

all about me?

If I may mention a private matter...

An opening sentence like this is sure to catch a reader's attention. Coming from the flesh and sweat of the narrator's life, our personal stories are, with no exception, all persuasive and intriguing. More realistic and intimate, earthier and more pressing than a third person narrative, a "me-story" has the power to emotionally draw in a potential audience.

Lots of television programs and reportage shows nowadays take advantage of this feature, by letting the director appear on camera to tell the story as it unfolds from a first person perspective. In filmmaking, the "me-story" is now a commonplace narrative device to get an audience involved.

But the beauty of the personal documentaries featured in this special program lie not in the truth or dare risqué of the content, but rather how the filmmaker takes on the assumed "insolent authenticity" of the first person voice to tell the story. The filmmaker self is constantly split between itself as an irreplaceable and singular existence, and the desire to connect with others through communication. In a personal documentary, we can discover cinematic pleasure in the delicate abrasions of the split self, rather than to squeal in amazement at how much truth the filmmaker courageously disclosed.

Since relations between the self and the other are a fundamental part of international exchange, we are pleased that this collaborative project between Swiss and Japanese filmmakers follows such a challenging theme.

Don't swallow the fully armed statement that "The story is all about me." From the open seams of the question-marked "all about me?" will rise the complexity, contradictions, and the generosity of the world the filmmakers live in.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Visions du Réel Director and initiator of this project Jean Perret, and Chantal Bründler of SWISS FILMS who fully supported the logistics of the program to its fruition. We were lucky to gain the support of SWISS FILMS, Pro Helvetia, and the Swiss Embassy in Japan, to whom we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Thanks also to Yamagata city government's International Exchange Department who gave us assistance in the operation of this international project. With hopes that the actual meetings among filmmakers and audience that will take place during YIDFF thrive and inspire, I look forward to this program traveling to Nyon, Switzerland in April 2006.

Fujioka Asako
Coordinator

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