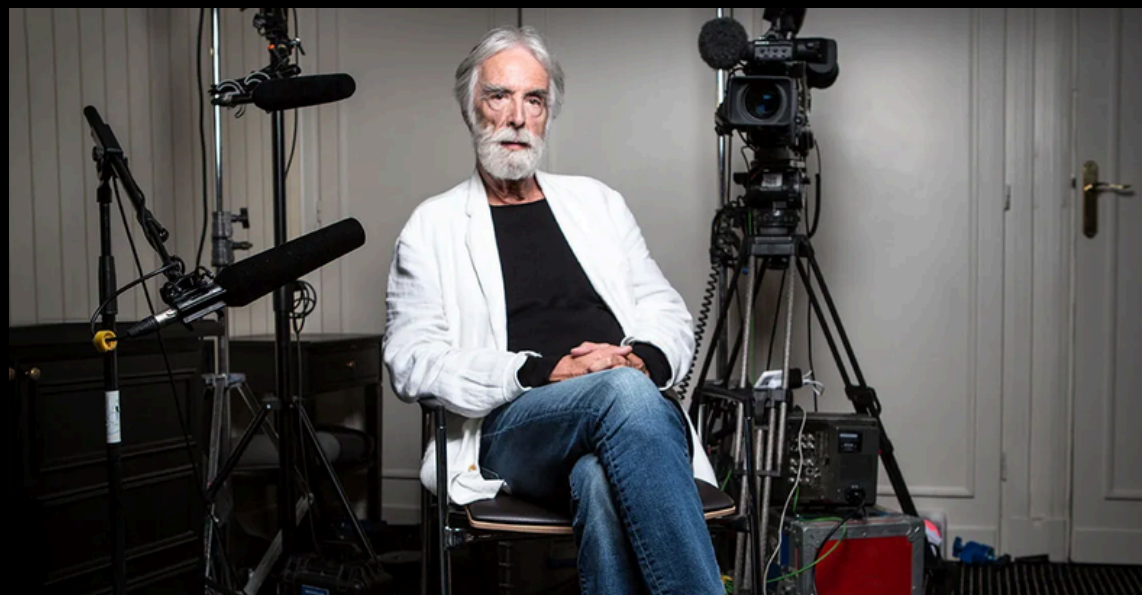
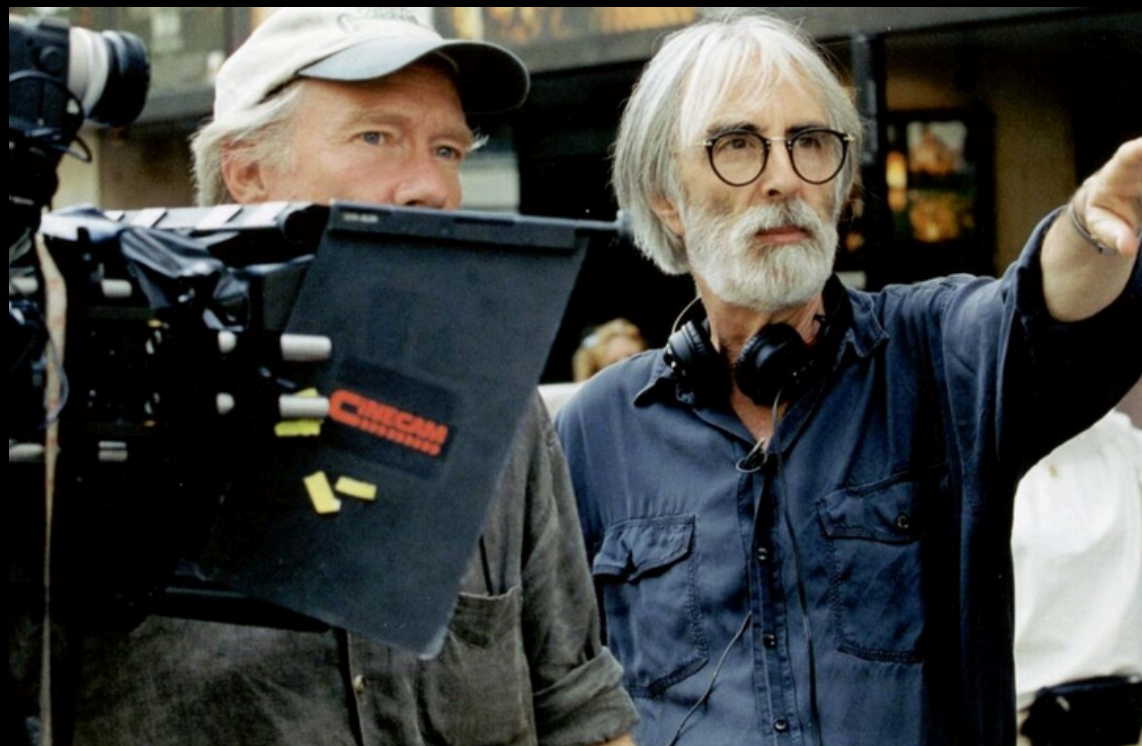


VOYEUR OF VIOLENCE



LUKE NOTHSTINE



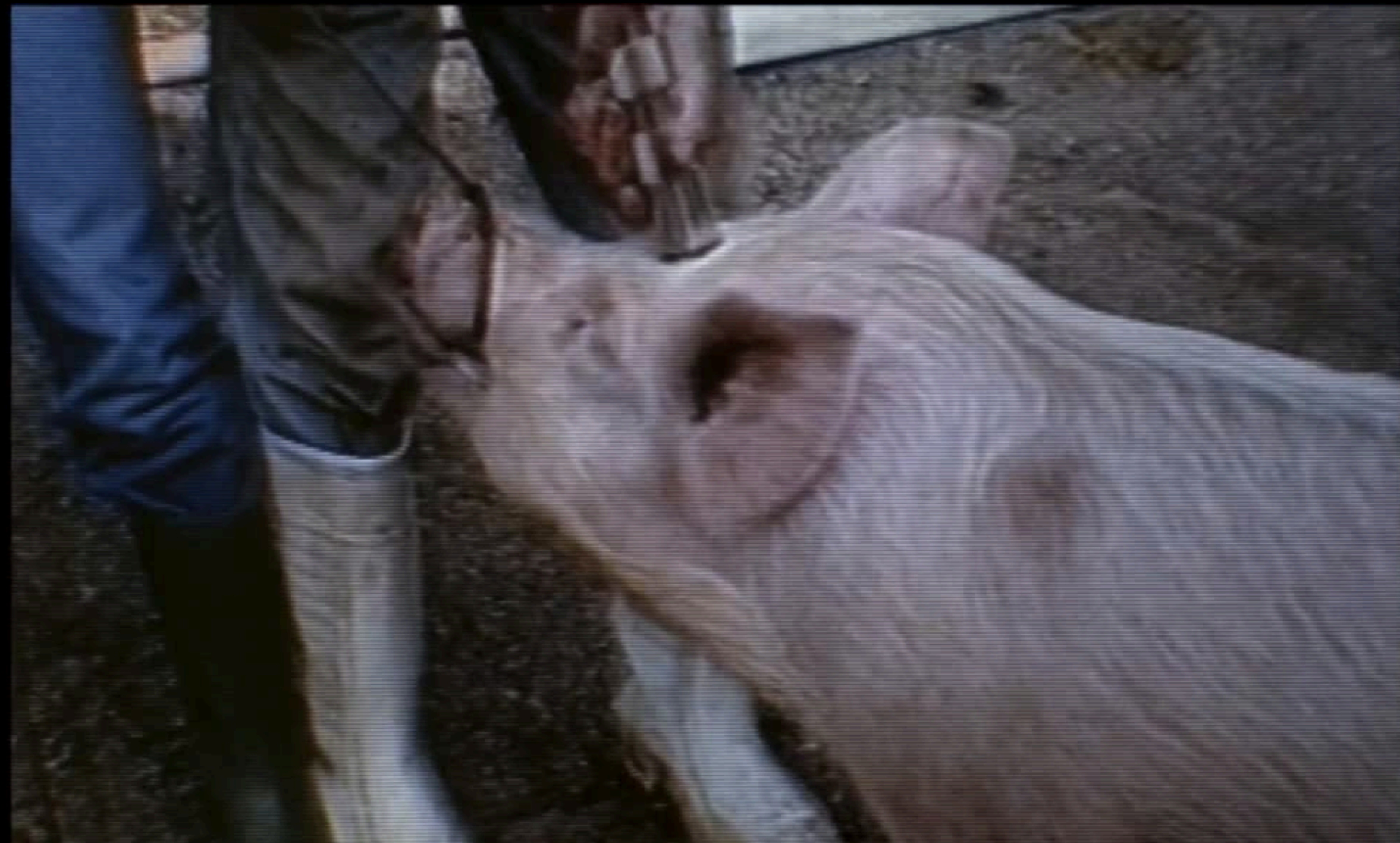
AN INTRO TO HANEKE

Michael Haneke is a German-Austrian film director known for his provocative films, films that often include intense violence. Differing from normal horror or grotesque, Haneke's violence is a critique of those who consume violence themselves. He wants to make people uncomfortable, even those who seek out the thrills of graphic horror movie kills. Haneke has become skilled at making the audience (as well as his character) voyeurs of violence without gratification. To some extent he even involves the audience in the violence themselves.

When one becomes complicit in the horrific violence on screen, it is suddenly not as enjoyable as a slasher horror film where the audience can watch from a far while everyone except the final girl is tortured and killed off one by one. His films are also notoriously anti-cathartic, as he creates them to be deliberately unbearable and uncomfortable to prevent entertainment that people typically find in violent films.

BENNY'S VIDEO

TW: Animal Violence



1992



Haneke's second film, *Benny's Video*, is arguably the basis of his entire critique of on screen violence and the consumption of it. Benny is a teenage boy who is obsessed with violent videos, a boy who views the world through a lens (similar to Erika Kohut in *The Piano Teacher*).

Benny's favorite video is one of a pig being slaughtered with a bolt gun, which he rewinds and watches continually and obsessively throughout the movie. This video is also the opening scene of the film, playing before the title card even appears. Benny's obsession with violence and his desensitization towards it eventually lead him to create a video of his own. He lures and kills a girl, and Haneke doesn't show the audience any of it. At least not until what Benny has recorded of the event is shown on his computer monitor.

The event exists for the audience in the same way that it exists for Benny, a prime example of how Haneke makes the audience uncomfortable but also complicit and involved in the violence of the film. Benny's parents' willingness to cover up the murder entirely can also be connected to the audience. Haneke shows that ignoring violence in your own home is exactly the same as audiences watching a disturbing film and going on with their lives as if nothing happened after.

FUNNY GAMES



Peter, come in here!

1997



Funny Games is Haneke's most direct assault on the audience's role as consumer of violence, the entirety of the film is built on punishing the audience for watching it. Two young men, Paul and Peter take a family hostage and subject them to prolonged, sadistic torture, and eventually kill them. Despite this, the horror is never gratifying and Haneke withholds catharsis at every turn, with almost every kill being kept off-screen.

Throughout the film, there are moments where Paul breaks the fourth wall and address the audience, as shown in the clip where he makes a bet that the family will be dead by 9am, asking the audience, "You're on their side, aren't you?"

In one of the film's most infamous scenes, the mother manages to grab a shotgun and kill one of the boys. Then a remote is picked up by another character and the film is reversed, none of it actually happened. Haneke snatches away the thought that Funny Games would become a revenge thriller that the audience wants at every turn.

The audience feels implicated in the family's torture and their inevitable deaths through the fourth wall breaks, and yet they still watch.

THE PIANO TEACHER



What a nice surprise!

2001



In contrast to *Funny Games* where its violence is shown on the outside, *The Piano Teacher* works almost exclusively from within until the last few scenes of the film.

The Piano Teacher follows Erika Kohut, a sexually repressed piano teacher who still lives with her overbearing controlling mother at 38. She feels nothing, and her life is made up of voyeuristic activities, as she feels she cannot do anything herself. She watches pornography in booths, observing others through a screen, a mirror for the audience's own relationship to consuming intimate suffering. In the book, she also watches snuff videos, emphasizing how she observes people's pain and pleasure from a distance rather than feeling anything herself.

Erika is similar to the audience of a film, she wants to feel things without being affected by it, and in the climax of the film when she is sexually assaulted by Walter, a student she seduces, that distance is destroyed.

The violence in *The Piano Teacher* is psychological and self-inflicted, implicating the viewer who watches Erika's downward spiral with detachment. Haneke refuses to let us observe from a safe distance: we are voyeurs, and Haneke does not let us look away even in the film's final scene, when Erika stabs herself in the shoulder after seeing Walter walk by her without a care of what he did to her the previous night.

CACHÉ

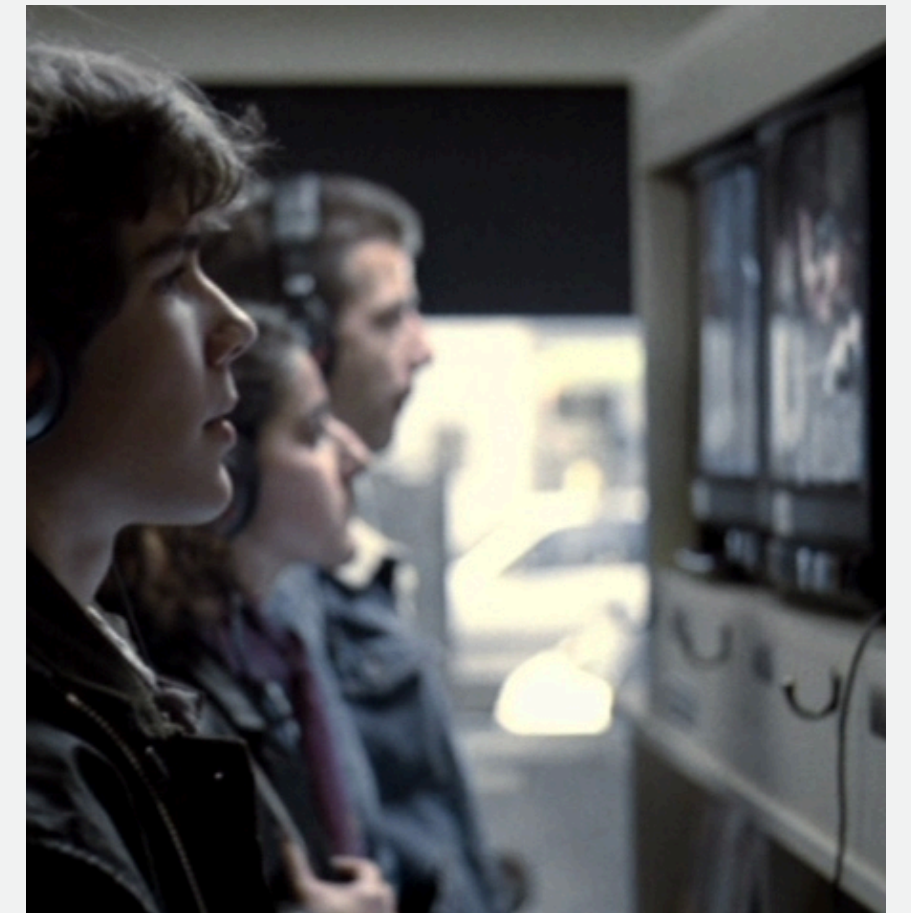


2005



Caché, while not as violent as Haneke's previous films, is just as if not more voyeuristic. The opening scene of the film is a long show of the main family's home on a Parisian street, surveillance footage that someone has been filming and sending to them anonymously. Much of the film is shown through this surveillance footage, again implicating the audience in the act.

When the graphic violence of Caché does come, it is sudden and completely catches the audience off guard. A throat is cut in a single take with no music or cutaway. Haneke shows what violence actually looks like without the cinematic distance that makes slashers watchable for audiences that "love violence". Slasher films teach people how to watch graphic violence while Haneke does not.



THANK YOU