

The Lindgren Manifesto: The Film Curator of the Future

- 1 Restoration is not possible and it is not desirable, regardless of its object or purpose. Obedience to this principle is the most responsible approach to film preservation.
- 2 To preserve everything is a curse to posterity. Posterity won't be grateful for sheer accumulation. Posterity wants us to make choices. It is therefore immoral to preserve everything; selecting is a virtue.
- 3 If film had been treated properly from the very beginning, there would be less of a need for film preservation today and citizens would have had access to a history of cinema of their choice.
- 4 The end of film is a good thing for cinema, both as an art and as an artifact. Stop whining.
- 5 If you work for a cultural institution, make knowledge with money. If you work for an industry, make money with knowledge. If you work for yourself, make both, in the order that's right for you. Decide what you want, and then say it. But don't lie.
- 6 A good curator will never claim to act as such. Curatorship is a pledge of unselfishness.
- 7 Turning silver grains into pixels is not right or wrong per se; the real problem with digital restoration is its false message that moving images have no history, its delusion of eternity.

8 Digital is an endangered medium, and migration its terminal disease. Digital needs to be preserved before its demise.

9 We are constantly making images; we are constantly losing images, like any human body generating and destroying cells in the course of its biological life. We are not conscious of this, which is as good as it is inevitable.

10 Knowing that a cause is lost is not a good enough reason not to fight for it.

11 A film curator must look for necessary choices, with the ultimate goal of becoming unnecessary.

12 Governments want to save, not give, money. Offer them economical solutions; therefore, explain to them why the money they give to massive digitisation is wasted. Give them better options. Treating with the utmost care what has survived. Better yet, doing nothing. Let moving images live and die on their own terms.

13 Honour your visual experience and reject the notion of ›content‹. Protect your freedom of sight. Exercise civil disobedience.

14 People can and should be able to live without moving images.

»The Lindgren Manifesto« was the title of a speech delivered by the author for the Ernest Lindgren Memorial Lecture held at the British Film Institute's National Film Theatre, BFI Southbank, London, on 24th August 2010. Both the speech and lecture were named in honour of the BFI National Archive's founding curator Ernest Lindgren. The complete text of the speech was subsequently published in April 2011 in the *Journal of Film Preservation* (84): 4. This revised version appears here with the kind permission of the author.