

Peter Greenaway

Quotes

*Cinema, Thinking, Art, Men, People, Believe, Writing, Emotional, Two, Eye,
Sex, Years, Film, Want, Hands, World, Painting, Way, Stories, Mistake*

I've always been fascinated by maps and cartography. A map tells you where you've been, where you are, and where you're going -- in a sense it's three tenses in one.

~Peter Greenaway

I have always had severe problems with Austrians. ... Musical, churchy, uptight... nice legs... hypocritical... authoritarian... always insist their dustbins are very clean.

~Peter Greenaway

I have often thought it was very arrogant to suppose you could make a film for anybody but yourself.

~Peter Greenaway

I really, sincerely believe that one should trust the work, and not the author.

~Peter Greenaway

You can play lacrosse all over the world provided you know where the goalposts are.

~Peter Greenaway

I would be curious about one of those Jane Austen women - you know - long-suffering, dutiful - but all right in the end - a plump 19th century type, five foot four, ringlets, brown eyes, long fingers.

~Peter Greenaway

I wanted to make a cinema of ideas, not plots, and to use the same aesthetics as painting, which has always paid great attention to formal devices of structure, composition and framing.

~Peter Greenaway

Every historian has a vested interest. "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" was not about the Roman but the British empire. What

price the truth?

~Peter Greenaway

Works of art are never finished, just stopped.

~Peter Greenaway

I always think that art is one of the most wonderful exciting curious ways to learn. I have no worries or apologies about art being used as a teaching medium.

~Peter Greenaway

Whispering can be a rest from a noisy world of words.

~Peter Greenaway

There is visual illiteracy with text-oriented films like bloody 'Harry Potter' and 'Lord of the Rings.'

~Peter Greenaway

Most cinema is not about images but text. Why on earth have we based cinema on text? Why can't we break that umbilical cord? Why do we have to pollute cinema?

~Peter Greenaway

There's no such thing as history, only historians. That's how we know about the past.

~Peter Greenaway

I am certain that there are two things in life which are dependable: the delights of the flesh and the delights of literature. I have had the good fortune to enjoy them both equally.

~Peter Greenaway

We don't need virtual reality, we need virtual unreality.

~Peter Greenaway

Americans don't understand what metaphor in cinema is about. They're extremely good at making straightforward, linear narrative movies, which entertain superbly. But they very rarely do anything else.

~Peter Greenaway

The pretence that numbers are not the humble creation of man, but are the exacting language of the Universe and therefore possess the secret of all things, is comforting, terrifying and mesmeric.

~Peter Greenaway

As for critics, one mediocre writer is more valuable than ten good critics. They are like haughty, barren spinsters lodged in a maternity ward.

~Peter Greenaway

Only cinema narrows its concern down to its content, that is to its story. It should, instead, concern itself with its form, its structure.

~Peter Greenaway

American actors are coy. We all have pricks and cunts, or are you different from the rest of us?

~Peter Greenaway

If you never lived out your sexuality - it's a great force, and if you try to fight it, what does that create? Energy: positive and negative, self-loathing.

~Peter Greenaway

Cinema is far too rich and capable a medium to be merely left to the storytellers.

~Peter Greenaway

I want to regard my public as infinitely intelligent, as understanding notions of the suspension of disbelief and as realising all the time that

this is not a slice of life, this is openly a film.

~Peter Greenaway

If every man is supposed to think of sex once every nine minutes, what on earth does he think of in the other eight?

~Peter Greenaway

There's more religion in my little finger than there is in the pope. But no, I don't believe in God. I am an athiest. A Darwinian evolutionist.

~Peter Greenaway

The best painting is totally non-narrative. It doesn't have to tell you a story.

~Peter Greenaway

My favourite way of watching the cinema is the biggest possible cinema you can find, with the biggest possible screen, and the loudest possible Dolby - but just me. Nobody else.

~Peter Greenaway

A French critic referred to me as a gay pessimist, with gay used in its older sense, and talked of Cocteau in the same breath.

~Peter Greenaway

Since Caesar, we know his historians are liars. The good writers get read. Bad history doesn't get read.

~Peter Greenaway

Churchill was a good writer but a bad historian.

~Peter Greenaway

If you're a Shakespeare fan, isn't that a way to negotiate sex and death?

~Peter Greenaway

There are many photos of Eisenstein. I think he was quite vain, and he liked photos of him. Being a virgin at 33 is strange now, but let's not be too high-minded about that.

~Peter Greenaway

Eisenstein was a good editor. I was trained as a film editor, and I've no doubt that the editor is key to a film.

~Peter Greenaway

Painting is the supreme form of expression; you don't need to 'read' painting.

~Peter Greenaway

I got in trouble with the stern-faced Russians who didn't want me to create a guy who is mortal.

~Peter Greenaway

Cinema is dead, long live cinema.

~Peter Greenaway

I was continually connected with the whole world and never got any rest. At the moment, I spend only a few hours weekly on the net, that's just better for me.

~Peter Greenaway

What are you - some kind of addict? Is this where you come to.

~Peter Greenaway

English culture is highly literary-based.

~Peter Greenaway

I do indeed think that cinema is mortal. There is a lot of evidence already that it is dying on its feet.

~Peter Greenaway

It serves the purpose of not serving a purpose, surely quite a valid one.

~Peter Greenaway

I've always been fascinated by Eisenstein.

~Peter Greenaway

A hand cannot write on itself.

~Peter Greenaway

The range of human skin colours is quite narrow when you think about it - and I do - and subtle - beige, pink, white, tan, taup.

~Peter Greenaway

We all live to a formula. Maybe the secret lies in keeping that formula secret.

~Peter Greenaway

My personal obsessions are much more interesting to me than other people's.

~Peter Greenaway

Blind eyes cannot read.

~Peter Greenaway

I have transmitted genetic material, all I have to do between my daughters' birth and my death is to decorate my life.

~Peter Greenaway

We live in a time of excess - excess population, excess information.

~Peter Greenaway

All religions have always hated females.

~Peter Greenaway

Anybody who writes a diary insists it must be read by someone else.

~Peter Greenaway

The Sistine Chapel is an extraordinary work of education - it lays out all the early books of the Bible.

~Peter Greenaway

We all know that we're going to die, but we don't know when. That's not a blessing, that's a curse.

~Peter Greenaway

I am Welsh by birth, English by education, and European by nature.

~Peter Greenaway

There are basically only two subject matters in all Western culture: sex and death. We do have some ability to manipulate sex nowadays. We have no ability, and never will have, to manipulate death.

~Peter Greenaway

Life is full of a thousand red herrings, and it takes the history of a civilisation to work out which are the red herrings and which aren't.

~Peter Greenaway

Continuity is boring.

~Peter Greenaway

I don't believe in the deplorable notion of realism in the cinema: you can over-reach it, and it becomes as false as convention.

~Peter Greenaway

I like a lot of glasses about - it highers the tone.

~Peter Greenaway

I can't think of anyone who has done anything remotely useful after the

age of 80.

~Peter Greenaway

Investigation is never complete.

~Peter Greenaway

It's precisely on the Internet that the majority of the writing is terribly bad and uninteresting.

~Peter Greenaway

I admit that death is not just about you, it's also about the people who love you.

~Peter Greenaway

If you want to tell stories, be a writer, not a filmmaker.

~Peter Greenaway

Too many proofs spoil the truth.

~Peter Greenaway

I never go to the cinema. I can't stand sitting in the dark with strangers -- all of us obliged to share the same emotional experiences -- it's too intimate. I like to be emotional in private.

~Peter Greenaway

I obviously irritate people. I obviously antagonise them.

~Peter Greenaway

If God approved of his creature's creation, He breathed the painted clay-model into life by signing His name.

~Peter Greenaway

There are, after all, approaches to be made other than the dependable routes that massage sentimental expectations and provide easy

opportunities for emotional identification.

~Peter Greenaway

Cinema has reached a dead end.

~Peter Greenaway

Bill Viola is worth ten Scorseses.

~Peter Greenaway

Cinema basically examines a personality first and the body afterward.

~Peter Greenaway

I still would like you to feel the enthusiasm that all those people felt in the twenties and thirties, that indeed we had discovered, with cinema, the great 20th-century, all-embracing medium.

~Peter Greenaway

I share this interest in the weird, strange, unusual, surreal.

~Peter Greenaway

Words reproduce themselves pleurably too.

~Peter Greenaway

There have been innumerable films about film-making, but *Otto e Mezzo* was a film about the processes of thinking about making a film -- certainly the most enjoyable part of any cinema creation.

~Peter Greenaway

It seems so tragic to me that so many filmmakers are making movies up against this extra-ordinary revolution with one eye closed and two hands tied behind their backs.

~Peter Greenaway

I like to think of *The Falls* as my own personal encyclopedia

Greenaway-ensis.

~Peter Greenaway

That comes from most people having an American film model in their heads which is nothing but a total illusionary masturbatory massage.

~Peter Greenaway

It's so miserable and so easy to keep slamming Titanic -- I'll shut up.

~Peter Greenaway

I think my films are very English. That certain emotional distance, interest in the world, interest in irony. These are all deeply English propositions.

~Peter Greenaway

Cinema is not a playground for Sharon Stone.

~Peter Greenaway

We are all united by the phenomenon that we have a body and that body is universally the same, more or less. If we lose sight of that perspective, everything can desperately suffer.

~Peter Greenaway

For so many filmmakers, cinema is a means to an end.

~Peter Greenaway

My heroes among filmmakers would be people like Buñuel and Pasolini, who were of very high cinematic intelligence, but tread on a lot of toes.

~Peter Greenaway

I don't think we've seen any cinema yet. I think we've seen 100 years of illustrated text.

~Peter Greenaway

I think my films are always quite self-reflexive and always question 'why am I doing this, is this the right way to do it, what is cinema for, does it have a purpose?'

~Peter Greenaway

This is where I begin to do the writing. I am now going to be the pen and not the paper.

~Peter Greenaway

Imagine a world where nothing is stable. In the West, we have three moving elements -- Air, Fire, Water -- but at least we can depend on the fourth.

~Peter Greenaway

I don't want to become an ivory tower filmmaker. That sounds peculiar, but I want to be a mainstream filmmaker. I want the largest possible audience that I can find - but, of course, on my terms.

~Peter Greenaway

I think it is really important to be in some way provocative -- either intellectually or viscerally -- in the films one makes.

~Peter Greenaway

I do feel for me that cinema has somehow ceased to be a spectator sport. I get tremendous excitement out of making it rather than watching it.

~Peter Greenaway

Itch to read, scratch to understand.

~Peter Greenaway

In a world where we can all be our own filmmakers, the old elites are disappearing and there is no desire to look at somebody else's dream anymore because you can go off and make your own.

~Peter Greenaway

A really intelligent man makes an indifferent painter. For painting requires a certain blindness, a partial refusal to be aware of all the options.

~Peter Greenaway

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