



Film Talk Facilitator Guide

Presented by the TIFF Volunteer Programme

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FILM TALK TRAINING GUIDE

Seniors' Film Friday film talks are typically structured as follows: a film screening followed by 30-45 minute discussion led by one of our volunteer docents.

All of our volunteer docents are provided with an information sheet about the film. This template has been provided at the end of this guide which you can use to create your own information sheet in support of the objectives of the film talks.

The nature of your film talk is up to your group and their needs! We've included some things to consider when programming a film and how best to facilitate a discussion for your group in this handy guide. This guide is by no means the only methods in which a film discussion can happen but provides information on how TIFF structures the program.

OBJECTIVE

A film discussion should provide a safe space where participants can share individual experiences while also contextualizing the film. The intention of the discussion is to create a transformative experience for the participants through conversations sparked by the participant's feelings towards the film and by facts about the film that may connect to their personal lived experiences or by current issues and events. We would emphasize that the most important factor in facilitating a film discussion is acknowledging the interests and needs of the group, while also taking into account who made the film, when, where, how and why the film was made.

It is important to note that even if some participants did not enjoy the film, the combination of the film and discussion can still be a positive experience. Providing the opportunity for participants to voice their opinions on the film (and topics surrounding the film), share knowledge and being able to learn from each other is the driving force behind film talks and what we are aiming to provide. We know we are successful when we allowed those who wanted to speak up, do so (positive or negative). Other criteria for a successful film talk could include the group's willingness to attend another film talk, the group learning something new, engaging in conversations, changing of perspectives etc.

PROGRAMMING FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding the needs and interests of your audience is essential in your film selection. Although not every participant has to enjoy the film, we want to select films of interest and relevance to participants. Finding the correct film can be as simple as deciding on a film that has broad appeal to attract as many individuals as possible to a film talk. On the flip side, this can be as complicated as balancing different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and providing accommodations for individuals with differing abilities and needs.

At TIFF we have identified four (4) main audience types:

- **Knowledge & Experience Seekers** – A patron or group who is interested in arts/entertainment (not necessarily just film) and is seeking new information.
- **Film Creators** – Patrons who are immersed in the film world, new to the Industry or interested in joining the organization (members/Industry professionals) and are looking to expand their knowledge.
- **Film Lovers** – A patron or group who is already interested in film, film culture, or regularly visits TIFF Bell Lightbox/Festival for screenings and wants to visit to appreciate the institution or use the services that are offered.
- **Socializers** - A group of friends, family or community members who are interested in watching a film together and participating in a talk. For those engaging in our off-site programming, these might be individuals brought together by shared curiosity and interest in film, or just have the desire to spend time with each other regardless of the activity.

Within these categories, your group may have specific interests/needs, which you will have to take into consideration when programming a film. Things to consider when selecting a film:

- **Group dynamics** - Does everyone know each other prior to attending the film talk?
 - A group's familiarity with one another can affect the dynamics of the discussion as well as the comfort level of those involved
- **Accessibility** – What are some potential barriers to engaging in this activity?
 - Those with cognitive impairment may benefit from a shorter film without subtitles.
 - Those with visual impairments may benefit from a film that has a strong aural component like a musical or a film where the score is integral.
 - As a best practice provide the group with content warnings and film information ahead of the screening. Audiences can then elect to participate (or not) and they can prepare to use coping strategies if necessary.
- **Genre** – Does the group have a favourite genre of film?
 - Asking about the film interests of participants helps narrow down film choices.
- **Language** – Not only the languages in which people speak, but also take into consideration profanity and vulgarity.
 - If your group is comfortable in one language over another, try to select a film that matches their comfort level.
 - When programming a foreign film that is in a language unfamiliar to the group, ensure that reading subtitles will not be an impediment to one's enjoyment or understanding of the film.
 - If the film is screened in English, but it is not the primary language of your group, subtitles in their primary language may be necessary
 - Excessive use of profanity may be offensive to certain groups.

Use your discretion. You don't want to limit yourself but you also do not want to make it difficult for your group to watch the film for any reason. What works with one group may not work for the next. Feel free to ask the group about certain genres, or how they feel about subtitles; the possibilities are endless!

We have programmed the following films for Past Seniors Film Fridays:

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| ▪ <i>52 Percent</i> Rafal Skalski, 2007 | ▪ <i>Anomalisa</i> Charlie Kaufman, 2015 | ▪ <i>Loving Vincent</i> Dorota Kobiela, 2017 |
| ▪ <i>Florence Foster Jenkins</i> Stephen Frears, 2016 | ▪ <i>In the Heat of the Night</i> Norman Jewison, 1967 | ▪ <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> Jean Cocteau, 1946 |
| ▪ <i>The Producers</i> Mel Brooks, 1967 | ▪ <i>Marie Antoinette</i> Sofia Coppola, 2006 | ▪ <i>Lucky</i> John Carroll Lynch, 2017 |
| ▪ <i>The Other Side of Hope</i> Aki Kaurismaki, 2017 | ▪ <i>Dundas Street</i> Sofia Bohdanowicz, 2012 | ▪ <i>Faces Places</i> Agnes Varda, 2017 |

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This package was developed through interdepartmental collaboration. If you are interested in learning more about film or additional resources that your group can access, please review the following:

TIFF Volunteer Office

Launched as part of our Volunteer Docent Programme in June 2016, our Seniors' Film Friday program is a free half-day experience at TIFF Bell Lightbox that brings local seniors together to watch classic and contemporary films and share their perspectives at post-screening discussions. We also offer tailored film screenings hosted in the community space of an organization within the GTA to redress any barriers that may exist for a group to come to TIFF Bell Lightbox. For more information on our Seniors' Film Friday programme please contact toursandtalks@tiff.net or call 416-934-5846.

TIFF Film Reference Library

The TIFF Film Reference Library is a closed reference library that has one of the largest holdings of film materials. Materials may not be borrowed or removed from the premises. Patrons are encouraged to reach out with questions and our librarians will pull and hold materials to suit their requests. You can also browse our catalogue for materials and information. Our experienced library team can help support you with your research needs and can connect you to the appropriate resource.

The Film Reference Library is located on the 4th floor of the TIFF Bell Lightbox. The FRL can also be contacted at 416-599-8433 ext. 3 or by email at libraryservices@tiff.net.

TIFF.NET Resources

The Higher Learning Digital Resource Hub (<https://www.tiff.net/higher-learning-digital-resources/>) is an archive of Higher Learning events (for post-secondary students) and contains video footage of past talks as well as a curated selection of books, films, and web resources that provide a jumping off point for further, self-guided research.

Many of TIFF's full-length talks are posted as podcasts on the TIFF Uncut Sound Cloud channel or on the TIFF Uncut YouTube channel. These past talks offer examples for the types of questions and talking points that can be incorporated into film talks.

Other Useful Websites:

- IMDB is an online database that contains detailed information about films and suggests related films.
- Rotten Tomatoes is a website that sources both audience and critics reviews together and assigns a score to films.
- There are multiple industry/news websites focused on film/TV analysis from an industry and film theory perspective: The AV Club, Empire Online, The Hollywood Reporter, indieWire, Masters of Cinema, Variety.
- Most news sites will have a film section where you can source reviews, industry news and analysis.

Here is an example of the information sheet we provide for the Volunteer Docent.

Seniors Film Friday/2001: A Space Odyssey

Film Title: 2001: A Space Odyssey

Country: USA

Year: 1968

Director: Stanley Kubrick

Include Basic Information about the film.

Starring: Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester, Daniel Richter

About:

A synopsis of the film can be sources from a website like IMDB, TIFF's website or the website of the film itself.

"The ultimate trip," Kubrick's science-fiction masterpiece has survived innumerable parodies, references and rip-offs with its awe-inspiring power intact. Tracing a cosmic mystery from the dawn of mankind to the farthest reaches of time and space, 2001 chronicles an intergalactic mission to find the origin of a mysterious black monolith discovered by American astronauts on the moon—a mission complicated when the ship's renegade computer HAL 9000 decides that its human cargo is inadequate to carry out such an important task. Featuring spectacular special effects by Douglas Trumbull, 2001 pointedly speculates on what it means to be human in an age dominated by technology, and what the next stage of human evolution could potentially be." ~TIFF press release

Key Themes

- Literary Interest, Cinematheque, Science Fiction

Interesting facts can be used to spark conversations during the discussion. Some groups may be very interested in these facts.

Interesting facts:

- The book was developed Kubrick at the same time as the film.
- Kubricks' inspiration: Clarke's short story, "The Sentinel"
- Kubrick scrapped the entire original score and replaced it.
- Kubrick was involved in every aspect of the production including the furniture that was used.

Discussion prompts:

Open Ended Questions

- What are your initial reactions to the film?
- What key scenes stuck with you the most?
- What did you think the film was about? (This can speak to the plot, its themes etc.)
- For those who have seen the film, did you form any new impressions while rewatching the film?

Open-ended questions generate answers related to the personal experience of those who watched the film. It is a good idea to begin with open-ended questions to get a feel of the group's interests (cinematography, plot, sets etc.)

Targeted Questions

- *2001: A Space Odyssey* is widely held as one of the most influential science fiction films with its visuals and story. How does it relate to other films in the genre that you've seen?
- Where do you see the design influences of *2001: A Space Odyssey* in other science fiction films that you've seen?
- The original score was entirely scrapped by Kubrick and replaced by the music you heard in the film. What did you think of the music chosen and how did it affect your experience of the film?

Targeted questions will force participants to look within and use examples from the film; it lets the group explore the topics surrounding this film. Questions can be so specific that they can only be used for – in this example – 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Targeted questions can also be general and used for any film. They should still be based on topics surrounding the film (themes, actors, awards, special effects etc.) rather than the audiences' experience with the film like the earlier open-ended questions. A good mixture of both specific and general targeted questions will be useful to the facilitator.

- How is the film's inspiration (ex. literary adaptation, remaking, historical movement) actualized in the film and achieved?
- How does this film relate to others in the genre?
- What do you think of the character development in the film?
 - Who was your favourite character and why? Or who did you connect with the most and why?
- How are the themes of the film presented?

Tips: Targeted questions can be modified for documentaries and shorts

Documentaries

- How is the Documentary filmed and presented to convey information?
- What was the central thesis of the film?
- How were biases presented and examined in the documentary?
- Is the documentary meant to galvanize its audience? If yes, how?

Shorts

- Did you have a favourite within the shorts?
- In comparing the shorts to each other, why do you think they were paired?
- What does the film criticize? What does it celebrate?

Sources:

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0062622/>



Include sources you used to create the film talk information sheet. You can also share some of these with participants who want to look further into the film.