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Dekalog 01: On The Five Obstructions

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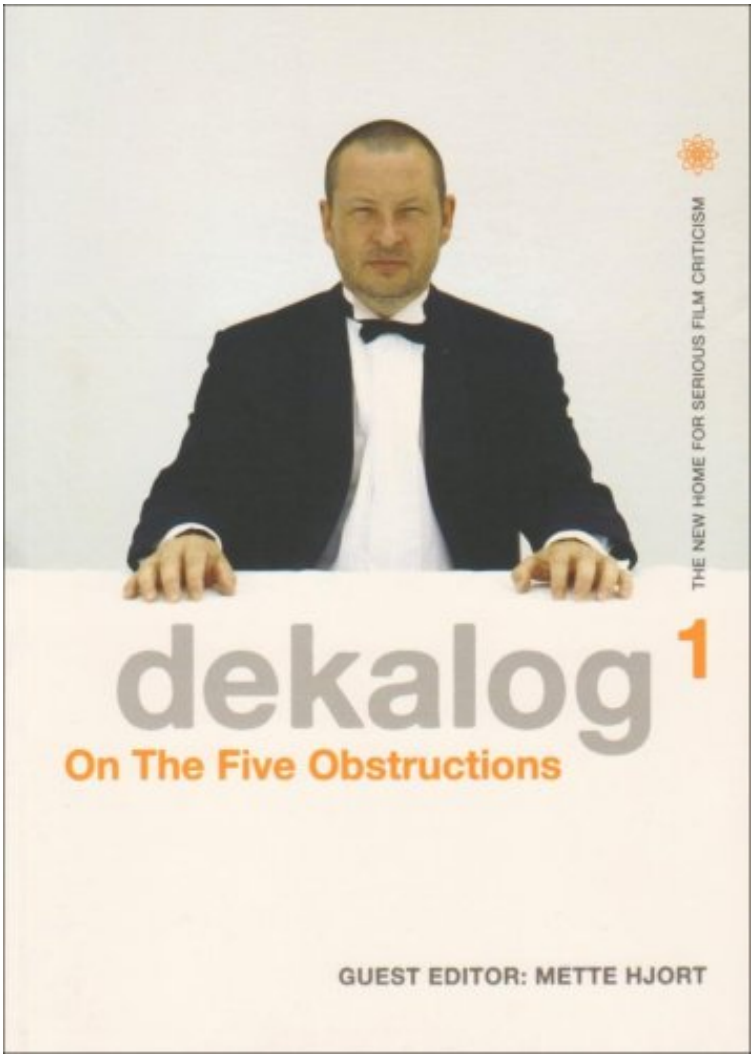

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Released in 2003, Lars von Trier and Jorgen Leth's collaborative film has been received as one of the most intriguing and significant cinematic works of recent times. The film comprises five episodes, each a re-creation of Leth's classic film The Perfect Human (1967), but with five different creative constraints, or 'obstructions'. This first issue in the Dekalog series brings together writers from diverse disciplinary and national backgrounds. Together the essays present a case for seeing The Five Obstructions as a philosophically compelling cinematic work that tests our understanding of

key psychological, aesthetic and ethical issues: the role that other people play in facilitating self-understanding; creativity and its relation to constraint; individual style as an artistic problem; filmmaking as a form of play; the pragmatic effects of nesting works within works; and the ethical limitations of aestheticism. An interview with Jrgen Leth helps to clarify aspects of the films context of production, including von Trier's manifesto-like call for works situated at the very boundary of fiction and non-fiction.

About the AuthorMette Hjort is a Professor of Visual Studies at the Liberal Arts University of Hong Kong, Lingnan. She is also co-editor of The Danish Directors: Dialogue on a Contemporary National Cinema (2001).