

Yana Lineva Text on Practice

Word Count: 1477



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 centered around a topic I thought would be my main 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 a 'proud' homophobe, yet 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 main 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.



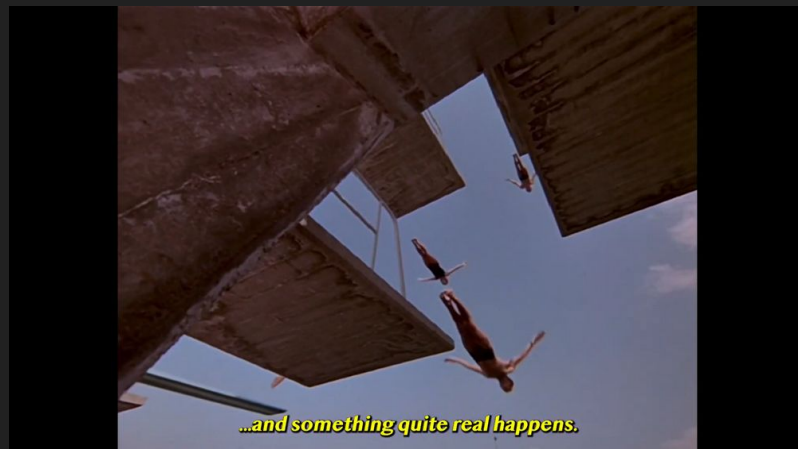
** my friend is not open to her colleague about her queerness, which is another point that needs to be addressed*

The video is interview-based and at first was an edit of shots from 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 style, from a film project I participated in the year before. In this material, the video focuses on one female character, roaming the city and listening to the story of this friendship.

I think this narrative is not one that can be laid out with enough depth in such a short amount of time as was the format of the Eye project (3-4 mins), so it requires further development to be effective.



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



...and something quite real happens.

I then progressed to the actual project developed 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 the explosions happening in Rotterdam and the reaction of its residents - or rather, the lack thereof.



I wanted to focus on a topic that is rooted in my current environment. 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 myself as it is for the viewer. I did not have a starting point neither for the narrative, nor for the visuals which left me with endless possibilities when editing.

At first, I made a montage of footage shot around the city (e.g. talking heads of interviewees, atmospherics from around the streets), combined with pieces of the interviews which I found valuable. However, the connections between the audio and visual seemed too vague. I felt like I could achieve more with CGI as video games are the medium where violence is trivialized the most. Personally, the most intriguing thing about the topic of explosions was the fact that everyone I spoke to was very casual about it, and I wanted to find ways to emphasize this message.



- 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; sometimes the after was imaginary and sometimes the before - simulated.

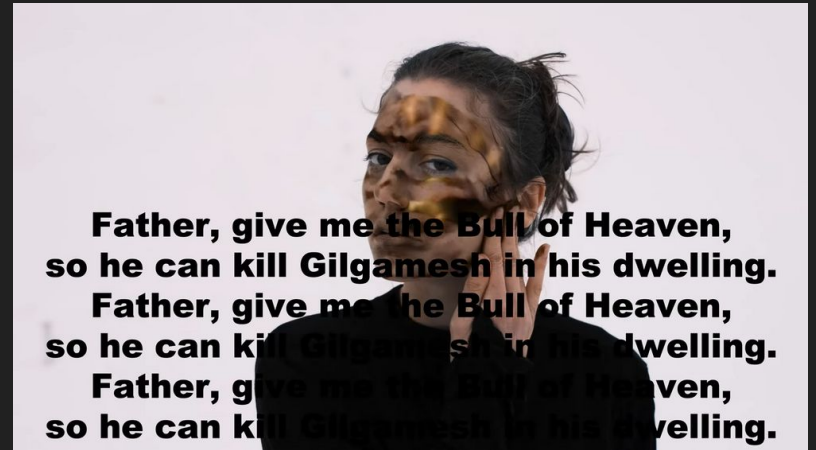
I took inspiration from eclectic works such as *Martin Cries* by Jonathan Vinnel in which imagery from GTA V is used to both portray an emotional narrative and comment on the casual use of violence in video games.

A connection I see with my previous work is the focus on environment as character; this is present in my bachelor's thesis, HC2121, which focuses on a garden on Mars, 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 at its characters and peculiarities.



My current research focuses on rhythm in film, through dance and editing. I started working on a dance sequence developed during the thematic seminar with Simon Iggs where we had to interpret the myth of Gilgamesh through a video work. I wanted to work with dance for some time, not only filming it but also performing it myself, as movement has been a significant part of my identity in the past few years. Therefore, I found a way to fit it in this assignment and use it as an excuse to pursue my interest. I then decided to further develop this work, this time without the supporting structure of the narrative and focusing mostly on visual and editing rhythm.

I recorded the sequence with the idea that the final video would not be a one-shot choreography, but that the rhythm would come through editing and switching between aesthetics - be it AI vs footage, different cameras and lighting, or using the contrast between the body and the environment as a mask. In the first version, I had the story as the leading trajectory to which I molded my edit.



Screenshots from the first version (Gilgamesh)

For the second version, I want to remove the narrative structure of Gilgamesh 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 follow the song's composition, while also letting some of the dance movements fall in and out of sync with it 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 that helps me 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.



Screenshots from the second version (Look At You Without Pain)

Reflecting on my practice before the master's, I now 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. 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 believe exploring the life of birds in the city can also prove to be fertile ground for tackling ecological and political themes.



No matter the theme I decide on, I want to put more emphasis on creating a visceral experience for myself and for the viewer. I was influenced by the seminar from Nan Wang on hand-made films, where we dived into structuralist and musical works such as those of Norman McLaren. I was intrigued by the idea of how interest can be created by 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 and rigid if that is the whole dynamic. I want to explore these mechanics further and ponder on how I can integrate my movement/embodiment practices with my image making.



References

Itzcóatl, 2013. [Film] Colectivo Los Ingrávidos. Mexico.

Martin Cries, 2017. [Film] Jonathan Vinel. France: Aka Productions.

The Pool, 1977. [Film] Binka Zhelyazkova. Bulgaria: Boyana Film Studios.