17

Making and responding – Identity

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Part A: Ideas – for stylistic film

GENERATING IDEAS FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

There is a stage just before the writing and preparation starts on your production. This is the stage when the ideas are just rolling around, but they have not been developed. Sometimes it is called the concept stage.

Idea generation

Many people think that ideas for media productions just happen in one grand moment – a sudden lightning strike of inspiration occurs and the idea has arrived. Instead, those who work in the media industry say that getting an idea is not a sudden event, but a gradual process.

- **Ideas take time to develop.** The time taken to develop an idea is well spent. Whether you know it or not, in this concept phase you will be working. Even staring out the window daydreaming is a valid thinking technique. However, ideas also take work. At the concept stage, the most important thing is to keep undertaking the processes that will trigger the idea.
- **Fear of the blank page.** Staring at a blank page is a good way to induce writer's block. Anyone who has to come up with an idea can be baulked by an off-putting blank page. The easiest solution to this is to make the page 'not blank'. Put ideas down – anything is better than nothing. You don't need to have the perfect idea straight away. It is all part of the process.

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Figure 17.1 The blank page is said to be the writer's or artist's greatest fear. However, scriptwriting expert Linda Aronson does not advise screwing up the rejected pages. Instead, she suggests keeping all the ideas in view, and then asking questions about each idea to trigger development. Eventually one will come through with stronger potential. 'Any idea, however weak or crazy, is acceptable because it can lead by association to something useful.'

Starting the ideas process (not waiting for the event)

A good idea is probably inside you right now. It is just a matter of going through some processes to try to bring it out. A key step in that process is to stimulate lots of ideas. Following is a list of strategies that are used by writers to get their imaginations stimulated:

- **Brain dump.** This is also known as word vomit. Set yourself a time limit, and then write anything that comes into your head around the general areas you are working in. This tells you what is in the top of your head. Scan through and see if there is anything worthwhile.
- **Interrogation technique.** Ask yourself a series of 'what if', 'if only' or 'why' questions around the topic. Make serious questions, and then make ridiculous ones. Often absurdity will stimulate other ideas.
- **Google.** Conduct an internet search of some of the words from your topic and see

> 'If, as writers, we look back at how we got ideas for original work, almost invariably the answer is that something in the world around us provoked in us a response that demanded a story.'
>
> **Linda Aronson**, scriptwriting consultant

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> 'If you want to have good ideas, you must have many ideas. Most of them will be wrong, and what you have to learn is which ones to throw away.'
>
> **Linus Pauling**, Nobel Prize winner, quantum chemist, and founder of molecular biology

what the search algorithms come up with. Sometimes unusual connections will stimulate your own ideas. Sometimes a classic idea can be given a fresh perspective.

- **Crowd sourcing.** The internet has given us access to millions of people. Crowdsourcing is a modern term for getting the answer to something over social media. However, smaller groups can be just as effective at generating ideas. Assemble a group of friends with very different personalities – for example, a funny person, a thinker, a sociable person, a quiet person and so on. Task them with helping you come up with an idea.
- **I believe.** Make a list of statements to do with the topic that begin with 'I believe …'
- **One sentence technique.** Make up a series of small cards. Write a one-sentence idea on each card, moving quickly along without thinking too much. Use as many cards as you can. Later, spread them out and choose the most appealing.
- **Other media examples.** Make a list of all the television shows and movies you can think of that deal with the topic. Beside the titles, write the angle or premise they have used. Now see if you can come up with any fresh angles on the idea.

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Figure 17.2 Before internet searches there was still daydreaming, brain dumping and sentence cards. Coming up with an idea is hard – it is difficult even for highly experienced Hollywood scriptwriters.

Developing ideas

Once you have come up with three or four possible ideas, the next stage of the process is to develop them. It is best to develop all of the ideas rather than choosing one too early. It can be difficult picking winners until the process is completed. Postpone any judgement until after the development stage. The following steps will help develop all your ideas.

Step 1: Brainstorming and mind mapping

> 'Brainstorm means using the brain to storm a creative problem and to do so in commando fashion, with each stormer attacking the same objective.'
>
> **Alex Faickney Osborn**, creator of brainstorming

- **Brainstorming.** This well-known process for developing creative ideas originated in an advertising agency in 1939. Usually it is a group process in which people are given a topic and they then call out ideas. No one should be critical of the ideas, and all ideas should be accepted. Brainstorming can also be done as an individual activity.
- **Mind mapping.** Drawing up mind maps is a common technique for depicting the results of brainstorming in diagram form. Usually the idea being developed is placed in the centre of the diagram or map. Ideas then branch out from this centre point. This is sometimes called a spider diagram because of its web-like structure.

Media production mind maps

Using the following steps can be a helpful approach to brainstorming a mind map in media production.

1. Draw an oval in the centre of a blank page. Write the name of the idea to be developed.

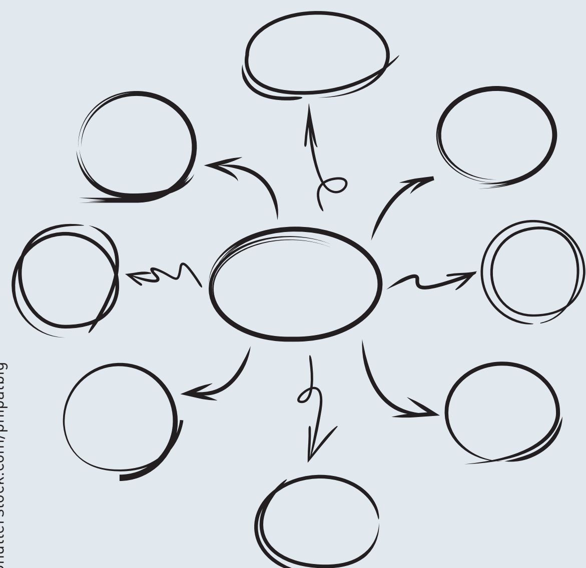

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Figure 17.3 A design for a mind map. It can be useful to place direct production possibilities in a larger frame around the outside of the mind map where ideas are being developed.

2 Take all the associated ideas you can think of and attach them to the central idea using lines.
3 Around the outside, frame the mind map with ideas for images, scenes, characters or plots that are going to be useful for your media production.

Step 2: The three Ws and one H

Ask four basic questions of your ideas, say British media educators Nick Dimbleby, Richard Dimbleby and Ken Whittington.

- **Why?** Media productions are usually expected to educate, inform or entertain. Work out why you want to produce your idea. Having a strong purpose will make the idea easier to develop.
- **What?** Ask yourself what content you want to put in your production. As time goes by, that may change. However, it is useful to have a good sense of content before starting.
- **Who?** For whom is the production going to be made? A sense of audience is the most important element to keep in mind all the way through the production.
- **How?** You will need to explain how you are going to present the text to the audience. Technical matters can be added here to further develop the ideas.

Step 3: Considering genre and stylistics

Genre can be useful for developing ideas because genres are repeatable. You will have seen many genre examples, which can act as models.

Genres have a step-by-step structure. Recall what you know of this structure, because it has developed around similar concepts to your own. For example, consider settings, typical characters, plot sequences, openings and resolutions.

Use each aspect of the genre structure to stimulate thoughts about what you could do with your own idea. For example, what might be a good setting? What sorts of characters would you expect?

Twist the genre by challenging genre expectations to further stimulate your ideas. Instead of using typical examples, choose surprising and different ones.

Step 4: Laying out the ideas

Time-based media productions (such as video) and static media (such as print) that are based in a sequence can benefit from physically laying out the ideas on cards and moving them around to achieve the best order. To do this, you will need some blank cards. Paper or light cardboard cards are best for this – they have a flexibility and ease of use that is difficult for a computer to provide.

1 Take all the ideas for scenes (or pages or articles) and place each one on a card of its own.
2 Lay them all out in the sequence you think they will appear in the production. Move the cards around until you think you have achieved the best sequence.
3 Look for gaps or places where the audience may become confused. Create new cards to span the gaps.
4 Check that you have good start and finish cards.

17.1 ACTIVITIES

Experiment with three or four of your own ideas through each of the stages suggested in this section, concluding with a series of cards laid out with the media production planned from beginning to end. Try different combinations to discover how a variety of ideas could work.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVITY THEORY

Edward de Bono is one of the few people who can say they have helped change the way the world thinks. De Bono led research into creative thinking, and the concepts he developed have now become so widely known that almost everyone has heard of them.

Vertical and lateral thinking

De Bono argues that there are two sorts of thinking processes in creativity: vertical and lateral. Both are useful and of equal value.

Vertical thinking

Logical step-by-step thinking was labelled 'vertical thinking' by de Bono. Vertical thinking is the kind used in mathematics. It is rules-based, and often looks for a right or wrong answer. Vertical thinking uses logic to think in a sequence and arrive at a predictable conclusion. Experts say that vertical thinking accounts for up to 90 per cent of the thinking that people do. Vertical thinking allows for deadlines to be met and everyday tasks to be completed in efficient ways.

Lateral thinking

Taking in ideas and solutions from all over the place, using a kind of random creativity, is called 'lateral thinking'. De Bono coined the term in 1967, and subsequently wrote several books about it. Lateral thinking does not follow the usual logical and predictable thought patterns of vertical thinking. Instead, lateral thinking gets ideas from left of field. It can be inspirational, because it seems as if the idea came from nowhere. However, lateral thoughts are usually connected in some way to the original stimulus – it is just that the connection is somewhat unusual or illogical. Lateral thinking involves looking at the world from a number of perspectives.

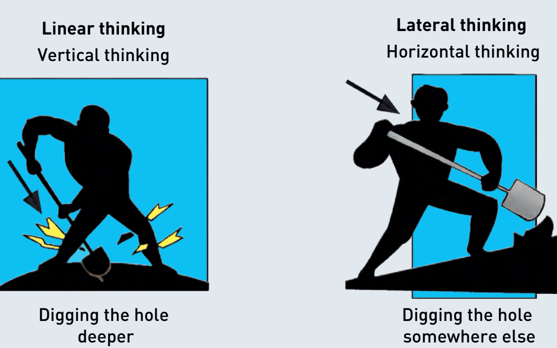

Figure 17.4 Edward de Bono explains vertical thinking and lateral thinking by referring to different approaches as digging a hole. Vertical thinking pursues the objective single-mindedly and step by step – like digging a single deep hole. Lateral thinking jumps around, looking at digging shallower holes in different locations. Neither lateral thinking nor vertical thinking is superior; they are simply different ways to think, each having their advantages and drawbacks.

a

Stimulus or task → Step 1 → Step 2 → Step 3 → Final correct answers

b

Alternative possibility → Stimulus or task ← Alternative possibility

Perspective B → Perspective D → Stimulus or task → Perspective A → Perspective C

Outside information → Stimulus or task ← Outside information

Figure 17.5 (a) Vertical thinking and (b) lateral thinking.

Using vertical and lateral thinking in media

Lateral and vertical thinking can be used to create media texts that are successfully 'real but unusual', according to screenwriting coach Linda Aronson. She uses the analogy of driving a car: lateral thinking is the accelerator and vertical thinking is the brake. You need both the accelerator and the brake – you cannot drive without using both.

Vertical thinking is good for the following:

- Creating according to genres and patterns.
- Creating characters that are types or stereotypes.
- Making sure ideas are realistic.
- Checking that ideas are not clichéd or over the top.
- Working out what needs to be done.

Lateral thinking is good for the following quite different tasks:

- Coming up with new and unusual ideas.
- Coming up with lots of ideas.
- Finding the emotional core of an idea.

Six thinking hats

De Bono has six thinking hats, each one of a different colour for a different purpose. The idea behind the hats is to encourage particular types of thinking around an original idea.

Working with the six hats

Whether you are in an individual or group situation using the six hats, all thinking has to be determined by the colour of the hat. In a group, it might be a good idea to have a chairperson who manages the processes, perhaps by holding up a coloured card to indicate what thinking is being used. Most of the time is spent with the yellow, black and green hats. You will spend a smaller amount of time with the white hat. The red hat is often dealt with in brief bursts because emotions tend to change once they are spoken about for too long. The blue hat is for process/overview, and is only used when you are thinking about how you are using the six-hat method. The blue hat is used at the start and finish of the six hats sessions.

Table 17.1 De Bono's six hats of thinking. Putting on a hat of a different colour encourages a different type of thinking. Purposefully taking on a new perspective about an idea or problem forces you to think of alternatives.

HAT COLOUR	TYPE OF THINKING
Green hat	Creativity: • growth • new ideas • options
Yellow hat	Benefits: • logic • positive vision • feasibility
Blue hat	Overview: • control • decision • processes
Black hat	Critic: • risks • obstacles • caution
Red hat	Emotions: • feelings • hunches • intuition
White hat	Information: • facts • data

17.2 ACTIVITIES

1. **Experiment** with lateral thinking to come up with as many new and unusual ideas for your media text as you can think of. Lateral thinking will draw in all sorts of thoughts from outside sources.
   Choose three of the ideas from your lateral thinking to develop more fully using vertical thinking. Vertical thinking will 'flesh out' the idea, decide on genres and consider feasibility.
2. **Experiment** with new ideas in a small group by using the six thinking hats method to explore the possibilities of an idea you are considering for a media text. The six thinking hats method encourages parallel thinking. List all of the ideas people have while each hat is being used. Underline the best three for each thinking hat.

MAKING AND RESPONDING

FINDING YOUR STYLISTIC AESTHETIC

Literature, music styles, natural forms, traditional cultures and eras can steer screen productions in subtle, structural ways. Direct visual references can also be applied through shooting and post-production stylistics. Critics have grouped visual artists (such as painters) into movements according to styles, giving clear cues to identify influences.

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Getty Images/AFP/Piotr Wittman

Figure 17.6 Visual inspiration can be applied very literally, as in the world's first fully painted feature film, *Loving Vincent* (2017), by directors Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman. The film is based on Vincent van Gogh's life. Kobiela trained as a painter and says she listened to van Gogh's diary quote: 'We cannot speak, other than through our paintings.' Each frame in the film is an oil painting, executed in his distinctive style (as seen in van Gogh's *Self-portrait*,1889). The film narrative is an animation of 6500 still images.

Steps to your stylistic aesthetic

Stylistic productions can occur in film, documentary, animation or digital games as a result of deliberate decision-making by key personnel in the crew.

While some use the **director of photography** title interchangeably with cinematographer, the director of photography need not actually operate the camera and is assumed to have a level of control over the lighting provided by the **gaffer**. Just as a professional musician is able to play in various genres, a director of photography will alter their stylistic approach for the demands of a particular production.

Step 1: Experimentation and inspiration

Narrative films, documentaries, animations and digital games can all draw on the elements managed by directors of photography. Non-linear forms, such as virtual reality environments or free-range levels within digital games, may not have a fixed frame to communicate meaning – however, the placement and choice of virtual lighting and colours still contribute to meaning and mood.

Russell Boyd, director of photography, says his passion is lighting. He offers simple tips for would-be filmmakers:

- Know how each scene is placed within the larger story.
- Watch rehearsals.
- Use lighting choices to create the mood.
- Talk through the look with the director, as directors of photography and cinematographers may manage more or less of the mood, depending on how the director likes to work.

> 'A cinematographer is a person with technical expertise who manipulates light to transfer visual information by the use of a camera into aesthetic moving images, onto motion picture film or electronic recording systems.'
>
> Australian Cinematographers Society, cinematographer.org.au

Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 2

Figure 17.7 Inspiration – Frederick McCubbin, *Violet and gold* (1911), oil on canvas. According to the National Gallery of Australia, Australian painter McCubbin was heavily influenced by the French Impressionist Claude Monet's observation that 'Light is the chief sitter everywhere'. McCubbin produced many iconic works of the Australian landscape that helped romanticise the native bush.

ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.8 Experimentation – The film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) was visually inspired by the Australian Impressionist painters of the 1880s and 1890s. Known as the Heidelberg School, they painted the Victorian countryside. Russell Boyd, the director of photography, captured an ethereal quality to the light by using a bridal veil over the lens, proving that simple experimentation with a physical solution can be just as effective as the creative use of digital tools.

Step 2. Selecting for an aesthetic

Just because you can doesn't mean you should! Choose from your aesthetic repertoire to suit the project, as shown in the diversity of Russell Boyd's international successes and iconic Australian 'looks' in many films: *The Way Back* (2010), *Ghost Rider* (2007), *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003), *Liar Liar* (1997), *White Men Can't Jump* (1992), *Prisoners of the Sun* (1990), *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *Phar Lap* (1983), *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), *Starstruck* (1982), *A Town Like Alice* (1981), *Gallipoli* (1981), *The Last Wave* (1977) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975).

Boyd tells film students that he learnt from a director to 'use the frame to tell the story'. Composition and placement of objects are powerful means of communication. So too is control over lighting source and direction, camera frame rate and depth of field, colour and movement. Examples of Boyd's work can be seen in the following figures.

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Figure 17.9 Arrangement and location – In *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), the enchanted character of Miranda steals attention from the other cast, while several shots remind us of the mystery of the rock, looming large.

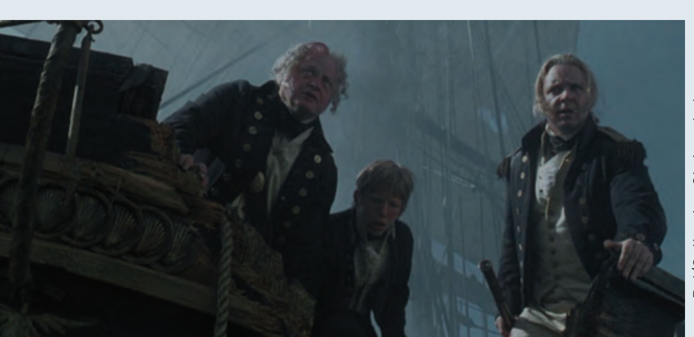
ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.10 Colour and *mise en scène* – In *Master and Commander* (2003), the near monochromatic frame, the use of the set and eyelines convey the perilous situation for the characters.

Alamy Stock Photo/Universal Archives GmbH

Figure 17.11 Depth of field and costume – In *Prisoners of the Sun*, also known as *Blood Oath*, military uniforms in combination with the blindfolds suggest an execution. With multiple characters in the frame, the question for the audience will be, 'Who is shot first?' or 'Who am I supposed to identify with?' In either case, the question is resolved by the technical answer of the depth of field offering a point of focus.

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 17.12 Diagonals and direction – More than just an aesthetic composition in *The Way Back*, the uphill march is into the direction of the burning sun and adds to the sense of struggle. The visibility and 'feel' of the sand is being affected by frame rate choice.

Academy Award–winner Boyd along with other cinematographers such as Dean Semler, John Seale, Andrew Lesnie and Donald McAlpine have had such prolific careers that they have shaped the look of international screens and the way Australia sees itself. Whether fictional or historic stories, the work of the cinematographer and their technical decisions have shaped the way we view the imagery of our country and the world, just as the work of other artists did before them. The powerful aesthetic tools are available to all filmmakers.

17.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Use visual art movements as a basis for stylistic experimentation. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	ANALYSE	SYNTHESISE
Construct a digital folder of still images from various art movements that feature obvious **conventions** and distinctive styles for you to **arrange** on a timeline within your **moving-image** editing program.	**Analyse** the **technical and symbolic codes** as they apply in the medium of the artwork (e.g. paint) as if you are a critic, **interpreting constituent parts** of the artwork and **evaluating** the overall impression of the work. Set up a reverse camera angle as if from the point of view of artwork on the gallery wall to record the critics' **judgements**.	**Synthesise** an arts review program segment by **combining** the still image **element** of the researched artworks with the filmed critical reviews to create a **moving-image media product** timeline. Discover a post-production **technical practice** (e.g. within editing tools) to impose a **creative** style on the video of the critics that matches the **creative** style of the art they are reviewing, e.g. Pointillism = extreme film grain. Colour, contrast and distortion should also be experimented with.

2 Locate and examine a number of well-known paintings by Frederick McCubbin. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

APPRAISE	EXPLAIN	APPLY
Appraise the works of McCubbin and their significance in romanticising the Australian landscape, systematically identifying objects that prompt the viewer to draw conclusions of an implied narrative in the works.	Explain the use of symbolic codes and conventions in the representation of the Australian natural landscape in outdoor scenes of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* or another film text featuring people, places or events in a pioneering Australian setting.	Apply literacy skills to communicate the common representations, visual elements and props you recognise in your selected film text from the works of McCubbin. Cite the appropriate McCubbin paintings with formal referencing in the written discussion of your scene/s.

3 Analyse the work of any one of the Australian directors of photography mentioned in this section. View trailers or short clips of their moving-image media work to examine technical codes they have employed. Consider which films have similar stylistics and make judgements about how you could group them together according to aesthetic criteria.

4 Explain technical and symbolic codes in a recent stylistic digital game, film or television project of your choice, using a table to produce a significant account of the production. Ideally, it should be a moving-image media product you enjoy or know well.

Your selected media production:	
TASK	PROMPTS FOR YOUR RESPONSE
Explain by recalling the concept for your chosen example.	*Give the scenario of 'the world' of the production and character circumstance.*
Explain by identifying a previous style, director or *auteur* as influencing the production.	*You could include a production* institution *as an influence.*
Explain by clarifying how the technical and symbolic codes communicate the scenario of that 'world' to the audience early in the text.	Technical codes*: units of meaning generated in shooting and post-production.* Symbolic codes*: units of meaning generated independent of production processes.*
Explain by recognising specific stylistic choices made in technical and symbolic codes, linking them to other contemporary or historical use.	*Direct references could include architecture, shot composition, costuming or a soundtrack.*
Explain by illustrating the portrayal of a person, place and event through linking each of the three with a sign, symbol or code and convention that generates meaning.	*Include a paragraph for each one.* Sign*: points to a meaning other than itself through a similarity.* Symbol*: does not resemble the thing it represents.* Convention*: techniques in a particular genre – i.e. ways of combining codes.*

Part B: Production for stylistic film

LIGHTING FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Photographs are time machines – a frozen moment captured from some time in the past. Originally, crystals of silver halide reacted chemically to photons of light; later **CMOS** (complementary metal–oxide–semiconductor) chips produce numbers in a computer processor to record images. These optical machines have a preferred range of light to work in. The limited brightness range of early moving-picture photography drove the glass-roof studio designs in France. The bright Hollywood sunshine helped to establish a home for US movies.

Meeting the functional range of a camera and lens combination is the first purpose of lighting. As sensitivity increased, experimenting on the extremes of that range helped artistry to develop. Lighting can set mood and also imply time and action off-screen. Much like framing, lighting can reveal *and* conceal – hiding objects within the frame and directing attention.

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The variable elements in lighting design are intensity, direction or quality, colour and source. Each element can be selected for artistic effect.

In the camera, **aperture** controls the amount of light passing through the lens, while the **shutter speed** determines how often the light is progressing out of the lens and entering the image area. Mechanically, dark filters of **neutral density (ND)** restrict the brightness of the light on its journey within the camera and, electronically, the **gain** (or **ISO**) boosts the image signal artificially.

'Painting with light' must be done with the camera in mind. There is a 'conversation' of **exposure** between light intensity and the seesaw of aperture and shutter speed. Gain, ND filters and the reflective quality of the objects to be filmed also need to be factored in. Lighting is not about the brightness the crew is standing in – it is a relationship with the recording and display devices.

Studios

Studio-based television often looks inferior to film as the lighting is compromised for multi-camera coverage on a fixed grid. Most cinematic productions use the single camera method, which allows each shot to be tailored for an individual filming position. Lighting can also be arranged for the best solution to that particular take.

Cameras do not respond to light like the human eye, so even an untidy garage can function as a studio by altering the lighting intensity and directional quality. Like exterior location filming, good risk management practice must be observed for safety.

Elements of lighting

Intensity

The dramatic difference between the images in Figure 17.14 is due to **contrast ratio** – not the light intensity itself, but the ratio of the intensity between the brightest and darkest areas. When the ratio is low, there is little difference in exposure between the background and the subject. Therefore, everything is visible. When the ratio is high, the vast difference means a correct exposure for the subject drops the background detail to nothing, thanks to the functional range of the camera. If the correct exposure for the dark background is selected, tools will be seen on the wall and the subject will be vastly overexposed.

Figure 17.14 (Top) Filming lights illuminate the walls and the camera reveals full detail. Dark-coloured cloths are secured over the brightest areas of reflection. (Bottom) Repositioning the light, using barn doors and reducing camera exposure to match the brightest object makes the background disappear: it is the same set with the same camera and lights, just pointed a different way.

High-key lighting

If the ratio of fill light to key light is close, with each contributing to a bright scene where details are very visible, it is considered **high-key** lighting. Often used in comedies and musicals, it carries a happy connotation through soft lighting with low contrast. This leads to fewer areas of black while mid-tones are brighter, so the lighter shades dominate. A physically higher lighting position is better able to hide shadows on the floor, perfectly suited to studio lighting grid set-ups with the camera at traditional eye-heights. High-key lighting brings with it less need for focus pulls and more need for makeup.

Low-key lighting

High-contrast ratios between lights that produce a sombre mood are known as **low-key** lighting. Areas of black dominate the frame in these subdued scenes of low light, made possible by grainy, fast films. Historically, they were stocks chosen for black-and-white news footage. Lower numbers of less powerful

lights make the production more portable, with cameras able to use low angles and even include the ceiling. Use of physically lower lighting points means the shadows are visible in the frame.

Chiaroscuro

Having a high ratio between the fill and the key light means the mid-tones drop away, often disappearing altogether if a single key light is used. This produces **chiaroscuro** lighting (high contrast, low key), named after the Italian words for 'bright' and 'dark or obscured'. Chiaroscuro lighting lends itself to defined shadows that can become the subject of the shot rather than the character. Strong side-lighting produces depth, and without the fill it creates a **tone drop-out** effect that is an exaggeration of the black-and-white film stock.

Light meters

Cinematographers use **light meters** to measure the amount of light. **Incident light rays** and **reflected light rays** are measured to determine the intensity of incoming light, and the reflected brightness of an object is measured to see if it will show up in the frame. Beyond a certain point, dark grey will become black.

Figure 17.15 Traditionally, light meters were analogue devices. Nowadays, light meter apps are available for smartphones to help judge the contributing intensity of each light.

Adjusting light intensity

With the lighting elements in place, the balance of object brightness will need to match the story-telling intention and support the recording of a good-quality image. To adjust light intensity, try the following:

- Choose a different-coloured object or a different-sized light.
- Adjust the **flood-spot** setting or brightness faders where the light has these controls.
- Pass the light through **scrim** or **spun**, or even point the light away and use a **bounce-board** to reflect it back.
- Alter the **barn doors** to change the amount of light spilling forward.
- Move the light in relation to the subject.

The change of intensity is governed by a rule from physics that applies to radiation and sound, the **inverse-square law**. This rule states that light intensity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the light source. This is written as $I \propto \frac{1}{d^2}$.

The inverse-square law is particularly useful for translating to cameras. Standard camera **f-stop** settings are f-16, 11, 8, 5.6, 4, 2.8, 2 and 1.4. Each f-stop allows twice the amount of light into the camera as the stop before it. The larger the number, the smaller the aperture, so the larger opening of f-11 will let in twice the light of f-16. The inverse-square law states that moving an object away from the light reduces intensity at a predictable rate. Going from

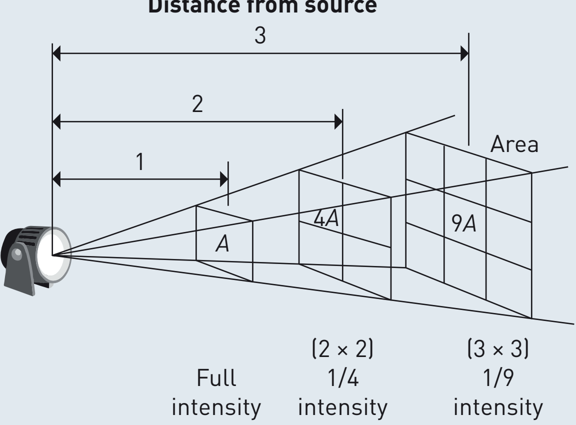


Figure 17.16 The light intensity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance. 2 × 2 = 4, so at 2 metres from its source the light intensity is one quarter of what it was at 1 metre from the source. 4 × 4 = 16, so at 4 metres from its source the light intensity is one sixteenth of the 1-metre intensity.

a gap of 1 metre to a gap of 2 metres will produce one quarter of the intensity. That equates to half of a half, which fits very neatly with the f-stops. If only that single light is being used, the camera needs to adjust two f-stops when the light is moved away. No matter which f-stop setting it starts on, doubling the distance needs a two-stop adjustment.

Therefore, adjusting the distance (with due respect for the hot lights) is an effective way to adjust intensity, particularly at close quarters.

Directional quality

Quality of light refers to the softness or single-point harshness. This can be grouped with direction of light. Having many harsh lights close together produces a softness as they fill in for each other, like the effect of lighting a stadium. Most **LED (light-emitting diode)** panels are just a series of lights very close together. As a result, LED panels have a limited application. They produce soft light with low heat and power consumption, but they cannot concentrate the full intensity into a single beam.

Creative shadow manipulation is more suited to a single-point LED or a **tungsten** filament light, especially if a 'spot' adjustment can be used to produce sharp shadows. Relative distance from the light will also affect shadow sharpness, along with the size of the light-emitting surface.

Some strategies for adjusting intensity (such as scrim, spun, reflectors, barn doors and flood setting) also alter the quality of light because the apparent area of the light source is changed.

Three-point lighting is an effective starting point for direction of light, either for a glamorous look or to remove lights individually for mood. In addition to standard key, fill and backlights, consider some alternatives:

- **Ring lights**. Wrinkles on a model's face can be eliminated with a light that surrounds the lens. Coming from the same angle as the camera fills in the texture, which looks flattering.
- **Catch lights**. Lights can be placed to create a sparkling highlight in the subject's eyes when taking close-ups. Catch lights are often evident in pupil reflections.
- **Ceiling bounce**. One powerful light can soften all of the shadows with a gentle fill from the overhead reflection.
- **Hair light**. A backlight trained specifically on one character's position will define them and increase background separation. This can be from a low placement, or sometimes as a top light, relying on shine.
- **Rim light**. A backlight above and behind the subject illuminates the majority of the figure or object for visual separation of backgrounds and objects.

Colour

Emotion, time and location aspects are communicated through colour. Measured in the Kelvin scale, the colour temperature of location lights depends on the chemical element involved. Streetlights can use a variety of materials to produce light of different colour temperatures: sodium vapour (yellow), mercury (green), xenon (blue), halogen (white) and fluorescents (purple or greenish).

Lights for filming must have a consistent colour across scenes. The two standard settings are tungsten and daylight. Many types of **bulbs** are available in 'daylight', which is a bluish colour of 5600 K. Tungsten lamps are quite orange, around 3200 K, which corresponds to the indoor setting on cameras for the warmer orange light. Cameras can be programmed to recognise white according to the lighting condition they are in. The automatic function of white balance is normally very effective in responding to the light colour. Situations that mix different colours of light can create a problem. The camera may make a compromise or have to adjust from shot to shot. Locations with mixed light colour call for manual control of the white balance.

Shutterstock.com/kondrukhov

Figure 17.17 The physics of light determines its behaviour. Blue light is more easily refracted, giving it more punch than other colours for backlighting. Conversely, warmer light tends to travel straighter, explaining why yellow is the best colour for fog lamps and streetlights in misty areas. The longer wavelength of red light is not as easily bent, but the shorter wavelength of blue light is more easily scattered as it passes through the smoke.

Exteriors in shaded areas tend to look bluer from the reflected skylight. Under large trees, the yellower light direct from the sun is screened out, while the blue bounces in from surrounding sky. Colour temperature also varies with the amount of cloud cover, time of day and latitude.

A solution for mixed colours when filming indoors is to exclude all daylight by drawing curtains. Professionals may also use orange-tinted **85a** or **85b filters** to wrap the windows. The colour of the light outside is changed to match tungsten by using the orange film. More commonly, lighting inside is matched to daylight. Blue filters can be pegged over tungsten lights to match the outside, and LEDs can be dialled to the blue setting. The decision to turn on domestic lighting may add little useful light. It may depend on the colour temperature of the lamps matching the desired look for the scene.

Post-production allows for subtle white balance adjustments and outlandish colour tints to be added. However, the effect of this is different from adjusting lights on location. Exaggerated colours can be applied to individual lights using 'party **gels**' of strong colour pegged to barn doors.

Colour reflection from green-screen studio walls can ruin the digital effect by discolouring whites and reflective surfaces, spoiling the sharp edge of the masking. **Magenta** gels can be used, sometimes called a **negative green**, to counter the unwanted reflected colour.

Lighting sources

Variable light sources (such as the sun on a partially cloudy day, moving shadows from wind in trees, or shifting patches of light as the sun moves) can disrupt the consistency of takes. Changes in light can be disguised by using a scrim over the subjects. **Sail cloths**, **silks** and **grifflons** are large-format lighting **diffusers** for exteriors.

Additive lighting

Directing a light source into darker areas is referred to as **additive lighting**. This is the conventional way to draw out details with light. Lamps that contribute light from within the frame are referred to as 'practicals', but they are often not bright enough to make a useful contribution. Additional lights may be carefully aimed to boost the output of a practical. Fireplaces are also relatively dim, and reverse shots of fireside faces often need to be creatively boosted.

Subtractive lighting

When the source light is too uniform, flags or cutters can be used to cast shadows. This is called **subtractive lighting**. Sometimes taking light away may be desirable. If a black cutter is used near a face, it creates a 'negative bounce' – absorbing light from one side to bring direction to a diffuse light source, increasing modelling and texture.

Selective blocking of light

Light can also be selectively removed from directional sources to help them blend with the set. **Cookie boards (cucoloris)** create patterned shadows from stencils mounted on clamps such as a **C-stand**. *Film noir* is well known for the symbolic use of venetian blind shadows that are easily simulated through lighting design, even without a window.

Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection/20th Century Fox

Figure 17.18 Technically, the Bat Signal is a **gobo** (not a cookie board). A gobo is placed on the light and is intended to create a more precise shape with the light. At the same time, a **snoot** wraps around the whole beam to contain the outer edge.

Day for night

Imitating night can also be enhanced with selective blocking. The technique is used to allow cameras to work in a preferred light level, but it can look very artificial. Exposure can always be darkened in post-production and have extra blue added, as long as there is an adequate image to work with. Images should not be severely underexposed at the shooting stage. Some filmmakers advise only shooting on overcast days, but direction of the sun is more of an issue than cloudy or sunny conditions.

> 'Many game designers vary light contrast and colors to direct the participant's attention to important artifacts. Such lighting effects may indirectly affect participants' choices and actions.'
>
> **Magy Seif El-Nasr and Ian Horswill**, in their paper on Expressive Lighting Engines for games

High contrast is not a problem (and it often looks more convincing without mid-tones), but overhead sunlight is difficult to disguise.

Editing the colour balance and contrast is useful, but doubling up on daylight gels and party gels on the actual film lights is very effective for close shots.

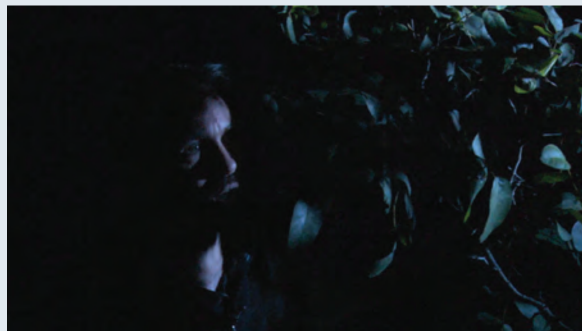


Figure 17.19 An actual piece of tree foliage used to cast a shadow is known as a **dingle**. Its pattern has many uses on set including high contrast shadows for night shots.

Lighting style

Expressive lighting

Hyperbole can be used in lighting. A ridiculously perfect rim light around an action hero is part of the language that the audience accepts. Perfectly manufactured, overly glamourous imagery is common, but is a version of expressive lighting. Many chase scenes and show-downs take place under flashing lights, cascading sparks and rotating spotlights. These industrial grunge sets are also expressive, exaggerating the mood of the action.

Expressiveness is also achieved through the overly minimal lighting of the *film noir* chiaroscuro.

Quirky and abstract lighting can work like a German Expressionist set, drawing attention to its own exaggerated form.

Expressive lighting can also be very realistic and still have an aesthetic purpose. A character turning off a practical lamp at a moment of defeat accentuates the dramatic aspects. This is a meaning beyond the task of producing illumination, yet it is realistic imagery.

Naturalistic lighting

Sensitive cameras have allowed the amount of light needed on set to fall over the decades. Natural light can often be the primary source, making it very difficult for viewers to see that lighting has been added to the scene. Many filmmakers and advertisers are very interested in manufacturing a look of authenticity, and naturalistic lighting reinforces this. Less studio-looking studio lighting can also be generated by tactics such as allowing actors to walk through holes in the lighting, passing through shadows as they move, not providing rim lights for all positions, using light sources that are justified from within the frame by windows or practicals, and having shadows that are cast from props themselves.

17.4 ACTIVITIES

1 **Experiment** with the range of aperture settings needed for **moving-image media** equipment to keep consistent exposure at various distances.
   - Locate a room and set up a camera aimed at a piece of paper.
   - Set up the brightest single light you have, or set a reflector in daylight from a window. Place the paper 1 metre from the light source.

- Framing only on the paper, adjust the camera's settings (shutter speed, ISO and so on) to set the aperture to the highest number f-stop possible for a correct exposure **in the context**. Note the settings of the camera.
- Use a tape measure to **discover** and record the furthest distance the paper can be moved from the light source within the room.
- With other settings constant, refer to the inverse-square law to **solve the mathematical problem** of calculating the new f-stop required at the furthest point in the room while maintaining correct exposure for the paper.

2 **Construct** a **moving-image media** shot in *film noir* style.
   - **Design** a cookie board from assembled objects at even spaces, or cut strips in card to simulate a venetian blind cookie board.
   - Recreate the *film noir* **convention** of an actor looking out through the blinds. Position a light to cast shadows into the scene.
   - Place the camera to disguise the lack of a genuine window and record some action.
   - Add some lines of voice-over and appropriate music for a 1940s **moving-image media** product.

3 **Explain** the lighting **features** of three still advertising **images** and the **practices** in production.
   Identify the light sources used to illuminate the images.
   Present the three ads in a way that allows lights to be drawn in position outside the frame.
   Mark all light sources within the frame and indicate the **characteristics** of each light according to the four elements of lighting. Where possible, list technologies used.
   Demonstrate understanding by identifying use of known lighting conventions.

4 **Experiment** with the three-point lighting **convention**.
   Refer to page 36 for three-point lighting information and a diagram guide.
   Lock the camera in position and record a **moving-image media** experiment with three individual lights on independently.
   Film again with each light off, **trying out** the combinations two lights at a time.
   Edit the footage in a series of jump cuts that displays the full **variety** of combinations of the three lights.

5 **Experiment** with lighting **methods** to solve the reverse-engineering **problem** of replicating the thumbnail images in Figure 17.20 using a **variety of techniques**. Record the images you reproduce, including 'behind the scenes' shots for each set-up.

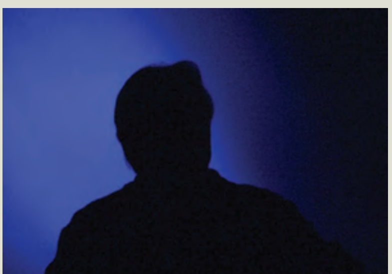


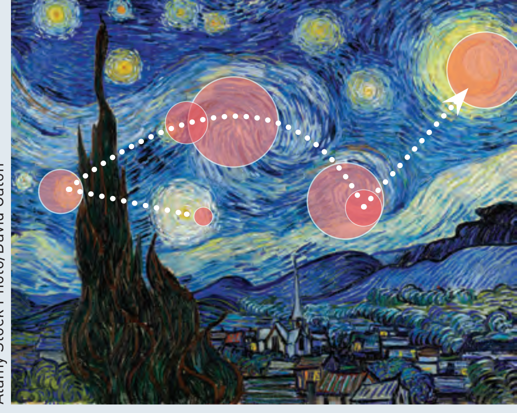
Figure 17.20

SHOOTING TECHNIQUES FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Excluding selected parts of the 'real world' is a critical planning step, particularly for location shooting. For stylistic productions, the *mise en scène* must reveal and conceal according to the era, mood and logic underpinning the moving-image media sequence (see chapter 5). This key determinant may limit where the camera can be pointed.

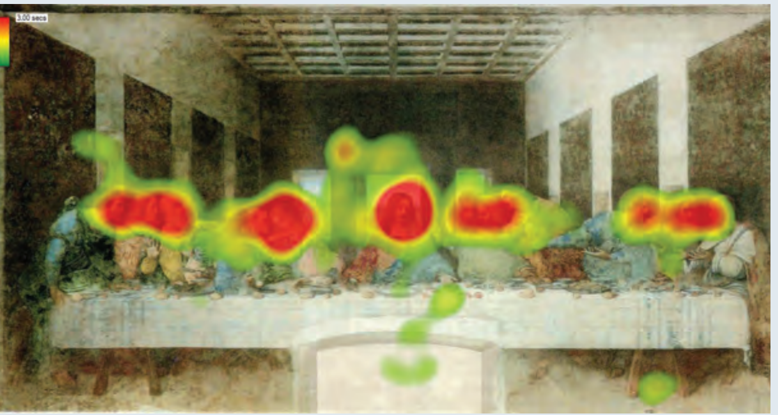
Composition and framing

Placement within the frame and the power of the visual interest will manipulate your audience. Technology used by the advertising industry reveals why classical composition has been effective in directing attention. We look to the areas of interest with a western world's left-to-right tendency. 'Reading' of images happens so fast it is considered involuntary.



Alamy Stock Photo/David Caton

Figure 17.21 Eye-movement tracking of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889) indicates that viewers look to the brightest star and begin to think about stars as a concept, according to Gufran Ahmed, data scientist and researcher at Jazan University. We then preferentially look to the left of the composition to find a connecting idea (other stars) and begin reading that idea along leading lines.



Tobii AB

Figure 17.22 Faces are magnets for attention. Eye-movement tracking of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci demonstrates the power of characters in composition. Viewers look to all of the faces but spend the most time on the central face of Jesus, even looking to his eyeline and gesture. Key product information can be placed in such areas for commercially motivated images.

Compositional strategies

Visual artists refer to the elements and principles of design to analyse a still image. Many of those elements and principles apply to moving images. The most relevant aspects can be grouped together as a set of filming strategies for interesting composition.

Intersections

- **Converging lines.** A focal point can draw the eye initially, sparking the first pass of the image and then a second or third circuit in which greater detail is absorbed. In Figure 17.22, the perspective lines reinforce the centrality of Jesus in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (c. 1490s).
- **Diagonals.** A straight line becomes a diagonal through perspective and camera placement or by tilting the camera for a Dutch angle (see page 24). Any oblique angle will tend to add energy and dynamism. Verticals tend to look elegant and horizontals restful.
- **Rule of thirds.** The well-known compositional technique produces a pleasing result as it almost automatically creates emphasis and balance. It can infer a diagonal relationship even if one is not visible between objects on intersections of opposite thirds (see chapter 2, page 27). When using the thirds rule, it must be adjusted to suit the aspect ratio of the medium – however, this is a rule that can be broken.

Alamy Stock Photo/2929 Productions

Figure 17.23 Bisected composition. A strong horizon line can make a shot look like a flag with two distinct zones battling for dominance. If a visual bridge is provided by an object or a movement, it can be a refreshing experiment. In *The World's Fastest Indian* (2006), the motion of the vehicle and character acts as an attention gateway, drawing the eye and spanning the distinct halves. The flightpath of a bird or an inanimate visual ladder can achieve a similar bridging effect.

Relationship

- **Balance.** The suggestion of an even frame does not only come from obvious symmetry. One small object can create an equal match for an apparently larger object through strength of colour and the illusion of mass or density. This can be further complicated by the suggestion of distance and knowledge of the object.
- **Asymmetry.** Tension or anxiety in the audience may be heightened by using an unbalanced asymmetrical composition. A balanced asymmetry will be less disturbing, but still adds energy to traditional balance.
- **Negative space.** Empty spaces 'want' to be filled. This can increase anticipation, or even isolation and disappointment in longer takes. These 'holes' between objects can provide looking space for an eyeline, movement space for characters and objects, or an invitation for another character to appear. They can also provide opportunity for audiences to project a conceptual idea such as thinking space, or an escape from the physical scene the character is placed in.
- **Frame within a frame.** Depending entirely on the relative placement of the camera, this technique requires an imaginative eye to take advantage of the possibilities. Filmmakers must not settle for the first view that they have of the location. A walk through the whole 360 degrees of the 'set' gives an opportunity to recognise what the location provides. High and low vantage points should be explored before determining what to add to the scene.

ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.24 Others have filmed this hole in Utah – yet, in *Baraka* (1992), even the time of day adds to the compositional elements. This shot makes use of diagonal, rule of thirds, asymmetrical balance, depth, complementary colours, mass, and frame within a frame, within a frame, within the frame.

Distance

- **Claustrophobic frames.** Lack of space between characters and the frame hides information from the audience. Suspense is built by the viewer's desperation to see what threatens the character. Audiences are forced to 'look around the next corner' only at the rate permitted by the filmmaker. Digital games can achieve the effect via placement of walls, portals and other objects. First-person play can also be unnerving if the field of view does not provide adequate warning of hazards. In a romance scene, this close framing may provide intimacy – however, if an extremely restricting frame lingers, it can become a threat.
- **Perspective.** Wider angle lenses and straight lines emphasise perspective difference between the foreground and the distance. Placing the camera close to a wall surface or an object can achieve a similar result, exaggerating the size difference, even on a mid-range lens setting.
- **Low angle.** Placing the camera low is the classic way to convey a powerful subject. It can also increase the feeling of distance by capitalising on the perspective distortion of a floor, or to allow an open sky to dominate the frame.

Camera movement and motivation

- **Leading lines.** Like arrows on a sign, the eye is drawn to follow a branch, a horizon line or a road. Audience attention is directed along these lines. When the frame is moving, these directional elements can provide the reason for a **motivated move**, initiating a pan, tilt or crane. Audience attention is again following the lines, but in a controlled reveal. These motivated movements tend to work the same way that a viewer naturally wants to follow a character that moves, or the desire to follow an eyeline that strays off-screen.
- **Three-dimensionality.** Layering objects in the foreground, midground and background ensures a perception of depth. Distance is emphasised by differing shades of colour in the layers and by manipulating focus. Dolly and tracking shots can be accentuated by dressing the set with objects at varying distances from the lens so that the differential speeds draw attention to the motion of the camera. A series of objects or perforations allow for a continual sense of movement more than large, solid objects obscuring the background.

Compositional strategies work together

Each of the compositional strategies can guide the formation of an artistic frame – more as ingredients than absolute rules. Unlike painting and photography, which are trapped by time, the moving-image media are freed from being frozen. They are able to move in and out of these compositional recipes as the shot progresses.

A game or virtual reality environment may be designed to provide a certain vista through an opening as an invitation to the next challenge, or perhaps the player may happen to align with the virtual objects through chance.

Television, film and animation have an aesthetic advantage: the audience is forced to endure the duration of the shot. Each one of these artistic features can occur at the start, middle or end of a moving frame. The linear narrative filmmaker knows that even if a shot is ugly, it can be saved by ending on an inspired composition through moving the characters, objects or the camera. A shot can be awkward and even improvised mid-take if it is bracketed by beauty at each end.

Camera movement equipment

Skateboards and wheelie-bins have often been employed at great risk to the equipment and the filmmaker in pursuit of a moving shot. Safe methods for moving camera shots include **tri-dolly** (clip-on tripod castors), **pipe dollies** constructed from angled skateboard trucks, **Steadicams** to increase stability through camera inertia, and full-scale film dollies that can carry a camera operator and focus puller. Even a tabletop in a restaurant can provide a crude dolly track if a camera **slider** is not available. A **sink dolly** can be made with a towel under the camera to reduce friction when moving it on a kitchen bench.

In-built image stabilisation on cameras and phones reduces the need for equipment in some circumstances, but digital stabilising can sacrifice quality and produce noticeable frame lag. 'Warp stabilisers' within editing tools iron out bumps, as does slow motion, providing the 'strobe' of individual frames does not become obvious. Deliberate frame drift can be a stylistic decision that often conveys realism or 'being in the moment'.

In *Au pays des mages noirs* (*In the Land of the Black Magi*, 1947), Jean Rouch's wandering frame captures the frenzied villagers looking possessed. The handheld effect became a matter of philosophical choice for Rouch, and influenced the French New Wave (see page 392) and such films as *Cloverfield* (2008), *Black Swan* (2010), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and the choreographed long take near the climax of *Children of Men* (2006).

Vertical movement can be achieved with **jib arms**, cable suspended rigs, **cherry pickers**, helicopters and drones. Motion to start the rising or falling movement is not always smooth and may need to be trimmed out of the shot. A small, handheld crane up with the human body can be as spectacular as a large movement if the foreground is thoughtfully dressed to amplify the movement.

Figure 17.25 Many accessories are available to stabilise filming on a whole range of domestic and professional equipment. Avoiding tripods may create the illusion of less work through faster set-ups. However, this time will often be more than consumed in the processing of footage or simply identifying a frame to cut on that does not produce a directional jump.

> 'I had lost my tripod early on in some rapids and didn't know how to shoot ...'
>
> **Jean Rouch**, the pioneering French filmmaker described shooting his documentary in Africa

ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 17.26 (a) *Citizen Kane* (1941), directed by Orson Welles. The sign was constructed to come apart during a crane shot, creating a gap for the camera after the lens had passed through. Long continuous takes with a combination of choreographed movements can create an epic feel. (b) The problem of camera movement into a confined space can now be solved with a GoPro and a boom pole.

Joining camera moves

'Morphing' is a computer-assisted method for joining two shots by gradually altering the shape of objects. Striking results are produced by mixing one human face with another, famously used for Michael Jackson's 'Black or White' (1991) music video, but the technique can also be used to connect individual shots as one. Directors who desired extremely long takes were once limited by the length of film that could be loaded into a magazine, meaning the shot would run out at a predetermined time. The 'invisible cut' was a solution. Actor movements could be contrived to enter a pitch-black lift or block the camera by walking to the lens with a dark jacket. The moment of black could be used to reload the film and produce a seamless cut. *Birdman* (2014) uses this technique as well as zip pans and digital object wipes to create continuous shots.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) gives the impression of a much longer take between two complicated moving camera set-ups in different rooms. As the camera leaves the famous shower scene to focus our attention on the newspaper, a cut is hidden in the black-and-white tone of the wall. Another example can be found in Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). Panning at a constant speed gives the impression of a single move, and is easily executed with some planning and a softening dissolve.

Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 17.27 *Poseidon* (2006), directed by Wolfgang Petersen. Individual shots can be blended with digital imagery to create stunning moves. Industrial Light and Magic worked a computer render farm for a week to process the 4000 frames of fluid dynamics and a completely digital ship. Compositors used hundreds of layers on *Poseidon's* opening sequence.

Visual metaphor and figurative use of imagery

Figurative imagery is when the visuals in the frame make a statement about a connected concept that we cannot actually see. In literature, figurative writing refers to something beyond the literal. Devices such as metaphors, similes, hyperbole, symbolism and personification add layers of inferred interpretation. Screen language is able to use the equivalent of these to create a kind of 'figure of speech' that has a meaning beyond the literal words or shots themselves.

Metaphor is created when the audience understands the similarity between two different concepts. 'All the world's a stage' is a metaphor by William Shakespeare. It can easily be a simile by substituting '*is* a stage' for 'is *like* a stage.' On screen, the difference between metaphor and simile could hinge on the force of the connecting transitions.

> 'The image-maker proposes food for thought without stating any determinate proposition. A visual metaphor is a device for encouraging insights, a tool to think with.'
>
> **Noel Carroll**, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*

Table 17.2 Figurative language and suggested screen equivalents. While simile and metaphor can play a very direct role in making meaning, other devices may be employed to create a connection that is relatively shallow but improves visual flow.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE		LITERARY DEFINITION	SCREEN EQUIVALENT
Common examples	Simile	Finds common aspects of two different things by saying one is 'like' the other.	Cutting between shots of two different subjects that are connected in some way.
	Metaphor	An imaginative claim that one thing 'is' another, made clear by common aspects of the two.	Cutting between shots of two distinct subjects using a graphic match in the transition to force direct comparison.
	Hyperbole	An extreme exaggeration to draw attention.	Using extreme shot sizes (such as ECU) and extreme camera angles (such as extreme HCA). Also using slow motion.
	Symbolism	An object or event represents something other than itself.	Motifs with internal story meaning of an image with external cultural readings, e.g. a flag at half-mast represents mourning a death.
Further examples	Alliteration	Starting consecutive words with the same sound.	Consecutive shots with different versions of the same kind of object, e.g. different makes of helicopters.
	Anaphora	Repeating the same word(s) to begin each clause.	Consecutive shots with the same direction and speed of camera or object movement.
	Antithesis	Two opposing ideas brought together.	Juxtaposition of contrasts such as safety and danger, rich and poor, or complementary colours.
	Assonance	Similar vowel sounds in the middle of consecutive words.	A particular colour theme embedded in a series of props, costumes or landscapes.
	Euphemism	Using substitute expressions to avoid content that may offend.	Clichés function as accepted vocabulary, such as cutting to fireworks after an extended kiss.
	Onomatopoeia	Words that describe sounds by approximately imitating them.	Overlapping scene audio that synchronises with action from the other scene.
	Oxymoron	Terms that do not normally sit together, such as 'seriously funny'.	Characters and objects in incongruous settings, such as a Surrealist dream.
	Paradox	Self-contradictory statements such as 'fighting a war for peace'.	Contrapuntal sound, presenting an opposing emotion in the vision and the audio.
	Personification	Human qualities are used to describe inanimate objects.	Animation of various forms.
	Synecdoche (a form of metonymy)	One small sample of an activity or object represents the whole.	Close-ups without connective establishing shots, e.g. train wheels turning on the tracks represent the entire journey.

Figure 17.28 This shot is halfway through a dissolve between a shot of the radio telescopes and a second shot of a pair of hands offering a bowl with an antique book in it. The exact placement of the similarly shaped telescope dish and bowl force the audience into a direct comparison of the ideas in each image. The open hands suggest receiving something by offering the bowl. The book seems old and precious, possibly religious. The radio telescope is facing directly up to collect technical information from outer space. The elements suggest a metaphor to the audience – that technical searches for significance in the universe are also spiritual searches. The closely matched alignment of the visual elements help push beyond simile into metaphor, visually arguing that one concept *is* the other.

Digital support for the metaphor

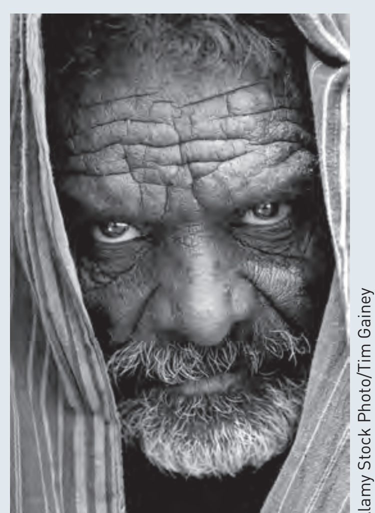
The 2005 version of *War of the Worlds* features a series of **graphic matches** that play with scale. One graphic match transition seems to say, 'one rain drop *is* a whole world of its own', and this is key to the plot. Without the metaphor, that's just one big leaf! Unlike in the famous graphic matches of Stanley Kubrick and Alfred Hitchcock, a high degree of accuracy in size and placement is achieved digitally.

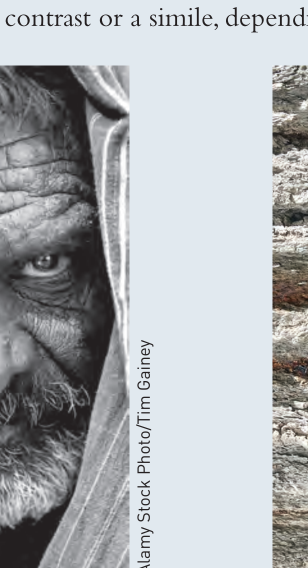
Figure 17.29 Shots can be zoomed, stretched and dragged to perfectly match an object of any scale. The giant 'X' sculpture behind the crowd in Mexico, as shown on the screens, can be aligned with an X from a naughts-and-crosses tabletop game. Key frames can be added to animate a moving graphic match during dissolves and pans.

Complicated graphics are not always needed to create a metaphor. *Parenthood* (1989) features a simple sound effect followed by a swaying motion of the camera as a father feels he has lost control. The analogy of a rollercoaster ride is clear in the scene from the technical codes. The power of the rollercoaster as a symbolic metaphor comes from an earlier monologue in the film that establishes Grandma's wisdom that 'life is like a rollercoaster'. Juxtapositioning of audio and a bland *mise en scène* can also produce sophisticated metaphor without graphic spectacle.

Shooting for metaphor and simile

Screen language dictates that consecutive shots are initially assumed to be related. This can create a contrast or a simile, depending on which way





Alamy Stock Photo/Tim Gainey

Figure 17.30 Rotating the frame of the tree bark in post-production makes the horizontal lines match the elderly person's forehead furrows. Choosing the high-contrast image of the bark is also hyperbole, exaggerating texture and strengthened by the horizontal orientation.

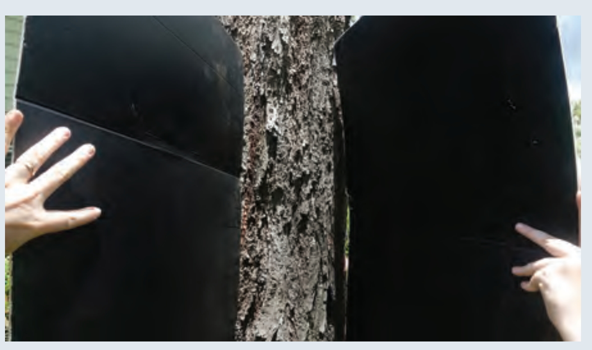


Figure 17.31 (Right) White bounce-boards will reflect daylight to soften the contrast and produce a 'nicer' image of the bark. However, to maximise the harsh texture, reflectors are not desirable. (Left) Using black cutters reduces sideways spill light by absorbing the bounce to turn the sun into a single-point key light. This increases the contrast and texture to create the exaggeration.

the audience goes. Therefore, it is important to manipulate images for similarity if the intention is to create a visual metaphor.

Technical and symbolic codes must support the preferred reading. The juxtaposition of ageing human skin and tree bark implies a connection of longevity – perhaps experience or wisdom through personification of the tree. Keeping the same colour and tones is suggesting the images sit together in a cohesive visual sentence, but the high contrast lighting creates a stronger link. The same patch of bark looks quite different due to planned location lighting to support the metaphor.

For documentary, figurative imagery is often used in the dramatisations of events. This could be slow shutter speeds to create a blur of memory, or creative use of focus. When the audience engages with nonfiction moving-image media, it carries great emotive power. There is less need for extreme visual hyperbole or flamboyant technical manipulation.

The controversial portrayal of the town of Cunnamulla in Dennis O'Rourke's documentary *Cunnamulla* (2000) concludes with a shot at the rail siding. Characters discuss lack of opportunity for them in the town and talk of leaving for Brisbane, 800 kilometres down the track. The final frames literally show the sun setting at the end of the rail line. This metaphor for their future is constructed by a creative selection of *mise en scène* on location.

Using symbolism

Symbols represent a meaning that has been translated from another context. The connection between the symbol and the meaning is constructed rather than natural. Written language is a set of agreed symbols that refer to spoken language, not because every letter looks like a sound it represents, but because there is an accepted system of meaning for each symbol on the page.

Relying on clichés and stereotypes is not all negative. It is an efficient way of communicating a common meaning that can save valuable screen time. These elements can then be combined in novel ways to explore less predictable layers of meaning.

Symbols that rely on external, cultural elements can provide a pre-programmed interpretation, although audience knowledge and age can disrupt or blunt the intended meaning. A raised fist may be a sign of triumph or resistance to many, but not all may be aware of Nelson Mandela using it in South Africa as a victory salute. History students may recognise the Nazi mass rally references in *Star Wars,* where others will just see a disciplined military scene.

In a factual film, it is straightforward to link a smoke stack with pollution as a direct symbol. However, more narrative work within a screen text would be needed to illustrate a connection with specific birth defects or an internal health problem that does not have an obvious visual outcome.

If the meaning of a symbol is entirely established within the world of the film, the plot must carefully build this understanding through various contexts to ensure audience members have a shared understanding of the symbol. *Inception* (2010) establishes a totem associated with each character as a reality check on their journey through dreams. The audience is taught the entire meaning of this simple prop symbol within the narrative of the movie.

Abstract elements

Purely abstract visual art relies only on the elements of the work – the intention being to bypass references to objects in the real world. For example, abstract art can force the audience to respond to combinations of blue and white instead of a literal sky with clouds.

Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 2

Figure 17.32 Piet Mondrian's *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow* (1930). Mondrian was not trying to represent a map or a particular object, rather he was exploring the relationship between the colours and the illusion of mass from their placement – elements also found in moving frames.

Film editors can identify connecting visual themes in seemingly random **rushes**. Found footage or unstructured filming still present suggestions of a rhythm than can be accentuated through selection and repetition. Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles* (1952) seems a chaotic 'abstract expressionist' painting without a topic, selected by critics as a good example of the movement. Modern analysis of the image has revealed that there are smaller paint splatters that resemble the shapes on the larger scale – an example of fractals, which are found in nature and defined in mathematics. This may explain the appeal it has over another random collection of splatters. The subject of the painting is the paint – the colour, the rhythm, the depth and patterns that have built up.

Abstract screens

An Andalusian Dog (1929), also known as *Un Chien Andalou*, is a film by Luis Buñuel with collaboration from Salvador Dalí. It was a Surrealist production that goes some way to being an abstract film. Previously, in 1924, the Dadaist Fernand Léger produced a film that relied heavily on filmmaking techniques to capture audience interest. *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) repeats a limited number of images to the point that they cease to add new information. The film then becomes about the rhythm of the

Blue Poles, 1952 (oil, enamel, aluminium paint & glass on canvas), Pollock, Jackson (1912-56) / National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Purchased 1973 / Bridgeman Images. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation/ARS. Copyright Agency, 2018

Figure 17.33 Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, oil, enamel, aluminium paint and glass on canvas. In 1973, the Australian Government controversially paid $1.3 million for one of Pollock's most famous works. In 2016 it was valued at $350 million.

edits, the motion of the camera, and the random kaleidoscope patterns that have no literal meaning at all – like true abstract art.

Experiments in purely abstract film do not usually enjoy commercial success. Mainstream films risk being considered self-indulgent if the innovation is perceived as overly experimental. The 'light journey' in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) by Stanley Kubrick had a narrative excuse for the abstract segment. It also contrasted with a highly realistic portrayal of the future in other scenes. The special effects tapped into a 1960s mood for experimentation and a fascination for psychedelia.

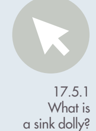
Video- and computer-generated artworks are often found in modern art galleries. They will commonly emphasise the elements of the mediums (brightness, movement, colour, edits) over the importance of depicting objects. But even in a gallery setting, the representational imagery and abstraction are likely to work together.

17.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Compositional strategies. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	EXPERIMENT	ANALYSE
Construct a **systematic** collection of examples for each of the compositional strategies listed in this section using a still camera or locked-off tripod on an in-house excursion. **Arrange** the visual **elements** according to the described **conventions** as the priority for each of the strategies.	**Experiment** in groups of two or three with three compositions around your current **context**. Record a wider shot of a leading line within a static frame. Referring to eye-tracking research, **discover** where your audience is most likely to look within your three frames and mark on your images the likely points of **interaction** with audience attention. **Experiment** with the leading lines by using them as a cue for the alternative **technique** of directing attention in a closer **moving-image** 'motivated move' (e.g. pan, tilt or dolly). **Experiment** with an end point on the leading line that fulfils the **brief** of a natural end to the move, and place a product within view near that end point.	**Analyse** the **constituent parts** in the composition strategy of an image designed for the **purpose** of promoting a product, service or opinion. **Examine** the directing of audience attention and indicate the elements through a combination of explanatory text and markings on the image. **Analyse technical and symbolic codes** evident, and **consider** how they support the compositional strategy in the explanatory text. **Analyse** the success of the sum of these **techniques** in capturing the attention of a particular audience.

2 Three dimensions and movement. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.


17.5.1 What is a sink dolly?

EXPERIMENT	EXPERIMENT	EXPERIMENT
Experiment with two takes of a tabletop tracking shot using objects from your current **context**. Use the friction-reduction **method** of a camera on a jumper, carefully slid sideways to observe the apparent movement. Repeat the shot with props placed at **various** distances to **discover** what most accentuates movement of the benchtop **sink dolly**.	**Experiment** with **various** stabiliser **techniques** in a small group. Turn off the stabilising in your camera device and walk quickly but smoothly along a corridor. **Try out** the camera stabiliser by repeating the exact same motion. **Experiment** with a post-production warp stabiliser effect applied to both takes to **discover** which of the four **methods** gives the desired result.	**Experiment** in a group of three with a handheld crane from a personal possession on a tabletop to **discover** the identity of the owner at the end of a timed 5-second take. **Experiment** with a slow motion applied at 80 per cent. Calculate and film a take length to maintain 5 seconds of rendered footage. **Experiment** to determine at what percentage of speed reduction the individual strobe of frames is a **problem**. Calculate the real-time filming needed for a 5-second shot at the slowest acceptable speed.

3 Joining shots. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	EXPERIMENT	SYNTHESISE
Construct a list of **conventional** descriptions of camera movements that morph together to form the 2-minute above-water title shot for *Poseidon* (2006). **Construct** a list that **systematically** identifies the shot sizes the camera progresses through for each of the movements.	**Experiment** in groups of two or three with two tracking shots executed in front of objects of the same colour in different locations, such as doors. The **brief** is to fill the frame with the door at a certain point, and to have a constant speed for both shots. **Experiment** with cutting points in post-production to **try out** the illusion of connecting the spaces. **Experiment** with a variety of colour corrections and tints to **solve the problem** of different lighting for a seamless transition.	**Synthesise** a graphic match between two shots with one similar shape within the frame. **Solve the technical problem** of lining up the objects precisely, then dissolving between the shots.

4 **Symbolise** figurative language with a screen equivalent for your own context. List specific possibilities you could incorporate in your own production from the list in Table 17.2. Suggest further equivalents for rhyme and rhythm.

5 **Structure** a chain of abstract still photographs (like the game known as 'Chinese whispers') in a group. One person **selects** an interesting image or texture in extreme close-up, hiding the full context and adding some image treatment. The image is digitally shared with the next person who must find their own secret object to photograph with the **purpose** of obscuring the subject while creating a sympathetic response to the image they have been sent. Each image **systematically** builds on the previous one. **Sequence** the images in order and return to the first as a conclusion. Add a soundtrack to create an abstract **product** and debate what meaning or overall aesthetic has been generated.

6 **Experiment** with filming natural and manufactured shapes to **discover** fractal-like patterns repeated on different scales. Alternatively, create your own environmental sculpture on that principle using sticks, leaves or stones and film the fractal pattern as an abstract piece.

EDITING FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Montage editing

Musicians do not improvise guitar solos by striking a series of random notes at totally unpredictable times. Knowledge of the musical key and reference to timing is needed, even if broken up by the odd sliding note and some syncopated beats. Patterns must also be recognised in montage editing – choosing to repeat a blurred movement several times in a row or cutting in the middle of a movement to another.

Soundtracks can often provide motivation for a montage in stylistic and narrative production, illustrating a character's physical or emotional journey. Therefore, cutting to the beat of a song is a good option but it should not be overplayed. Just like sentence lengths in a paragraph, some variation is desirable. Colour may be used as a linking device to cue a cut between shots of the same colour, and movements provide natural points of exit. It can feel awkward if a motion is partially completed on a cut, unless that motion is continued in the next shot.

Generally, there should be a sense of completion for a shot or a series of linked shots. Montage editing is the art of making a series of jump cuts 'feel' cohesive. Over time, it is possible to develop an innate sense of an editor's rhythm.

Collision of images

Seamless cohesion for Hollywood-style continuity editing (see page 395) requires extra attention to particular details. Eyeline angles to the camera in most conversations should be relatively similar. If one subject is looking only 10 degrees off the **barrel of the camera**, the other end should mirror that angle in order to suggest that the camera is close to the line of action. It should suggest the viewer is turning their head on the spot as if observing from a similar camera

9780170423601

position. A 90-degree profile needs to be roughly reciprocated in the reverse shot of an eye-to-eye conversation, otherwise it is difficult to suggest they are in the one room. *The King's Speech* (2010) features reverse angles that share a reciprocated angle and lack of looking space, skewing the negative space away from the two lead characters. This keeps the shots connected in the one space and adds a sense of isolation from the world, with intensity towards each other.

Tripods should not be set up for the comfort of the camera operator. In a conversation, the taller character should be filmed from slightly below their eye height, even if the shot is not a point of view, and the reverse for the opposite character.

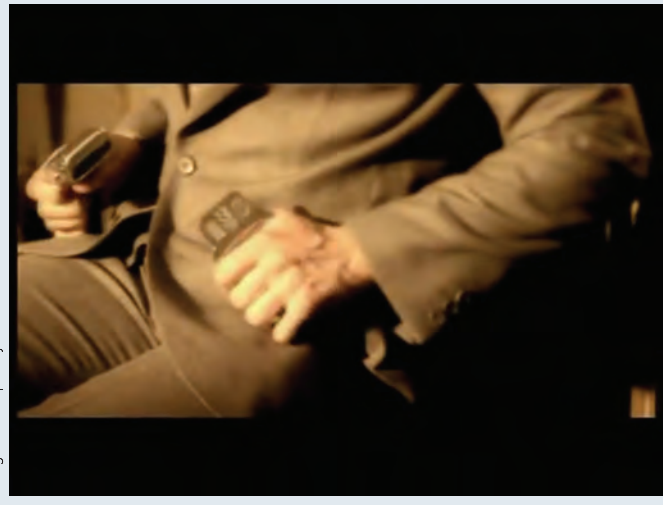
Differentiating or connecting locations can be supported by colour correction. **White balance** can be adjusted or a tint can be added to help the audience recognise (even subconsciously) the slight change in the atmospherics of the venue. Background sounds and **atmosphere tracks** will allow the audio to support this, adding a convincing polish to the collision of images.

Associative editing

Direct visual comparison via graphic matches and so on is not required if the audience's general knowledge can do the same work. Cutting from highly visible cigarette smoke to a bushfire creates a visual link that does not need to have a cause and effect via narrative – it can be just a connective device to improve visual fluidity.

Like the telling of a joke, the priming of an audience to receive the mental association between shots must be carefully planned in the set-up so the 'punchline' falls efficiently into place, even in stylistic productions. The Silverchair music video for 'The Greatest View' (2002) has a strong stylistic element throughout, and a shot near the end of a seatbelt fastening as the building shakes. The association of preparing for take-off is strong enough to justify the outrageous conclusion of the building blasting off like a rocket.

Dialogue or other audio can play a major role in generating associations. One example from a UK television crime production makes use of it in narrative to increase shock value without affecting the program rating. A discussion occurs between a detective and a forensic officer over a body just pulled from the river. '*Well, I suppose we will know more after the autopsy*', the detective says, as a close-up on the face shows a body bag zipping up. The abrupt shot change to the next scene is accompanied by a loud screeching noise when a saw penetrates bone and two halves of meat are pulled away. The mid-shot then reveals the unrelated character of the butcher, wrapping up meat in a delicatessen for the detective's dinner.



(Left and right) Photos from music video, Silverchair 'The Greatest View'. Directed by Sarah-Jane Woulahan and Sean Gilligan for Squareyed Films.

Figure 17.34 In an associative editing trick, the passengers buckle up airline-style seatbelts before the whole building lifts off from its Brisbane location. Looking like rockets from the outside, the 'Old Museum Building' sits firmly beside the current Ekka grounds.

(Left and right) ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 17.35 Graphic matches are not needed for viewers to understand that train passengers are sorted and processed in a similar way to chickens. Most audience empathy rests with the animals over the people in one of many associative editing examples from *Baraka* (1992).

Experimentations in production

If valuable things are discovered by chance, it is referred to as serendipity. These happy accidents can occur in the production process, and the observant filmmaker is able to respond creatively to discoveries.

Using mistakes

Out-takes should not be deleted. Unused takes can be reviewed for dream sequences, flashbacks or fight scenes. Accidental, frenetic movement that is out of focus can often provide effective quick-cut montage material or a transparent overlay in slow-motion to depict reminiscing.

Collaboration is valuable for recognising unintended potential in footage. Often the camera operator will only see their error, rather than a constructive use. Directors or writers can be so attached to a scene, based on the time already invested in setting up shots, they are not prepared to scrap it. This is a good argument for having an editor as a fresh eye – someone not emotionally attached to the effort on set.

The process of deletion is also experimentation. It could be switching off a dialogue soundtrack or removing an entire scene that does not progress the narrative. Professionally, these changes are facilitated by having scriptwriters on set to work on emergent changes to dialogue and having test audiences to rate different edited versions of a film.

Plan to experiment

Before a set-up is broken down, at least a sample of footage should be played back to check the quality of recording video and audio, especially for things not apparent such as mobile phone radiation interference with the audio recording. Another standard practice should be to record cutaway (and cut-in) footage from the scene that does not rely on continuity to allow flexibility in editing. Large crews have a second unit that can be tasked to film establishing shots and the general environs as cutaways while the main crew continues with the cast. The second unit may even shoot hand-double cutaways of defusing a bomb (for example), and their footage presents various solutions for telling the story.

Especially for expressive pieces, deliberate over exposure, recording 'on air' zip-zooms, hunting and re-framing, and focus pulls can all provide rich pickings for an editor prepared to find patterns and connections in such takes. Space on a memory card is cheap compared with the investment of time: maximise the visual resources from which to mine in post-production.

Do not let the technology take charge. Automatic functions have their place in certain situations – however, the creator of the image should be in charge of the equipment, not the other way around. Take manual control of focus points and exposure to direct audience attention and emotions.

> 'The camera thinks it knows what you want to focus on. But it doesn't know.'
>
> **Hooman Khalili**, director of *Olive*

Figure 17.36 One of the camera rigs for *Olive* (2011), assembled by the team after they deconstructed a 1940s film camera to solve the technical challenges themselves. Among the solutions was a final touch of attaching the phone with double-sided tape – a surprisingly basic solution for a film that cost just under half a million dollars to make.

The first film shot on a mobile phone to gain theatrical release was *Olive* (2011), filmed on a Nokia N8 smartphone. The makers of *Olive* modified the smartphone to disable the auto zoom and auto focus in order to take creative control. They tried to commission a bespoke camera construction from professionals, but had no takers. Team collaboration, reverse engineering and experimental creativity would have to do.

17.6 ACTIVITIES

1. **Synthesise** a short scene of a person entering a room, sitting at a table and having a discussion with one other character. Use all the relevant **practices** to **combine** separate shots in the Hollywood continuity style for a **moving-image product**. Use a clapperboard to mark the takes, but keep the camera running for the entire set-up of the shoot.
2. **Structure** an abstract sequence using only the out-takes between set-ups of the Hollywood style. **Make adaptations** to the cutting points, **selecting** footage for rhythm, colour and repetition, and **arranging** the **sequence** for abstract priorities, such as editor's rhythm, while and totally disregarding the narrative **purpose**.

Part C: Writing reflective statements for stylistic film

REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS

Reflection is a continual and vital part of the process of creating moving-image media products. Artists reflect on their work to evaluate which techniques supported their purpose and which processes were most effective at achieving desired outcomes, and suggest changes to improve future work.

A reflective statement is generally completed once the moving-image media product is finished, but it can be worked on throughout the creation process. To write a reflective statement, it is important that you, as the artist:

- summarise a project workflow used to create your moving-image media project
- describe stylistic ideas
- describe experimentation with languages and conventions
- outline the development and refinement of stylistic conventions throughout your creative process, considering (for example):
  - influences – internal, contextual and stylistic
  - symbolism
  - structure
  - style.

This section will examine how moving-image media artists reflect, and help students to use this knowledge to create their own reflective statements. Once you have read through all the sections and completed all the activities in order, you will have constructed a reflective statement on your own moving-image media product.

Outline of workflow

The first step that a director such as Baz Luhrmann takes – that of working out the story – is not the universal first step of all other moving-image media artists. Some innovative products are created through spontaneous, process-based explorations. Others are planned in a linear fashion down to the last shot.

Moving-image media artists do not follow one universal process. The process of creation may be varied and involve spontaneously, particularly when experimenting. A clear understanding of the stylistic intent and purpose are critical to a successful resolution of a product.

In a reflective statement, you, as the artist, will need to reflect on your processes of creation – the steps or processes you took to develop and realise your product, and why you chose to work in these ways. How did your stylistic intent influence your creative process?

To establish a workflow, you, as the artist, need to know your purpose or intention in creating your product, and your influences. Have you been inspired by a particular artist, and therefore wish to follow a similar process? Are you creating a Dada artwork, and therefore enacting the anarchic and experimental process of this movement? Reflecting on your intent and influences will help you to develop a workflow.

The following case study of director Warwick Thornton illustrates how a moving-image media artist's stylistic intent guides their workflow.

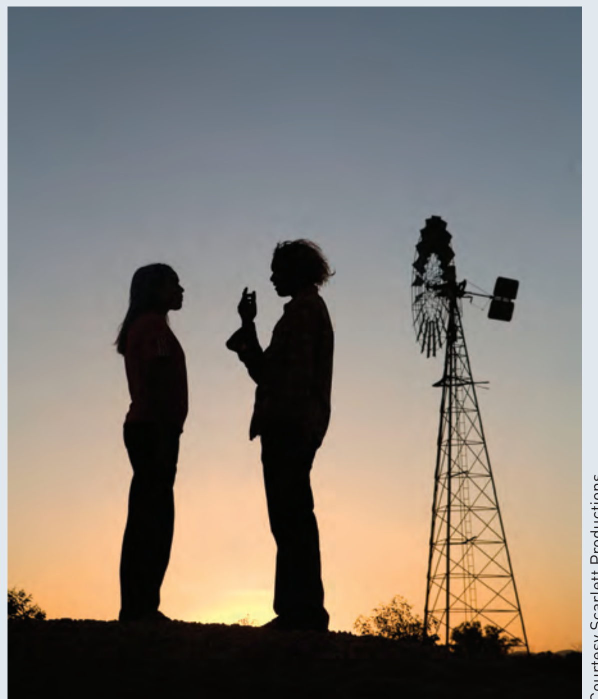
Case study

Moving-image media workflow: Warwick Thornton (1970–)

In the romantic drama *Samson and Delilah* (2009), award-winning Australian filmmaker Warwick Thornton showed the strength and resilience of two teenagers to central Australia. The clarity of and passion behind this intention, influenced by personal and social contexts, is evident in Thornton's stylistic choices and process in the creation of *Samson and Delilah*. The film has a distinct, deliberate style, wherein the storytelling is highly visual and uncluttered, using symbolic location shooting, and exploring tenderness and beauty within brutality.

While some moving-image media artists create through organic, experimental processes, Thornton's workflow in creating *Samson and Delilah* followed a traditionally linear production structure of pre-production, production and post-production. This process is summarised in Figure 17.38.

Drawing on stylistic, contextual and internal influences, Thornton formed a stylistic intention. This intention drove the development of story in pre-production, informed the choices made during production, and synthesised the product through post-production.



Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.37 Warwick Thornton's *Samson and Delilah*. Every moment in the film is designed to further Thornton's stated intention of showing the strength of the two young people at the narrative's centre. The film won Thornton the Caméra d'Or award for Best First Feature Film at the Cannes Film Festival. The workflow Thornton used to create this film followed a relatively traditional pre-production/production/post-production structure.

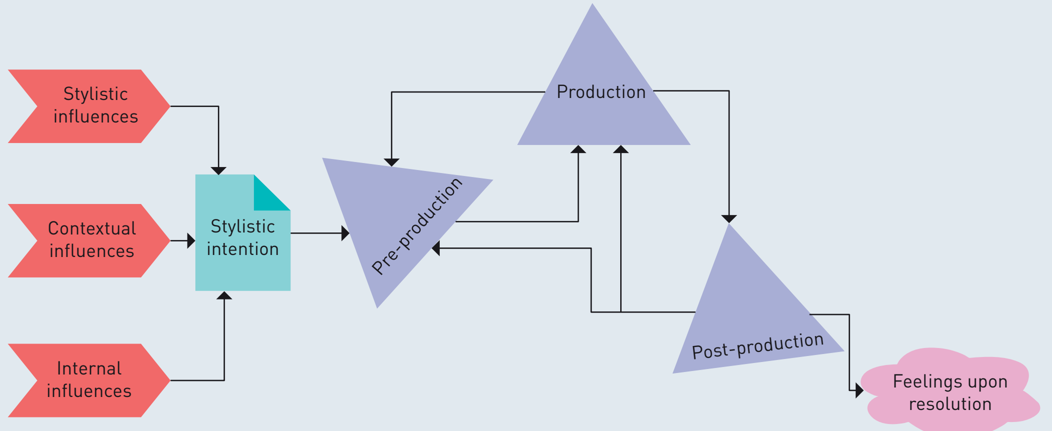


Figure 17.38 A 'traditional' workflow begins with influences forming a stylistic intention, and this guides the pre-production process. Production follows, and then the synthesising process of post-production. Backward arrows represent reflection and review that occurs at various stages. In production and post-production, review of rushes or events may lead to an adjustment of the pre-production documents such as the script. The workflow on a project involving experimentation does not always follow the 'ideal' path of pre-production to production to post-production, but may revisit steps along the way.

Stylistic influences

Thornton's work shows the influence of the landscape of central Australia. This has fed into the artistic style he has built through his short-film work such as uncluttered visuals and dialogue, and location shooting.

Contextual influences

Thornton's storytelling and characters in *Samson and Delilah* were fuelled by social and cultural context, particularly attitudes towards substance-abusing teenagers in central Australia. In an interview with Crikey, Thornton explains that, 'One [character] is a sniffer and one is not. It was designed for Central Australia because we do write these kids off there ... Elders in Aboriginal communities have been taught that kids who sniff get brain damage, so as soon as they see a kid sniffing they think "well they're rubbish now, they're brain damaged." ...That is the world I was working with.'

Internal influences

Thornton has spoken about how he embraces his Aboriginality: 'I've got something unique to say,' he explains. Thornton's Aboriginality is a continual influence on his work. His films prior to and after making *Samson and Delilah* tell stories about Indigenous Australians.

Stylistic intention

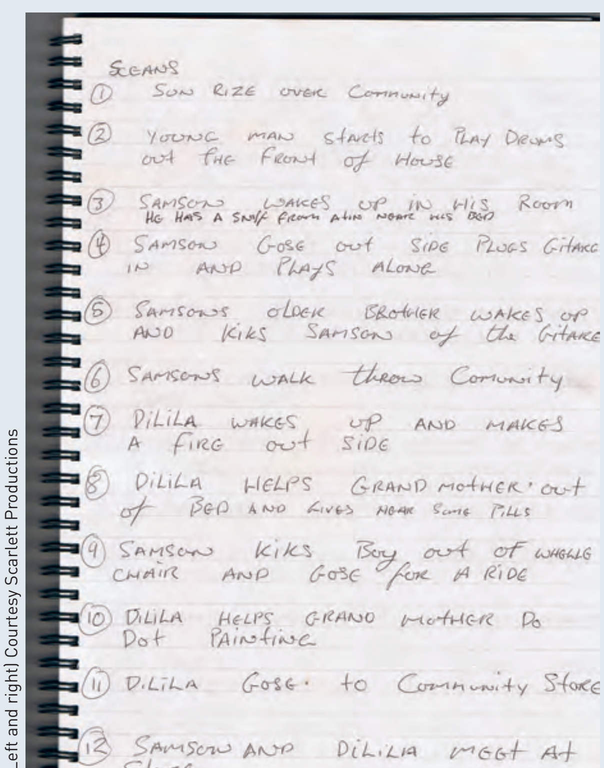
Motivated by these influences, Thornton crafted a film that tells an uncomplicated, beautiful love story – love being a theme that transcends cultures – 'with a good ending'. He has spoken of an intention to 'show two incredibly beautiful children who have fought all their lives ... and how we should be celebrating them and backing them up. I wanted to show that to Central Australia.'

Pre-production

Thornton's pre-production process involved the following steps:

- Outlining the entire narrative in terms of structure and story. This is done instinctively, according to the stylistic intention. This hand-written document consists of a several-sentence summary of each scene.
- Writing a first draft of the script. This is typed up into a conventional script format and fleshed out from the outline.
- Revisiting the script, fleshing out each scene in more detail and taking feedback from trusted sources such as his producer, script advisers, and his wife and writing partner.

This process can take many years; *Samson and Delilah* was written over about one year. Much of this time is for gestation, allowing things to organically grow and change, for problems to be solved and the script to be strengthened.


SCEANS
1. SUN RIZE OVER Community
2. YOUNG MAN starts to Play Drums out The Front of House
3. SAMSON WAKES UP IN HIS Room
4. SAMSON GOSE out SIDE PLUGS GITARE IN AND PLAYS ALONE
5. SAMSONS OLDER BROTHER WAKES UP AND KIKS SAMSON of the GITARE
6. SAMSONS WALK throw Comunity
7. DILILA WAKES UP AND MAKES A FIRE out SIDE
8. DILILA HELPS GRAND mother out of BED AND GIVES HER Some PILLS
9. SAMSON KIKS Boy out of WHEELE CHAIR AND GOSE for A RIDE
10. DILILA HELPS GRAND mother Do Dot Painting
11. DILILA GOSE to Community Store
12. SAMSON AND DILILA MEET At Store

(Left and right) Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.39 First step in the pre-production process: outlining the story. Page 1 of 5 of Warwick Thornton's original story outline of *Samson and Delilah*, where he outlined each scene.

DAY ONE

1 EXT. COMMUNITY - MORNING 1

The early morning sun slowly rises over a small, isolated Aboriginal community.

Clusters of houses are nestled beneath a beautiful desert mountain range.

A single dirt road leads into the small community - it is straight, long and narrow.

In the community nothing can be heard other than the occasional cry of a crow that is sitting high in a nearby gum tree.

Spirals of smoke gently rise from small campfires situated around the homes.

A windmill slowly spins in the desert wind.

A pack of brumby horses gather around a waterhole, kicking up dust with their hooves.

Light gently spills on a small corrugated iron church.

The crow flies off across the early morning sky when suddenly the tranquil desert silence is disrupted by the banging of drums.

2 EXT. SAMSON'S HOUSE - MORNING 2
YOUNG ABORIGINAL MAN (DRUMMER)

On a small verandah, out the front of a run down community house, a YOUNG ABORIGINAL MAN (DRUMMER), bashes away on an old set of drums.

He is wearing a heavy metal T-shirt and a pair of stained jeans.

As he plays he stares out at the narrow dirt road at the front of his house, but there is no-one in sight and nothing is happening.

So he bangs on.

3 INT. SAMSON'S BEDROOM - MORNING 3
SAMSON

In a dark bedroom, another young man, SAMSON (15) is lying on a swag on the floor.

Clothes are strewn across the room and a heavy blanket is hung over the window letting in a single shaft of morning light.

(CONTINUED)

Figure 17.40 Page 1 of the final screenplay of *Samson and Delilah*, with Warwick Thornton's annotations and storyboards. This is the third step in Thornton's process – finalising the screenplay and planning shots.

Production

Most of Warwick Thornton's films have been shot on location, usually in central Australia. These locations are central to both narrative and style. Moreover, his films often make use of non-actors as well as trained performers. This is sometimes also a practical choice, since there are few trained and experienced Indigenous actors, particularly teenagers, so sometimes there is no option but to work with non-actors. This is changing, though, as the industry grows and more roles exist for Indigenous actors. Using non-actors allows Thornton to achieve a raw, visual realism, as the performances of his first-time actors exploit non-verbals.

In the production of *Samson and Delilah*, as on all of his films, Thornton acted as director of photography – meaning he, as director, was able to precisely align every shot, movement, angle, all *mise en scène* and lighting choices, to his stylistic intent. In his multiple production roles, Thornton was able to successfully set the tone and story of the film in the first shot.

Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.41 Cast and crew on location during the filming of *Samson and Delilah*. In the foreground are Marissa Gibson (Delilah), Warwick Thornton (director) and Rowan McNamara (Samson). Samson was Alice Springs–teenager McNamara's debut role, and Delilah was Gibson's first main role. Utilising new actors is a common feature of Thornton's process.

Post-production

In this final stage of the production process, Thornton worked in collaboration with his editor, Roland Gallois, to structure the footage into a resolved moving-image product. Informing this structure was the original film script. To select the best footage for inclusion in the final product, and maintain a tight focus on character and story, the director and editor evaluated takes according to the film's stylistic intent. To reinforce the meaning created, and in further alignment with his stylistic intent, Thornton worked closely with Liam Egan, the sound designer, to create the atmospheres in the film. Because there is hardly any dialogue and very little music, the soundscapes and atmospheres are especially important for the storytelling.

Feelings upon resolution

Both internal and external factors (such as reviews, awards, box office takings and so on) can influence an artist's judgement on their completed work.

The final resolved product that was *Samson and Delilah* received numerous awards and accolades – from the only 5-out-of-5-stars agreement in 2009 from critics Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton on ABC's *At the Movies*, to winning the Caméra d'Or award for Best Debut Feature at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and being shortlisted for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. The film also achieved remarkable success at the box office in Australia.

Moreover, Thornton achieved social advocacy and provoked thought among his specific central Australian target audiences. As he explained to *Filmink*: 'with *Samson and Delilah*, we have the sniffing and the lack of parenting, but if a community recognises itself in there, then it needs to make changes. When they watch the film, they might think: "We need to stand up and be stronger."'

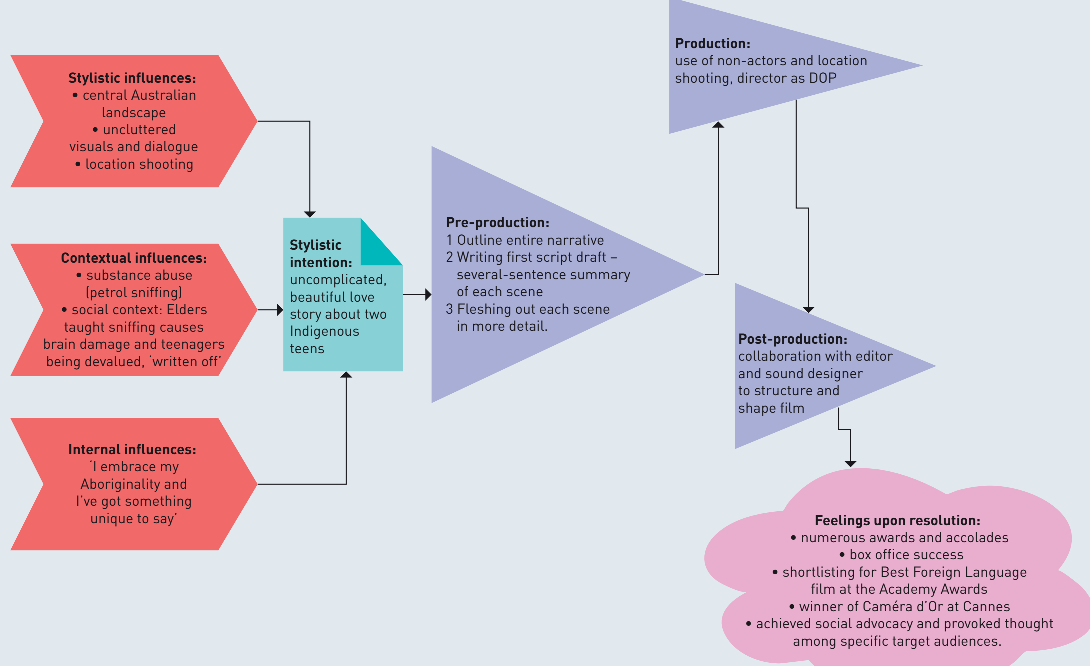


Figure 17.42 A diagrammatic summary of Warwick Thornton's workflow in the creation of *Samson and Delilah*.

17.7 ACTIVITIES

1 View Warwick Thornton's film *Samson and Delilah*. Use the information in Figure 17.42 and in the previous section to respond to the following activities.
Explain Thornton's workflow on *Samson and Delilah*. **Demonstrate** understanding of the director's process by writing in first person.
Analyse Thornton's process for experimentation and synthesis. **Examine** the **constituent parts** of his workflow and **interpret** the moments that allowed for experimentation and synthesis. Continue to write from the director's point of view.

2 Consider a moving-image media product you are about to create. Use the graphic organiser in Figure 17.42 to respond to the activities below.
Structure your intended workflow.
Apply literacy skills to make this diagram into a statement **communicating** your workflow.
Analyse your workflow outline once your project is completed, **examining** its **constituent parts** and **evaluating** the strengths and weaknesses of your process. **Make judgements** about why you chose to work in particular ways.

STATEMENT OF STYLISTIC INTENT

Like Warwick Thornton, all moving-image media artists have an intention. This drives the choices made during the creation of their artworks, and their continual reflection surrounding the effectiveness of choices. This intention may be process-based, stylistic or a response to context.

As a moving-image media artist, you will need to reflect on your own intentions in creating your product. What drove your choices? How did you judge whether a shot or a sound effect was effective? What was your overall intention and how did you fulfil this?

The following case study of director Baz Luhrmann will outline how a moving-image media artist details their stylistic intent.

Case study

Statement of stylistic intent: Baz Luhrmann (1962–)

The intention of Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann in making films is to create stories about love. He communicates these stories through a highly stylised cinematic form he calls the 'Red Curtain'. This style was established in the creation of his first film, *Strictly Ballroom* (1992).

Luhrmann has spoken very clearly about his stylistic intention with the 'Red Curtain': to use a highly stylised cinematic language that forces the audience to participate actively in the viewing experience, through challenging any constructs that relate to realism. Luhrmann says he intends for the audience to be always aware that they are watching a movie. As a result, he does not prioritise plot, telling 'predictable' stories, but rather *how* a story is told. 'One of the primary ways of telling this kind of story is that the audience must know from the beginning how it is going to end, so that within the first 10 minutes you know how it's going to end.'

Consequently, Luhrmann says he draws on techniques from a variety of internal, contextual and artistic influences that help to ensure his moving-image media products align with this stylistic intent. He says he deliberately embeds elements of song, dance and theatricality, drawn from Bollywood cinema, Hollywood musicals, Italian opera, music video, and his childhood memories of his mother's ballroom dance experiences into the narratives of all of his films. Each film uses a 'device' to unfold a no-surprises narrative.

Strictly Ballroom uses a narrative about ballroom dance to heighten a familiar 'ugly duckling' story;

Romeo + Juliet (1996) is edited, shot and scored like an MTV music video, and interspersed with moments reminiscent of Mozart's comic operas. Its fast, futuristic world ensures that the audience remains engaged through every familiar line of Shakespeare's text;

Moulin Rouge! (2001), a pop-pastiche musical, explodes with Bollywood-influenced colour, song and dance that comedically energises a tragic star-crossed lovers tale.

In his deliberate and purposeful selection of languages, representations and technologies, Luhrmann ensures that his stylistic intention of heightened cinema language is realised, and his audience are therefore actively engaged through his films.

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Figure 17.43 Ballroom dancers Vanessa Cronin (Leonie Page), Liz Holt (Gia Carides) and Tina Sparkle (Sonia Kruger) in their competition finery. All choices in Baz Luhrmann's film *Strictly Ballroom* are driven by his stylistic intent. He calls this the 'Red Curtain' style, and one aspect of this style is the use of a device to heighten reality. In *Strictly Ballroom*, this device is ballroom dance. The exaggerated and colourful world of competitive ballroom dance is present in every frame of Luhrmann's film, realising his stylistic intent.

17.8 ACTIVITIES

Imagine you are Baz Luhrmann preparing notes on your stylistic intent, using the 'Red Curtain' approach to *mise en scène*.

Construct a statement of stylistic intent for the 'Red Curtain' trilogy.

Explain any key stylistic influences, contextual influences and internal influences that have affected your work as a moving-image media artist. **Identify** how these influenced your completed moving-image media product.

Apply literacy skills to clearly **communicate** your creative vision in making your moving-image media artwork.

EVALUATIVE REFLECTION UPON RESOLUTION

Every product made provides a rich opportunity for reflection and thus growth as an artist. By evaluating and reflecting on their own work, a moving-image media artist is able to further develop their technical proficiency, consolidate their style and increase their innovation.

To structure evaluative reflection, you, as the artist, may consider looking back at your work through the following lenses.

Influences

- What were my key influences?
- How did these influences affect my work?

Symbolism

- What symbols or visual metaphors did I create in my work?
- How did I create these?
- Why did I create them – for what purpose, intention or meaning?

Experimentation

- How and why did I experiment:
  - with technologies?
  - with representations?
  - with languages?
- What ideas, values, processes, expectations, representations and so on did I challenge in my work?
  - How did I challenge?
  - Why did I challenge, in terms of my intent?

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Structure

- How did I structure my product?
- How did this structure help me to tell my story or explore my theme?
- How did I structure my workflow or creation process? How effective was this?

Style

- What is my unique style as a moving-image media artist?
- How is this style manifested in this specific product?
- How did I use representations, technologies and languages in this product to construct this unique style?

Overall

- What might I do differently next time? Why?
- How can I push myself further?

17.9 ACTIVITIES

1. Select a filmmaker and view a key film text, such as *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel.
   Research the background to the artist and the making of the film.
   Explain the intention of the film, **demonstrating** your understanding of the artist's context.
   Analyse the moving-image media artist's influences and stylistic intention, **examining** constituent parts of the film that appear to reference other influences. **Make judgements** about the workflow processes the artist used, based on the graphic organiser (see figure 17.42) and your **evaluation** of their own probable stages. Based on your research, **make a judgement** about the artist's feelings upon resolution of their work.
2. Imagine you are the artist in activity 1 above, and you have just completed your film.
   Appraise 'your' final product, **applying** your **judgement** from the task above and the evaluative reflection questions from this section in a reflective statement.