



# New Naturalism and Sustainable Cinematography

Jack Shelbourn - 22nd June 2023



What does sustainability mean?



# Hans Carl Von Carlowitz

## Forest Sustainability

- First used in 1713
- In reference to forst Management
- Only take as much wood out of the forest as you plant trees.
- Only take as much as you give back
- Balance





Balance is the key

What does sustainability mean  
for the film industry?

# **The average tentpole film creates 2840 Tons of greenhouse Gas**

**Hollywood Reporter September 1. 2020**



**Transport & travel  
being the largest  
contributor**





‘Data analysis shows that one average tentpole film production – a film with a budget of over US\$70m – generates 2,840 tones of CO2e, the equivalent amount absorbed by 3,709 acres of forest in a year. Within this, transport accounts for approximately 51% of carbon emissions, mains electricity and gas use accounts for around 34%, and diesel generators for the remaining 15%.

**BFI, 2020**







# The Traitors

## Whats on screen

- Every UK Episode involved at least 4 old Land Rover Discoveries
- Some episodes glamorised a helicopter unnecessarily
- Is the theatrics worth it?





To make serious change, we  
must shift attitudes.



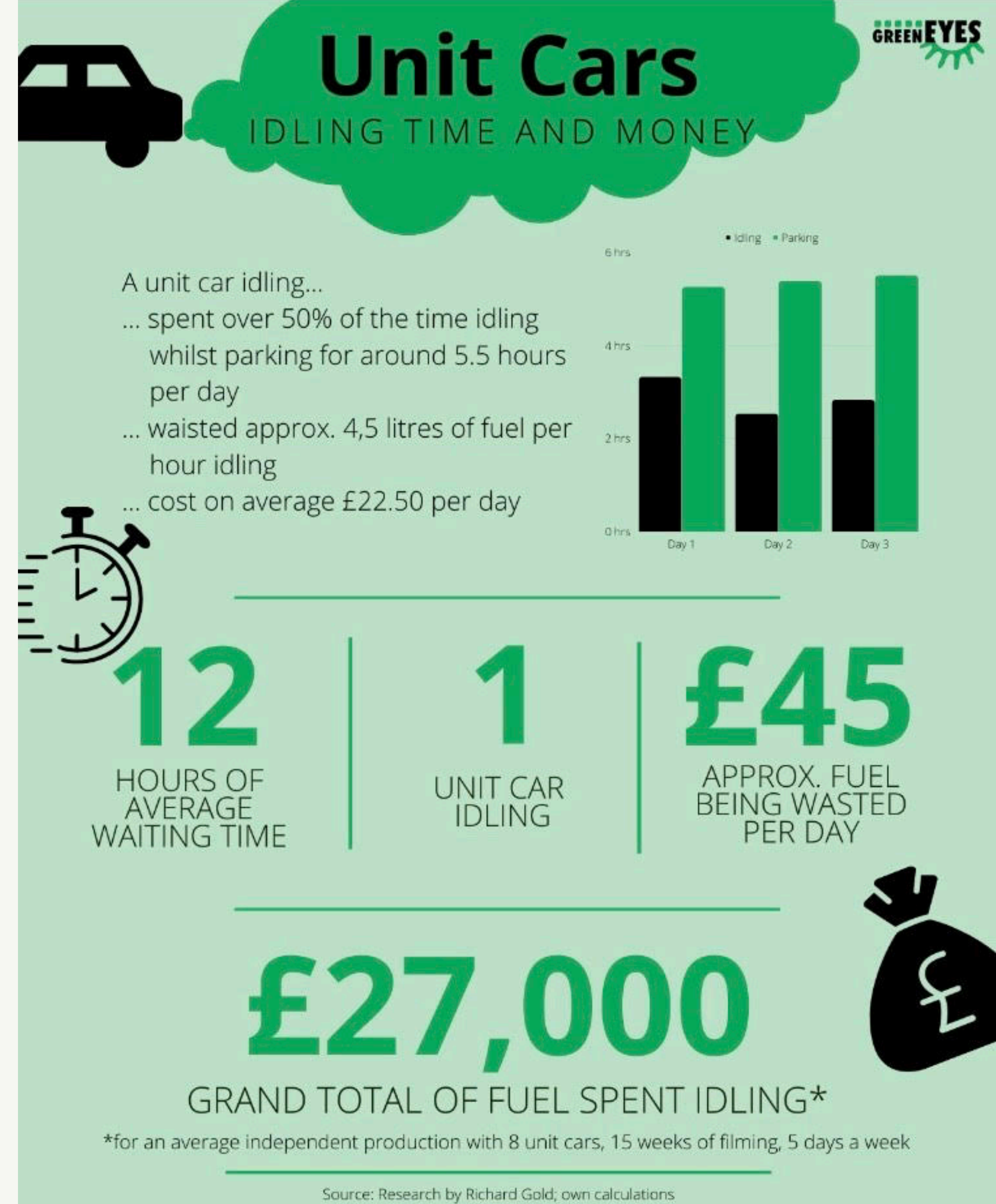
But what about escapism?  
What about Fantasy?  
Wasn't the theatrics, the point?







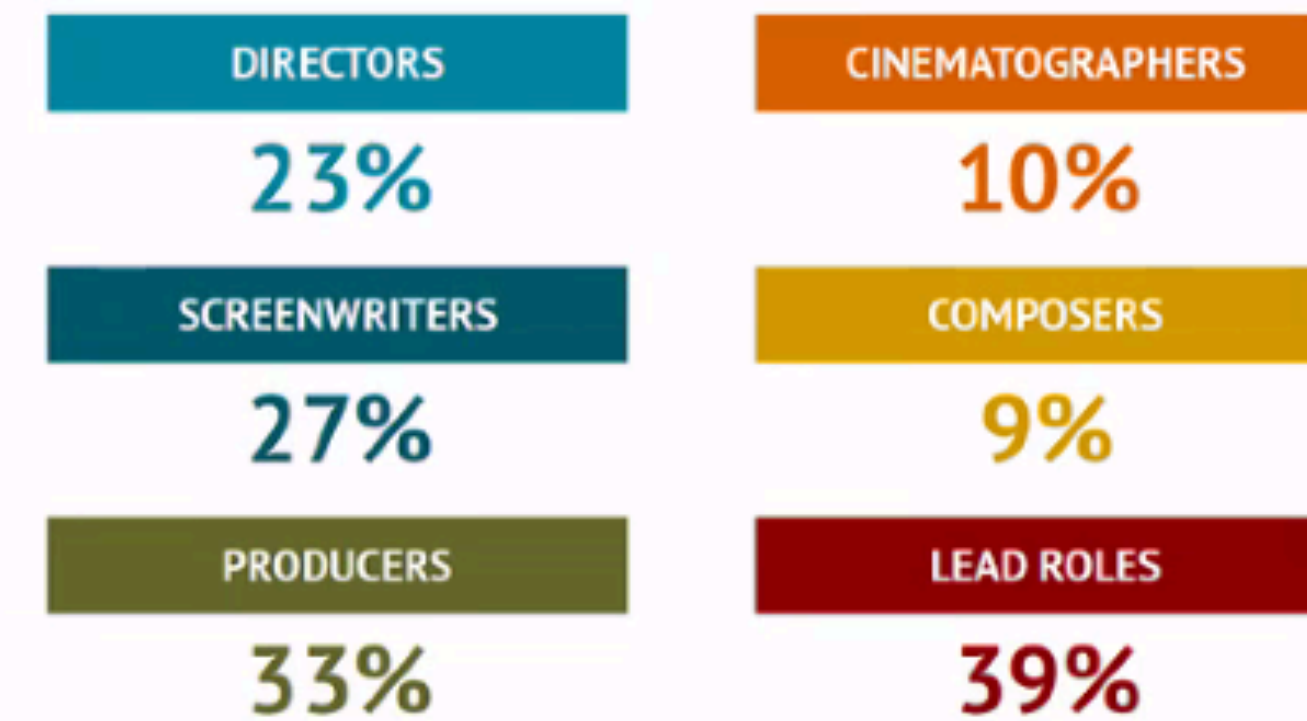
# Sustainability isn't just about the environment





# Equality in industry & in the community

Share of active female film professionals, by professional category (2016-2020)



Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / LUMIERE

Across all categories except lead roles, the prevalence of female professionals was higher in documentary films than other film genres. For instance, women accounted for 29% of directors of documentaries compared to 19% for live-action fiction films and 16% for animated fiction films.



# New Naturalism





## SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE ART AND CRAFT OF CINEMATOGRAPHY.

Can 'New Naturalism', with its emphasis on natural light, lead to more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in cinematography?



# My Research

PhD

- Write and Test a Manifesto
- Currently inspired by Dogme95
- Currently based around New Naturalism
  - Natural & available light





What is New Naturalism and what are its  
creative restraints?



# **What is New Naturalism?**

**Terrence Malick & Emmanuel Lubezki**

**The New World (2005)**

**The Tree of Life (2011)**

**‘Dogme’, but fell short of a Manifesto**

**The Tree of Life (2011) it was not a governing factor for the whole film. With large VFX sequences taking up part of the film’s opening.**



# New Naturalism

## The Dogme

- Shooting exclusively in natural light by day
- Using existing lighting in dark interiors and nights
- Favouring backlight to create continuity between shots from different times and places
- Shooting with wide-angle prime lenses, sometimes very close to the actors, to give a sense of immersion
- Seeking resolution, avoiding filters, seeking depth of field
- Handheld and Steadicam cameras movements defining space in depth (in the “Z axis”)
- A constant desire to embrace serendipity... a willingness to stop everything to shoot a butterfly
- Article “E”, for “Exception”, to acknowledge that all good dogmas are made to be broken upon occasion.





‘New Naturalism isn't just about the cinematic form, but also about the films' content. A recurring theme in Malick's films is that human encounters with nature are transformational, transcendent events.’

**B, 2021**



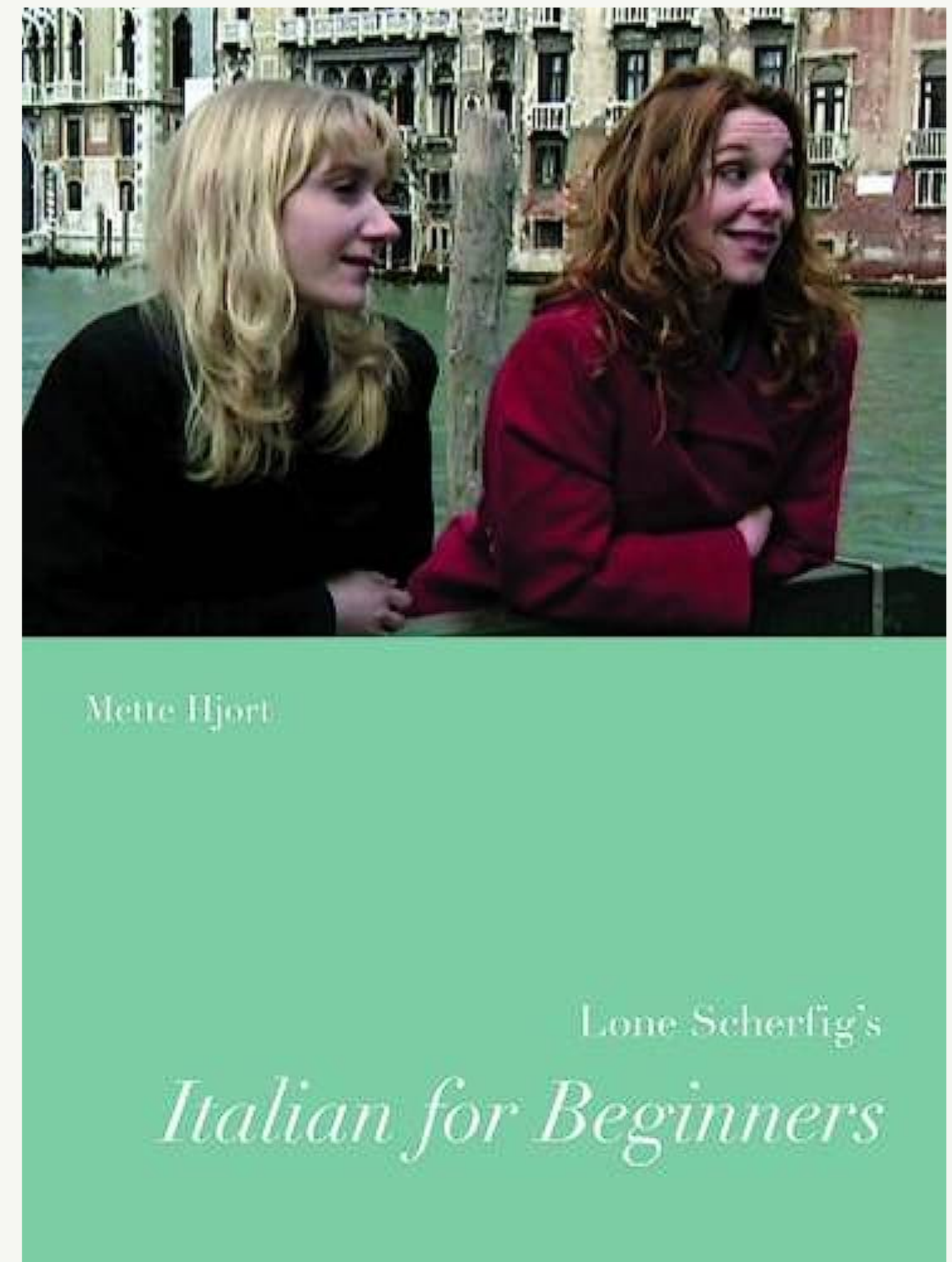
The Manifesto, taking a visual driving  
force & focusing on sustainability



# Rule Following

Lone Scherfig's *Italian For Beginners* - Hjort (2010)

1. Sincere submission to the rules
2. Rule-following within reason
3. Rule following when it suits
4. Rule following as a cynical ploy





# Rule Following

1. Sincere submission to the rules is the desirable, or perhaps a must
2. Rule-following within reason is possible only when ignored rules are balanced out
3. Rule following when it suits is not possible
4. Rule following as a cynical ploy is possibly dangerous



# New Naturalism

## Presented as a manifesto

1. Natural or available light preferred. No more than 2 powered light source per location if there is no other option. Favour reflected or bounced light using a Dedolight DPB70 or similar when required.
2. All on screen must be sustainable. (Note. What does that mean?)
3. Local production & locally sourced (cast?). Being carbon neutral and balanced.
4. No fossil fuel generators - Prioritize eco-friendly production practices, such as using renewable energy sources and minimizing waste.
5. The exit strategy – What do you do with consumables? What could be used instead?
6. Community focused - Work with local communities to minimize the impact of filming on the environment and support sustainable development.
7. Do not engage with projects that do not practice sustainability at its core, especially in the screenplay
8. Educate audiences about sustainable filmmaking practices and the importance of environmental stewardship.





Could New Naturalism and its expanded interpretation, completely without intention, contain the formula for sustainable practices for cinematography embedded within it?



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# Thank you

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