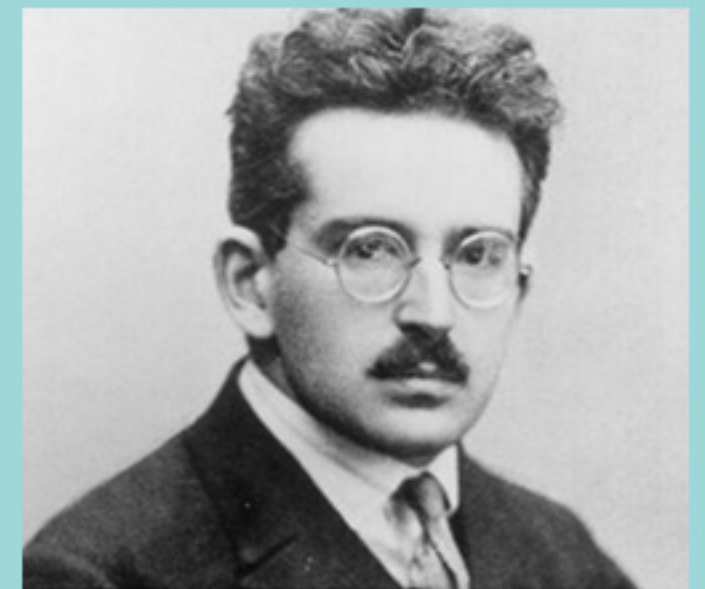# WALTER BENJAMIN   *The Nature of Film*

about

Walter Benjamin was a Marxist philosopher and cultural critic born in Germany. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" he discusses art having lost its aura through it's mechanical reproduction.
The aura of a work of art is its unique place within time and space.
It represents the authenticity and singular authority of a work that cannot be reproduced. A painting has an aura where as photography does not because it is only an image of an image.
In his essay Benjamin describes how with the advent of photography and film, a void has been left with the loss of aura in art. How that void would be filled and what changes in our perception could occur as a result of this loss are still being determined. Benjamin hoped that the loss of the aura would open up the **politicization of art.**

WALTER BENJAMIN *The Nature of Film*

"The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."

-Walter Benjamin

film

With the advent of film, the artist no longer relied on a skilled hand.
The camera only requires the participation of the operator's eye.
The film actor does not perform for the audience, but rather vfor the camera
(as opposed to Stage acting).
Film can be viewed by a mass of participants.

The audience's view becomes synonymous with **the perspective given by the camera.**
Rather than lose themselves in participatory ritual (Stage performance), Film places the viewer in the position of a critic or passive agent.

Film becomes a tool of distraction for the masses or a tool for effective propaganda.

opinion

Film and television have had an effect of alienating individuals by experiencing life through the lens of a false reality.

But there have been many films since the writings of Walter Benjamin that I would refer to as works of art in that they allow an audience to experience beauty in a way that is intangible with other art forms.

As far as a politicizing form of art movies like "Zeitgeist", "An Inconvenient Truth" and "V for Vendetta" have inspired social and political movements.

The politicizing of art can also be seen by visual artists such a Banksy, who uses the city walls as a canvas in order to present his work to the masses.