ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

THE ACTOR'S WORK BEFORE THE CAMERA

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Abstract

In this article, I have endeavored to illuminate the work of an actor before the camera and the process of acting in modern cinema. I also discuss the measures taken for the development and history of our national cinema art. Furthermore, I have attempted to reveal the vital role of the school of acting mastery in cinema and to distinguish the differences between theatre and film acting.

Keywords

Cinema, art, actor, director, mastery (skill), camera.

Since the emergence of cinema art, the art of film acting has evolved through various stages in parallel with it.

Undoubtedly, it must be acknowledged that throughout its history, Uzbek cinema has weathered various political storms, as well as economic and spiritual crises. However, despite this, in all eras and under all conditions, the face of national cinema and its unique traditions have been preserved and have continued to develop.

The processes on the film set and behind the scenes, as well as the establishment, formation, and development of the school of film acting and directing, laid the foundation for the unique and contemporary development of national cinema.

When discussing the history and development of national cinema art, it is impossible not to acknowledge the Uzbek national school of acting and directing. Any art form draws nourishment from the traditions of this school of mastery, and cinema is no exception.

The foundation of the national school of mastery rests on solid, deep knowledge and traditions. This, in turn, serves to form, develop, and ensure the unique identity of cinema art. The unique talents who have contributed and continue to contribute to the development of cinema are nurtured within the traditions of this school.

In every era and process, the profession of the film actor, like cinema itself, has taken on different forms. In Uzbek national cinema, in particular, many great masters established the secrets of the school of film acting based on their own creative work. Today, this profession occupies a special place in national cinema thanks to its elegance, national values, traditions, and performance styles.

It is common knowledge that for an actor, the theatre serves as a kind of altar. In cinema, however, the camera plays a crucial role. Although the camera is an inanimate object, every artist feels that the audience views the film specifically through the camera's gaze. This very sensation places a heavy responsibility on the actor. That is why the expression **"the imposing presence of the camera"** (or "camera awe") exists among creative professionals.

For a young artist just entering the field of cinema, the imposing nature of the camera acts

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as a significant barrier. No matter how talented or skilled an actor may be, they may feel nervous before the camera. This is a natural state.

Over a century ago, the requirements K.S. Stanislavsky set for actors, and the principles of acting mastery he developed, were considered vital factors not only for dramatic theatre actors but also for representatives of cinematography. Undoubtedly, any theatre actor who has mastered these secrets can also create effectively in the field of cinema.

K.S. Stanislavsky's secrets of acting mastery serve the theatre stage and the film set equally well. However, the film industry imposes a number of additional demands on the actor, to which Stanislavsky once eloquently alluded: "On the screen, everything is revealed; even the smallest details are imprinted." (K.S. Stanislavsky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, "Iskusstvo", 1959, p. 277).

This statement by the great theatre figure and founder of the school of acting compels one to think.

Cinema is the **art of the instant**. That is, the events of the work are imprinted in the camera lens at specific moments. All the events captured by that lens are performed on the shooting set. If for the actor in theatre the **stage** is considered the creative field, in cinema, the **shooting location** (the object of filming) is considered the creative field.

The filming process can start from any part of the chosen work from the beginning, the end, or even the **climax** of the events within it. This aspect alone can create certain difficulties for the actor. They may encounter complex **psychological conditions** when demonstrating the characteristic traits of their character, initiating **internal organic feeling**, finding a **source of inspiration**, and finally, employing **emotional memory**. A professional actor must be prepared for this complex process, both **physically and mentally**, and must have developed their capabilities.

It must be acknowledged that activating the internal source of inspiration on the set is a rather complex process for the film actor. The reason, as mentioned above, is that filming work can commence from any point or event in the script. Furthermore, dozens, even hundreds of creators and workers operate on the set, and the focus and gaze of all of them are directed at the actors and actresses performing before the camera. Sometimes, however, most crew members are busy with their own tasks. The actor must perform the role while activating the internal source of inspiration in such situations.

The **object of filming** can be in any location on a busy road with cars passing by, in front of a roaring waterfall, in a boat with a rattling motor, at sea, and so forth. Generally, the actor may have to perform the role in any natural location and under any conditions. Whether it's in a field under the scorching sun, on a mountain peak where snow is heavily falling, or under pouring rain, they must be able to perform their role **superbly** and create freely, demonstrating their acting **mastery**.

In some instances, the film actor is tasked with performing **complex movements**. The actor must be **physically ready** for such complicated physical actions, and their body must be conditioned for them. True, in many shooting environments, these complex stunts (tricks) are performed by a **stuntman**. However, if we look at world cinema, such actions are often performed by the actor or actress themselves. This means their physical capabilities are ready for such complex stunts. It is well known that the demand for such actors and actresses in the film industry is very high.

It is advisable for the **future actors of national cinema** to set high goals for themselves and be

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prepared to go through the path of any difficulty, labor, and research in pursuit of those goals.

A film actor should **not bring their personal problems and emotions** onto the shooting set. That is, the actor must leave all their problems outside the filming area and come to the set **mentally prepared** for the character traits of the role they are meant to perform. Only then can they fully execute the role entrusted to them. If the actor begins their role performance while their mind is preoccupied with completely different personal problems, this will be reflected in their **gaze**. And their gaze, as we mentioned earlier, is clearly revealed in the camera's lens. This is why, in art schools and acting workshops, deep knowledge and skills are taught concerning **internal organic action**, searching for the source of inspiration, and applying it.

The actor must be able to wisely and successfully apply all their **mastery, talent, knowledge, and skills** acquired in the art school workshops, as well as their **life experiences**. This, of course, requires **knowledge, research, skill, experience, and most importantly, talent.**

The gaze of the camera is, simultaneously, the gaze of millions of viewers. Nothing in front of the lens, not even the smallest detail, remains outside the viewer's field of vision. This, in turn, places high demands and responsibility on the film actor. A film actor must possess all the tools of the craft simultaneously. Furthermore, internal control over one's appearance, image, costume, and the minutest details of behavior is required.

One of the most complex tasks facing a film actor is the ability to express the necessary emotions and perform actions before the camera. This requires the actor to immerse themselves in the events of the work, disregarding the external environment (i.e., what is happening around them), using emotional memory to act based on the narrative, and expressing the required state.

In the theatre, the stage is elevated several steps above the audience, and during a performance, all actors play their roles together, in unison, on this height. That is, for a single actor to experience and feel the events of the play and utilize the necessary creative inspiration, they are supported by an entire ensemble a large group of actors. In this process, the audience in the hall, impressed by the events of the play, also aids the actors in their performance. After all, before attending a play, the viewer has certain information about its title, the playwright, and the genre. When the performance begins, they are interested in its development. They strive to derive the necessary conclusion from the show and experience a certain catharsis through the actors' performance.

The goal of the actors performing the play is precisely this: to provide spiritual nourishment to the viewer through their performance style and to evoke an emotional response. In short, in the theatre auditorium, both actors and spectators unite for a single purpose. Only the paths to achieving this goal differ, and they perform actions that are distinct from one another.

A film set has a completely different appearance. Shooting can take place in any environment on the street, in crowded places, in a café, a shop, etc. In such an environment, while performing a role, the actor encounters the piercing gazes of complete strangers outside of the film crew. In this setting, the goal of everyone present is not directed in one way, as it is in a theatre hall. The way a random passerby completely unaware of the film being shot and busy with their daily chores views the actor before the camera, and their attitude toward this process, is completely different from that of a spectator sitting in a theatre. Often, on a film set, it is precisely these "alien" gazes that help the actors.

So, how should an actor proceed in this process? Where do they find the source of inspiration to enter the necessary character?

In this regard, the reflections of the renowned mentor and pedagogue Munavvara

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Abdullayeva in her work *Acting Mastery in Dramatic Theatre and Cinema* can serve as an answer: "Throughout their entire creative life, an actor performs various images and roles. They strive to approach each one differently, individually. It is this specific approach that determines and shapes the versatility or, conversely, the limitations of an actor's mastery and talent."

An actor's preparation for a performance requires both spiritual and physical readiness before playing any role. In his time, K.S. Stanislavsky called this process the **"hygiene of the role."**

Unfortunately, most actors worry more about their physical appearance before performing a role. They do not take into account the necessity of internal spiritual preparation. Or, even worse, some actors think only about looking beautiful before the camera. In such cases, there can be no talk of internal and external preparation for the role. Such an attitude toward the acting profession is considered extremely disrespectful.

Many great, experienced artists not only spend specific time preparing themselves for a role and the stage but also permanently include this in their strict daily schedule. Young actors and actresses just starting their path are often far from such preparation. The majority of young actors do not feel the need for internal and external, spiritual, psychological, and physical preparation before a performance, or they treat it lightly. Many young actors may not know about this preparation process or may not have full information about the "hygiene of the role."

Teachers of acting mastery in theatre and art schools must first teach student actors the order, rules, and requirements of preparation for a performance, whether on stage or before the camera.

To prepare oneself for a role and the performance process, one need not forcibly inspire the soul or pressure feelings and emotions. This process is a preparation of the sensory organs, which prompts the actor to notice, see, and express the slightest, elementary changes in the relationship with a partner, in behavior, or on stage, and to find a source of inspiration. The ability to identify these small, elementary materials and masterfully use them in the interpretation of a role is one of the characteristics of acting mastery.

By using today's specifically today's new source of inspiration, the actor creates novelty in the performance. While seeking a daily source of inspiration, the actor also utilizes their life impressions and emotional memory.

To avoid the emotionless recitation of the text before the camera, the actor is required to constantly sharpen and renew their **"Internal Screen Reel"** every day.

Before the camera, as soon as the actor hears the director's command **"Motor!" (Action!)**, they engage this internal screen reel and **"ignite"** their creative inspiration. In this process, the actor completely disconnects from the external environment. They feel only the camera in front of them and their partner. Using creative inspiration, they perform their role in the required state.

Regardless of which part of the work is being performed, whether the beginning or the finale, as soon as the director's command signaling the start sounds, the actor must be able to begin the performance process at the required level, utilizing their acting mastery.

Another important requirement for a film actor is a deep study of their character and extensive knowledge of their background and profession.

For example, an actor playing the role of a doctor is not limited to merely wearing a white coat before the camera. They must pay attention to small details known only to doctors: how doctors put on a coat, or how they use the pocket of a white coat. Or, an actor playing a police officer must know exactly the rank and grade of that officer and the position they hold. After all,

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the officer's rank is reflected in the details of their uniform. The actor must also have the necessary information on how, with what method and movements, the police officer they are portraying uses their service weapon.

The famous actress and recipient of the "Shuhrat" medal, Dilnoza Kubayeva, shared the following information in an interview. In one of the films where the actress starred, her partner had to handcuff her. While the partner was putting the handcuffs on the actress, she experienced severe pain and marks appeared on her wrists. Despite this, the actress, striving to perform her role flawlessly, later heard this feedback from a professional in that field who watched the film: "In that film, your partner put the handcuffs on you incorrectly. Actually, handcuffs aren't put on like that. If put on that way, they cause severe pain to the hand." Hearing this, the actress drew another major conclusion for herself: every actor must possess necessary information not only about the internal and external experiences, lifestyle, and gait of their character but also about the minutest details of their profession. Such information can be called **specialized knowledge**.

An actor performing a role without studying the necessary information and without specialized knowledge commits a major error in the eyes of professionals in that field. Even the smallest mistakes made before the camera can negatively affect the actor, their professional mastery, and professional ethics.

The process of an actor working on a role, and the process of searching for and mastering this knowledge, sharpens the actor's skills. After all, acting mastery is of vital importance not only on the theatre stage but also before the camera.

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