KULESHOV, LEV VLADIMIROVICH (b. 13 January, 1899, Tambov, Russia; d. 29 March 1970, Moscow, Russia)

Lev Kuleshov was a Soviet director and theorist who spawned the montage movement of the 1920s. He proclaimed editing to be the primary authorial act in filmmaking, because a montage could generate images that transcend the ontology of the constituent shots (i.e., such images exist only as the sum of sequential shots, and their referents may exist only within the film). This phenomenon, known as the ‘Kuleshov effect’, allowed the director to construct ‘artificial’ or ‘creative landscapes’ (imaginary places). Kuleshov asserted that the more nuanced aspects of acting result from editing, a claim he demonstrated in his *Mozzhukhin Experiment*. In this piece, which is lost, a shot of Ivan Mozzhukhin from an earlier film appeared repeatedly, followed each time by a different image such as a bowl of soup, a corpse, a sensuous woman. In each instance the subsequent image should have caused the viewer to perceive a different emotion on the actor’s face. Although Kuleshov’s ideas formed the basis for Soviet cinema and influenced such notable contemporaries as Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, and Vsevolod Pudovkin, his career declined in the 1930s after the advent of Socialist Realism that coincided with a backlash against Formalism. Nevertheless, he was later appointed the head of the Russian State Institute of Film in 1944 and received the order of Lenin in 1967.

**References and further reading:**

Khokholova, Elena (2008) ‘Lev Kuleshov’s Retrospective in Bologna, 2008: An Interview with Elena Khokhlova’, by Ana Olenina. *Art Margins [online]*, Friday, 3 October 2008. Web. Accessed 16 July 2013. <http://artmargins.com/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=90%3Alev-kuleshov&Itemid=133>.

Kuleshov, Lev (1974), *Kuleshov on Film: Writings by Lev Kuleshov*, ed. and trans. Ronald Levaco, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Web. *Google Books*. Accessed 15 July 2013.<http://books.google.com/books?id=0kfHxRVupxIC&printsec=frontcover&dq=kuleshov+on+film&hl=en&sa=X&ei=7E3jUeXuOoLD4AO4uIC4Cw&ved=0CDkQuwUwAA#v=onepage&q=geography&f=false>.

—— (1996), Yuri Tsivian, et al., ‘The Rediscovery of a Kuleshov Experiment: A Dossier’, *Film History* 8.3 Cinema and Nation II: 357-67. Web. *JSTOR*. Accessed 16 July 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3815314>.

Prince, Stephen and Wayne E. Hensley (1992), ‘The Kuleshov Effect: Recreating the Classic Experiment’, *Cinema Journal* 31.2: 59-75. Web. *JSTOR*. Accessed 16 July 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225144>.

**Selected Filmography**

*Engineer Prite’s Project* (Khanzhonkov, 1918).

*The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (Goskino, 1924).

*Death Ray* (Goskino, 1925).

*By the Law* (Goskino, 1926).

*The Great Consoler* (Mezhrabpomfilm, 1933).

**Paratextual Links**

*Istoriko-dokumental´naia vystavka ‘Khudozhniki teatra i kino’*, *RGALI*. Web. *RGALI.ru*. Accessed 28 April. <http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/80.shtml>. Slideshow of an exhibit entitled *Artists of Theater and Cinema*, featuring [a photograph of Kuleshov’s film crew for *The Great Consoler*](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/80.shtml), the [cover-page of Osip Brik’s screenplay for Kuleshov’s *Dokhunda*](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/88.shtml), and three pages from the director’s copy of the screenplay ([1](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/89.shtml) [2](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/90.shtml) [3](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/91.shtml)), two of Kuleshov’s sketches for scenes in *The Great Consoler* ([1](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/138.shtml) [2](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/139.shtml)), and one of Kuleshov’s sketches of [a costume design for *Fate*](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/painters/140.shtml).

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