Film, Television & New Media 2019 v1.2

IA3 high-level annotated sample response

August 2018

Stylistic project (35%)

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers to match evidence in student responses to the characteristics described in the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG).

Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

2. symbolise conceptual ideas through descriptions of technical and symbolic codes in a stylistic project treatment

4. apply relevant terminology and written language conventions in a treatment

6. structure visual, audio and text elements using technologies to edit a stylistic project

7. experiment with moving-image media languages and stylistic conventions

9. synthesise media elements in stylistic ways to explore identity.

Note: Objectives 1, 3, 5 and 8 are not assessed in this instrument.

Instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG)

Criterion: Treatment

Assessment objective

2. symbolise conceptual ideas through descriptions of technical and symbolic codes in a stylistic project treatment

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
• symbolism illustrates stylistic aesthetic through use of symbolic codes, metaphors and stylistic elements	5–6
• symbolism through description of stylistic influences that inform technical and symbolic codes	4
• symbolism of conceptual ideas through descriptions of technical and symbolic codes in a stylistic project treatment	3
• identification of a film style, auteur or director as an influence	2
• description of an idea for a media project	1
• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Applying literacy skills in a treatment

Assessment objective

4. apply relevant terminology and written language conventions in a treatment

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
• application of premises that are based on the selection and discussion of key information to justify and persuade	4
• application of generic conventions specific to the treatment, controlled structuring and sequencing of information	3
• application of relevant terminology and written language conventions in a treatment	2
• use of basic vocabulary	1
• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Structuring media elements

Assessment objective

6. structure sounds, images and text sequences using technologies to edit a stylistic project

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
• structure exploits production practices that communicate meaning and a stylistic aesthetic	9–10
• structure demonstrates stylistic influence on moving-image media	7–8
• structure shows sounds, images and text sequences using technologies to edit a stylistic project	5–6
• structure uses components of a stylistic project	3–4
• uses equipment to record sound and images	1–2
• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Reflecting

Assessment objective

7.   experimentation with moving-image media languages and stylistic conventions outlined in a reflective statement

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
• experimentation shows development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms	4–5
• experimentation with moving-image media languages and stylistic conventions outlined in a reflective statement	3
• describes stylistic ideas	2
• summarises a project workflow	1
• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Criterion: Synthesising media elements

Assessment objective

9. synthesise media elements in stylistic ways that explore identity and conventional representations

The student work has the following characteristics:	Marks
• synthesis and resolution of a conceptual problem that shows a personal stylistic aesthetic	9–10
• synthesis of symbolic, figurative, metaphorical or abstract media elements or forms that realise a personal, social or cultural identity	7–8
• synthesis of media elements in stylistic ways that explore identity and conventional representations	5–6
• synthesis of experimental media elements	3–4
• organisation of media elements in a timeline that expresses an idea in visual or audio form	1–2
• does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Task

Subject	Film, Television & New Media	Instrument no.	IA3
Technique	Stylistic project		
Unit	4: Identity		
Topic	—		

Conditions			
Duration	—		
Mode	Multimodal	Length	Treatment of 800–1000 words Individual production of 2–5 minutes Reflective statement of 200–400 words
Individual/ group	Individual	Other	• Submission – pdf of treatment and reflective statement – .mov, .mp4 or .avi for dynamic files
Resources available	Editing software Filmmaking hardware		

Context

In Unit 4, you have experimented with moving-image media representations and languages to express, explore and question artistic identity. Filmmakers progressively develop an aesthetic style by experimenting with technologies, representations and film languages. In this project, you will use technologies and languages to challenge traditional ideas and practices to design and produce a stylistic moving-image media production.

Task

You will create and present a stylistic project. To do this you must write a treatment for a stylistic moving-image media production which outlines how you will use technical and symbolic codes in a symbolic and stylistic way. You will make the stylistic production and then write a reflective statement outlining how you have explored identity.

Sample response

Criterion	Marks allocated	Result
Treatment Assessment objective 2	6	6
Applying literacy skills in a treatment Assessment objective 4	4	4
Structuring media elements Assessment objective 6	10	10
Reflecting Assessment objective 7	5	5
Synthesising media elements Assessment objective 9	10	10
Total	**35**	**35**

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) performance-level descriptors.

Beat — Treatment

The film 'Beat' experiments with the primal responses to the resolution of tension, why an audience reacts with shock or relief when a cinematic arc is completed, and what can enhance or dull these innately human reactions.

'Beat' is a surrealist film, despite the lack of a clear definition of what is surrealist. 'Beat' uses techniques that align with the fundamental ideology of exploring "the real function of thought, in the absence of any control exercised by the reason and outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupations" (Breton, 1924). 'Beat' visualises, without restrictions, the primal urge to do unthinkable or abnormal actions that we experience often and repress. The film also experiments with how we react to these disturbing imaginations when they happen, and doing so by experimenting with the mainstream cinematic expectation of a resolution or climax.

To experiment with the reaction to a climax, 'Beat' never grounds itself in reality or in a 'safe space'. This alters the traditional view of the 'three-act structure' in modern cinema, where a climax occurs after the disruption of the old 'stable world' and results in the establishment of a new 'stable world'. Inspiration to tamper with the three-act structure was drawn from various directors. 'Beat' further disrupts the traditional structure by never having a 'stable world' in the film, and by changing the chronological order of the climaxes, by having them earlier than expected, or one after another. A contemporary audience will try and match events in the film to the structure they are expecting, which will enhance the element of surprise and the shocking effect of the climax.

In line with surrealist imagery, the film establishes an oneiric, or dreamlike atmosphere, existing at what Andre Breton describes as "the point at which the waking state joins sleep;" (Matthews, 1971) like the feeling of a 'fugue state' where one's actions are abnormal and the memory and recollection of events are indistinct between dream and reality. 'Beat' is not constant brutality and violence, like a horror or thriller blockbuster, but instead contains a mixture of shocking and strange imagery to create the mood that something is off, or out of place; because it is not always fear that accompanies our disturbing dreams, as the Sleep Research Society found; half of these dreams "had primary emotions other than fear" (Robert, 2014). 'Beat' includes hints to the dreamlike state by having shots of eyes opening and closing, along with the bizarre imagery. Dreams, in modern cinema, are often used to foreshadow or provide insight into a character, such as Fred's dreams in David Lynch's 'Lost Highway' enhancing the audience's feelings of fear and confusion.

Further cinematic inspiration was found in films with a thematic and poignant use of brutality, specifically 'Birdman' due to its absurd realisations of imagined scenarios. Along with contemporary cinema, 'Beat' experiments with the doctrine of existentialism, where the core 'existential attitude' is based on disorientation because of an absurd scenario from which meaning cannot be directly drawn. In 'Beat', there is no context to

Beat — Treatment

provide insight into, and therefore the fugue-like dream feel serves a different purpose, to keep the audience prepared for any on-screen event. Like an orchestra building to crescendo, 'Beat' creates a constant sense of uneasiness that tells the audience something 'might' happen, echoing my own experience of simply being an observer or an unwilling participant of my dreams.

The title is a play on words, referring to both the musical term 'to mark time', and 'to strike violently and repeatedly'. The film incorporates both elements; with repetitive, metronomic noise used to establish rhythm and to enhance the shock when the rhythm is broken or changed, such as four pleasant sounding strokes of a violin followed by a fifth, harsh, off-pitch note, or 10+ seconds of relaxing audio of a babbling brook to make the next two seconds of silence more unexpected and enhancing the accompanying shocking visuals of a man being flicked in the eye. The lack of a traditional soundtrack or song running through the film keeps the audience on edge, as there are no audio cues for them to anticipate the potential shocks that may occur. 'Beat's visuals also channelling the violent interpretation of the title by using harsh and brutal juxtapositions of normal human actions, like 'grinding', 'smashing', 'snapping' et al, for example, in scenes where a bow is drawn across a violin, an interrupting shot of a saw grinding through hair in the same motion and position as the violin bow. Further surrealist elements, such as the Kuleshov Effect and industrial imagery, like 'Stop' signs, saws and hammers, are used in the film to help create the feeling of unease to enhance the film's climaxes.

As a work of surrealist cinema, 'Beat' disrupts the mainstream ideologies of traditional chronological film structure to enhance the audience's emotional responses to the resolution of tension and to intense or absurd imagery.

References:

Birdman (2014) Gonzalez Inarritu, A.
Breton, A. (1924). Manifestos of Surrealism. S.I.: Univ. Michigan P.
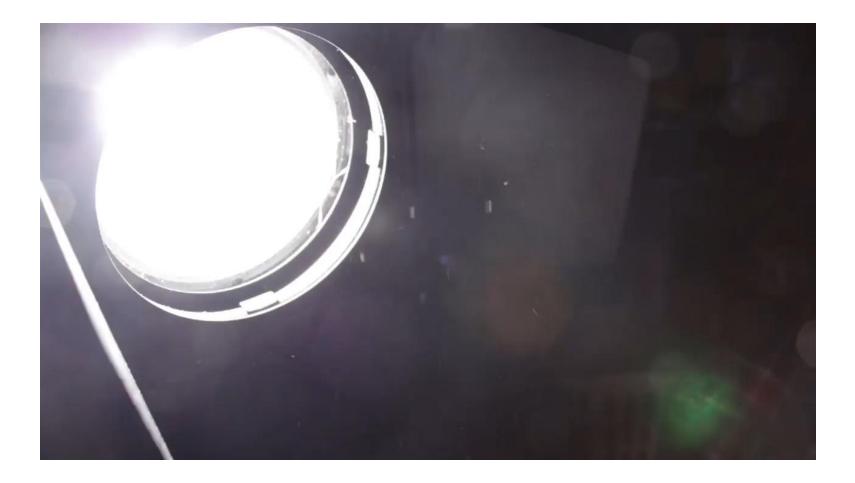Hames, J. (2012). An urge to jump affirms the urge to live: An empirical examination of the high place phenomenon.
Matthews, J. (1971). Surrealism and film. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Robert, G., & Zadra, A. (2014). Thematic and Content Analysis of Idiopathic Nightmares and Bad Dreams. Sleep.

833 words

Treatment [6]

symbolism illustrates stylistic aesthetic through use of symbolic codes, metaphors and stylistic elements

Purposeful use of technical and symbolic codes, motifs and stylistic elements.

Applying literacy skills in a treatment [4]

application of premises that are based on the selection and discussion of key information to justify and persuade

Key information — referencing.

Beat

Please see annotations that show the match to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG) performance-level descriptors on next page.

Beat — Structuring media elements

Structuring media elements [10]

structure exploits production practices that communicate meaning and a stylistic aesthetic

The student has recorded clear, effective sounds, and well-focused and angled images.

The film is structured according to the concept set out in the treatment.

The edit is very fluid, and rhythmic, and the use of technologies is central to the concept of 'Beat'. Deliberate control of editing technologies is shown through precise alignment of sound and visuals.

The intercutting of everyday objects with the close-up, standard facial expression effectively pushes the interpretation back on the audience, as per the Kuleshov effect of the design. Elements of the grotesque are a key motif, evoking surrealism.

This is a very sharp, precise edit that uses sound and visual with specific purpose.

Beat — Synthesising media elements

Synthesising media elements [10]

synthesis and resolution of a conceptual problem that shows a personal stylistic aesthetic

The concept is clearly expressed through the rhythmic organisation of shots and audio in the edit.

Experimentation with the sounds that particular objects make influences the soundscape and imagery. The experimentation with juxtaposition of objects is apparent, e.g. guitar plus saw.

The motif of the close-up face, pulling an open-to-interpretation expression, creates an immediate connection to personal identity. The interpretation of conventional shots and objects forces the audience to consider their own identity.

Every shot contains an expression or object that is associated with something socially innocuous. The abstract pairing of objects, expressions and sounds challenges the associations made by the audience.

The concept in the treatment has been realised through visual and audio experimentation. The film presents a very clear aesthetic — tongue-in-cheek, playful, grotesque.

Beat — **Reflective statement**

Reflecting [5] **experimentation shows development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms** Outlines experimentation.	As an exploration of primal responses to tension, and what enhances or dulls these, 'Beat' is in every way an experiment. Borrowing from the anarchic ideas central to the Dadaist process of creation, I disregarded narrative structure and engaged in a cacophonous process of experimentation with sounds and objects, particularly playing with juxtaposition to explore the Kuleshov Effect.
Reflecting [5] **experimentation shows development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms** Summarises project workflow.	Beat explores the surrealist concept of the 'fugue state'. Beginning with a sound recorder and a box of unrelated, innocent objects I attempted to create a dissociative disorder. Through experimentation, I explored the workability of my original ideas, and recorded sounds and visuals that engendered a primal response to tension in either myself, or those I shared my experiments with. The emphasis on a perfectly rigid soundscape was too much to have in a no budget, short time-frame production. I felt that the aspects of rhythm and lulling the audience into a sense of security could be achieved through other means, not just through a precise ticking of a metronome. Rather, the high-hat audio acted as a somewhat rhythmic element, but the actions in the shots are not timed to the beat. I found that this actually was more disorienting and created a stronger sense of unease, which was my ideal result, so my planned rigidity of timing loosened. Moreover, using post production audio software, I was able to further manipulate recorded sounds, playing with frequencies and pitch in order develop unease in the viewer.
Reflecting [5] **experimentation shows development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms** Describes stylistic ideas.	
Reflecting [5] **experimentation shows development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms** Explains development and refinement of stylistic conventions, methods, elements and forms.	During the filming process, I added elements to the mise en scene, such as the dolls - a chance discovery while shopping, and a motif that immediately induced unease. The juxtaposition of symbols of childhood and innocence with harsh and brutal human behaviours - grinding, snapping, smashing - creates sense of the grotesque, a visual concept central to surrealism due to its reflection of the subconscious. Simply experimenting with what I thought would be 'unsettling' during pre-production and the actual filming produced a lot more intuitive and creative ideas. I synthesised my experiments through an editing process that emphasised chance and juxtaposition. With the Kuleshov Effect, rather than any concept of narrative structure, as my guiding influence in terms of sequence, I played with the association of various images next to each other, selecting those combinations that channelled the violent interpretation of the title: 'Beat'.