

## **Rebels in the Corporation: Filmmakers Learning and Turning the Tables on Business**

Since the post-war period, young filmmakers have successfully worked for business corporations. But in the terms of AR@K 2026, young filmmakers have developed their corporate experiences into institutional critiques, imaginative counter-worlds and creative approaches that become practices of resistance against the consumerism on which their corporate employers depend.

This paper presentation makes original connections between the careers of three film directors: Ermanno Olmi (Italy), David Fincher (USA) and Roy Andersson (Sweden) to show how their corporate documentaries and advertisements were essential to their formations as filmmakers. Olmi's first scripted feature *Il Posto* (1961) exposes the corporate rituals in which he had worked from his teens. Fincher's cult film *Fight Club* (1999) reworks the cool aesthetics of his brand-name advertisements into a style anathema to commercial culture and Andersson's insurance and lottery spots cultivate the deadpan tone of his celebrated films like *You, The Living* (2007) that create a humanistic resistance to the imperatives to labor and consume. As businesses solicited these filmmakers for their skills in promoting their corporate identities, each filmmaker's insight into corporate workings nurtured practices against the commodification of creativity.

Keywords: film style, business advertising, anti-corporate culture

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Name, Affiliation, Contact:

Dr. Gabriel M. Paletz

Professor, The Prague Film School

[Gabriel.paletz@praguefilmschool.cz](mailto:Gabriel.paletz@praguefilmschool.cz)

BIO: Gabriel M. Paletz is the first scholar to earn a PhD from the University of Southern California in both film history and practice. He has pursued this combined study in teaching young filmmakers from around the world in the center of Europe at the Prague Film School, as well as scripting a movie documentary on Czech design, curating cinema programs with eight national film archives and completing two books on the media-making practices of Orson Welles (forthcoming from Edinburgh UP) and on screenwriting. His recent essay on the craft won the 2024 best essay prize from the Screenwriting Research Network.