Film Production Reel/Pages
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Film Production Role 1: Editor

Clip 1: *Me Montage* (0:49)

**Rationale:** *Me Montage* is the very first production assignment I received in the subject being to, in one minute, use film to express a person’s identity. I wanted my film to mirror how much the person I chose loves art and creativity. As an editor, I created a collection of clips that represented them well and worked on colour grading and cutting to represent their identity. I was inspired by how the YouTuber Ollie Ritchie composes his short films with a lot of different clips taken at different times and places, and then edited together to appear coherent (Ollie Ritchie, 2017).

**Inquiry:** As this was the first film I ever made in the course, there was a lot that I did not know about editing. To educate myself on how to use Premiere Pro, I watched a series of instructional videos online. One very helpful one was “Learn Premiere Pro in 20 Minutes” giving me an overview of what the different tools in the software do (Kriscoart, 2015).

For an editor, being involved in the planning stage of the production is important to ensure you have the right idea of what film is to be made. Editors also provide a critical eye in the process of envisioning the film. I paid particular attention in the shot list and storyboard to keep track of clips and keep the editing work organized (as shown in Figure 1). Drawing a storyboard was good for also planning what I wanted the final footage to look like after colour grading.

![Figure 1: Shot list of images from the storyboard.](image)

After the film was shot and all my footage was gathered, I sat down to put everything together. Starting out with very little experience, it was hard to navigate the software, but eventually, I got the hang of it. The shot list helped me a lot in the assembling process, but because of the time frame of one minute, there were a few shots and sentences in the voice over that did not make the final cut. This damaged the coherence of the film, something I could have prevented if I made an even more elaborate shot list.

![Figure 2: Before and after colour grading of footage to make it look more playful.](image)

Colour grading was the most interesting part. For example, the last sunset scene, as shown in Figure 2, was originally a very average-looking, dimly coloured sunset which
Reflection: Even though this was a very light task to start off the year with, it was still a challenge in that I had to get used to the whole process of creating a film from start to finish. It was a good task for getting familiarised with what it means to produce a film and even though it does not really show that much skill in terms of coherence in editing, I feel it was important to incorporate in the beginning of the production portfolio to give an impression of what my journey in the film subject sprung out from.

Rationale: In *Shut*, the task was to create a chase sequence where a character would move through three different doors, each door leading to a separate location in real life. As an editor, I got to challenge myself a lot on continuity, which I felt I needed to improve on. I wanted to create a dream sequence of a girl being chased by a monster through different doors where my filmmaker intentions were to create suspense and continuity through colour grading and cutting. I took a lot of inspiration from Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* (2005) (Burton, 2010) (Burton, 2005).

Inquiry: In contrast to what I had done in earlier film productions, I put a lot more work into the preparation process of this film. The task of keeping track of how all locations must fit together to create a coherent trail was very hard and confusing. Looking at how Tim Burton has managed to create transitions between the magical world and the real world in his films helped me a lot. It gave me a better understanding of how to structure the set along with the set designer to create a logical and seamless path. I found that creating a map of the trail would be helpful for both the production team and myself. Figure 3 shows the map that I made, and I am glad I did because it really helped me avoid a huge mess in the post-production editing.

![Figure 3: Map of the film composed of areas that are in different locations in real life but are connected in the film.](image-url)
To be even more certain that I would have the fewest complications possible in the editing, I decided to take the preparation one step further and pre-shoot almost the whole film to use as a live action storyboard. This was of course very time consuming, something a film student rarely commits to, but considering that it helped everyone on the production team as well as myself understand how to operate the very confusing set structure, it was all worth it in the end. In addition, I took this chance to experiment on different colour grading techniques to ensure I had found the best technique for fulfilling my filmmaker intentions. Figure 4 shows the pre-shooting for the “white room” where I manipulated exposure and fading to make the atmosphere seem more blinding and foggy.

![Screenshot of the editing I did for the pre-shoot of the “white room”. Next to it is a couple of screenshots from the actual film showing the final result.](image)

When the time came for post-production with assembling the filmed footage, there were a few complications. I had made a very thorough and elaborate shot list explaining exactly how the footage was to be filmed and its duration, but in spite of this, the film I had envisioned was not the film we managed to produce on set. There are always unexpected problems that arise during production and things do not always go as planned. Hence, I was left with a huge jigsaw puzzle when editing came along because we had too many clips and too short of a time frame to fit those clips into. As the film is a nightmare dream sequence, I had to be a bit creative with the colour grading in order to trigger fear, stress or calmness where needed. An example is the opening of the film which shows the girl running down a corridor with lights flickering. This I did by applying patches differentiating in brightness and applying that to the footage in Premier Pro. The result was the look of flickering lights which creates a sense of panic which creates suspense in a film about a girl running for her life.

**Reflection:** Even though I had to juggle around with the footage in post-production to fit together in the time frame, I still think I managed to save the film very well. There are a few awkward transitions between shots here and there, but considering the demanding criteria of the task, the coherence is pretty seamless and I eventually ended up being proud of what I had managed to produce. I am also glad I prepared as well as I did because even though there were a few issues, there would have been many more had I not foreseen it in my preparation work.
**Film Production Role 2: Production Designer**

**Clip 1: A Pollen Picture (1:08)**

**Rationale:** *A Pollen Picture* was a response on a task based on moulding the same plotline into different genres and the clip from my Film Reel shows two of them. The plot of the film is a that a girl is given a bouquet of flowers by her boyfriend who does not know that she is allergic, and so she tries to get rid of them without him finding out. As a production designer, I intended to show how colour and set design is important in romantic comedies and mockumentaries to create humour.

**Inquiry:** My work as a production designer started already in the idea process of the film with developing the “visual dictionary” as my team member wrote the script. I started making more detailed ideas while doing research to broaden my perspective and be inspired. For the first film, I was inspired by the beautiful kitchens used in the film *Ratatouille* (2007) and I wanted to design a set that had a similar colour scheme and materials. For the mockumentary, I borrowed aspects from Planet Earth with the David Attenborough-mimicking voice over and the jungle sounds (*Planet Earth, 2006*) (Bird, 2007) (Coppola, 1979). For this production, I borrowed a track of jungle noises from a creative commons website (bulbastre, 2011). This was not sounds my production team could have recorded themselves, and thus we found a track that did satisfy our filmmaker intentions. The track is properly referenced in the “Works Cited”.

Figure 5: Design of the kitchen showing how I intended to construct the scenery to conform to the different genre conventions.

For the set, I wanted to have a rustic looking set with flowers, red checkerboard curtains and antique scenery (Figure 5). Initially, the plan was to film at IKEA because they had let us use their kitchen display room after closing time and I had prepared the whole production design according to that kitchen. Unfortunately, due to issues in the production team we had to move the production day and I had to find a new kitchen. Time was running out towards the deadline and I had to make a decision fast. The best option was to use a small kitchen in the teacher's lounge at my school. Since this kitchen did not at all resemble a cosy French kitchen, but rather a more modern, minimalistic one, I had to do a complete re-design of the set, props and costume.
Reflection: Had I worked more on finding props and costumes, I would have gotten a clearer distinction between the genres presented in the film. The same goes for set. I could have easily made a modern kitchen work with my genre conventions, but in terms of the time limitations, I had to move on. Even though the outcome was not the desired outcome, I still feel I learnt a lot due to that I had to reinvent the whole look of the mise-en-scene on very short time. Having your whole plan wiped out in front of you only moments before the production is scheduled is not an uncommon issue in the real film industry and experiencing this has matured me in the sense that I am now more experienced in how to handle problem-solving under pressure.

Rationale: Dinner with a Doll is a silent film response to a task on creating a film inspired by German Expressionism. German Expressionism is a genre known for having sharply angled shapes, high contrasting between bright and dark, and exaggerated acting and costumes (Barsam & Monahan, 2016). Dinner with a Doll deals with a lonely man who falls in love with his mannequin and starts believing she is a person. As a production designer, to bring out the sadness and distortion of this twisted situation, I have played a lot on the typical genre conventions of German Expressionism.

Inquiry: I learnt a lot about the genre after having watched the two quintessential films The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920) and Nosferatu (1922) (Wiene, 1920) (Marnau, 1922). Due to that I was not as accomplished in fulfilling the genre conventions in the last production, I wanted to correct that now and used the knowledge I had gained from studying the films to find the perfect location for the set. I found a building from 1912 that was exactly right. It was the town hall in my home city with black and white marble interiors and a wall full of tall slim windows (as shown in Figure 7). The
depressive plotline paired with the contrasting between light and dark displayed through the bright light from the window entering a dark room and using sharp shapes like the black and white stripes on the marble floor, alluded well to the genre of German Expressionism.

Figure 7: Screenshots from the film showing the set.

I chose to make a storyboard to best inform my production team of the style I was going for. This was very helpful for everyone and myself in visualisation. Figure 8 shows my storyboard. I chose to use a lot of antique props in order to adhere to the nostalgic feel of German Expressionism giving connotations towards the times when the genre flourished. The production was very tiresome because as the production designer, I had to be very active on set arranging all the props. We filmed in the middle of the night (2:45 AM to 9:00 AM) which was the only time our filming location was available for use. There was a lot of reorganisation of set structure and monitoring of props. For example, we had lit candles up the side of the staircase and in every window that I needed to watch very closely.

Figure 8: Storyboard for Dinner with a Doll

Reflection: In this production, I felt I managed to use my position as production designer to express genre conventions a lot better. Even though the plotline of the film may not be as horrific as it is in most German Expressionistic films like Nosferatu and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, I still feel it meets the expectations of the genre very well. In contrast to A Pollen Picture, there is here a much better symbiosis between the different components of the set. The architecture of the building, the props, costumes, and colour grading. That is something I believe is a result from better planning. We also composed our own original score, which helps bring out the genre as well.
Film Production Role 3: Director

Clip 1: The Journey of a Book (2:58)

Rationale: As a director, I want to in my film The Journey of a Book explore the idea of love at first sight between the two characters Martha and Jonas and how this helps battle Jonas’ loneliness. To address this theme, I have taken inspiration from the romantic films of Nancy Meyer, and the symbiosis between the main characters in Carol (2015) (Haynes, 2015). My goal for this film was to, as a director, effectively communicate to my production team my filmmaker intentions on using different types of light and sound to trigger emotion and the way eye contact substitutes dialogue in communication.

Inquiry: My work as a director started with translating the script into a film idea. I like to always start directing with the imagining of what the film would look like in my head and play it over and over until I have a good idea of what I want to achieve. This is a skill I have become better and better at and it helps me uncover all the areas of the script that might be problematic as well as get ideas for how to work as a director before I go and do any practical work. I like doing this to see how I can interpret the script in a way that is realistically achievable before I go onto planning (Figure 9). Afterwards, I try my best to get this vision down on paper. Here I clearly outline my plan of what artistic and technical things to incorporate by making a storyboard and constructing a shot list (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Scan of annotated script in the first steps of interpreting the script into a film.

Figure 10: Scans of some images from the storyboard.
I have found that the best way of learning about how to make films is to watch examples from films and pay attention to the work of directors. Due to that I planned to make a romantic film, I paid particular attention to the films of Nancy Meyer and was inspired by the composition of Carol (2015). Even though the plotline of several of Nancy Meyer’s films are predictable and cliché, I still took inspiration from how she manages to convey such strong emotion through her film elements, with her use of lighting in particular. Here I also used YouTube to learn how to achieve different light effects (Film Riot, 2018). I knew that creating the chemistry between my two characters was going to be a challenge. I looked at the dynamic between the main characters of Carol to know how to best create an intense communication without dialogue.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for planning this film is that I needed to narrow down my ideas to what was actually doable in my area with the limited equipment I have access to. I have killed a lot of dreams doing this in past projects as well and I do not think that that ever stops because you always have to make sure your ideas are parallel to what is realistic, but this has taught me an important lesson that you cannot always get what you want, which is a central issue in the film industry. This was particularly a hard issue in location-finding.

The action process was ruff starting out with having to switch locations during the first filming session. I had arranged with the grandparents of my friend to film at their apartment because it was of the more modern kind, which I wanted from the start due to its minimalist, cold, blue and empty feel reflecting the loneliness of Jonas, but I had no idea of how the place would be furnished and had only heard a vague description from my friend. I was worried we would be met with an apartment filled with old things, and unfortunately, I was right. I tried hiding away some things, but there is only so much one can do to other people’s homes without being rude and thus eventually we decided to go for the backup plan of filming at another location. Sometimes one has to take risks and this time I was not successful. Thankfully, I had an option to fall back on and it worked out well in the end, but it meant that I had to do a complete redesign on the look of my location and the way this would affect my filmic language as the second location was more mid-century and had a lot of wood colours. Instead of the cold and empty, I had to work with the darkness to elaborate Jonas’ loneliness.

![Figure 11: My cinematographer and I discussing how to get a good opening shot through the glass of the café window.](image)

I consider the ability to communicate the most important skill as a director and if you are good at it, it can solve a lot of your issues. The director is the only one who truly
knows what the films is about. Whatever gets produced, is based on what the director manages to communicate from this idea they have locked inside their head. This is a skill I have improved on a lot at since the start and the way I have learned to do it is to show them how I want it, not just tell them. When I communicate to the actors, I act out what I want before them, when I talk to the cinematographer (Figure 11), I show pictures or clips and move the camera around to show how I want it, and with the editor and sound designer, I may use my arms or voice to show where I want suspense or calmness. I have found that being present during the production is a more valuable communicative tool that the script, storyboard or shot list will ever be. There can be areas of doubt for the production team. Active participation allows and if there are problems that arise, like for example what happened in *The Journey of a Book* where the actress could not come, I can step in and make the decision that gives the best possible outcome for the film. Since I have the best idea of what the destination looks like, I also know the best steps to take to get there.

Together, my cinematographer and I came up with a light setting plan for the location of Jonas’ house. The place was poorly lit and even though this scene in particular was supposed to show this to communicate loneliness, it was at the extent where the footage got too grainy and we had to change it. Figure 12 shows the lighting plan. With this plan, I could best determine how to place light sources to best communicate emotion, and my cinematographer could follow this plan and satisfy my vision.

![Lighting plan](image)

*Figure 12: Lighting plan for apartment location.*

**Reflection:** Like most of the films I make, they never turn out as expected. I love the idea that the director can govern the creation of their own art piece, but there are always compromises needed to be done to the original plan. Being a director is a very busy role where you will be held responsible if things do not go as you wish. I have experienced that it is clever to always have backup plans, but that creative thinking is even more important. No matter how much you plan, things *will* go wrong under a film production and if you are not able to solve problems as a director, you cannot expect a good film. The more you plan the better, but the rise of different issues are inevitable and therefore it is important to have the guts and willpower to lift your film out of the mess if you need to. Another thing is that sometimes, meeting the wall in filmmaking could be a good thing in that it challenges you to think in other ways to construct a film. The film rarely turns out as first intended because new ideas are picked up along the way.
Works Cited


Film Riot. (2018). *How To Light For Darkness!* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15tYFWR4cvA


*Planet Earth*. (2006). BBC.