

Opposing Forces: A Video Diptych Art 116 / Project 5

In this project you will reflect on what you have learned over the semester and complete a video diptych that revisits fundamentals of media literacy. (See Wikipedia for brief description: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_literacy.) As you are probably aware, you have been learning to read media through the projects in this class that required you to analyze, evaluate, and create messages with digital media. In the future, as you continue working with media in art courses (design, video, and photography) you will expand your knowledge base to become more actively informed critics of contemporary media culture (i.e., producing work and dialog **about** media rather than simply making **with** media tools).

Let's review:

- *Project 1 Book of Change* = combine symbols with text using semiotics with the intent to increase social awareness.
- *Project 2 Blog* = write, evaluate, and analyze your methods with social media.
- *Project 3 Abstraction as Subject* = understand the camera as a framing device. Compose and juxtapose images to further shape meaning and perception.
- *Project 4 Experimental Capture* = use collage techniques to combine and juxtapose images in a single frame to manipulate mood and emotion.



Symmetry: <https://vimeo.com/22564317>

ASSIGNMENT

Create a one-minute video diptych that compares and contrasts divergent forces. You will shoot a minimum of 40 shots each with a duration of 10 to 15 seconds. Consider the subjects from previous projects for inspiration (compositions from your photo diptych or revisit the social issue for your poster) and work through the ideas in a new form.

Your subject is opposing forces (consider: Newton's Third Law, which states for every force, there is an equal and opposite force). You will edit a series of video clips side by side in order to highlight opposites, diverging moments, complementary colors, and/or distinct shapes and patterns. Your decision of WHAT to aim your camera at (composition) and HOW to juxtapose (edit) your shots will shape the meaning. In this assignment we will edit in a diptych format (or split-screen) to call attention to the edit.

What is editing? Editing may be thought of as the coordination of one shot with the next:

- Elimination of unwanted video
- Cutting superfluous frames
- Joins desired shots from end to beginning

When does editing begin? In planning stages. In the script, storyboard, and on the set.

What is a shot? A shot is the basic film unit that makes up an entire film. A film/video may have one shot or hundreds of shots. When setting up each shot consider framing and exposure. (*p. 271, Bordwell, Film Art*)

Step 1: Select a Dichotomy that you want to SHOW visually (and in motion!). A dichotomy is a division into two parts that are often opposed. A few examples: the one and the many, forward or backward, dark or light, up or down, fast or slow, urban or rural, hectic or calm, left or right.

Step 2: Make a shot list. What do you need to shoot to convey your idea? (Ex: for night, you might list all activities done at night or it may include a list of very dark things.) Use an ideation process to ponder what night IS (metaphor) and/or what qualities night HAS that can be shown visually (visual equivalent). Your goal is to READ into your chosen dichotomy and decipher symbols that will enable you to visually construct something compelling from moving images. Keep it simple but avoid being too literal (if you simply take a shot of night and compare it to a shot of day you are being literal).

Step 3: From your shot list, plan to shoot from a variety of angles and distances. You MUST include a combination of close-ups in order to contrast them with wide shots (see types of shots on page 4). Continue to use the framing strategies discussed earlier in the semester (shape, line, color, balance, etc) as a means to connect the opposing forces in your diptych. But remember to also experiment with the motion capabilities of the video camera. For this, you will need a tri-pod! You will also need to MOVE around—using a tri-pod DOES NOT mean stay in one place. In fact, for this, NO in-camera ZOOMING allowed. To get a close-up, you'll need to walk closer to your subject!

Step 4: Record at least one-minute of ambient sound in EACH location with your camera before you leave. You will use these as audio tracks. You may NOT download music as a backing track. You MUST record your own audio.

Step 5: Bring your camera and footage to class. Upload or "capture" it to your external drive. Edit.

Formal (Framing and Composition) Approaches:

1. Abstraction
2. Repetition
3. Camera Angle (High / Low)
4. Leading Lines
5. Frame within a Frame
6. Rule of Thirds
7. Distance from Camera to Subject
8. Balance

Camera Techniques:

1. Still Shot
2. Tilt Up / Down
3. Pan Left / Right
4. Pan with subject
5. Hand-held vs. Tri-pod

Vocabulary

Aperture (F-Stop), Audio, Capture, Composition, Contrast, CODEC, Decibels, Depth of Field, Dichotomy, Diptych, Edit, Exposure, File Formats, Frame Rate, Montage, Negative Space, Non-linear editing software, Pan, Positive Space, Resolution, White Balance, Semiotics, Shutter Speed, Signal to Noise Ratio, Split-screen, Tilt, Timecode, Timeline

Video Diptych / Split-Screen Examples

<https://vimeo.com/groups/diptych/>
http://www.nfb.ca/playlists/shanghai_world_expo/viewing/in_the_labyrinth/
<https://vimeo.com/22564317> "Symmetry"
<https://vimeo.com/23768767> "Split Screen in Movies"
<http://www.artofthetitle.com/title/up-in-the-air/>

Many narrative films use split screen as a device to show parallel action. Below is a short list. For a longer list and description see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_screen_\(filmmaking\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_screen_(filmmaking))

- *Suspense*, Lois Weber (1913)
- *Napoleon*, Abel Gance (1927)
- *Chelsea Girls*, Andy Warhol (1966)
- *Run Lola Run*, Tom Tykwer (1998)
- *Timecode*, Mike Figgis (2000)
- *A Requiem for A Dream*, Darren Aronofsky (2000) [for an analytic breakdown of scene: <http://filmstudiesforfree.blogspot.com/2010/11/split-screen-studies.html>]
- *Rules of Attraction*, Roger Avary (2002): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6EPa9Fw3Lk>
- *24*, the TV series by Surnow and Cochran (2001-2010)
- Michel Gondry's *Sugar Water* and *How Are You Doing?* music videos (among others)

Online Resources For Final Cut Pro and Compressing Video for Web

On-line tutorials with VTC.com are available through the University. For more information on accessing the tutorials go to: VTC.com: <http://www.it.udel.edu/learnit/online-training-resources>.

<http://www.vtc.com/products/Apple-Final-Cut-Pro-7-Tutorials.htm>

(You can access Intro, Interface, and Import here w/o going through UD)

For Video in General: <https://vimeo.com/videoschool>

For Compression Tips: <https://vimeo.com/help/compression>

Found Footage: <http://archive.org/details/movies>

Focus of Critique and Assessment (needs to be re-written for THIS project)

Directions (25 pts)

- Did you follow directions, make a shot list, shoot from a variety of angles and distances, record your own audio, and turn the project in on time?

Composition (25 pts)

- Did you try a variety of formal compositional approaches? Did you change your posture when shooting—lying on the ground, standing on a chair, kneeling down?

Creativity (25 pts)

- Did you use an ideation approach to find new ways to express opposing forces? Is your dichotomy too literal? What editing strategies did you use to choose HOW to pair your video shots?

Technical (25 pts)

- Did you experiment with the motion and exposure capabilities of your camera?

Reflection / Blog (20 pts)

- Which compositional strategies did you experiment with? Why did you choose to pair the video clips and how did you decide on the order of shots? What would you do different next time?

Checklist for turning in:

___ Project Reflection uploaded to blog

___ Two (2) .mov files: one compressed for the web and one uncompressed for back-up

___ Your final video diptych compressed and uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo (see <https://vimeo.com/help/compression>) Your final videos must be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo by 11:55pm the night before the due date. It takes time to upload AND to appear on-line. DO NOT wait until the last minute to do this!!

___ An uncompressed .mov saved on a DVD, a data file for back-up (Oppose_JaneDoe.mov)

___ A video still with the active link to your video in a word doc (Videolink_JaneDoe.doc).

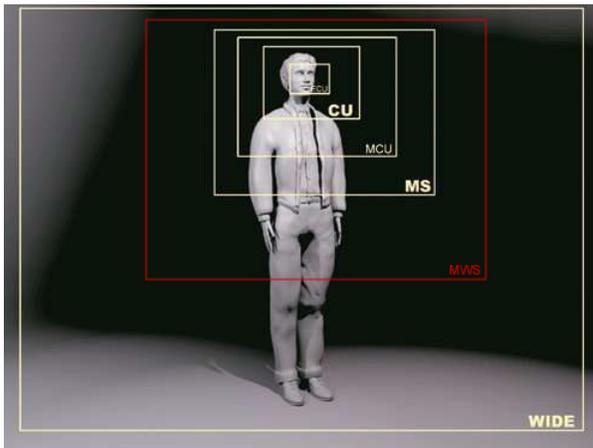
___ Upload to Sakai Folder labeled "Project 5 Opposing Forces" by 11:55pm the night before the due date.

A little history: The montage edit is one fundamental tool used by ALL producers of moving images to control and shape meaning in a video or film. By placing two moving images next to each other on one screen you are forcing an association of what were previously unrelated shots (that is, when you place a shot next to a different unrelated shot, you end up with a response from the audience that is different from viewing either of those shots alone.)

This association may be constructed by narrative, documentary, or commercial filmmakers as a diptych or, more commonly, as a seamless edit with one image following another in time. Your diptych (also called split-screen) will call attention to this practice by filming two opposing forces and juxtaposing them on one screen.

"Montage editing is the technique of using different shots, of seemingly unrelated footage, and from there allowing the audience to deduce their own meaning to the sequence of shots. Usually these shots in narrative film wouldn't go together at all. In fact, these shots tend to juxtapose each other, but when paired in an editing sequence, they tend to produce a response within the audience. This type of filmmaking tends to be more interactive for the audience members. They are involved in the film process and require a certain level of intellect. Thus, (Sergei) Eisenstein called his montage work 'the intellectual montage.'" (<http://introtocediting.com/theory.html>) Sound like semiotics?

On-line Description of Camera Shots & Angles



<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/medium-wide-shot>

<http://www.film-makers-toolkit.group.shef.ac.uk/shots.html>

Types of Shots (Human Scale):

- ECU (Extreme Close Up): Frames one important thing such as an eye or ear.
- CU (Close Up): Used to focus on someone's facial expression and often only includes the face and nothing else.
- MS (Mid or Medium Shot): Commonly includes head, neck, and half-torso. If you include two people it would be called a "Two-shot".
- LS (Long Shot): Head to toe, entire person but not much room above or below them.
- WS (Wide Shot): Similar to LS, often a bit further away and used to establish a scene.
- ELS (Extreme Long Shot): Landscape.

Types of Angles:

- WEV (Worms Eye View): An extremely low angle, from below looking up as if you were looking from a worm's point-of-view.
- Low Angle: Shot from below, this often makes the subject look bigger and more significant.
- Eye Level: This is neither high nor low and is a neutral camera angle.
- High Angle: Shot from above looking down, this often makes the subject look smaller.
- BEV (Birds Eye View): An extremely high angle, from above looking down as if you were looking from a bird's point-of-view.