REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE
Whereas Paradise was all shot in nature, all over the varied gardens, waterways, groves, and wooded areas of the park, I wanted now to shoot something urban, in the city.

So after a while I discovered an area I liked, the fashion district, Twenty-Third Street and Broadway in Manhattan. With new zoning, car traffic had become very minimal and the diversity in the neighborhood, very compelling.

Taking its cues from Raymond Queneau’s Exercises in Style, I wanted at first to make one short scenario sixty-nine ways—Queneau did a hundred, but I was in love with the Magnetic Fields’s 69 Love Songs so sixty-nine was the number—yes, I would make one love story sixty-nine different ways, maybe even in sixty-nine different countries.

But doing the same thing in a different style sixty-nine ways takes a good deal of control and exactness and this, as I kept learning, cannot happen without money, permits, control, et cetera. So I went from the one story told in different styles to a series of interconnected and overlapping stories told, in a sense, from the perspective of the neighborhood. The neighborhood would be the story, how it goes on, changing at a very different pace than those that inhabit it. At this corner today these things happened, and here, other things happened, and then at night, other things. Six girls went to this wig shop and put on wigs; three of them also stepped into this perfume shop, not all for perfume, and others took this subway, and so many others took that subway too. It was going to be about repetition and difference, about place and the persistence of place and the slow change of it.

I went about shooting it and a number of things clicked and I got a forty-five-minute cut, but I felt it was too pat and so, except for one scene, I started over and continued seeing actors.

In one of the auditions I had the female actors read lines about women, power, and sex. It was spring, and so I took the actors outside under the trees along the side of my house. I was filming them as I often do, and one of them, Raimonda, who I knew from auditioning for another project and whom I liked but could not find the right part for, asked me if she could take her shirt off to do the reading.

If you want, yes, I said. The two actors, Raimonda Skeryte and Tjasa Ferme, get up on a stone wall, under a flowering tree, and fireworks! Tjasa says to Raimonda, “You’re so beautiful,” they kiss, they connect and kiss more—I am delighted, and then Tjasa tells us she has to go. But before she does, I ask the two of them if they would like to shoot the next day. Yes.

So of course I have to think of something for them to do.

We meet the next day and I have Raimonda placed under a spell by a young satyr and then she goes to a perfume store.
where Tjasa enchants her and the movie becomes their movie, and so 69 Love Stories became Revolution of Everyday Life. But I am still not sure what the film is. And at some point I sense I will never intimately know either of them, so I ask them and a number of actors to take a flip camera I will give them and to go home and make recordings of themselves. I asked them to be a body in space. Not to do anything really. Just to be. To do small, quiet things. Now this is a very open-ended and difficult instruction, but I had to hold back from asking for more, I had to let them explore themselves, present themselves as they would want to be seen or show themselves. I wanted to see their world, them—with minimal direction, I wanted them to set about to see and create themselves, not in a dramatic sense but in an everyday, banal sense—but what would that mean, how would they interpret this?

I very quickly find out as the cameras come back and everything I need to know about the actors is in the recordings they make. They are to me extraordinary. Of course they are performative, acted and enacted, very raw, very simple, with a strange sense of urgency and intimacy. And the two modes of the two girls are radically different. One lets herself be seen, she is a presence for the camera to see. She does not do anything but be there. And you can’t stop watching her. The other presents herself to the camera, addresses it directly, we never see her, so to speak, she talks to us, performs for us and so she is her performance. What a difference, letting yourself be seen and seeing. The two would be fascinating and perfect, their difference would speak on many levels.

I have the other recordings from eight other actors. Also interesting. So the film will be The Idiots, a collective that gets together not only for private and public performance, but recordings, and as in The Idiots, they will argue about what it is they are doing and why. In the center of this the two girls are falling in love. Until, that is, they see each other through the group that sees them and through the group, each recognizes the great distance between their views of love, society, revolt, and art.
Without a script, not unlike Warhol’s Screen Tests, the actor, as an artist, alone with the camera, comes to the camera and the camera asks, without asking, how do you know yourself? What do you want to show me? How am I to look at you? This is the question Hilbert asks himself in Exploding Oedipus. The very question the Warhol Screen Tests set up. How it is that we construct an image of ourselves? That is your test. Show me the image of you. Know that you are the image you show me.

In Exploding Hilbert obsessively looks at childhood movies his father used to make. In one of those home movies, he sees himself as a young boy walking away from his mother’s vanity, where she, terribly drunk, has seen him in the mirror, looking on at her. She gets up to slap him for his intrusion, when his father comes in shooting his 8-mm camera and records her hitting him. In his hotel room with a projector and a sheet on the wall, it is this piece of film that Hilbert keeps looping. He watches night after night. To break this film, this film that has become his memory, he makes his own film, he creates a new narrative, a new image, what he calls a postmodern oedipal spaghetti western. And in this film he shoots his father dead-dead. But here in Revolution of Everyday Life, there is no oedipal, the actor sees themself in the image of their own recording. Not in the image of film, but in the primacy of the image itself, the image they author. It is the construction of the image and how the image is made that is the subject of Revolution of Everyday Life. What is the image we want to make?

With digital recordings and social media we are always constructing an image of ourselves. We are always already recorded and recording and hence recoding. We change our profile, our picture, and our story—is this not the project of any psycho-schizo analysis? Of any self-knowing? To create an image that is a double of us, that in fact is the only us, the image proliferating and multiplying.

This will then be a film about the image and representation, about the body and presence. Far away from its point of origination, the film will be about actors recording themselves alone. No, not the same story told again and again but the same action enacted that leads to different representations. But it won’t be about only these private actions but the collective as they get together as an experimental arts group hotly debating the value of their private work and whether to do public performances. And what would a public performance mean? For Tjasa, a way to engage and change the world.

It becomes a story of one young woman as she becomes obsessed with her lover, the leader of this group, imagining an idealized love while the other wants her to find the revolutionary part of herself. Revolution of Everyday Life becomes a document of actresses playing actresses who play characters who fall in love. It is at the same time a love story that happens in the realm of fiction and in the realm of recorded reality.

The result is a documentary film within a fictional one. The film becomes a site...
not for representation but discovery. It is a structure for things to happen, it becomes the site for performing, not acting, not representing desire, but enacting it—it is a longing for politics of desire and an expression of its urgency.

Revolution is a document of actors and artists playing artists who play characters, two of whom discover a higher-contested self than love. It is a love story that happens between the dimensions of fiction and the realms of recorded reality. It is a documentary film within a fictional form where the film, through instructions, catalyzes a site for representations but a structure for things to happen, not representing desire, but a situation to enact it—it is a politic of desires expressed and the urgency that these expressed desires bring upon us to change our world into love, beauty, violence, and expression.
Consider the film script as instructions for a recording event. When shooting you are recording this event of recording. In postproduction you are rerecording. The situation of recording is in fact what is recorded. The subject of the digital is our relation to recording.

Recording is now ubiquitous, happening all the time and at many levels and all scales: while typing here, using the ATM machine, blogging, Skyping, chatting, on the network live, under the surveil of cameras while shopping, walking across the street, under the instrumentation of a physician, in devices inside our bodies, our homes and cities under the sights of satellites.

If cinema was a way to image the world, to narrate the recording event, to create an event that would allow us to see, recording now turns on us, us seeing and imaging ourselves, in this saturation of recording.

Warhol early on gets fixed at the sight of seeing through the camera, there is no need for mise-en-scène, no boredom of seeing, just an endless fascination, compulsion to see as recording sees, not necessarily to play back, but to see and possess that seeing in recording.

Something far better than memory, recording, has more details and takes no effort to remember, you only have to find the file and it is all there. In fact, knowing it is there, you never have to look for it. It’s already remembered.

And then there is being seen, wanting to be watched on camera. Think of Michael Powell’s Peeping Tom—to see is to predate, devour, consume, to be erotically charged; to frame is erotic, to murder and orgasm while recording was Powell’s Peeping Tom’s desire. Recording is augmented seeing, like Google Glass—better than seeing, amplified and directed.

Sunset Boulevard, the glorious Gloria Swanson under the klieg lights—“All right, Mr. DeMille, I am ready for my close up”—how long she had to wait and exhaust herself before Mr. DeMille and his camera crew of minions appeared. If she waited longer, she could have been on Chatroulette.

Revolution of Everyday Life, by your bed is your vibrator and your camera, interchangeable, inexhaustible. You consume, eroticize, consummate yourself in the auto-affection of recording, continually multiplying yourself.

In the event of recording and being recorded, you are a mise-en-scène spliced into the saturation of the global brain.

We live in an ongoing cinema and the archive it leaves behind everywhere. It is not the society of the spectacle but the spectacle of society, put on by a society that wants to be spectated.

Film and cinema has become a new kind of recording. But this recording has yet to become the subject of cinema, a parochial form over there.
The Revolution of Modern Art and the Modern Art of Revolution

“The Juvenile delinquents—not the pop artists—are the true inheritors of Dada. Instinctively grasping their exclusion from the whole of social life, they have denounced its products, ridiculed, degraded and destroyed them. A smashed telephone, a burnt car, a terrorised cripple are the living denial of the ‘values’ in the name of which life is eliminated. Delinquent violence is a spontaneous overthrow of the abstract and contemplative role imposed on everyone, but the delinquents’ inability to grasp any possibility of really changing things once and for all forces them, like the Dadaists, to remain purely nihilistic. They can neither understand nor find a coherent form for the direct participation in the reality they have discovered, for the intoxication and sense of purpose they feel, for the revolutionary values they embody. The Stockholm riots, the Hell’s Angels, the riots of Mods and Rockers—all are the assertion of the desire to play in a situation where it is totally impossible. All reveal quite clearly the relationship between pure destructivity and the desire to play: the destruction of the game can only be avenged by destruction. Destructivity is the only passionate use to which one can put everything that remains irremediably separated. It is the only game the nihilist can play; the bloodbath of the 120 Days of Sodom proletarianised along with the rest.”

I think you need to agree on what you want:

Angry?
Contemporary? Eternal?
Are these the conditions of cinema—its way of going—which you reveal?
Is your approach a move to keep pace of culture and its technologies?
Are you reacting to—in any sense, in any way—the hegemony of narrative/Hollywood cinema?
Is your claim historical?
Is it aesthetic?
Is it sociologic?
There are A LOT of ways to spin this.

No:
Angry—reacting to the hegemony of narrative/Hollywood cinema? Almost every independent filmmaker does that, also, we haven’t tried hard enough to be angry, I believe that to be only reactionary today = boring and not innovative, we are not in the 60s, I saw the Oscars yesterday, almost none of the nominated films actually appealed to me as someone who loves cinema, and I think [the same is true] for other people out there, especially outside of narrow-minded America.

Yes:
Contemporary, eternal
A move to keep pace of culture and its technologies—yes.
Historical . . . aesthetic . . . sociological . . .
I think mostly historical in the sense of the recording because we talk a lot about a right way of achieving a narrative structure, which is a more breathing one, alive, a network of ideas, thoughts, and identities, for example by setting up the recording event, simulation of reality, to be in touch with what is now, to want to be always relevant, in control . . .
To reach audiences who are opened to a more contemporary approach of delivering information and cinematic experience, to dare. Not minimalist, not maximalist or naturalist, in between.
Cinema as an event changes.
As a recording changes.
As a form changes.
As an activity, as a format.

The feature film is but one shape of the recording and postproduction effort.

Today’s cinema event is simultaneously authorial and participatory.
"Revolution of Everyday Life" is not about the cinema event. It is a cinema event. The process of making the film and the film itself are so thoroughly intertwined it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other. But not through reflexivity—we don't see booms entering the frame. Rather, we encounter a film in the process of making itself, characters in the process of making themselves—to a point where we're not even sure if they are characters. They exist in a state of person becoming, character becoming, actor becoming, just as the film flourishes in the space of cinema becoming. Events are at once real and not, recorded and live simultaneously.

"Revolution of Everyday Life" hence breaks down the rigid lines that separate creation from playback, writing from reading, and finally subject from object. The pervasive cinema engine, the everyday cinema engine not only rewrites cinema: it rewrites the private and the social, the very manner in which we present and are presented to the world.

In the contemporary world of pervasive cinema, we present ourselves as something to be seen, something already seen, always already being seen. And yet we do so without evacuating our individuality. We are turned inside out, splayed, but not eviscerated. On the contrary, we are multiplied, extended, disseminated, and proliferated.

And this, alas, foments the revolution of everyday life. The title is taken from the English translation of Raoul Vaneigem's great situationist treatise by the same title. The revolution, then, is not Tjasa's ranting against capitalism. Nor is it her all-too-familiar spectacles of S and M. The revolution of everyday life is the proliferation of cinema within and through the everyday.

If we live in a society of the spectacle, this everyday cinema engine decenters image production, proliferates centers, shatters the hegemony of the corporation's will to quantity and uniformity. This pervasiveness of cinema—this ability to create, distribute, and screen on demand—fundamentally shifts flows of communication, introducing radical new possibilities of constituting the social. Images no longer solely flow downhill or in a straight line. They are no longer solely created by vast corporations and streamed into our houses. Images now flow every which way—up, down, sideways, diagonally—disrupting the painful banality of narrative, character, and cliché.
"As cinema takes up the everyday, it infuses life and is in turn infused. Engaging this everyday cinema engine, LaFia gives us a living cinema, a live cinema, a cinema that is always (and already) in the process of making itself, a cinema replete with affect, with the impossible complexity of the human: a cinema that is revolutionary."

—Daniel Coffeen

"Watching The Baader Meinhof Complex last night, the film captures really well the winds of change that spread across the US and Europe in the late sixties—young, sexy, liberated people making a change by taking action at all cost, fighting fire with fire.

“What happens today, two generation after: we use Facebook to vote on how much we are against the American occupation in Iraq, Israel, Ahmadinejad, and all the other evil forces that are behind the destruction of progress, but how, exactly, does that help? The man on the street becomes smaller and smaller, we went back to the time in history when giants ruled the land—China, America, Europe, Iran, they are all giants—people do not want to take action because it is obvious they are going to lose. It is not an argument between ideologies, perspectives, ways of seeing the world, we now don’t want to hold any certain ideology because they all failed, it is all transparent now, humans are destructive creatures.

“Going back to Revolution of Everyday Life: the film tries to offer an alternative to the problem of the impotency we are all experiencing; to go back and become animals, monkeys, lions, swans, start again, recapture the moments of real existence.

“Two women love, fuck, hate, beat, shout, cry with no social context. Why?

“To make sense of it all, shameless creatures that can’t handle it all anymore, this is their protest, this is what maybe we all should do, but we probably are not going to, unless we are true to ourselves or just crazy."

—Lior Rosenfeld