

THE POETICS OF POETRY FILM – BOOK REVIEW

SUZIE HANNA

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS (UK)

As Professor of Animation Education at Norwich University of the Arts, **Suzie Hanna** contributes to journals, books and conferences. She is a practising mixed-media animator whose collaborative films have all been selected for international festival screenings, TV, or curated exhibitions. She also creates live improvised animated VJ performances.

orcid.org/0000-0002-8566-381X

Corresponding author

Suzie Hanna

s.hanna@nua.ac.uk

Norwich University of the Arts

Francis House, 3-7 Redwell Street

Norwich NR2 4SN

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The Poetics of Poetry Film provides a comprehensive overview of a history of the form. By outlining models and methods it creates a taxonomy of defining characteristics for identification of a range of possible genres and terminologies. As an academic and a practitioner Sarah Tremlett, the author of this book, clearly enjoys the holistic experience of bringing deeper understanding to creative practice through theory and vice versa. She explores poetry in conjunction with film; how formal characteristics are extended, translated or re-visited as a way of sharing both a subjective and political voice not only through form but as philosophical practice. Numerous references to her own oeuvre are threaded through the publication, which veers from formal academic analysis to highly subjective and pragmatic reflection on aspects of production. In *Constructing Dynamic Spatio-Temporality* she argues that the remediation of the page poem becomes theoretically interwoven with the sequential nature of the filmic narrative and the spatial construct of the artist's and animator's canvas, to create new ways of interpreting combined audio-visual aesthetics.

She may be in a unique position to write about this under-represented subject; her wide-reaching experience as creator, collaborator, participant, curator and jury member in international film festivals over many years has exposed her to an extraordinary number of exemplars. This 'catalogue' brings the voices of poets, filmmakers and curators into the frame, as well as offering diverse references and structures for critical theoretical analysis. Through intensive primary and secondary research, as well as more subjective experiential reference, the author has developed ideas and systems for interpreting and evaluating the *Poetics of Poetry Film*. The focus is on defining the characteristics, ethics and motivation of poetry film-makers and how this is reflected in their films, what the final *Overview* describes as their "philosophical dialogue with the world". With over forty contributors to the volume it reads in part like an anthology, but there is no rationale for emphasis given to practice in particular regions, Spain and

Portugal for instance, creating a sense of imbalance in international representation.

The book comprises three parts: *Form and Structure*, *Artists' Voices* and *Narrative Forms*, each of which is between one hundred and one hundred and fifty pages in length. Within these are subsections with titles such as *Subjectivity*, *Time*, and *Voice* which depart from more standard approaches to film analysis. The depth and reach of the research undertaken is evidenced in the analysis of numerous works from early 20th Century Western Art movements such as Dadaism and Futurism through to the international flowering of independent contemporary practice. They include collaborations between poets and film-makers, the work of *auteur* poetry film-makers and community group productions. These works are examined with some detailed reference to literary and linguistic theory.

In Valerie LeBlanc's *Foreword* she refers to this book as being 'multimodal', setting out a model for discourse. In the preface the author describes the rationale as a re-evaluation of the genre of poetry film: a symbiotic merging, reinforcement and extension of poetry and western philosophy. It is refreshing to read this ambitious undertaking, written by a female author, about subjects that have been traditionally dominated by male perspectives. Over two hundred relevant texts are cited and there is a range of primary research to explore for those who have a serious interest in poetry film, who develop work from textual inspiration, or engage with wider experimental and short filmmaking practice.