

## Werner Herzog - philosophy of film

Werner Herzog is a very interesting man. He's seen and done many things in his life that most people can only dream of, and he claims that this—his exploration of life and the world—has made him the great filmmaker he is, something film school could never do. He surely doesn't believe in conventional film schools as a way to make great films, in fact his first several films were made with a 35mm that he 'procured' (Werner would say this was not actual theft) from the Munich Film School.

Werner believes in hard work, and perseverance, and getting the shit done that he says he's going to do. Not a lot of people can say they'll eat their shoe and then actually do it—though really this is quite a small scale example of the things he's said he would do and done; Werner Herzog is a man of his word. He's what I would call an 'accomplisher,' one of the main reasons he's so successful is because he puts his mind to something and doesn't stop until it's finished. A great example of his perseverance is his film Fitzcarraldo which took around 5 years total to film and had a great many problems during shooting, many of which would have probably stopped a less determined man.

In interviews and documentaries Werner stresses the importance of seeing the world and learning/trying things that have nothing to do with filmmaking in order to be a great storyteller; He claims that in order to be a storyteller you need to have stories to tell. And so, Werner Herzog's "philosophy of film" seems to be perseverance and living a little-- or a lot as the case may be.

Werner has a tendency of making films without a studio budget, or really any budget at all when it comes to some films, in fact, he produced Fitzcarraldo himself and went broke doing it, to the point he was surviving on four kilos of rice he got by trading his shampoo and conditioner. He doesn't rely on large sums of money to finish his films or a huge studio sized crew, very similar to guerilla filmmaking. He's the kind of guy who will get creative to convince officials to let him shoot in the Chauvet cave for his documentary Cave of Forgotten Dreams.

Werner is a big believer in funding your own movies and making them happen without the need for large studio help. He is also known for his preference for working with a set team of people on his films, lots of the actors and crew members he hires can be found working on numerous films of his. Werner's directorial style is much more freeform than a director who works often with big studios would be, and he is quite proud of never using storyboards and often improvising large portions of the script with the actors. Without a large crew to manage time and story elements Werner is left to his own devices with his films, possibly for the better since his works are so respected.

Werner is a big advocate of sharing his knowledge and experience as a filmmaker, part of which he does through his numerous documentaries, and part of which he imparts upon students that attend his "Rouge Film School." He has a very curious way of going about his filmmaking but in reality it may be quite a bit simpler than going to everyday films schools where you sit in a classroom and learn about great directors, all while doing no real living-- something Werner would probably say will hold you back in your quest for storytelling. He would want you to get out there, live, and actually make that film you've been thinking about!