of creativity and critical thinking and spark a love for film.

Cinemini Europe is an European project by Das Österreichische Filmmuseum, Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, Eye Filmmuseum, Kinodvor Cinema Ljubljana, Taartrovers and is supported by Creative Europe.

This material is created to support the creation of meaningful film educational activities.

TÉR

Director	István Szabó
Country	Hungary
Year	1971
Prod. by	Mafilm
Length	5 minutes
Image	colour
Sound	sound



Synopsis

A boy painting some letters on the walls of a city house with a piece of chalk takes us to the adjacent square where public life is being performed on a sunny day: Children, women, men, young and old - everyone is at play, chasing each other, dancing with each other, talking or screaming, always in movement. The camera captures this moment of collective life in a breathtakingly fluid movement, giving us the feeling that we could potentially be every single one of them or all of them at once, close to everything and at the same time strangely detached, flying above and watching life unfold from afar.

Film aesthetic

István Szabó's portrait of a public square where families hang out collectively on a summer day is a documentary film which does not follow one character or one event but rather gives us an idea of a certain place in a certain time. The film is framed by the boy who paints letters on the walls of houses surrounding the park until he runs into it. At this very moment the camera follows him and then let's go to investigate all the people he passes in running. There is an ongoing tension in the film which is derived from the fact that it does not show us the whole square first and then the people in it one by one but rather unfolds the whole square by going from one individual to the next. One can read this literally: The square is not a square in itself, it becomes one through the people that inhabit it.

While we look at children and adults in small groups and on their own from quite a distance in the beginning the film slowly begins to come closer until – towards the end – we have children looking directly into the camera, interacting with it and us, the spectators. This also changes how we could think of the film: As a document or as a fictional film that stages things for the camera.

At the end the boy leaves the square again and then magically ascends to the air from which he (and we) finally get a view of the whole square and all of the people we have just met.

Filmmaker(s)

István Szabó is probably the internationally most renowned director from Hungary. Born in Budapest in 1938 his family had to go into hiding during the later stages of WW II because of their jewish descent. After graduating from high school he started studying at the Academy of Theatrical and Cinematic Arts, directing several short films. After working in Hungary for a while he made a number of international films in the 1980's, one of the most widely known being *Mephisto* (1981) which won him an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

Creating a meaningful film experience

General suggestions on how to work with this film:

- 1 Prepare a meaningful screening for the children, in cinema, at school or kindergarten (ideal setting: large screen, a bit of darkness, clear but not too loud sound, space for playing – potentially with an installation or else with a simple set up like table and drawing paper or light and shadow).
- 2 Have an introductory dialogue with the children on film in general and the project: ask about their personal experiences with film, ask if they've seen a film in a cinema before, tell them about the project and the visit, and discuss the rules.
- 3 Introduce the film(s) and watch the film.
- 4 Allow the children to bodily articulate reactions and to share emotions, thoughts and notifications about their experience.
- 5 Create a safe surrounding for a discussion and encourage a dialogue. Try to let the kids talk and collect what they have to say, draw connections between what they have seen, articulate similarities and follow up on differences (why have different kids seen things differently although they have seen the same film?).
- 6 Let the children process the films by playing freely (with one of the installations or a simple alternative).
- 7 Hand out the activity cards, and let the children play in groups or individually.
- 8 Repeated viewing: watch films again (and again, and again: children love repetition and learn from it).

Talking & Activity suggestions

- 1 Ask the children to tell you what the people in the park did? Ask them if there were things they did not understand or things they felt especially drawn to or familiar with. You can ask for example: Do you know all the games the children played? Do you have a space like this in your neighborhood?

- 2 After having watched it a second time, prepare some stills from the film and talk about the idea of distance: When is the camera close to people, when is it far away? What can we see better when being close, what can we see better when being far away?
- 3 Go to a park or the outside area of your Kindergarten and give a number of digital cameras to the children. Ask them to take photos of things or people around them. Present a selection of these photos to the group and discuss.

The activity cards

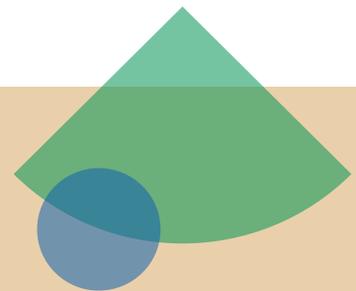
For each film of the Cinemini Europe project two or more activity cards have been created. The activity cards are nice treasures for the children, a remembrance of what they've seen. The assignment on each card invites to reflect and elaborate a bit more on the film. With simple and playful activities like drawing, dancing, acting or imagining children can work on the development of various skills, such as fine motor skills, speaking and listening skills and social and emotional skills. The activity cards can be done in groups, individually, in class or at home.

Further watching or viewing

The following films from the cinemini Europe project might be a good addition to *Tér*:

When Cities Fly – this film would allow you to follow up on the notion that cinema can document something without using any words.

L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat – this film can help you to start talking about the difference between documentary and fictional film which is also an aspect of *Tér*.



Colophon

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