



Open College of the Arts

Formative feedback

Student name	Peter Owden	Student number	515724
Course/Unit	Digital Film. Prod.	Assignment	2
Type of tutorial (eg video/audio/written)	Written		

Overall Comments

This film presents an interesting conflation of subtle moods and atmospheres. Yes, there is the intended mood of *contentment*, but with the radio babble talking about a cyclonic wind, and other signs like extreme wide-angle lenses, there is also a sense of looming *danger* and because your main character is a lone woman, there is a sense of *loneliness*.

You've chosen a good actor for this film. She is subtle and relaxed through-out the film.

In technical and visual terms the film is well made with no big issues. The film feels long, and the tea making could perhaps have been omitted or shortened. Also, the hand-held shot through the kitchen window could be questioned because it sets up the idea that someone is looking in. The use of light is pretty accomplished in places, considering you were trying to balance the daylight 'dusk' with interior lighting.

You certainly have not succumbed to melodrama! The film has its own vibe, and that's important. You have something here to build on. You do need more story, more interesting events than tea-making, but there's something in the way you handle the scenes that is satisfying.

Assignment 2 Assessment potential

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography/Creative Arts* Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to pass at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.

Feedback on assignment

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

Shot 1

This hand-held movement of the woman making tea, shot from outside, sets up an expectation in the viewer that there is someone (or something) watching her. This conditions the way the movie is viewed, making it seem as if something will suddenly 'upset the equilibrium'. So, this shot should probably have been left out or thought through more deeply.

Hand-held camera is tricky. It can depend entirely on the type of scene for how the audience interprets it. But we've all seen the 'woman at home alone' horror movies and this is the association here. If your whole movie is made with hand-held camera (like a Dogma movie – "Breaking the Waves" or "Festen") then the camera is more likely to assume a pseudo-documentary role. In Hollywood movies, it nearly always signifies "danger" or "fear"!

Shot 2

There's something here about a boiling kettle that also suggests a 'boiling tension'! Boiling and relaxation, does it work together?

Showing someone making a cup of tea is really not interesting, especially in a close show of the kitchen surface! Use of a 'cut-away' could have helped you contract the time of this scene.

Wide focal lengths can exaggerate and distort objects and space - the effect of this is often to add a hint of 'strangeness' to even everyday things and places. To an extent that is happening here. And because we can see out of the window where 'someone' was just watching, we could expect a boogie man to suddenly appear at the window. The fact that you leave the duration so long also increases this expectation because the audience is thinking, "how long can nothing go on?"

Shot 3

I really like the use of the radio in the soundtrack here. But again, why is she listening to the shipping forecast? Is it because her husband is a fisherman? Does this add a narrative tension?

Shot 4

Excellent match on action cut with the cat here. The cat is a good actor!

Shot 5

The woman undresses and gets into bed. You've done as well as can be possibly expected to make that move smooth - well done! In Final Cut Pro there's a 'filter' called Smoothcam, which helps you smooth out hand-held footage even more. You may have something similar in your package.

The mood is quite relaxed here, but there's still an air of expectation.

Shot 6

This would have been better if your composition had framed more empty space on the right and your viewpoint had faced the cat more. Why, well, it's almost a pov shot because the woman has just looked down at the cat.

Shot 7

The dissolve adds tension because you dissolve to a more tense radio broadcast. Can you see

how this radio dialogue is somehow 'upsetting' the peace of the bedroom scene and causes the viewer to question why she is listening to this strange station instead of music if what she wanted was to relax?

Again here you're using a wide-angle lens - quite extreme - with a near/far composition which places emphasis on the radio and the cup of tea. (We could surmise that this woman has just drunk poison!) But when the dark book, almost entirely black is placed foremost in the frame, there is a hint that you are playing with the viewer's expectations - why Nod's Dream?

The film fades out with all these questions 'hanging' and unresolved in an anti-climax. I'm not sure how much of this was your intention.

Coursework

Your coursework is extensive and well researched. I liked your "O what a lovely morning" film and your "Stalker" film, both of which demonstrate pretty good framing, lighting and feel for expressive atmosphere.

Research

Context, reflective thinking, critical thinking, analysis

Some of the films you researched for Part 2 show really good examples of narrative film atmosphere (lighting and colour etc) but all of them are pretty *dark*. Surely for a film where you intended to express a sense of peace and contentment, you'd have needed to find that in your research material. A Clockwork Orange, Twin Peaks, Salvador, Trainspotting...these are all dark, twisted dramas in some way. Maybe this viewing leaked into your handling of this film.

Learning Log

The blog is excellent.

Suggested reading/viewing

Context

See if you can find anything on YouTube about the use of the "Cut-Away" in editing.

Pointers for the next assignment

You've done quite a lot of implied meaning in this film - maybe not entirely intentionally. But I hope this report will show you where the lens or the sound is overlaying meaning on the image and on the events. It would be good for you to set up a relationship in your next film, two actors or more with some dialogue.

Tutor name	Robert Enoch
Date	26th August 2016
Next assignment due	14th November 2016