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On the aesthetic regime of Kurdish cinema: the making of Kurdishness Şimşek, B.

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Cover Page



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Propositions of the Doctoral Dissertation ‘On the Aesthetic Regime of Kurdish Cinema: The Making of Kurdishness’

1. Cinema more generally, and Kurdish cinema specifically, is not only a means of representing people; it actively produces people or subjects, and does so in ways determined by a politics of what can and cannot be said, what should and should not be shown.
2. Contrary to the claims of an aspirational Kurdish national cinema—claims that envision *a cinema* able to articulate *a Kurdish subject*—, in grounded practice we find not a singular cinema of a singular reality, but acentric and diverging realities which enable several subjectification processes (*cinemas* that compel us to ask, *which Kurdish subjects*).
3. Certain emergent forms of Kurdish cinema (namely, certain non-commercial films and local festivals) can be said to be political in the sense that, as Rancière’s work on aesthetic regimes and ethics would say, they presuppose equality, and enact democratic movement.
4. Kurdish films and festivals ethnicize viewers, actors, and directors, but do so in ways beyond the metaphysical suppositions of the nation state, inviting one to inhabit a spatially and temporally non-fixed and non-unified Kurdishness; such is the *we* these aesthetic acts produce.
5. Much of the film theory on national cinema, however critical, ends up—through a kind of methodological cinema-nationalism—reproducing the Platonic foundations of the literature on national cinema.

6. The hegemonic Lacanian literature on trauma cinema is rooted in the aesthetics of testimony through the category of the unrepresentable, whereas critical art embraces the unrepresentable to uncover the necessity of reconceptualizing ethics.
7. The separation of fiction from reality is itself fictive; far more realistic and clearer is the blending of reality and fiction in film and theory.
8. As non-commercial and local Kurdish film festivals show us, contemporary art and cinema share a space capable of realizing a Rancièrian emancipatory community, their acts of exhibition rendering the heterogenous sensible.
9. The mass circulation of certain representations of Kurdish women in recent years has the effect of silencing the deeply gendered construction of Kurdish art and its critique.
10. It is still technically perfect films that define the canonical meanings attributed to cinema, though the flood of poor images—of democratized camera work, so to speak—now circulating with such ease, and in such unprecedented volume, speak more to the future of cinema and its politics.