

FILM DIDACTICS AND CHANCE

Abstract for AR@K 2026

Liis Nimik

For a decade, I have been teaching film editors to use Roland Barthes' concept of 'punctum' as a practical and emotional tool. We start by examining still photographs and identifying the small, wounding details that 'prick', before carrying the exercise over to moving images through a hands-on seminar that combines theory – what could Punctum be in film - with analysis of extracts from films. Students consistently report two outcomes: a reduced fear of editing and a clearer understanding that 'punctum' refers to genuine encounters, rather than manufactured effects.

I situate this pedagogy within Gert Biesta's conception of education as being about more than just qualification or socialisation; teaching should also facilitate subjectification — the process of becoming someone who can respond to the world. Biesta's "Beautiful risk of education" and his call for world-centred pedagogy legitimise practices that prioritise exposure, interruption and responsibility over scripted outcomes. A punctum-based approach reclaims film editing from platform and format logics and performance metrics by cultivating attention, patience and readiness for the unforeseen.

I will share classroom protocols and short student tasks, and propose three teachable commitments for film editors: (1) Create your observation system; (2) Design for contingency – set conditions that allow unscripted moments and narratives to emerge; and (3) Own the ethics – take responsibility for what your system reveals and occludes. Reclaiming punctum reclaims art's capacity to unsettle, care for others, and build shared attention in democratic life.

Keywords: film editing, narrative, punctum, democracy

Disciplinary field: film studies

Presentation: conference presentation or a practical workshop

Name: Liis Nimik

Affiliation: Junior Researcher at Tallinn University, Estonia

Contact: liis.nimik@tlu.ee, +37256616905

Mini-CV

Liis Nimik (b.1979) is an Estonian filmmaker, editor, lecturer, and researcher whose work moves between the borders of fiction and documentary. Her debut feature *Sundial* (2023) premiered at *Visions du Réel* and *Hot Docs*, winning several awards for its quiet intensity. As an editor, she has shaped some of Estonia's most celebrated arthouse films, including *Free Range* (2013) and *Roukli* (2015). With a deep sensitivity to both form and feeling, she has taught editing for over a decade at the *Baltic Film School* and abroad. A member of the *European Film Academy*, she is currently exploring film editing as artistic research.