Each portfolio page for the individual film projects that you submit to Pamoja should include*:

1. Your role;
2. The number and title of your film or clip and its length;
3. The URL of your film or clip;
4. A statement of your creative filmmaker intentions and your influence and/or inspiration;
5. A balance of written and visual evidence documenting your INQUIRY, ACTION, and REFLECTION process.

In addition, all documentation must be typed in a legible, sans serif 12-point font and your document should be saved as follows:

Last name_First name_Cohort_FPA.

* Please note: you will eventually put all of your films in one up to 9 minute reel and all of your written and visual commentary documentation in one 9-page document that will have a Cover Page containing your URL and a Table of Contents (see exemplar).
STATEMENT OF FILMMAKER INTENTIONS:

This is one of the most important sections of your entire portfolio. Spend time crafting it to make sure it clearly identifies the following:

• 1. The name of your clip and the role you are adopting;
• 2. Your specific and CREATIVE filmmaker intentions in that role;
• 3. Whose work or what technique, style, movement, genre or approach you are inspired by; and
• 4. What you want your film or clip to achieve as a result of exploring your filmmaker intentions.

Please note: Students can have one filmmaker intention for one role, and explore that intention in three different clips, or have a different intention for that role in each of the clips.
EXAMPLE OF A STATEMENT OF FILMMAKER INTENTIONS:

In my clip “Out of Place,” I want to work as a director to explore using symmetry and overhead shots in mise-en-scene as effective and impactful visual techniques. I have been inspired by Wes Anderson’s work in *Moonrise Kingdom* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and the way in which he often centers his characters and objects in the frame, and frequently uses overhead shots. My hope is to creatively explore how symmetrical and overhead composition in mise-en-scene can convey meaning, especially about character and setting.
1. INQUIRY: Commentary and Visual Documentation
This section should offer a BALANCE of written and visual documentation that includes:

- A thoughtful, well-developed statement of creative filmmaker intentions;
- Concrete evidence of the research you’ve done into the production role you will be working in and whose work or what technique, style, movement, genre, or approach you have been influenced or inspired by, through parenthetical citations and other references on a Works Cited page;
- Your pre-production planning and organizational approach and how you intend to creatively explore your filmmaker intentions in your production role;
- Visual evidence of your pre-production planning that supports your production role and filmmaker intentions: research, scripts, storyboards, shot lists, location scouts, test shoots, and casting notes are most appropriate here, depending on your role.

2. ACTION: Commentary and Visual Documentation:
This section should offer a BALANCE of written and visual documentation that includes:

- Discussing details of your creative exploration into your production role, highlighting the skills and techniques you are learning and using to achieve your filmmaker intentions and evaluating how your production approach and process has impacted your learning and understanding of your production role;
- Evaluating moment(s) where you encountered a problem related to your production role and how you solved that problem;
- Making sure that any audio/visual material used is ORIGINAL and that you document its creation. (Please note: if you work with another student in your school you MUST play a part in its creation. In addition, work with adults or students outside your school, and work that has already been created prior to beginning work on your production will NOT be accepted).
- Providing visual evidence from the film shoot that supports your production role and filmmaker intentions, and demonstrates your understanding of that role; camera logs, behind the scenes photographs, before/after set décor, shooting scripts, and/or other on-set/location items are most appropriate here, depending on your role.

3. REFLECTION: Commentary and Visual Documentation:
This section should offer a BALANCE of written and visual documentation that includes:

- Reflecting on and evaluating what you have learned about the production role you have worked in through a consideration of the successes and challenges you experienced;
- Evaluating to what extent you have fulfilled your filmmaker intentions and how you have grown as a filmmaker through your experience in this production role;
- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of your approach and final work and what you might do again and differently if given the opportunity;
- Submitting a Works Cited page which lists all research materials that you used to help complete the project (including but not limited to books, articles, and websites).
To what extent does the student evaluate how their research, creative explorations, and production work, led by filmmaker intentions, have shaped their understanding of the chosen production role?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Possible characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.</td>
<td>Basic, Incomplete, Ineffective, Rudimentary, Superficial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1    | This work is limited.  
• The portfolio pages and supporting evidence provide an undeveloped or incomplete outline of the student’s research, creative explorations and production work, or the student’s understanding of the specific film production role is inaccurate, irrelevant or unclear. | Acceptable, Reasonable, Standard, Suitable, Sufficient, Typical |
| 2    | This work is adequate.  
• The portfolio pages and supporting evidence provide a description of how the student’s research, creative explorations and production work, led by their filmmaker intentions, contributed to a mostly relevant or appropriate understanding of the specific film production role. | Competent, Balanced, Proficient, Relevant, Thoughtful |
| 3    | This work is good.  
• The portfolio pages and supporting evidence provide a detailed and informative explanation of how the student’s research, creative explorations and production work, led by their filmmaker intentions, contributed to an accurate and relevant understanding of the specific film production role. | Compelling, Finessed, Honed, Insightful, Mature, Sophisticated |
| 4    | This work is excellent.  
• The portfolio pages and supporting evidence provide a compelling and discerning evaluation of how the student’s research, creative explorations and production work, led by their filmmaker intentions, contributed to a highly appropriate understanding of the specific film production role. | |
### Mark 0
- The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

### Mark 1
- This work is **limited**.
- The film or collection of film clips demonstrate(s) an undeveloped level of ability in the student’s production skills, as appropriate to the one film **production role**. The student’s use of skills, techniques and/or approaches are rudimentary and the results are ineffective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Ineffective Rudimentary Unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mark 2
- This work is **adequate**.
- The film or collection of film clips demonstrate(s) an acceptable level of ability in the student’s production skills, as appropriate to the one film **production role**. Some relevant skills, techniques and/or approaches are applied, but these are underdeveloped.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable Standard Sufficient Typical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mark 3
- This work is **good**.
- The film or collection of film clips demonstrate(s) a competent level of proficiency in the student’s production skills, as appropriate to the one film **production role**. Relevant skills, techniques and/or approaches are applied in a clear and suitable manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capable Clear Effective Robust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Mark 4
- This work is **excellent**.
- The film or collection of film clips demonstrate(s) a sophisticated level of proficiency in the student’s production skills, as appropriate to the one film **production role**. Relevant skills, techniques and/or approaches are applied in a highly effective manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomplished Finessed Honed Refined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please use this checklist BEFORE submitting your work to make sure you have followed all the directions and met all the requirements.

- Stated your role and provided clearly stated creative filmmaker intentions and who or what they were inspired and influenced by?
- Creatively explored your role and come to understand the techniques, strategies, methods, and approaches needed to fulfill it?
- Provided an informative and balanced discussion and presentation of your pre-production, production, and post production work in the role you’ve adopted?
- Thoughtfully evaluated how well you have fulfilled your filmmaker intentions? (NOTE: the strongest portfolios contain some kind of reflection in the Inquiry and Action as well as the Reflection stages.)
This week (W7) students have been tasked to select your three production roles that will serve as the focus for each of the Film Portfolio Assessment chapters (3). What teachers are going to advise students to do is select these three roles and assign them to specific future FPA productions.

The BIG FIVE IB Film FPA production roles are: Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Sound Designer, and Screenwriter.
The Production Projects and Picking the right role to go with them

Before randomly selecting production roles, students will want to consider the upcoming production assignments that may influence role selection:

Role 1 will involve the first three production assignments in Year One:
- Meet My___________Montage (one minute montage)
- Dinner With… (one minute dinner scene using expressionistic approaches)
- Space Chase (one minute chase scene)

Role 2 will involve the second three production assignments in Year One:
- 3 Genre (three short scenes involving a gift using the same premise)
- Diegetic/Non-Diegetic (a sound project involving a spy-themed handoff scene)
- Experimental (one minute experimental film)

Role 3 will involve the last film production assignment in Year Two:
- Complete Film (student’s choice, no longer than three minutes)

So, moving forward, the first role you select (ROLE 1) will focus on the first three productions. The second role you select (ROLE 2) will involve the second three productions. The third role you select (ROLE 3) will involve the last production.
Level 7 FPA Exemplar: Let’s look at why it scored as well as it did

Film Production Reel/Pages

IB Film Standard Level

M2019

gyx389

https://youtu.be/o8pgDOKkEj0
FPA Exemplar
Table of Contents

Contents

Film Production Role 1: Director ............................................. P.3
Clip 1: Genre Production (2:07)
Clip 2: Dinner With My Husband (0:53)

Film Production Role 2: Editor ............................................. P.6
Clip 1: Chase Sequence (1:28)
Clip 2: Sound Exercise (1:29)

Film Production Role 3: Cinematographer ............................. P.9
Clip 1: Japan Trip (3:00)
Film Production Role 1: Director

Rationale
A director is not only the main force behind a film, the drive that keeps the gears turning; they are also the creative hand, the person whose vision, ideas and personality are transmitted through the film. They are praised when a film is good, and blamed when it is bad. In essence, they are the face that goes with the movie, the person the audience relates to. Ultimately, the person whose soul is transmitted to the audience.

As a director, my main aim for "Genre Production" was to create three different shorts with similar storylines but different genres. To accomplish this, I was inspired by the way classic movies from these genres, such as "Dark Star," "NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD," and "À BOUT DE SOUFFLE," and the signature ways in which they conveyed the genre through editing, score, cinematography, etc.

Inquiry
As a director, my main aim for this film was to create an atmosphere that would be immediately recognizable for each of the genres that I chose. I decided to go with Science-Fiction, Zombie Apocalypse, and French New Wave because they all, in my opinion, have familiar elements to them, such as sounds, shouts, camera movements, etc., which make them easily identifiable. Science-Fiction was for me an already very familiar genre, so research for that was barely necessary; however, I was very strongly influenced by John Carpenter's "Dark Star," for instance in its use of special effects and light. A parallel can even be seen in the anatomy of the control room of the spaceship in that film and in mine (Figure 1).

For the zombie apocalypse genre, I re-watched "Night of the Living Dead," as well as looking at stills from more modern ones to try and capture the look that was given to them. I also researched more about the behavior of zombies in movies, which I thought would help capture the zombie character.

Finally, for "LE TEMPS QUI PASSE," I studied some excerpts from "LES QUATRE CENTS COUPS," "À BOUT DE SOUFFLE," and "PERMET LE FROU," in an attempt to capture the behavior of characters in these movies and camerawork. The obvious conclusions were certain characters and camerawork à l'Apollinaire, but I also noticed long, uninterrupted shots and, especially, awkward cuts and editing.

Action
As a director, I decided to keep the setting minimal for the science-fiction portion of the film. The effect of being in a spaceship and meeting an alien would instead be created through the use of foley and music. I therefore collaborated with the sound designer to make sure the effects were coherent with each other and the music would complement the visuals of the film. He also created a score for the three films; one of them used GarageBand, and this was for a total of 27 seconds.

On-set, I applied what I had learned from my zombie research to the film. As seen in Figure 2, I worked closely with the makeup artist, set designer and costume designer to make sure the characters' looks fit with their settings and situations. Additionally, I communicated with the actors as to how they should behave, giving them character backstories and referencing to other zombie-genre films.

Because I wanted each film to have its own "look," I decided that each's color scheme and grade should be different. "LE TEMPS QUI PASSE," for instance, was shot in monochrome, to set it in its time and apart from the two other films.

Reflection
There were a few things with which I was unhappy when the film was completed. For instance, one of the shots in "Undead" was badly lit (Figure 3), and I failed to call it out on the spot. This meant having to raise the exposure a bit in post-production, which resulted in an ugly image. I decided this shot should be cut as short as possible, but it still got significant screen time due to its importance for the plot.

During the first trials for animating the spaceship, I found that it looked too much like it was flying in front of a flat surface. To solve this, I decided we should create a second layer of stars that would move slightly slower than the first layer, therefore adding a perspective effect.
Overall, however, I was pleased with the result of this film. My intentions, creating shorts which copied each genre and in some ways parodying them, was met successfully. I also found that the three films interacted well, as although their themes were completely different, their common storyline created an interesting coherence. I do think that I could have developed the plot-line more interestingly visually, as I relied a lot on acting and not enough on camera work; this is something I will try to address in my next film.

Clip 2 - Dinner With my Husband (5:13)

Rationale
For "Dinner With my Husband", I am to create a gritty and comical atmosphere while telling a silent story about murder. I wish to communicate an engaging plot through using visuals; and for this, I will look at Alfred Hitchcock’s use of visual clues in "Notorious", but also learn to rely less on dialogue by basing myself on the use of image and light in films from the German Expressionism era.

Inquiry

One of my aims as a director for this film was to create an engaging story without using dialogue, relying instead on camera work and pacing as storytellers. For this, I was inspired by multiple Alfred Hitchcock films, but in particular by the scene in "Notorious" where the camera reveals the presence of the key in Ingrid Bergman’s hand, introducing suspense. In my film, I planned to use the same idea of visual reveals, but rather than introducing suspense, I wanted to build up a story, keep the audience’s attention by adding visual clues one by one.

As a director, I wanted to ensure that the blocking for each shot was perfect, because most of the meaning would be transmitted visually; this meant that, if a shot or character was out of place, the meaning could be lost and the entire film would be ineffective. Therefore carefully planned out how each shot would look (Figure 4 being an example) along with the cinematographer, who helped with composition and light planning.

Figure 4: Blocking the Steadicam shot

Good sources for telling visual stories are, of course, films from before the advent of sound in cinema. While watching a selection of these, I noticed that the use of light was very pronounced, possibly also due to their shooting in monochrome film. This was particularly apparent in German expressionism films, such as Robert Wiene’s "Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari" or F.W. Murnau’s "Nosferatu". I therefore decided to film in black and white, and made sure the cinematographer paid particular attention to his use of light to convey meaning.

Action

Because I wanted each shot to truly serve a purpose and convey a meaning, I was quite strict on set as to which ones we would keep and which one we wouldn’t. I stuck very closely to the storyboard, in which we had already laid out the visual guidelines for each shot or scene. The cinematographer and I had assigned a meaning in each image’s composition which helped to advance the story forward, as exemplified by the adjacent stills by adding movement and using the rule of thirds (Figures 5 and 6), we added tension and discomfort to the story.

Although seemingly simple, the actress’ role was not so easy to play as it required an ironic undertone, a transformation from the friendly housewife to the vengeful widow. I tried to help her convey this by instructing her on slight changes in attitude and movement, going from an exaggerated happiness and affection to a more natural satisfaction. I find that this works quite well, as her attitude seems to guide the plot towards the sinister end reveal.

Figure 5: Movement and use of the rule of thirds.

Figure 6: creating discomfort with composition.

Reflection

A problem I realized we had in the visuals was that the two characters were much too far apart to be able to clink glasses, and that if added and shot incorrectly, this could become apparent. Therefore made the decision to shoot two different motions: One where the glasses touched, and one where the female character simply raised her glass. I would then decide which one to use in post-production. To minimize the visual confusion of the glasses touching, I decided to ‘surround’ this shot with two others which looked like they were sitting close together; i.e., one shot where they look close, the glass shot, and then another shot where they look close. This minimized the contrast in distance between them, and was a result of careful blocking beforehand.
Overall, I was quite happy with the film; I was happy to be able to develop more of a storyline, which I wasn’t able to do in previous productions. The comedic aspect of the film was well supported by the music, which, made on piano and drums in collaboration with the composer, was meant as playful background music while still accompanying certain moments in the story. Guiding a plot without using any text was something I had never done before, and I feel that it has impacted the way I will use the camera in future productions.
Film Production Role 2: Editor

Clips: Chase Sequence (1.28)

Rationale

An editor is one of the most important people on the production of a film because of their control of the mood, rhythm, and structure of a film or plot. Although their impact seems to act in a more subconscious way on the audience, they ultimately have control over the last stages of production: they have the metaphorical ‘last word’. This shows the importance of their collaboration with other production roles to ensure that all visions are truthfully conveyed in the final film.

For this film, I wanted to create an exciting, fast-paced action sequence while keeping continuity and logic. To achieve this, I imitated the cutting style of modern action scenes and tried to re-create the whip pan in Edgar Wright's "Shaun of the Dead". Through the production of this film, I hope to gain a wider understanding of how such sequences are edited, and to examine the potential impact editing can have on action sequences.

Inquiry

In the preparatory phase of this film, my main concern as an editor was to research interesting cuts and transitions that I could include, but also to examine how fast-paced sequences were edited. I also knew I needed to make it seem like there would be a chase and a runaway, even though there was only one actor. When trying to solve this, I came across a scene in Edgar Wright's "Shaun of the Dead" where the camera spins and Chris Dickinson hides a cut in the motion blur. I decided to use something similar to this in my film to ‘clone’ the actor. Therefore, I made sure the cinematographer would include this effect in the correct shots through storyboarding and assisting on set.

When researching fast-paced editing, I decided to concentrate on a chase scene that I had (re)watched lately, the chase scene at the beginning of Martin Campbell’s "Casino Royale". I noticed multiple things: first, Stuart Baird cuts his shots very rapidly, like short sentences during a thrilling moment in a story. No shot lasts more than five seconds. Further than that, however, I noticed that still shots were very sparse; there was almost always some sort of movement in the shot. Finally, I noticed that all the action seemed to be happening real-time, that there were no jumps forward in time, to keep the audience constantly at the edge of their seat. Those are all points I kept in mind when storyboarding, helping on set, and, of course, editing.

Action

Because we wanted a coherent, logical chase, I participated in pre-production by storyboarding the film (Figure 2). I then communicated with the cinematographer to make sure everyone’s artistic vision was respected and that no technical mistakes had been made. During the shooting of the film, I concentrated on making sure that the progression of the shots were coherent, especially for difficult cuts. An example of this was for the shot where I fell down the building, since I had to cut between the fall and the landing to pretend that I had really landed safely. I had to make sure that the two moments had the same color, that nothing had moved, etc.

When preparing the film, I had planned to include many more interesting cut shots of the runners throughout their chase; upon editing, however, I realized that this deflated the excitement. Therefore I kept the core structure of the chase, and decided upon which b-roll I would include during post-production, trying to use it to reduce rather than add confusion.

Reflection

One of the cuts in this film was quite problematic (Figure 6). This was at the end, where the chase emerges from behind a wall to shoot the zombie. When re-watching the rush, I realized that not only the light had changed, but also the position of the camera which had tilted slightly. I therefore had to keyframe the clips in order to create artificial zooms and pans, in order to gradually align the clips at the cut. I also performed slight color correction.

As an editor, I am used to cutting rather slowly, letting each shot take its time; for this film, however, I had to break this mindset and keep a quick pace, like in "Casino Royale". This was interesting as it made me reflect on how the way I edited truly impacted the mood and message of my film, and that in this way, it was just as important as cinematography, sound, and even acting.

Something which I wasn’t able to do as an editor for this project was to edit sound. Indeed, only the music (made by the composer with synthesizers and a beat tape) and a few sound effects can be heard. However, I would have liked to explore in more depth how sound affects the mood of a sequence, and just how much impact it can have on the quality of a film.
Rationale
In “Sound Exercise”, my attention was not so much on the story as on logical editing and editing to sound. I wanted to create a comparison between a simple visual edit and one with sound editing included, and see what effect good sound had on the quality of the clip. For this, I examined the concept of intercutting by using the same situation as in “The Bourne Supremacy”: an onlooker viewing a person through binoculars. This scene was also a key inspiration on the use of sound and ambience in my film. With this project, I hope to gain an understanding of how to effectively use editing to accompany dialogue, ambience and Foley in a film.

Inquiry
For this film, I wanted to examine the use of sound and intercutting in a sequence, and so used the concept of the spy track with a third character observing it through binoculars. As inspiration, I watched various movie binocular scenes, including “The Bourne Supremacy” (Paul Greengrass). In one scene, Matt Damon communicates with a woman while examining her through a scope. At first, the camera is on Matt Damon; but before switching to a shot of the woman, we first see her through the scope view, therefore introducing her from Damon’s view (Figure 6).

In another scene, editing non-deciding sound was not part of my job; however, I did work with the ambience that came with the images. The scene from “The Bourne Supremacy” helped me understand how sound should be cut in these scenes: shots of the subject include the subject’s sound and its location’s ambience, while both the onlooker shots and shots through the binocular view should have the onlooker’s sound and ambience.

Action
The production phase went with relatively few problems. As an editor, I was present on set not only to supervise and confirm each shot from an editor’s point of view, but also to make sure sequences with more complex cuts were adequately filmed. As I would be working closely with the sound designer in post-production, I also helped supervise the capture of ambience and Foley. One problem that did arise was that there was lots of wind every time we tried to capture exterior ambience. This could be heard in the non-edited versions of the exterior shots. After multiple tries, however, we managed to get shots of a sound of ambience that was a bit of editing, was usable in the final cut.

A concern on set was that, to stick with the streamline scene approach, the sound designer had to find non-deciding sound effects that could create emotion without bringing too much attention to themselves. To help decide what sound would best fit with the images, I made sure to have edited a rough cut of the images by the time the sequence was recorded, so it was possible to immediately try and fit it to the images. This gave them on-set feedback so they could do next for it or there any sounds that would make certain sounds be better complement the images.

A great part of creating a buildup in tension is with a score. I therefore collaborated with the composer in the final stages of the edit, who created a menacing, worrying score on his synthesizer, but that didn’t preclude or disturb in the overall mix. He therefore made something less melodic and more ambient, but still punctuated to create a rhythm and build tension. For this collaboration, my edit of the images had to be very close to final, so that the composer could follow the dynamics of the film’s mood without them being moved afterwards.

Reflection
In my previous project as an editor, I had had to edit a cut, or hiding a cut in the image’s motion blur. In “Sound Exercise”, I had to do this again, but this time, twice consecutively and with the camera changing positions each time. To make the result as successful as possible, I took multiple precautions. Firstly, I avoided the cinematographer on-set to make sure the shutter speed was the same. This would result in more motion blur and would therefore be easier to edit. Additionally, I made sure that there was some sort of leveling between the two frames where the cut would be; in the case of Figure 10, this was the color of the trashcans.
A problem which I had to overcome for this film was the initial awkwardness of the binocular view shots. Since we had filmed the base clip with a tripod, and I had added a homemade binocular template above it, there was no movement in the shot. This seemed unnatural, as when one looks through binoculars, it is very rare that one is able to fix a point while being completely still. I therefore decided to add movement in the clip itself, which looked as though it was the onlooker who was moving. This made these views look more organic, and therefore more natural.

Although perhaps not as interesting as a final product, this project was immensely helpful in my exploration on how the editing of images to sound (and vice versa) could impact the quality of a scene. I realized that the ambience in many scenes has to be re-created completely from scratch, with every movement re-created through Foley and most seemingly distant sounds having to be created as effects. This will definitely prove useful in my future productions, as it will have given me a better understanding of how to collaborate with the sound designer to achieve a natural blend of sound and images, and therefore a successful finished film.
Film Production Role 3: Cinematographer

Clip 1 - Japan Trip (3:08)

Rationale

The cinematographer’s role in a film is to take care of how each shot looks, implying a use of composition, but also of light, depth of field, movement, exposure, and more. This means that, on set, the cinematographer will be in charge of both the electric and camera departments. They should be deeply knowledgeable and reliable technically in their fields; however, cinematography is much more than only a technical job. Through camera language, they play a major role in setting the tone and conveying the message of the film. For these reasons, I find that cinematography is one of the most interesting and important of the production roles.

For this film, I wanted to enclose the protagonist in a secure, enjoyable bubble, only to break it later on. To do this, I took on this production role and found various ways, such as shallow depth of fields, to isolate the character, a technique also used in Spike Jonze’s “Her.” Later in the film, however, I wanted to show the protagonist in a dystopian, trapped situation. To achieve this goal, I was inspired by Julian Schnabel’s “The Dining Bell and the Butterfly,” particularly in its use of POVs shots.

Inquiry

As a cinematographer, I wanted to find a way to introduce the main character in a short amount of time. To do this, I watched the opening scenes of many films, and found that Sebastian Schipper’s “Victoria’s” focus rack onto the protagonist by Sturla Brandth Greivein was an extremely effective means to visually introduce a character, singling them out almost randomly from a crowd of equally complex and interesting people. I decided to try and recreate this in a completely different crowd environment for this film (Figure 11).

Throughout the first portion of the film, I wanted the viewer to feel close to my character, to experience the same things as her, but without using POV shots, which I found were too unnatural at this stage. In parallel, I wanted the protagonist to look isolated, alone in a foreign environment. This effect is also present in Spike Jonze’s “Her,” and is in part accomplished with Hoyte Van Hoytema’s use of follow shots with shallow depths of field, separating the characters from their environment. I used this effect in the first shots of my film (Figure 12).

Because I had rarely shot a handheld, run and gun shoot, a great part of my research was to make sure to get the best images as effectively as possible. I decided against a shoulder rig or steadycam due to the inconvenience of transporting them and instead used a loris with a built-in stabilizer, achieving an image with organic movement. This also fed into the feeling I wanted to put across: the viewer seemingly walking alongside the protagonist.

A lot of my research for this production role was aimed at better understanding of how to use a green-screen effectively. As a cinematographer, I wanted to be able to solve any problem we might have with it during the shoot, but more importantly to know how to get the best possible image with our limited equipment. The best resources for this turned out to be watching YouTube tutorials, simply because they would usually be geared towards the use of similar equipment as mine. I learned multiple valuable things from these videos, such as keeping on a low, native ISO when filming, setting the shutter angle high to avoid motion blur, keeping constant lighting on the green-scren around the subject (Figure 13), and avoiding having too much fine hair in the image.

At the end of this section of my film, I wanted to convey a sense of isolation or of being trapped. To achieve this, I was inspired by the film “The Dining Bell and the Butterfly” by Julian Schnabel, in particular by Janusz Kaminski’s POVs shots which underline the main character’s immobility. I therefore decided to use this technique to shoot 5-call for the final long shot, which would also give the editor the opportunity to cut into the action in case any problems occurred.

In the original script for this film, most of the shots were exterior, with the protagonist sitting at a bus stop. However, when planning these shots, I realized that this meant I would have to use a green-screen in natural light. This seemed like a very bad idea, so I spoke with the director and we decided that it would be better to instead shoot indoors, as the setting wasn’t key to the story anyway. This gave me much more control over light, both on the subject and on the screen.
As a cinematographer, I wanted the images to underline the contrast between the protagonist’s fake life and her real life. To do this, her environment as an old woman had to be stark, impersonal and medical. Therefore, I planned to shoot on a plan, white background behind the subject, as well as dim, cold lighting, removing any organic aspect to the image.

**Action**

Because a fully fixed shot schedule was not possible when shooting in Japan, I decided instead only to create a list of key shots for which I planned and set fixed lighting and equipment. For the others, I wanted to capture a variety of images of Japan, and therefore decided to keep their creation more spontaneous. This meant preparing guidelines for those shots, such as the shot type, lenses and equipment I would use (Figure 14). The setting in which I shot them was simply inspired by what we saw during the day; when I saw an image I liked, I was able to shoot it quickly thanks to my pre-planning.

Shooting inside went very smoothly and effectively, because of the precise planning we had done in order to capture all the footage in a very limited timeframe. A technically I hadn’t pre-planned, however, was the fact that the position of the character and the light on each take jump cut, or the cuts from green-screen-black to real-black and vice-versa, had to be perfectly matching for the action to look natural. Thankfully, I thought of this in time, and it happened without too much difficulty. I tried to artificially re-vene the position in which the lights had been in the bathroom (Figure 15). The result wasn’t perfect, but it was good enough to be perfected in post-production.

The final scene of the film was shot twice. This is because I was unhappy as to how the first one had turned out. For this, we had gone to a retirement home in Berlin and shot with multiple elderly ladies. However, multiple problems made the clip unusable. The main one for me as a cinematographer was that the location that we chose in the home turned out to be too comfortable and cozy looking (Figure 16), while what I had envisioned was a hoary, more hospital-like location, with colder lighting and a simpler background (Figure 17).

Because we didn’t want the final scene of the film to look disappointing, we decided it would be best to shoot it again, this time in a better chosen environment. For this, I paid attention to the background, the lighting, the composition, etc., knowing what I had done wrong the first time. Because the content of this scene was pivotal for the effectiveness of the film, I wanted to keep as much attention on the action as possible. Therefore kept the camera movements natural, staying still for the main shot and providing minimal, organic shake to the b-roll.

**Reflection**

Multiple problems arose in the production of the Japan shots. For example, when the protagonist took a picture of herself with flash, the rolling shutter on my camera caused the flash to appear on only the bottom half of the frame (Figure 18). To fix this, I had to work with the editor so that he would place the bottom half of the previous frame over this one to hide the flash, and then remove it artificially. Another difficulty was that although we stayed at a hotel and the sound designer was able to record hotel door sounds, the room itself wasn’t visually satisfactory; I therefore had to dress my room as a hotel room and use that. However, later realized I had badly lit and framed the image. Because we couldn’t re-shoot, the editor had to do significant color and light adjustments as well as a minor crop, thereby devaluing the quality of the image.

There were also things, however, with which I was particularly happy. For example, the montage sequence has a certain amount of continuity while showing quite exceptional images of Japan, which was a key point in my filmmaker intentions: to show that the protagonist lives an almost overly successful and enjoyable life.
One specific problem I had when shooting against the green-screen was that a light I had used to light the green-screen had accidentally reflected on the protagonist’s head-towel. This made the jump from normal background to black background less believable. Therefore, I told the editor about this, and he fixed it by taking a piece of the towel from above the exposed spot, placing it on the exposed area, and keyframing it so that it would move with her (Figure 19). Although the result wasn't perfect, it was good enough to go unnoted and make the image look more natural.

Despite a number of small problems like that, I was nevertheless pleased with the overall result of the second portion of the film. The two or so cuts turned out to look natural, and the precautions I took to light and film the green-screen shots helped make the final keys as good as possible. Whatever still felt slightly unnatural after post-production, however, was again reduced by the three pieces of music made by the composer: an upbeat dance track for the Japan montage, a calm, playful, elevator-music type score for the bathroom scenes, and a menacing score for the dar scenes, all made with a synthesizer, percussions and a looper. This provided a mood to the scenes, removing the attention from the awkward cuts.

Although the mistakes I made in the first shoot for the final scene set us back a lot in terms of time, it was ultimately a positive experience for multiple things. First, it served as a guideline for what not to do in the second shoot, therefore ultimately improving the quality of the film. Beyond this, however, it was a good lesson in teaching me to logically deal with my mistakes, like having to organize unplanned shots in an already tight schedule.

The second shoot went very smoothly in comparison. A problem that arose was that, when watching the rushes of what we’d shot, I realized that the b-roll, or close-up of the woman’s hands, didn’t match with the main shot in terms of lighting: it was too warm and saturated (Figure 20). Therefore, I worked with the director and editor to rectify this through color grading.
 Works Cited

Sources

- Blade Runner. [Film] Ridley Scott. Dir. USA: Ladd Comp.
- Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari. 1920, [Film] Robert Wiene. Dir. Germany: Decia Bioscop AG.
- Her, Dir. Spike Jonze. Annapurna Pictures. 2015, Film.
- Pierrot le Fou. 1965, [Film] Jean-Luc Godard. Dir. France | Italy: Films George de Beauregard.
- Victoria. Dir. Sebastian Schipper. MonkeyBox, Radical Media. 2015, Film.