Wener Herzog on Film

Staying true to guerilla-style filmmaking, Werner Herzog has never let limitations on finance or resources stop him from making movies. He first learned about the existence of film when a projectionist visited his schoolhouse but his interest in capturing images did not begin until he started taking long journeys by himself, often on foot. He had no camera, and no money, but that never interfered with his drive to make motion pictures. He stole a 35mm camera from the Munich Film School and worked night shifts as a welder to save up the finance for his first productions.

Hollywood has always had some set of requirements and procedures for getting a film produced. This usually requires writers to do a lot of begging and pitching from one producer to the next and then often entails that the rights to the story is bought, thus relinquishing most of the control the writer has over their story. Herzog defies this practice and insists that if a filmmaker’s passion for a project outweighs the support available from the industry, they should carry on without that support. This philosophy requires guerilla filmmakers to shoot with fewer permits, fewer cuts, and smaller crews, thus making for more raw and imperfect footage. But Herzog would argue that this is the true spirit of cinematography; capturing something in its purest essence with as little added or taken away as possible.

In *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* and *The Burden of Dreams* Herzog repeatedly expresses his concerns for larger studios and producers not giving attention to smaller projects and filmmakers. This suggests that Herzog doesn’t necessarily believe that these resources *hurt* the filmmaker’s process, but that they are not essential. He would tell us that filmmaking requires only a passion, a camera, and a steady hand.