

EXPOSED - BY DAISY VAN DE ZANDE

Five film tips in Health & High Tech



Even as a little kid, Daisy van de Zande was already fond of stories, often with her nose in books, or marvelling over the magic of films. "The idea of storytelling has always fascinated me." We meet with Daisy, now festival director of InScience - International Science Film Festival Nijmegen, as she takes us on her journey through the world of science, art, and culture with five InScience films that impacted her.

"Stories are the foundation of our culture. They tell us who we are and how we experience the world. It's the ultimate way to engage in conversation. And stories can be a great means for scientists to explain what they are doing. But stories are not only important for scientists. Stories are also an important playground for the public to engage with science in an approachable manner. They shape opinions, inspire you, and guide you into the world of science. That's why bringing the cultural field and academia together is so important. Science is often seen as detached from the rest of the world, but research topic choices are often determined by the culture in which scientists operate. This is why it is so important for scientists to engage with society. Because it's literally where their ideas come from."



Tip 1. The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley

"My first film tip is 'The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley'. It highlights the delicate balance between innovation and ethics, telling the story of Elizabeth Holmes as a stark reminder of the consequences when ambition gets out of hand. Films like these allow innovators to imagine what the world would look like if their innovations were being used. Suppose you can literally see it all playing out in front of you. On a screen. That is so important. It can cause emotional reactions and make you wonder: are we doing something good here? This emotional involvement is so important because putting scientific knowledge to use is more than anything else a matter of morality."



Tip 2. Cyborgs Among Us

"Films anchor our common cultural heritage and shape our collective consciousness, weaving tapestries of understanding and perception. Films like 'Cyborgs Among Us' exemplify this; while on the surface it's about technological evolution, deeper layers reflect on our adaptability and the porous boundaries between man and machine. Neil Harbisson's transformation from a colour-blind human to the world's first recognised cyborg isn't just a personal journey. It reflects wider societal changes and underlines the adaptability of the human spirit in our technology-driven age."



Tip 3. Ich bin dein Mensch

“My academic sojourn at the University of Amsterdam, where I obtained my degree in Media and Culture and my master’s degree in Film Studies, was transformative. As I matured and ventured deeper into intersections of culture, art, and science, I encountered films that portrayed the complexities of the real world. For me, films became bridges to understanding broader social dynamics and the intricate interplay of human nature.”

“This brings me to my third film recommendation: ‘Ich bin dein Mensch’. It’s a delightful, funny and slightly disturbing feature film about falling in love with a perfectly programmed robot. It is a kind of investigation into human relationships, which are increasingly mediated by technology. How is technology changing our love lives? And our social relationships? This film shows that technology secretly plays a bigger role in our daily lives than we think.”

WHAT KIND OF WORLD DO WE WANT TO BUILD TOGETHER?



Tip 4. Are you there?

“Intellectual critical thinking and research are essentially where the worlds of filmmakers and scientists can meet. A filmmaker also does a lot of preliminary research. But a filmmaker is concerned with the story reaching the audience, whilst the scientist has a paper as the result. So, the filmmaker can sometimes function as a mediator between the scientist and the audience. Getting these three groups on an equal level and having a conversation about the role of science in society: that’s what InScience is about. We provide a platform for a pleasant exchange of scientific ideas. Inspiration and wonderment are particularly important here, as we celebrate interdisciplinary dialogue and shared discovery.”

“A film that embodies this mission and reflects my personal ethos is: ‘Are you there?’ by Dutch filmmaker Maartje Nevejan. Working with neuroscientists, artists, and philosophers, she explores what someone with absence epilepsy experiences when they have an epileptic seizure. She has artists depict what it looks like visually, to ‘not be there for a while’. What happens to someone physically and cognitively? This film explores a phenomenon in a very artistic way that also helps science. This film is even used as training material for health professionals.”



Tip 5. The Farthest

“Science is so much more than a sterile field, it’s about drive, the dreams and the human stories that drive great scientific endeavours. A great film knows to capture this energy, as it touches you both intellectually and emotionally. It really takes you into the story of what it is like to be a scientist and how important it is for something to succeed. It can make changes in behaviour.”

“‘The Farthest’ does just that, drawing you into the story by showing audiences there’s more to science than meets the eye. The successes and challenges of the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 projects are portrayed powerfully. It is not just about rational solutions but also about emotional involvement and the power of imagination. You see how scientists are involved in their work. It takes more than you think to get a project like this off the ground.”

CRITICAL THINKING, RESEARCH, AND IMAGINATION ARE ESSENTIALLY WHERE THE WORLDS OF FILMMAKERS AND SCIENTISTS MEET

THE STORY OF INSCIENCE

At its core, InScience aspires to be a beacon of shared storytelling. More than just rolling films, they aim to spark conversation, foster understanding, and champion the vibrant mix of science, art, and culture. InScience aims to shape an enlightened, connected future through these immersive stories, celebrating shared stories and discoveries that bridge gaps and transcend boundaries. Also, the focus on science and its place in our society has increased dramatically in recent years. Due to social issues like the covid pandemic, the wall between the scientific world and society is slowly crumbling.

The festival’s heart is situated at LUX in Nijmegen, the biggest arthouse in Europe. A stage where film, debate and theatre come together. InScience is intricately connected to knowledge institutions, educational institutions and the innovative business community, leading institutes doing research in many fields. That collaboration creates magic. Together, they ensure that InScience can provide a stage for science, art, and culture. For the public and for the many opportunities science can offer.

More about InScience, upcoming programs and the next festival:

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