



Open College of the Arts

Formative feedback

Student name	Martyn Rainbird	Student number	515830
Course/Unit	Setting the Scene	Assignment	3
Type of tutorial (eg video/audio/written)	Written		

Overall Comments

Your As3 movie "O Tannenbaum" looks like it needed some big visual effects to bring it to life. But you have managed to express the idea of the tree growing pretty well. It is an ambitious idea but the sequencing labours at times. I think you can improve it and I will raise a few points here.

Written feedback is probably more effective here. But if you have any questions then let me know.

Feedback on assignment

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity

Conflict:

In terms of conflict, the tree is the antagonist, the girl the protagonist. Your text about the tree as the protagonist with the girl as a 'helper' in getting the tree out of its predicament is unsatisfactory because you're dealing with an object that cannot speak or do much.

Obviously, the conflict is not a 'human conflict' which would have created dialogue and far more dramatic potential. The overall feeling here is like a children's movie with a 'soft conflict'. You could have made more of this conflict. The tree could've been 10 feet tall! It could have caused damage and been difficult to get out of the house.

The Film [scene by scene]:

There are some shots here that look like they have no reason to be there. Like the panning and tracking of "Ho Ho Ho Merry Christmas" near the tree which make the film feel awkward and slow.

You could rethink your use of song-less Christmas carols. I understand why you chose them as

it seems like the obvious choice, but your job as a filmmaker is to express the drama and mood in the narrative. Do the carols do that? The sudden change to lead rock guitar in the driving scene? It does work in a way but it's awkward.

There is a fine line between telling the viewer how you want them to feel and soliciting an experience. Try to go easy on the music.

There is a simple solution to reflections of lights in windows: don't shoot directly at windows. Or use reflectors to avoid a direct reflection. It's about set-up.

I understand the story as a girl who has a small toy tree which grows into a real tree. Good story. But you're labouring too many shots in the beginning for the sake of 'relaxed editing choices'. It doesn't work. She picks up the tree and turns it in her hands -- slowly -- you cut-in to a high angle -- back to the previous shot, she puts the tree down -- another shot of the tree: mood change signified by music -- cut to forest. All you needed here was the discovery of the tree by the girl. She puts it down or on the mantelpiece which is where it ends up, cut to forest.

About directing actors:

Focus the actors attention on two things, 1) Their backstory; where the tree comes from (was it a gift from a grandparent), their memories and experiences of setting up Christmas decorations, what they have on their minds or what they were doing prior to this activity and why they are specifically doing it (were they asked or did they choose?). 2) Motivation; what does your character want? Does she want to be putting up decorations or not? What motivates her? What happens to her motivation when she finds the tree in a jar? Does her mood change and hence her motive from a task to seeing something strange in the toy? Maybe she hears a noise and wants to find out where it's coming from. Maybe she gets a 'funny feeling' from the toy and reacts to that.

You needed a night shot to add mood to the scene where the toy tree grows and express the idea that this was happening when people were unaware. No need for any of those panning, tracking shots, nothing but the growing, the story. Why did you fade to black in the middle of this scene?

The girl enters, sees the tree has grown. But this is a high angle which de-emphasises her face. There is no reaction. And the shot of the tree here needed to be a big surprise to the viewer. You've established that it was growing. Now we could discover a 10 foot tree squashed into the room. You have a completely inadequate close shot from above.

Narratively there is no need for the girl to call and tell someone "the tree has grown" because the audience already know that.

There is a sudden ambient background noise in the shot of the woman in a car park. How to resolve that's? 1. Shoot somewhere quieter. 2. Use a directional mic that only picks up her voice. 3. Replace the words she speaks later, trying to lip sync a new recording. In any scene you need to pick up two sounds: dialogue and ambience (or background sounds). This gives you the control to deal with them separately in the edit and achieve consistent audio levels between scenes.

I like the shot of the two looking down at the tree. But here the dialogue sound levels a dreadful because you apparently didn't mic the actors. If what they are saying is narratively

important, viewers need to hear it clearly. Re-record the dialogue and edit it in. And in future aim your mic at the performers mouths.

The ending scenes are good and clearly narrative.

Coursework

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity

Your coursework looks good. I liked your 'Contracting Time" film in black & white. And you're getting to grips with the idea of a perception of the character in the Mosjhukin experiments.

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Your research into the movies in the course is good. I know it can be hard for a self-shooting filmmaker to put what you learn from movies into practice, but you can try on a small scale.

Learning Log

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Summarize how you have applied what you've learned from the course to your assignment photographs. Also note down what you've learned from other photographers in executing the assignment.

As I mentioned above, I wasn't too sure of your notion that the tree was the protagonist, but it is an interesting twist to see the story that way.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

Have a look at Edgar Reitz' film "Home from Home: Chronicle of a Vision" which is currently on BBC iPlayer under Films (but not for much longer). This is a really good example of an exceptionally well researched film - the experience of the poor and significant events in 1840's Rhineland. Note the use of Steadicam to create drifting shots that give the movie a ghostly and other worldly feel at times.

Pointers for the next assignment

The Assignment 4 film emphasizes audio production and interest. So try to find locations that have a variety of interesting sound-scapes to explore.

Summary

Strengths	Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interesting and ambitious story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not much emphasis on conflict.• Some editorial problems.

Please inform me of how you would like your feedback for the next assignment: written or video/audio.

Tutor name	Robert Enoch
Date	24th January 2019
Next assignment due	7th April 2019