



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

FILM AND VISUAL CULTURE

CREATIVE PROJECTS

CAMF6002

ASSESSMENT 2
SELF REFLECTION

NAME: NUR IZZATI ROSELAN

STUDENT NUMBER: 1811570

DATE OF SUBMISSION: 22 MAY 2019

Background

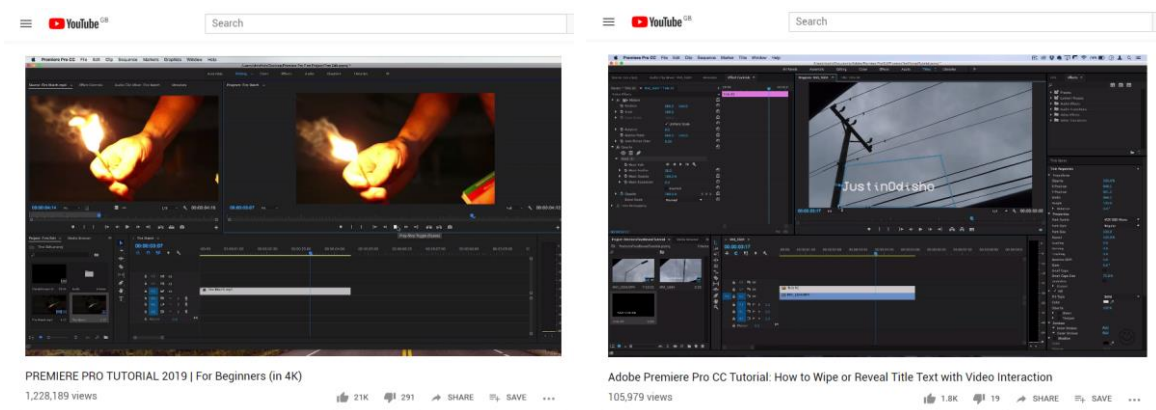
Home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit ever answered to, in the strongest conjuration. -Charles Dickens

Project homesick is one that is very personal to me. What started out merely just as a story of my journey being away from home turned into an actual project that challenged my emotional and mental capabilities. As I may have previously mentioned, this short film is something I owed myself to do. Being someone who enjoys filming and editing, I wanted to create a short film of my own that resonated to me at this point in my life and that I am proud of. Every detail seen in the film from the script, to the choice of music, to the editing style was carefully chosen to create a seamless final product.

In a nutshell, project Homesick talks about my journey as an international student pursuing my studies in a country far away from the place I call home. Every scene involved carries weight in order to efficiently portray what was being said in the script. The decision made to go with a narrative structure was because I wanted to be as personal as possible, sharing my story with an audience that can hopefully resonate to the journey I was on. The research I had done regarding the style of film also further proved that it is one of the best ways for a person to share their experience in a storytelling manner. While it was important for me to include personal aspects of my life in order to make it authentic to me, there were many aspects portrayed in the film that I can confidently say people all across the world would watch and think, "That's exactly how I feel".

The Process

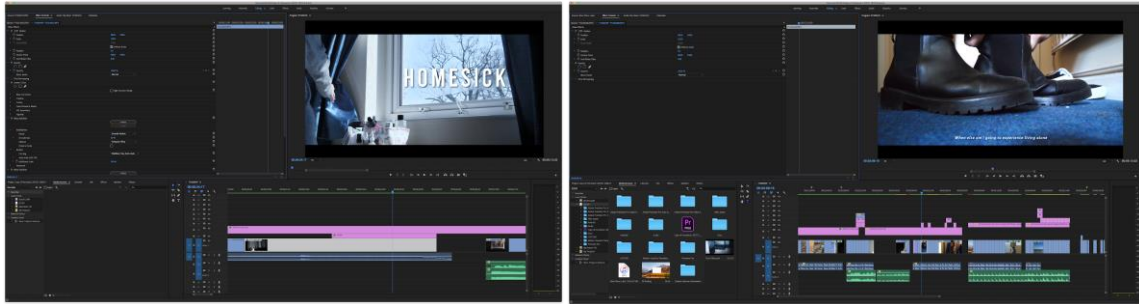
Seeing that this is a short film, the main tool I used compile and edit the clips was Adobe Premiere Pro. Having some experience using other editing software's, I was able to familiarise myself with the software relatively quickly. I learned my basics by watching tutorials on YouTube about the specific functions of each tool. I found it really helpful especially because it took me awhile to get accustomed to the format in the beginning as compared to what I am used to. When I first started, I referred to UnlockRiver.com on YouTube. That itself was enough for me to find my way around the different features on the software. Whereas for specific styles of editing, I referred to Justin Odisho's videos.



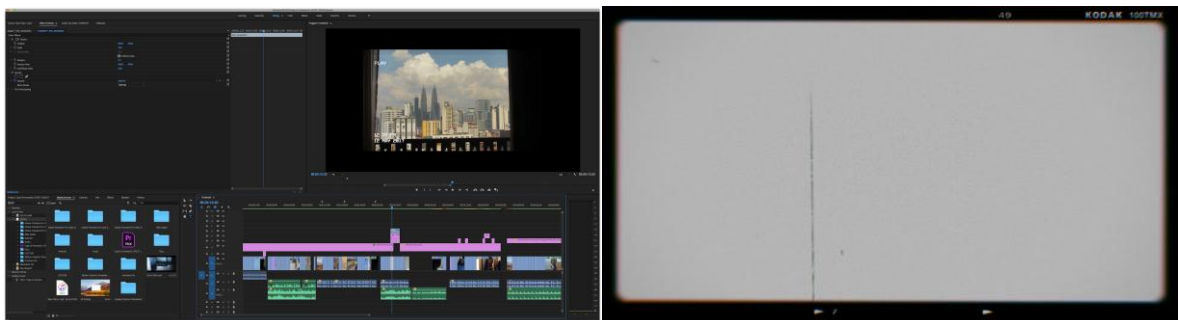
One of the first things I experimented with was the title of the film. I created a prototype on Vegas Pro and later re-created the same on Premiere Pro which allowed to me to have more control of how I wanted it to look, tweaking bits and pieces to perfect the size, font, colour and position. While I did not end up using this specific clip as the opening of my film, I still used the same font for the new version I created and this particular shot was used in a different part of the film instead of what I had originally planned.



When it comes to fonts, Premiere Pro does have a plethora of different options but the particular font I had in mind for the title and credits scene is called 'BEBAS' which I sourced from a DaFont.com. Following that, I also did the same for fonts used in the archive clips montage called VCR, and Corbel for minor parts of the film that has subtitles. I was going for a specific style of editing and so the decision made to use the chosen fonts has their own reasoning. While they are completely different from one another, I do think that they work well together.

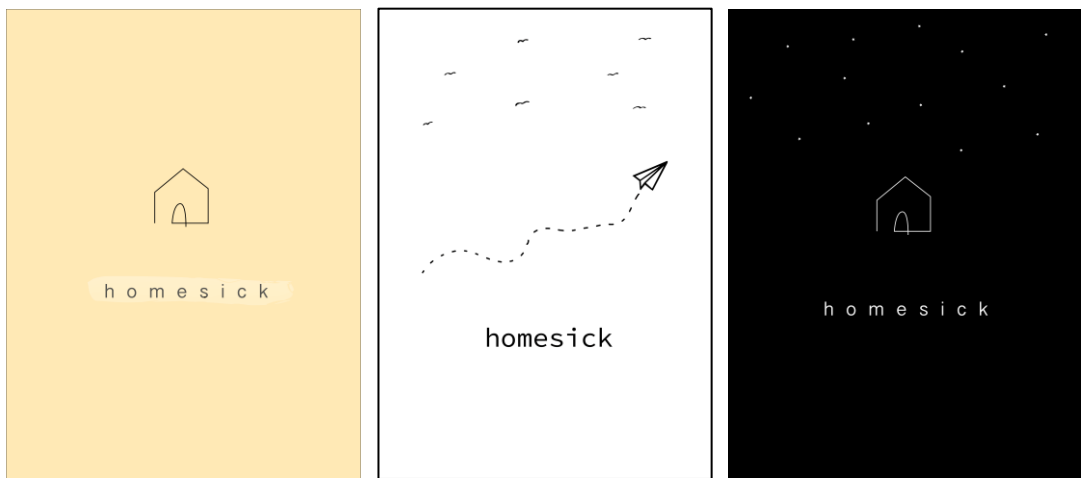


Another aspect which I found rather useful during the editing process was the use of overlays in which I sourced from YouTube. The use of overlays mainly helped with perfecting certain scenes that required frames or filters which Premiere Pro did not have. The two that I used are vhs interfere noise which creates the glitching effect as well as an old Kodak frame that gives an Analog effect. I find the use of overlays to be effective when used sparingly which is why I tried not to overdo it. It definitely helped in tying everything together with the detail elements it added.



An element which played an important role in delivering the emotional part of it is the audio which are narration and the songs that accompanied the visuals. Also sourced from YouTube, I handpicked these songs. I found this particularly difficult because it really is struggle to find music that suits the theme of the film and is also royalty free. Hours was spent just to find the right one which was the reason the completion of the film was delayed.

One of the earliest pieces I worked on for this film was the poster. I remember being very excited to design my very own poster to compliment the film if and when I do end up sharing it online. The whole designing process allowed me be as creative as I wanted to be and surprisingly enough I did find it enjoyable. The challenging part about designing the posters was doing them on Adobe Illustrator. I have never been good at designing let alone on Illustrator so it was a learning process for me. I took inspiration from Pinterest and minimalist movie posters which in recent years have been becoming more popular. Overall really happy with the way they turned out.



The Experience

From the day I began filming in February until today in May, this film has had a change in direction a number of times. The story evolved and changed as the months went by. I learned that when it comes to writing a story, at some point you will need to take a step back and leave what you have been working on behind for a while just to take a breather. I went for my Easter break and when I finally came back to my work, I looked at it with a fresh pair of eyes and only then did I see the improvements that had to be made. Before the break, I was not the happiest with what I had come up with. I felt that it lacked something that I could not quite put my finger on. However I soon realised that I was being a little too hard on myself when actually the progress I made then was quite good but, there was still room for improvement.

There were some things that I knew I was going to find challenging and one of it was the storyline. After working on this project consistently for the past few months, I had to make some major changes that I did not anticipate because of how content I was with the story at the beginning. Nonetheless the changes made were necessary and is what made the final product what it is. During the entire process of this project, the script changed three times. This is due to one, my indecisiveness, and two, because the story grew with me. Since this short film is based on personal experience, as months went by, those experiences changed my outlook on my journey here. I found myself going into extreme detail with the story to the point where it was becoming too much of a personal story. Also taking into consideration my audience, I made the creative decision to omit several personal details in order to create a story that is more universally appealing. Before the changes were made, I did not have a clear vision as to what the ending of the film was going to look like. It was still a blur up till 2 weeks before I had to be done with filming. It was not until my trip to Tenby that the idea came to me. I wanted the ending to be on a positive note and the golden opportunity was right there on Tenby's beach. On a bright sunny day, by the beach, in one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. Leaving the vibrant little town with sand between my toes and only the best memories.

I had the opportunity to familiarise myself with using different types of cameras and experimented with manual settings which I never really had a chance to do before this. When filming, I sometimes get too excited or eager to film that I forget about other aspects that are equally as important and detrimental to the outcome of the video. It is only when I review each clip in detail that I notice specks of dust or smudges that I did not notice prior to filming. Checking and cleaning the lens was not something I did very often and that affected the quality of my videos. The unfortunate part is, due to that some scenes did not make the cut.

Even the most well planned project almost never plays out the way it was intended to. Especially when taking into consideration external factors such as the weather, unexpected incidents and time that are just simply out of our control. The weather in Wales during frosty winter months and the rainy days that followed in spring proved to be challenging because that was when I was actively filming. There were some instances whereby I had to postpone filming for two to three days just to wait for a sunny day out. Even then there was no guarantee that the sun was going to stay out the entire day. I was lucky to even get a few hours of it. While I was well aware of this being a challenge for me, I must admit that I may have underestimated how much it would affect my filming schedule. In the Gantt chart I made during pre-production, filming was to take place in February up till the first week of May before Ramadhan starts. However, with drawbacks from the unpredictable weather and not being able to film during Easter break due to unavailability of equipment, I had to extend my filming schedule up to a week before submissions.

One thing I did find helpful in the long run was being consistent by continuously editing from the start. There were times where I did not end up liking how a particular scene looked or noticed a flaw in it during the editing process. This allowed me to re-shoot those specific scenes to get it to my liking. Doing so also helped me decide which direction the film was heading towards and gave me the option to experiment with different editing styles. There was room for trial and error which I had the pleasure of doing because if it was not for that I would not have branched out from my usual straight forward editing techniques.

In hindsight, there are a few things I would have done differently given the chance to. Whilst being in front of the camera has been a great experience, I feel that if I had chosen someone with experience when it comes to acting or being in front of the camera in general, I would have been able to be more creative with this film. There were times when I felt awkward being filmed or when I just did not like how I look in a particular scene. That did in a way affect the filming process because I had to give myself a pep talk to get myself together before filming. Sometimes being in front of the camera and seeing yourself on the screen can be daunting when all you see are imperfections that you want to change. Nonetheless, it is an experience that I do not regret. I now know what my strengths and weaknesses are and will hopefully make an initiative to improve myself.

These past few months has definitely been a learning curve for me. I managed to learn and improve on different aspects of filmmaking with help and guidance from both Matt and Brett. Looking back from where I started and where I am today, there is no denying that I am indeed proud of myself for coming this far. Despite having to make last minute changes and dealing with personal struggles, I was able to adapt and manage accordingly. Not forgetting, this film would not have been the success that it is without help and support from Zafirah who filmed for me from start to finish. We work well as a team and it also helps that she understands my vision for the film. Being comfortable with each other made the process a lot easier for the both of us.

In general, I have always taken a positive approach towards this project. From going to tutorials down to doing meticulous editing effects up till submission day. I stayed positive and pushed through even during times when I had doubts about what I was doing. I made the best of every situation regardless of the circumstances I was in. I learned to never give up at the first sign of distress and have given my best in trying to make this short film a piece of work that I am proud of. This short film has given me the confidence to hopefully pursue content creating in the future because I now have the knowledge and skills to do so.

There is a wisdom of the head, and there is a wisdom of the heart.

– Charles Dickens