

Patrik Sjöberg

Blurred Figures of Speech: Considering the Speaking Subject in Documentary Media

Patrik Sjöberg delivered his talk – Blurred Figures of Speech: Considering the Speaking Subject in Documentary Media – as part of Liverpool John Moores University's Liverpool Screen School Research Seminar.

Patrik Sjöberg (Karlstad University, Sweden)

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Almost regardless of what type of documentary we are watching, we are likely to encounter numerous sequences of people talking: interviews, conversations, monologues, arguments, and testimonies. This highly under-researched field has often been referred to simply as 'talking heads documentaries'. This project resituates the speaking subject from peripheral to central by considering it through both a theoretical and historical prism, resulting in a conceptual study of what it means to listen to, and watch, people talking in documentaries. This talk will offer an introduction to a few concurrent but closely related discussions that allows us to re-think the speaking subject in documentary media. I will focus on three topics: the speaking subject in acute affect (the crying, screaming, angry, or in other ways upset speaking subject); the anonymous interview (when the face, figure, and/or voice has been altered to protect the speaking subject's identity), and the role of the voice of the speaking subject (speech acts, the pre-recorded voice, 'the grain of the voice', and ventriloquism). In my talk, I will be referencing a wide range of films, from documentary to art installations.

Biography:

Patrik Sjöberg is Assistant Professor in Cinema Studies at Karlstad University in Sweden. He is the author of *The World in Pieces – A Study on Compilation Film*, Aura Förlag, 2001, a contributor to several anthologies on documentary culture (most recent in *A Companion to Contemporary Documentary Film*, ed. Alisa Lebow and Alexandra Juhasz, *Face Blind: Documentary and the Subversion of Surveillance*, 2015, and *The Fundamental Lie: Lip Sync, Dubbing, Ventriloquism and the Othering of Voice in Documentary Media*, *Vocal Projections: Voices in Documentary*, ed. Maria Pramaggiore and Annabelle Honess Roe, 2018), as well as

articles and essays in Swedish and English. His research seeks out the shared space between documentary film and other related fields, in particular the avant-garde and experimental film, sound art, and media culture. He is currently working on a book on speaking subjects in documentary media and sound art.