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Text on Practice

Word Count: 1553



Throughout the past six months, my practice evolved in different directions without a set initial goal; however, looking back I can see a focus on:

--(creating rhythm through editing/music/sync between visuals and audio)--

which grows as my main interest with each next project.

In this text I would like to outline

--(three video works)--

which best exemplify the development of my methodology and research.

The first one was the video I created for the pre-Eye workshop. This work was centered around a topic I thought would be my interest throughout this master's - how connection can arise between people with conflicting identity politics. I decided to interview a friend of mine whose relationship with a colleague of hers I find fascinating - my friend is queer while her colleague is an open homophobe, but they manage to have a very strong emotional bond.*

This project focused on the narrative of this relationship and tried to deliver the contradiction with enough nuance in a very short amount of time. Therefore, the conflict becomes almost like a punch-line - which is not an effect I desire. I realized that the exploration of such a sensitive topic would require a longer format, to let the layers evolve without forcing the main point for shock value.



** my friend is not open to her colleague about her queerness, which is another point that needs to be addressed*

This video is interview-based and at first was an edit of other films which proved to be too overwhelming. Following a feedback session with my peers, I noticed that trying to simultaneously follow fragmented narrative and visuals was too chaotic. Therefore, I decided to focus on one aesthetic from a film project I participated in the year before. In this material, the video focuses on one female character, and I was hoping to achieve identification with this character on multiple levels - as a protagonist, antagonist, and listener. I like the idea that one person can encompass conflicting roles and I think this further serves the narrative, but perhaps needs to be delivered in a clearer manner (that I still haven't given thought to).

But whatever the answer to this question is, I think this story is not one that can be told with enough depth in such a short time (3-4 mins), so I believe this project needs to be developed further to be effective.



...well, that she's a proud homophobe.



...and something quite real happens.

I then progressed to the project for the Eye, titled "How I Started Worrying and Learned To Hear The Bomb". It is again an interview-based documentary project, making use of various visual media, such as live action, animation, and screen recordings of Google Maps Street View. It focuses on explosions that are happening in Rotterdam and the reaction of its residents - or rather, the lack thereof.



I wanted to focus on a topic that is more rooted in the environment I am currently in as the pre-Eye project was about a story in Bulgaria, so I did not have direct access to it. Therefore, I decided to explore a Rotterdam-specific issue. I started doing interviews again, but this time, I did not have a clear narrative I wanted to deliver. This project was as much exploration for me as it is for the viewer. Therefore, I did not have a starting point neither for the narrative, nor for the visual which left me with endless possibilities. At first, I made a montage of footage shot around the city - talking heads of interviewees and atmospheric shots of the city - combined with pieces of the interviews which I found valuable. However, the connections between the audio and visual felt too vague and I felt like I could achieve more with CGI. Moreover, video games are the medium where violence is trivialized the most, so I wanted to utilize this idea to further strengthen the concept. Personally, the most intriguing thing about the topic of explosions for me was the fact that everyone I spoke to was very casual about it, and I wanted to find ways to deliver this message to the viewer.



- Like a bomb.



he didn't deliver -

For this purpose, I 3D-scanned buildings where explosions happened and focused on the comparison between the before&after of these places; sometime the after was imaginary and sometimes the before - simulated.

A connection I see with my previous work is the focus on the environment as a character; this is present in my bachelor's thesis, HC2121, which focuses on a garden in space and how this environment would look and feel like. I believe that exploring Rotterdam through this project gave me a new connection to the city, quite literally as I was biking around to 3D scan, but also more emotionally as I got to look in depth in its characters and peculiarities.



For the second version I want to remove the narrative structure to explore a more abstract mode of work focused on emotional experience. Therefore, I am now emphasizing on text as a graphic element that becomes part of the image rather than a supporting structure.

I use the song's composition when editing, while also using some of the dance movements that sync with the rhythm of the music as a further cue on how to develop the edit. On a more semantic level, I also labeled some dance movements as 'seduction', some as 'rejection', and some as 'rising action' to give myself a language to work with, as I still use a very loose narrative and this helps me to decide which movements should go where. This is a more sophisticated version of how I worked for a previous project of mine, Balkoni, in which I had to piece over 120 videos together in a VR collage, so I labeled each with the time of day which it represented and built the collage as it evolved from dawn to dusk.



Reflecting back on my practice before the master's, I see an improvement in my use of animation. This medium is something I was heavily involved with as this was my bachelor, but I think that now I use it in a more playful and intuitive manner which is an important step for me. It has always been very rigid for me, but through techniques such as scanning and kit-bashing, I managed to focus on the creative and not the technical side of it.

Looking at the future, I think I want to create a video on birds. I have gathered a lot of footage of birds since coming to Rotterdam, and I have also been met with a lot of stories of people's interactions with birds, and I would like to explore this relation further, through creating a rhythmic, musical piece. I was inspired by short experimental works I saw at IFFR, namely those of Colectivo Los Ingravidos, like Itzcóatl. I would like to have an intuitive process without starting with a clear structure, but rather interweaving footage, stories, and music together, with a focus on rhythm through editing. I imagine the process will be back and forth, in the best case working close with a musician, perhaps there is an edit, on top of which music is created, and then the stories get intertwined in the score, which then influences the visual content and so on until a harmony is achieved.

I think my focus is on rhythm and how I can create a visceral experience for myself as a creator and for the viewer - and the topic of the birds is just an appropriate vessel for it. I was influenced by the shorts we saw in the thematic seminar by Nan on hand-made films in works, such as those of Norman McLaren. I was intrigued by the idea of how interest can be created through rhythm and by going in and out of sync with it - there is pleasure in having every beat of the edit in sync with the music, but it will become boring if that is the whole dynamic. I want to explore these mechanics (is this the right word?) further. However, focusing on the life of birds in the city could also open the gateway to ecological and political themes and go beyond just an editing exercise. But let's see.

References

Binka Zhelyazkova, *The Pool*

Norman Maclaren

Nan Wang seminar

Gilgamesh

Colectivo Los Ingravidos - Itzcóatl