DESIGN EXPLORATION SEMINAR

A Procrastinator's Dilemma
A Hip Hop Montage Film

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March 2023

Project Guide:
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Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas and process in my own words. Wherever other people's ideas and words have been included and reference of works have been made, I have adequately cited the original sources.

I also declare that I have adhered to all the principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/ data/ fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been appropriately cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Bharathkrishnan S. (216340006)
March 2023

Approval Sheet

The Design Exploration Seminar project Titled " A Procrastinator's Dilemma - Hip Hop Montage" by **Bharathkrishnan S., Roll Number 216340006**, is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the 'Master of Design' in the Animation and Film Design at Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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Project Guide : Bharat Parmar

Date : **23 July 2023**

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Hip hop montage is a method of creating a montage in film using fast cuts. The purpose of using this method depends on the design of that particular film. It is a fairly recent idea and not much work has been done in exploring this field. That is one reason to study more about hip hop montage.

The aim of this project is to explore these possibilities to the best of our knowledge, creativity and capabilities, to create unique solutions for bringing our ideas in the format of a hip hop montage. For this project, I recorded videos and sounds and then edited them to create a short film.

Contents

Introduction

The Design Exploration Seminar is a great way to understand our interests towards different design methods other than our main course in IDC. I explored through the topics provided to us and figured I should go with Prof. Bharat Parmar's DES project about Hip Hop Montage. Since I'm interested in photography, cinematography and editing, I knew this is what I wanted to do. Ever since we bought a DSLR camera at home, I am aware that I have this inclination towards capturing something extraordinary in the frames. That led me to explore photography for some years, which led me to understand film and media and eventually into the world of animation. But the interest I have in holding a camera and recording something will be there in my life throughout.

Recording something is easy, but recording with the intention of something bigger, to communicate what the director wants to portray, is a tiresome and thought out process. Not to mention shooting a montage. Adding on to this trouble would be to increase the pace of the cuts in between shots in a montage. But like they say, the harder the challenge the better the outcome. I wanted to try my hand in the domain of hip hop montage and learn something out of it.
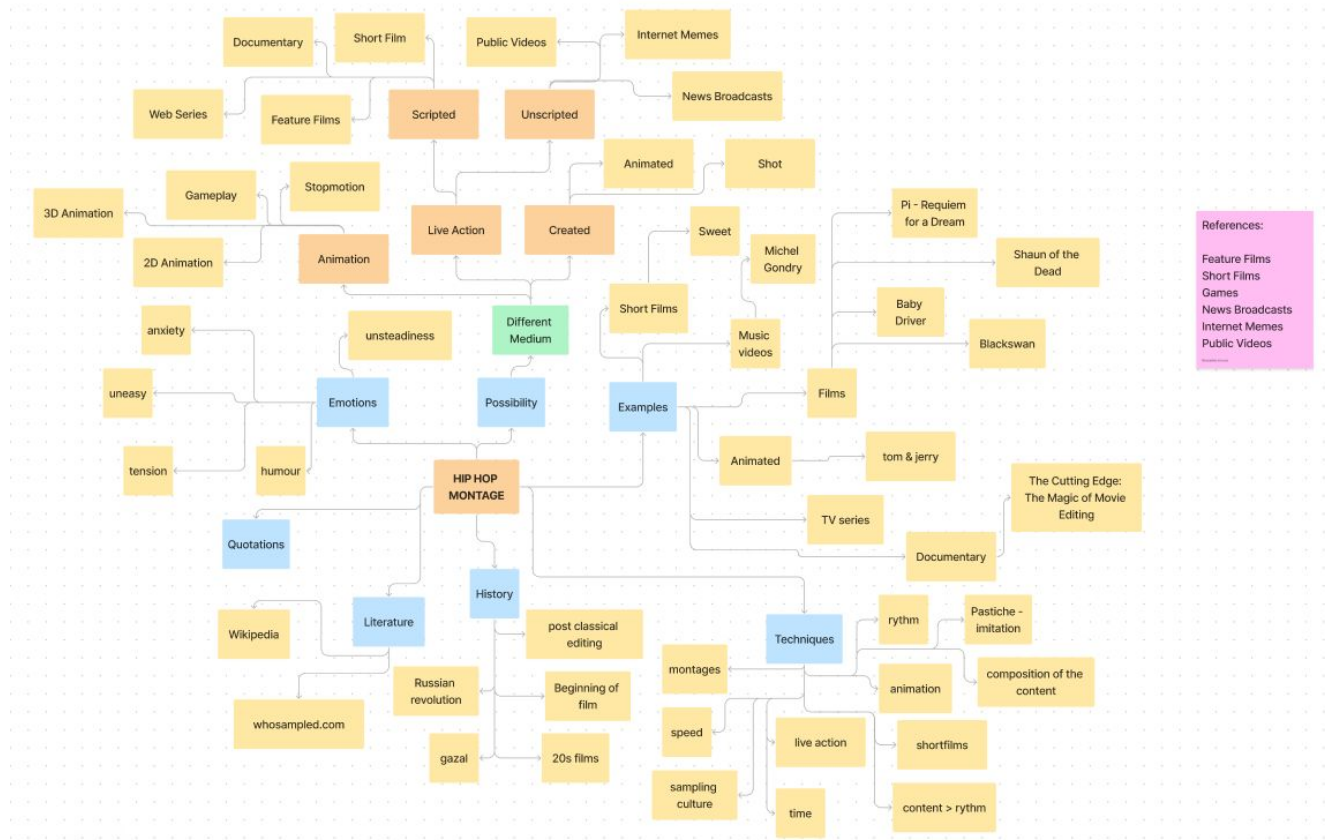
Research

Researching about this topic was a hassle as it is a very rare topic. Not much information and research material is available as it is a rarely explored area. But that is itself a treasure trove as the lesser it has been studied on, the more scope it has for exploration. Hence it is advantageous as well as disadvantageous. The few research papers I could find mentioned about the already existing tyes of montages. And how it can be enhanced using fast cuts and with the aid of sound and music to create a rythm for the visuals which goes well with the sound.

The greatest research material for montages is film and videos itself. A lot of films have explored montages and one of the iconic montages will be the shower murder montage in Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho. This particular montage changed the way a gruesome murder has been shot. Without even showing any gore scenes, or nudity or even blood the director and the editor has shown their brilliance by cutting the scenes at the right moment to keep the content flowing but keep the energy intact. Using small glimpses of symbolic representation, the montage has been ended with a beautiful shot of the actor's dead and still eyes, cutting the flow of dynamic energy in the sequence.

Lot of countless other montages have been shot in the entire cinema world, and notably a few have been phenomenal so as to inspire other artists to approach through the lens of montages. But what has changed very recently is the introduction of hiphop montage and how it has been used in film and media. Not just in mainstream feature films, but it has been used in short films, documentaries, infortainment videos, and even in internet memes nowadays. The opening sequence of Edgar Wright's Baby Driver and the Bar fight sequence in the same director's Shaun of the Dead are some of the other interesting and out of the ordinary types of montages. If we start listing out montages this report would not be enough for all of it.

Mind Map

Documentary

Short Film

Public Videos

Internet Memes

Web Series

Feature Films

Scripted

Unscripted

News Broadcasts

Animated

Shot

Gameplay

Stopmotion

3D Animation

Live Action

Created

Sweet

Pi – Requiem for a Dream

Michel Gondry

Shaun of the Dead

2D Animation

Animation

Baby Driver

Short Films

Blackswan

anxiety

unsteadiness

Different Medium

Music videos

uneasy

Emotions

Possibility

Examples

Films

tension

humour

Animated

tom & jerry

HIP HOP MONTAGE

The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing

Quotations

TV series

Documentary

History

Literature

post classical editing

rythm

Pastiche – imitation

Wikipedia

Techniques

animation

composition of the content

Russian revolution

Beginning of film

montages

whosampled.com

speed

live action

shortfilms

gazal

20s films

sampling culture

time

content > rythm

References:

Feature Films
Short Films
Games
News Broadcasts
Internet Memes
Public Videos

9

Analysis

Watching and reading about montages and fast cuts, there sparked a lot of ideas in my head. But as usual each and every one of it was very difficult to make in the time period provided to us, or rather couldn't be done in the skill level we are at right now. But the insights I gained from all of it were many. The importance of a sound track for a montage is very noticeable. It can either be music or foley plus sound effects. In case of music, the key is to focus on the rhythm of the music, where the events in the frames would be in sync with the rhythm or the cuts will be in sync. This method was seen in Edgar Wright's works. In case of sound effects, the addition of whoosh and swish sounds were added whenever there is cuts or movements to the camera. Also the increased pace in the sound is another unavoidable key to hip hop montages. The pace is what makes us feel anxious or rather uneasy while watching the montage.

The main purpose of this method is to make sure that the viewer does not take away their eyes from the screen as they subconsciously feel that if they even blink, they might miss out on certain information regarding the film. This small uneasiness is what keeps the audience on the edge of their seats, and it is a brilliant way of portraying specific parts of a film or video.

Concepts

As mentioned earlier many ideas and concepts came to my mind while dwelling on this topic. Initially I had an inclination towards car chases and thought of making one montage about it. My guide Prof. Bharat made me understand that even the simple car chases done on mainstream media is a result of decades of expertise from experienced action directors. So, I figured I should change my approach. The fact of using music or sound to make a connection between visuals has been my go to idea. So I started watching some films which included multiple medium of film, like stop motion, pixilation and live action.

The idea was to create a montage of some specific situation including the pre existing clips from films, media, etc. This has great potential to explore, but it is not a best approach in the limited time. So I shifted my idea towards shooting a simple montage of any particular situation, which may or may not have a story, and then using music or sounds in a surreal manner to connect it. Watching it the viewer should understand the emotion behind it rather than figuring out the story behind it, which I feel should be left open ended for the viewer. Some short situational ideas I came up with are; Insomnia, A pet, Life shown from the angle of zibs, stationery items depicting war during an examination.

Final Idea

What it might feel like to dwell into the life of a
procrastinator? This question sparked in me a lot of ideas
and I decided to go in this direction. The content is
basically about a guy who is troubled by his procrastination
and missing out the important things in his life just because
of this. What I am trying to show is one day in the life of
this guy, which is shot in a way to make it into a loop. The
idea of the loop is to portray that his everyday life is similar
to the previous day he had. Starting off slowly showing
how the guy is relaxed, the pace turns fast as soon as he
realizes the time, then it's a continuous set of fast cuts until
he is back on his bed at night.

Storyboard

An initial storyboard was prepared which was iterated over the course of the project, so that shooting of videos could be properly managed. Obviously there were some changes regarding the storyboard and the final shot videos, but the overall inclination of the idea is captured through the frames of the storyboard first. Making a storyboard was a crucial step in this project as I faced some difficulties when I had to improvise certain shots different from the storyboard prepared.
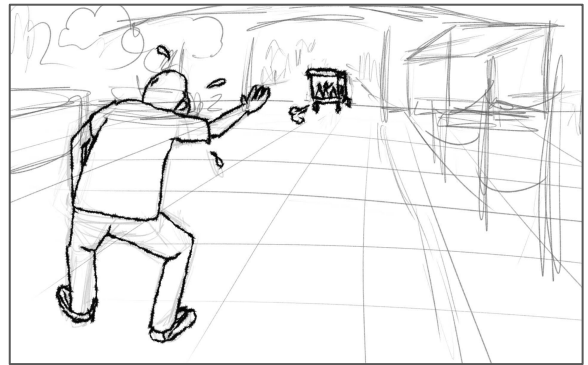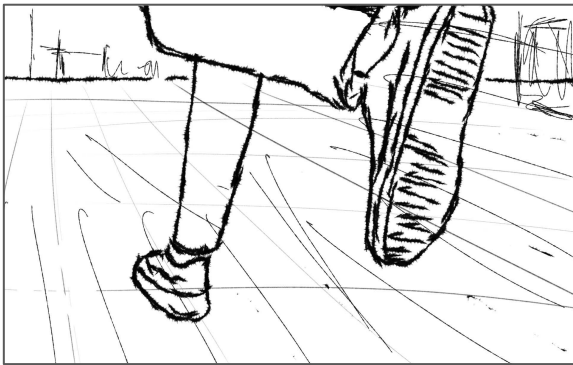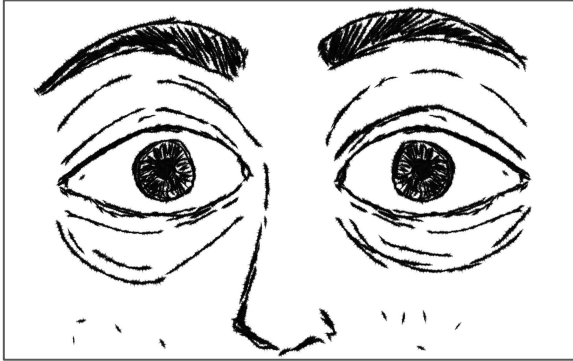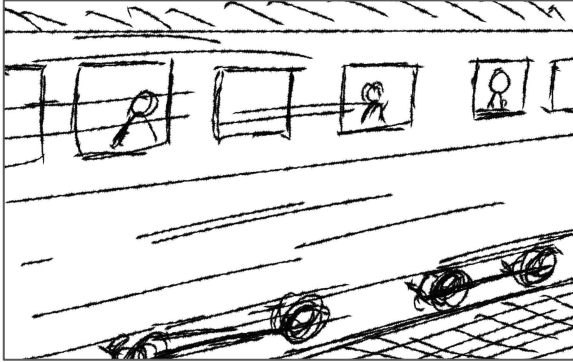
Process

A rough version of the script was written and then later revised into a better one. Based on the script a storyboard was created to see whether the visuals are falling in place. After this the videos were shot in such a way that the real footage is similar to the already staged storyboard. After getting ample amounts of recordings, then came editing of the film. In order for this to work, first a soundtrack was identified which would match the energy of the content. After getting the visuals to match the rhythm of the soundtrack, then foley sounds were added to enhance the viewing experience.

Conclusion

To make an experimental film is a very difficult task. First of all we need to study other artists who have done all sorts of experimental work in the fields of hip hop montage and such levels of editing techniques. To figure out such big amounts of work from a topic which has not been that explored by the film history itself was one of the biggest drawback we had while doing the research for this project. But since there are barely any material on this topic, there is a high chance of great possibilities hidden in this particular direction of film making. Already some directors have started using this technique in certain sequences in their work. Studying about all of this simultaneously trying to make a film similar to it was a hurdle that I learned to cross while doing this project. All the different alternatives when it comes to editing sound and video made me think of film making in a different light. I am very glad that I did this project and am certainly looking forward make lot of films like this in my further career.

THANK YOU