

Evaluation

A2 Moving Image Arts 2010/2011

Introduction

Now that I have completed my Final Outcome, I will now analysis and evaluate my A2 production since my initial intentions that I have stated in my A2 Extended Essay.

I shall explain whether my intentions regarding my Final Outcome have been achieved or whether changes had to be made due to practical issues that I has discovered during & post-production. If changes were made I will state why they were made and how I was able to fix this to improve my film as best as I could achieve within my production.

In the following slides I will separate each section of Filmmaking that I had originally stated and explain my intentions and whether they were accomplished or not and why.

I will show my overall progress through a range of multimedia sources, including text, pictures & videos containing my Film Inspirations' excerpts as well as my own Experimental & Final Outcome videos which shall be used to either support my written statements and/or to compare and contrast to how my progress has overall achieved.

After all the areas I had originally defined and gave preparation for have been evaluated within this document. I shall then, explain my Audience Response (which will be stated in small detail with each section and expanded in a separate slide named "Audience Response").

I shall finish my Evaluation with a Conclusion of my Overall A2 MIA production.

Narrative

My narrative kept within the 'Classical Hollywood Style of Editing' by incorporating the use of "seamless editing, shot-reverse-shot, POVs, flashbacks" that I had originally planned. I also followed my intentions to use the 'Continuity Style of Editing' in a more formalistic approach to help support my Psychological Thriller's emotional aspect that I had wanted the audience to feel.



The use of non-linear narrative remained extensively within my A2 Final Outcome. use of flashbacks and flash-forwards were utilised through the use of fades. I decided to allow white fades representing the past (i.e. a flashback) and a black fade to represent a flash-forward to symbolise that the future is quite a dystopia for Caroline in reality, which I believe was inspired by Ridley Scott's Blade Runner; my A2 theory exam pre-set film, in terms of narrative.

'The use of "Intellectual" Soviet montage was not used as much as I had initially intended. I had hoped to "manipulate" the audiences' minds, however decided against this technique and opted for a more surreal approach instead as I believe that the use of Soviet montage would overall detract from my audience's emotional impact of the surrealistic scenes as the use of soviet montage could characterise my film too much as in the fantasy genre instead of psychological thriller which depends on realism to create authenticity.

'The use of visual Storytelling was used throughout my production. I decided against the use of a voiceover i.e. Caroline's psychiatric nurse, and opted for the technique I used in my experimental, the use of words.

The symbolic nature of these words allowed me to hint at the delicate nature of Caroline's mind. which conveyed the trauma and emotional struggle that she was suffering.



Both experiments of Voiceover audio for experimental use in my A2 Final Outcome.

I made use of multiple questionnaires to get detailed feedback from my audience. The narrative structure left quite a few of my audience thinking about my A2 Film's Narrative plot and what it meant for them. Their reaction was very similar to how Darren Aronofsky's international audience reacted to 'Requiem for a Dream' as it recieved mixed reactions similarly to Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho & Ridley Scott's Blade Runner which were all considered 'sleeper hits' as my audience did show that they understood and were able to 'connect' to my film, I feel that this has proven my film to be successful.

Genre

My genre remained as a Psychological Thriller hybrid genre with my inspiration from the work of Darren Aronofsky (i.e. Requiem for a Dream, Black Swan etc.).



My original intention to base my main character; Carol/Caroline on the Requiem for a Dream character 'Sara Goldfarb' I believe has been accomplished and a strong link between the two characters has been made according to my audience through the use of Mise-en-scene (specifically positioning & performance).

I also believe my intention to showcase a split personality of Carol/Caroline throughout my Final Outcome was successful as my audience commented on the overall insanity of Carol/Caroline. My 2nd Experimental was used to test this aspect and I believe the distortion of reality has come across in my A2 production through my initial inspirations from German Expressionism which I've tried showcasing formalistically.



Two people commented on my film containing a "comedic element" due to the mise-en-scene (specifically the performance of Carol alongside the use of the baby prop). I tried to edit/remove certain shots to fix this but I began to feel my film was going against my genre of choice.

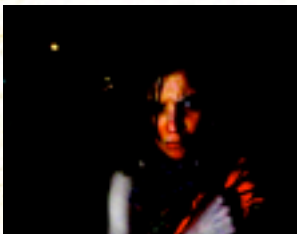
I decided to test my theory that comedy can emphasis the emotional impact of the Thriller genre. I analysed two famous Thrillers films; a Psychological from Aronofsky (Requiem for a Dream) and one I studied in detail for my AS year; Hitchcock's Psycho to gain a greater understanding if this can be a defining aspect of the thriller genre.



I re-discovered a clip of Sara Goldfarb from Requiem for a Dream from my initial investigation and also remembered the infamous ending scene in Psycho where the audience discover that Normal Bates believes he is his own "mother". I showed these clips to some of my audience and discovered my audience found these clips "humourous" however these films were proven to be successful "thriller" films. Therefore, I concluded that comedy within a Psychological Thriller can enhance and authentic the thriller genre as I believe to 'laugh' at someone unwillingly would create mental tension which the audience would 'fight' within their mind giving them a more "interactive connection" to a Psychological Thriller.

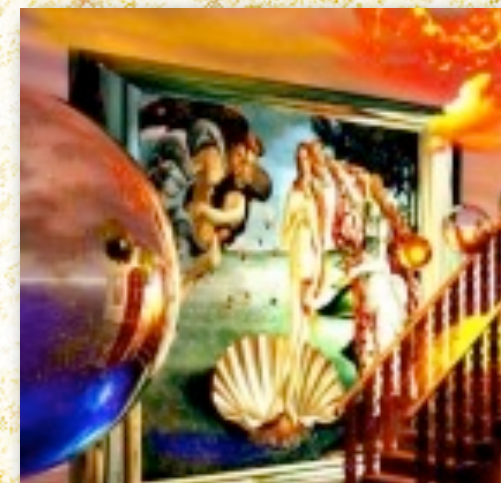
Art and Cinema

I believe my intention for Artistic inspiration(s) to be incorporated throughout my A2 production has been achieved. As an A2 Art & Design student, I have tried to utilise my strengths in Art to help enhance the overall quality and artistic value of my A2 production.



I originally intended for Expressionism & Surrealism to be featured in my A2 Final Outcome. I experimented with German Expressionism in my 2nd Experimental and Surrealism in the form of a Soviet Montage in my 1st Experimental. I tried to combine different elements from both that I felt would enhance the quality of my A2 Final Outcome for both Realism & Formalism which I always planned to incorporate both seamlessly together. I tried to use Cinematography, Sound & Music and Editing to showcase the artistic values of my A2 Final Outcome in both realistic and formalistic aspects.

My Art Link for my A2 Final Outcome initially was Lenny Ibizarre, as I had already had done my Location Research prior to filming, I had a rough understanding of where I would like my use of Surrealism to be showcased. As my 1st Experimental, showcased to me the use of subtle imagery, I tried to incorporate that for the scenes regarding Carol searching for her recently kidnapped "baby". I had a theory that the use of Surrealism will help showcase the trauma that must be induced from losing your child as well as the overall madness of Carol/Caroline. I tried to showcase the Surrealist aspects by saturating the colours to be far more vibrant than you'd realistically expect. I believe Surrealism is occurrent in my A2 Final Outcome but very slightly than to define it as 'containing' Surrealism. I believe the use of Expressionism from my 2nd Experimental was a greater inspiration to my A2 production than the use of Surrealism. I believe the lack of surrealism within my A2 Final Outcome does not detract from my film as I incorporate use of Art from other inspirations i.e. German Expressionism.



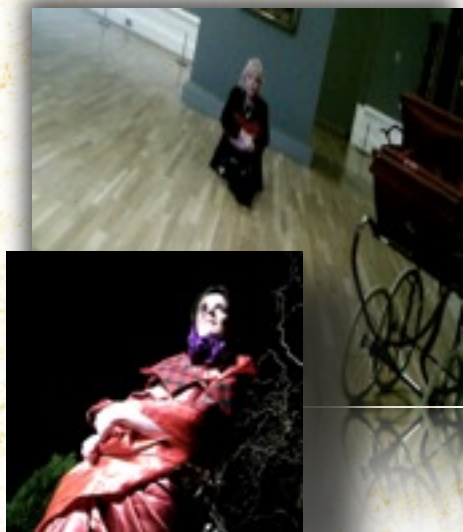
Camera Technique

Regarding Camera Technique, I believe my film has improved since my AS Final Outcome. I have a greater range of shots, more seamless and bolder use of camera movements and more theory and thought was given to the shots to be used beforehand. Camera Techniques however did contain issue(s) which I shall explain along with how these issues were fixed to the best of my ability.

My intention for use of Reverse POVs to be used within my Final Outcome in order to give a unique, daunting perspective to the audience of my main character Carol/Caroline was accomplished. I took Aronofsky's films such as 'Requiem for a Dream', 'Black Swan' etc. for inspiration to these unique camera angles. I attempted to use them within my Final Outcome to also hint towards the overall anxiety and tension within Carol/Caroline (due to her compressing insanity).



Unconventional Framing and Unbalanced Composition were two more aspects that I originally intended to utilise within my A2 Final Outcome. Dutch angles are largely used within my A2 production (from 2nd Experimental to Final Outcome) to help showcase the distortion from reality that I was originally inspired from German Expressionism. I believe I have been able to follow the Continuity Style of Editing to showcase the formalistic qualities to my Final Outcome along with trying to create the correct balance to keep my film realistic enough to not be seen as a "Fantasy" film which my Audience confirmed. I tried to maintain the Realism by balancing the use of dutch angles with realistic shots (i.e CUs, LSs etc.) in order to create seamless editing.



As I had planned, I gained the use of 'Tripod Wheels' in order to help my film's camera movements be improved from my AS year. Gaining use of the Tripod Wheel's was simple but issues did arise with the use of the wheels. The tripod given to me by my school's Art Department wasn't able to attach onto the Tripod Wheels. There was nothing I could do to foresee this issue, however as I had planned beforehand to bring duck tape in my Shooting Schedule's Check List I was able to attach the wheels onto the tripod by using the duck tape. The duck tape was not able to securely keep the two devices together and as a result there was slight instability during filming. This slowed me down and required me to re-take shots multiple times to ensure I do not lessen the overall quality of my A2 Final Outcome. I am satisfied with their use.



Cinematography

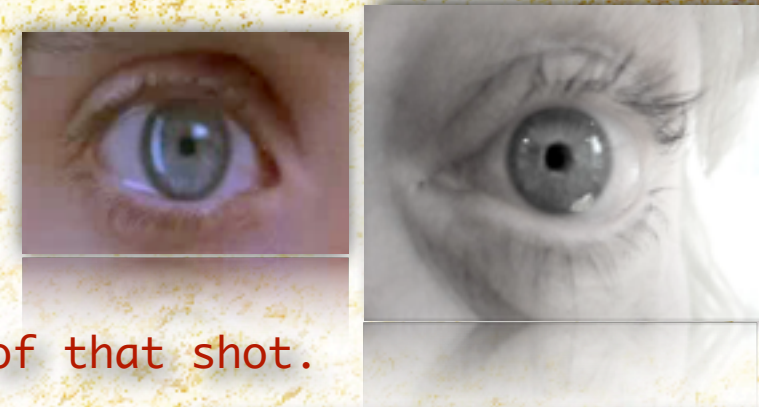
As I had previously planned, my intention to make Cinematography not just through the editing process has been an overall success throughout my A2 production. I have been able to create my own cinematography which I experimented in during my 2nd Experimental which I developed to my A2 Final Outcome.

One of my main inspirations for my A2 production apart from the film work of Darren Aronofsky has also been German Expressionism i.e. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* for redefining Cinema with its strong use of Formalism present while showcasing the distorted perspective of reality to tie within my film's narrative plot. I believe the use of Expressionism works to denote both Realism & Formalism regarding my A2 production's Cinematography.



I had always intended to use Colour Theory within my A2 production. I tested Colour Theory in an Expressionistic vibe in my 2nd Experimental and decided that its use would benefit my A2 Final Outcome and decided to develop this theory for my A2 Final Outcome. With the use of coloured heat-proof gels (films) I was able to give an authentic hue to my scenes. As I had originally planned, I decided to focus on the use of Red & Blue hues for the effects they create alongside their visual contrast.

After my initial analysis of Aronofsky's *'Requiem for a Dream'* I had always been inspired by the rapid, gradual-saturation scenes. Aronofsky used them to showcase the effects of the drugs being induced into the character's bodies however I felt that I could take his inspiration for my own A2 Final Outcome to help showcase the trauma caused by the loss of your 'baby' while also hinting towards Carol/Caroline's true madness. I attempt to progress from Realism to Formalism within my version of that shot.



I did accomplish my intention to use my Art department's professional lighting equipment for my A2 Final Outcome. After experimenting with the equipment in my 1st Experimental, I felt confident enough to try to bring the equipment to the Ulster Museum with confirmation of a safe location to store the equipment (and props etc.), I felt I could fully utilise & control the lighting within my Final Outcome's interior shots to gain the highest standard I could possibly achieve.



Mise-en-scène

Use of the Ulster Museum within my A2 Final Outcome has been commented positively by my audiences. I have always been eager to use this location for my A2 production ever since I did a filming project during the Summer of 2011 in the Museum. It was one of my main inspirations during my Screenwriting process. Regarding my A2 production; it's use for my Final Film was to give a visual link to time & history. One of my audience was negative of my use of the Ulster Museum as they couldn't understand why it was used. However, the vast majority of my audience noticed this link due to the strong use of non-linear narrative (i.e. flashbacks & flash-forwards throughout). I had originally intended for my Screenplay to be set in the 1940s during Carol's scenes. I noticed this wouldn't be practical enough to do after the 1st day of shooting. I tried to keep the link between time & history within my Final Outcome as practical and efficient as I could. My audience praised me for my film's unique locations too.

One issue that occurred however with the use of the Ulster Museum was Time availability. During 2011, it was impossible for me to begin filming in the Museum due to it's Renovation of artefacts. For 2012 there was many limitations during specific timeframes. To not let this be a major issue, I made sure to plan my shooting well in advance with both my actors and the staff of the Ulster Museum to assure that I would have enough time to complete the necessary work and to remain with enough time to give my all during the editing process. Thankfully, I was able to finished filming (even with the numerous cancellations by the Museum) before the Museum's scheduled re-decorating of it's entire Museum.

My intention for the use of the foetal position which I was initially inspired through Aronofsky's Requiem for a Dream has been utilised for both my 2nd Experimental to my Final Outcome. My audience commented that it's use helped to symbolise the tension and trauma of my film while also giving a hinting to Carol/Caroline's mental state of denial over the death of her "baby" as well as to Caroline's own belief of her state of mind.

My audience held mixed reviews regarding my cast's acting abilities. Use of my family as the cast I believe was a fundamental move to gain reliable yet devoted people I could work alongside. As I am not a professional filmmaker, I wouldn't be able to gain use of professional actors that could help give my film's emotional impact it's utmost, however I used what I had available to the best I could hope to achieve regarding my film's mise-en-scene i.e. Mother cried genuinely.



Sound & Music

I personally believe Sound (including Music) is 45% essential to the overall film as imposed to the 55% for the visuals. Once I noted this, I made sure to give as much preparation to my use of Sound & Music as I could to help make my film as successful as I could possibly achieve. I create, compose & arrange my own recorded folio sounds and short compositions for my A2 Final Outcome. I also take use of Garageband and freesound.org to help give my film's overall sound a unique quality for my film.

For my A2 Final Outcome, I take use of both Diagetive and Non-diagetive sound, while trying to create the correctly balance of both to give my Film's overall sound a wide range. Regarding texture, my Final Outcome takes use of Intertextuality (multi-layered soundtrack) in both Parallel (visuals & audio in sync) & Contrapuntal (clashing of visuals to sound/out of sync for effort) style. In the following clip I showcase how I use both in a progressive manner to maintain Realism and then develop my sound more formalistically while hinting towards the overall distortion of Caroline's reality through Sound.



**Audio Excerpt from
Hitchcock's Psycho
- Shower Scene
of infamous
high-pitched
violin score**

My inspiration from Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho is apparent within my A2 Final Outcome. One of my main inspirations with the film is the use of the infamous high-pitched violin strings used during the Shower scene. I tried to create my own version of this sound through Garageband for use in my A2 Final Outcome when Carol's "baby" is accidentally murdered.

A2 Final Outcome:

**My arrangement
of high-pitched
violin score**

I had originally intended to include my arrangement of the popular nursery rhyme: "Hush Little Baby" with a sinister sound due to Nursery Rhyme's dark origins. However, I decided this would not practically work for my A2 Final Outcome due to the lack of ability to be able to create my own arrangement of the Nursery Rhyme (i.e. to gain children's voices for authenticity). I also believe that it's use would detract from my film as it would provide too much of a hint to the audience of the connection between Carol/Caroline & children. I believe trying to keep my overall film as serious as possible will overall enhance the emotional impact of my film.

Clint Mansell was my inspiration for Score for his film score for Aronofsky's films. I tried to create my own arrangement with my influence from Mansell's tracks i.e. Lux Aeterna.

Editing

Editing remained as one of the most important areas of my A2 production that I harnessed my skills of, in order to create my A2 Final Outcome in the highest quality I could hope to achieve.

Use of Rapid Editing and Slow Motion remained a characteristic element that I created/controlled through Final Cut. I tried to balance the use of both for key scenes in order to emphasis the correct emotional impact that I'm hoping for the audience to achieve (i.e. rapid editing for action scenes).

In my A2 Extended Essay, I explained that I was interested in using two different visual paces i.e. rapid editing and slow motion used into one clip to further emphasis "time" running by. I was not able to create this effect due to not being able to use Adobe AfterEffects as planned for my A2 production. I tried to correct this by using my skills of Final Cut to emphasis the distortion of time through Caroline's flashbacks like in the following clip I attempted to use two different paces within one long take but to make it seamless as much as possible (like in my original intention).



I decided not to use Special Effects (i.e. Green Screen) in my Final Film as I found that it would detract from the overall quality of my film and would only confuse the audience to the genre of my film. My camera footage would not upload onto AfterEffects and StudioOn never replied to my numerous emails regarding an AfterEffects tutorial.



I believe my intention to create artistic transitions with seamless, disjointed juxtaposition has been fulfilled like the following clip from my A2 Final Outcome shows. I also utilised the video transitions & filters available in Final Cut to give my film a unique visual quality during transitions. My audience commented on my use of video editing within my A2 Experimentals (specifically 2nd) along with my A2 Final Outcome. Use of 'Colour Corrector' was a key editing filter for the Cinematography created/highlighted through the use of Editing which I also used to follow the Classical Hollywood Style of Editing with emphasis on Formalism.

My intention to upgrade from Final Cut Express to Final Cut Pro was not able to of been achieved due to my school's budget. However one copy was ordered and I spent time observing Final Cut Pro to see the differences, and I discovered that the differences that I saw were minimal and I was confident that my film wouldn't be disadvantaged greatly by the use of Final Cut Express.

Audience Response

I consider my Audience's Response a vital element to the overall success of my A2 production. I decided to have three Audience presentations as I considered other people's feedback extremely important as I learnt during my AS year that an audience can note certain errors (i.e. with Continuity, emotional aspect, etc.) that the filmmaker cannot as they will perceive their film in a unique way than an audience due to their deep connection and involvement with their film. I created a questionnaire for all presentations to ask key questions regarding my film to my audiences which overall helped me to understand my strengths and weaknesses within my A2 production and to maintain the strengths and to strengthen the weaknesses.

I always intended to have in total three Audience presentations of both my peers, school staff, friends, family & friends of friends (strangers), to stop any bias opinion being possible when my audiences were to fill in my questionnaires. After my initial presentation to my peers, I still had footage to film but thankfully with their advice, I was able to make further improvements during the rest of my filming. Once I had my full film complete in it's 1st Draft, I had a 2nd presentation with my MIA classmates and staff again. Their feedback this time, showcased new minor errors within my film that I had overlooked. After my final re-draft of my A2 Final Outcome, I showcased my film for the 3rd time to friends, family & friends of family who gave great praise and also criticised only one element within my Sound which I fixed. Now I am confident my film is to the best standard I could hope to achieve.

Statistics:

Q1) What Genre does my Film belong to?

88%: Psychological
56%: Thriller, Mystery, Drama
36%: Horror
14%: Family
02%: Comedy

Q3) Please choose the option that you believe best describes my Film?

57%: Excellent
34% Promising
09%: Fine

100% = Positive Review

Q5) Main Negatives of my Film?

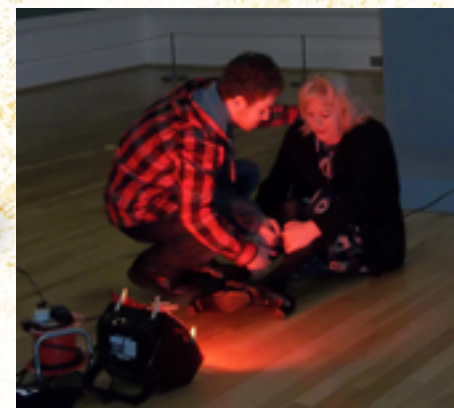
1st: Use of Plastic Doll prop
2nd: Dialogue Voiceover Audio
3rd: Storyline Narrative

Q2) How would you define my Film's Narrative Plot?

72% correctly understood my Film's Narrative Plot
16% incorrectly understood my Film's Narrative Plot
12% were unsure of my Film's Narrative Plot

Q4) Main Positives of my Film?

1st: Interesting Storyline (Narrative)
2nd: Use of Editing Filters/Effects
3rd: Use of Sound & Music



Conclusion

Overall, I am very glad and confident with my A2 production. I believe I have worked independently throughout my concluding A-level year for Moving Image Arts.

I feel far more in control during this year and have had time to perfect my A2 coursework unlike my AS year.

I understand my A2 production has been perfect but I am glad to of been able to fully accomplish every area of Filmmaking to the best standard I could hope to achieve. I believe I have developed greatly from my AS year and have gained a passion of Moving Image Arts that I intend to develop hopefully in University life.

I have learnt that my skills lie in the Technical aspect of Filmmaking and that when I combine that with my Creativity, I can accomplish great things. I have grown confidence for myself not just as a Filmmaker but also as a Person. I entirely recommend this A-level to anyone with a passion for Digital Media.

I have learnt more about myself as a person thanks to the Moving Image Arts A-level and will now focus in the Theory aspect to more detail by continuing to read Blade Runner study guide for use during my Online A2 Exam.

I thank my Art department's Staff for their help & support and I thank CCEA for devising this A-level giving people like myself a chance to do what I feel passionate about.