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Lodz, Poland



- The Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU)  
Prague, Czech Republic



- The Academy of Dramatic Art (ADU)  
Zagreb, Croatia



- Academy of Performing Arts - Film and Television Faculty (VSMU)  
Bratislava, Slovakia



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The “Open innovative resources for filmmaking education and training” (OIRFET) in Zagreb, Croatia created raw footage for editing under the theme “Visual Style”.

A deconstructed dance performance with clear segments from beginning to end. However, students are encouraged to find alternative logic behind certain sequences or even base their exercise on a single sequence. Given that dance is a universal language, easily visually explored, the idea behind raw footage of a deconstructed dance performance for “Visual style” proved to be a good idea.

Students can choose from four different visual styles present in the material, all differentiated by texture, lighting, color and camera movements. There is low-key, hi-key, hi-speed footage, documentary style (hand held) and footage with glitches (low quality). All four types of footage can be edited separately or can be paired and combined and put into relation to one another. Also, the use of sound is encouraged and recommended in order to upgrade the narrative. The fact that the material consisted of four different types of visual styles proved to be a big advantage to the workshop and its further uses. Given that all the participants in the workshop varied in their level of editing knowledge and experience (some students were in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of M.A. studies, while some were in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of B.A. studies of editing) the opportunity to just focus on one type of footage was useful to students with less editing experience, while more knowledgeable students were able to push themselves using all types of material. This allowed the tutors to work on the same material with all participants. Having a group of students who vastly varied in editing knowledge, it was very important that the tutors were able to have conversations and discussions with all participants together, including everyone in group analysis. This interaction between students proved to be of great use. Students with more editing experience offered useful advice to their colleagues, inspiring them to think beyond their knowledge, while students with less editing experience were able to effortlessly find faults in nonlinear structured exercises. Also, creating such a diverse group of editing students, who varied in editing experience challenged tutors how to share their knowledge, challenge all the participants, while making sure to not discourage and overwhelm some. Because of the great diversity of the material, tutors could include all the participants and equally split their attention and challenge everyone involved.

Storywise, there is an option of two "main" characters that can be singled out and be focal points of the assignment and also "the group" as a character. This option helped structure some students who lacked inspiration for nonlinear experimental exercises, or simply lacked the editing experience to try such a task. Within this structure tutors had the opportunity to challenge participants to explore nonlinear complex sequences while safely nestled within a clear structure. The participants could explore contrast, build rhythm or create conflict while staying on a clear path (ie. Following one dancer compete against her rival).

The goal of the visual style workshop is to encourage building alternate and individual visions from scratch. Whether students choose one or more types of material, a segment of dance or the entire dance sequence, one protagonist or the entire group, each and every exercise allowed for the exploration of *movement, rhythm and contrast*. Through the use of different shots and angles students were able to explore movement - how the same move is perceived in real time or slow motion, in a wide shot or a close up, with one dancer or a group. Every exercise also explored how to build and manipulate rhythm. Rhythm, which is the core of dance, is also the core of editing. Through exploration of the structure of dance, students easily saw how to construct and deconstruct rhythm, rhythm of dancing, as well as the rhythm of their exercises. Students could also explore contrast: beauty vs. ugliness, fluidity in movement vs. rigid mechanical movement, mistakes vs. perfection, one vs. a group, color vs. black and white, battle of one group vs. another group, stage vs. real life, reality vs. make-belief...

This wide variety of footage allows for multiple creative uses:

1. By downloading just the real time footage the editor can complete the dance sequence, creating a battle between two groups of dancers. The objective for the editor is to create a concessive, visually rich story, building rhythm and suspense using the dance battle as a story arc. The dancers are dressed in black and white t-shirts, creating a visual opportunity to enhance the battle. The simple arc is often represented in life as the battle of good and evil, a chess-coordinated battle of movement producing one winner.
2. Downloading just the low key, hi-speed footage the editor can explore body movement and the human form. The stunning footage can be used to show the progression of a dance move, the difficulties needed to achieve such a move, as well as the discipline required.
3. Combining the low key, hi-speed footage with real time footage editors can explore through time-lapse how the same dancers move in real time compared to slow motion. They can explore the physicality of movement by breaking down a complex move into segments by using slow motion. They can also explore how the same movement in slow motion creates a different type of movement, almost a poetic gesture that can build to a different meaning.
4. The documentary style footage explores the dancers in their “natural habitat”: getting ready, stretching, making mistakes, talking, joking, having a sandwich and taking a break. The material dismisses the perfection of dance and as such is shot in hand held. The emphasis of this material is to humanize the perfect dance move – show the physical requirement, the

“blood sweat and tears” required to perfect a dance move. The editor can follow one or more dancers. The editor can create a story based on the dancers, their mutual support, their friendships, their rivalries, the physicality of dance, the requirements and discipline needed to execute them or simply telling a story about a group of dancers in their everyday life.

5. The documentary style footage can be intertwined perfectly with the low key, slow motion or real time footage. The editor can create a contrast between the handheld relaxed everyday situations and the precise visually controlled coordinated dance moves. The contrast allows the editor to explore the dynamic between two visually different footages. The arc of the story can still be the visual dance battle, or simply the contrast itself.
6. The glitch material can be used alone to simply display the entire dance battle between the dancers. The glitches can be used to visually build the progression of the movement of the dance. They can be used as a visual style, progressively getting worse or letting down. The editor can also use the glitch as motivation for a cut, creating almost an abstract visual poem.
7. Combining the glitch footage with the real time or low-key, slow -motion footage allows the editor again to explore the concept of contrast. The contrast of "beautiful" and "ugly", controlled and experimental, fluid and with glitches. The contrast can be used by the editor to further emphasize the story arc of rivalry and battle or of dance and movement.
8. Combining the glitch and documentary footage gives the editor the opportunity to emphasize an experimental arc he/she wishes to explore. The glitches can be used to create a rift between two dancers furthering the battle or emphasize the difficulty of executing a movement or creating a made-up reality to contrast the everyday life of the dancers.
9. With the use of sound and/or music the editor can use any type of material to explore the different visual styles and power of sound and/or music. A suggestive soundscape can be broken down to its components by using different styles of footage to accompany it. A sort of sound or musical "visual deconstruction" which can create an experimental visual poem.

This great quantity of material can prove to be a disadvantage to a single novice user who chooses to download the entire material. It can overwhelm the novice and without the guidance of a tutor and/or clear chosen path, the open nature of the material can be quite a large undertaking. A strong suggestion for a novice editor is to focus solely on one type of material. Having completed a small exercise with one material, to then try and combine it with new material. Limiting the material (to one type of footage) can help focus the open nature of the material and gradually introducing new material can limit confusion. For more experienced editors the open

concept of the material can be of great value, allowing them to explore and seek multiple variations. Seeing how the same concept with the use of another type of material impacts the outcome and storyline.

For tutors, the quantity and the open nature of the material is a two-sided blade. On one hand it allows for having different participants with different skill levels of editing participating together in the same workshop, while allowing an opportunity to tailor the material to the level of experience of the participants. On the other hand the open structure, with no clear-cut cause and effect, leaves much room for interpretation and analysis. Perhaps deciding on the level of knowledge of participants, the tutor can choose the quantity of materials. If the tutors feel the use of all types of material in a time-constricted workshop proves to be a problem (uses up too much time to review the material), they can always limit the material to just one or two types of footage, with no quality loss to their workshop. If tutors also feel the use of four types of material might discourage young and less experienced editors, they can always limit the material without any loss. Though this type of open concept material can prove to be of great value to tutors looking for opportunities to push students out of their comfort zone. Not limited by a clear cause and effect narrative, students are forced to try different concepts, trying and learning, furthering their editing knowledge. As not to be discouraged and overwhelmed the tutor can help and limit an approximate story arc guiding them on a path but still allowing them to explore different variants. For tutors it is of great value to not just view the material and already made exercises for examples, but to try and edit out a small exercise themselves, to see hands on the way the material will adapt to their workshop.

Having completed the weeklong testing period of the material with 20 participants (all university editing students with different editing skill levels), the material proved to be very useful, exceeding expectations and creating 20 very different exercises. The great diversity of the material allowed them to successfully work with students of different editing backgrounds and experiences, students from different countries and schools, students with different degrees of film knowledge all working together. All of the 20 finished exercises successfully used the “Visual style” material, creating outstanding results. Most students who choose to edit one narrative (or one type of visual style) also explored and manipulated the material with the use of sound.

One student created an exercise with dancers completing the dance sequence while using voice-over narration of a professional dancer who explained the benefits of modern contemporary dance in comparison to classic ballet. The shots used furthered the thesis of the professional dancer how contemporary dance is less constrictive, allows more freedom than classical ballet. The student created an innovative, dairy-type film, a short documentary style coverage.

Another student explored through just one type of material the progression of dance. Through the symbolism of a butterfly transformation, the student explored the discipline needed to complete a complex dance move. Within the exercise the depicted dancer completed a transformation, she became a beautiful *butterfly*.

Some students chose the battle arc between two groups of dancers and created a visually stunning battle of motion and gesture. Others choose more nonlinear structures using the dance as a symbol. The dance became a symbol of oppression, conflict or fear. One student used voice over from a documentary about deviance, using all types of material but using only visually dynamic footage. As the voice over built in an explanation of what deviance actually is, the dance itself became more rhythmically dynamic and an act of deviance itself. Another student chose to combine all four types of material gradually building a visual deconstruction of movement. The concept was to rhythmically build the dance sequence, yet with every new dance sequence to combine a new type of material. The idea was to see how these visually different types of material affected the narrative of the story, and how progressively combining new material further created visual conflict within the exercise. The student progressively used more dynamic footage, combining more and more different types of footage creating a visual crescendo. The end result was a visually stunning, rhythmically building sequence of chaos.

Through the workshop it proved vital for all the participants to view all the used footage. The benefits of all participants having viewed all the used footage meant that all participants could comment on each other's work without limit. Also the benefit of viewing all the used material meant that students struggling with their concept could reconsider if adding a new type of material might further their theme or thesis. Maybe their thesis would be better represented in a different type of material. New material meant exploring new possibilities. Although the material is an open concept it does have a clear beginning and should have a clear ending that derives from it. Through discussions and analysis of the works it proved important that students do not try too many concepts in one exercise. Having viewed all the material, students should come up with a concept. They should try to finalize said concept from beginning to end. All finalized exercises were approximately 5-8 minutes long. The use of the entire material is ideal for a week to two week long workshop, better suited for editing students and editing enthusiasts, while the use of one type of footage is better suited for first time novice looking for experience.

As said in the beginning, dance is a visual universal language that entirely depends on rhythm which makes it perfect for editing exercises.

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All raw material produced during filming of this project serves as an exploration of movement and the way visual style transforms viewer experience, as well as the way it invites certain patterns and creates varied results depending on other suggestive elements such as sound and editing.







All footage will be recorded in three days with dancers being the main focus of our project. Several visually captivating excerpts will be taken out of a pre-prepared performance and will additionally be elevated and/or transformed with three distinct visual styles.





Each visual style will offer similar images with different results, offering editors to design their own sonic background by association.

Similarly, each editor will be able to combine styles, choose whether they wish to highlight a protagonist, as well as choose a completely experimental route based entirely on movement and sound.



















Hopefully, this  
material will  
be exciting to  
work with, to  
mold and to  
create various  
short works  
that present  
each unique  
vision.



# HUNTING PARTY | VISUAL STYLE

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