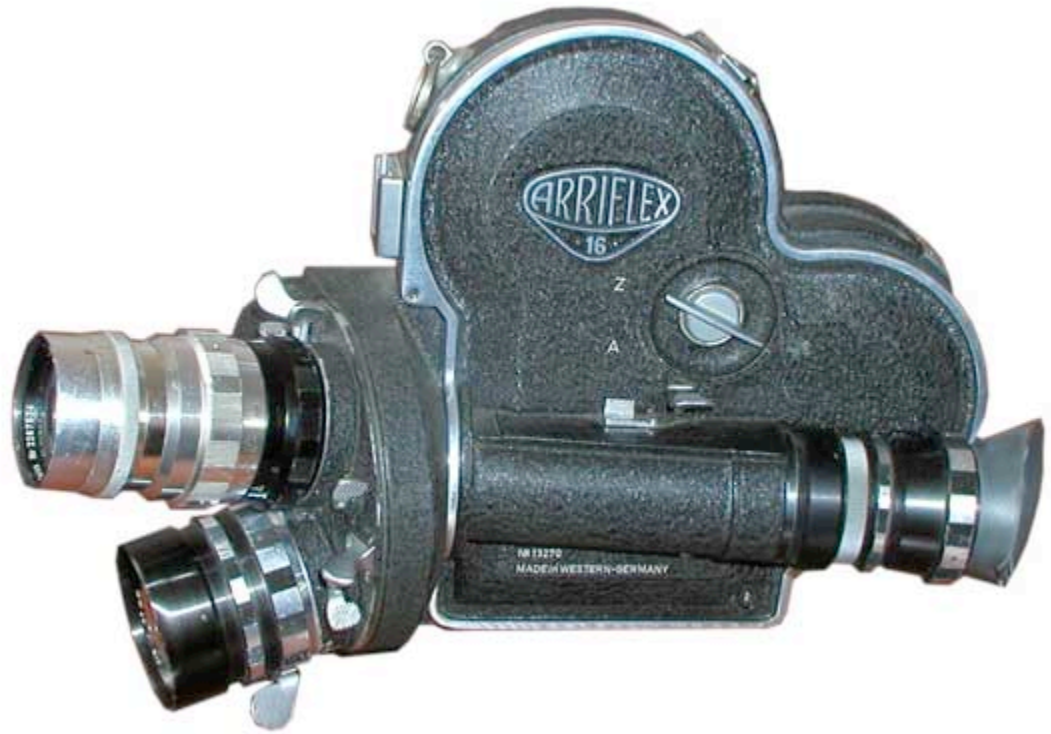


ON TEACHING FILM



Old film camera Arriflex

By Gregorio Luke



Digital video camera

All arts are taught through a process of intensive and constant practice. How many hundreds of sketches must an art student do? How many steps a ballet student must repeat? How many times must an opera singer practice a scale?

It is precisely this constant exercise, which liberates the hand of the painter, gives grace and speed to the dancer and enables the young writer to find his own voice and perfect his craft.

Unfortunately film has been an exception. The reasons are obvious: high costs, limited

equipment, large crews, etc. As a result the only ones who get the chance to film constantly are those already in the business.

Traditionally in film school you are able to use the equipment only a few days or at best weeks each semester. In the days of filming, you culminate the effort of months of script writing and planning. The pressure is enormous. There really isn't much opportunity to experiment. You can't really play and explore your craft the way artists of other disciplines do.

The use of digital technology excites me very much because it

On teaching film

can radically transform the way film is taught and practiced. Suddenly the ability to practice everyday becomes possible.

How useful would it be to be able to separate exercises from actual finished products, the same way an actor distinguishes his rehearsals from his performances.

Assignments could be, for example, to film dialogues, between two, three or four participants. In this stage the important thing would be the didactic process itself, more than the finished product. The objective would be to give the student practice and confidence, to encourage him, as Balanchine used to say to “create and throw.”