



Imagery in Context

A Theoretical Discourse in Correspondence with a
Music Video's Concept and Implementation

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Abstract

This thesis deals with imagery as visual mean of film to address the audience and explores the aware design of its aspects, like composition and framing, depth and focus, light and colors, or symbolic content, and the inherent motif, which are examined not only through a technical, but also through a pictorial and artistic point of view that includes illustrating examples.

Especially, the significance of the single frame - thus, the still image - in film to express ideas, situations, emotions, and moreover, a story's state, is approached and related to the film's momentum. While contrast and visual rhythm are the found outstanding essential features to be achieved by imagery, also its potential to influence the film's statement by its harmonic or disharmonic relation to the film's story and soundtrack, loom.

In order to assess a practical relevance as well, the approached considerations are referred to a music video production, which is currently in the phase of the preproduction. Therefore, also the visual concept and furthermore the script's and the story board's excerpt in correspondence to specific models and the project's circumstances are consulted, so that the imagery's practical implementation is documented and reflected in the course of this accompanying project.

As the example of this production shows, even though, the limits are set by the finances, the aspired imagery can be achieved, since the human resources and the minimum of the technically needed standards are given, or - with some inventiveness - are available.

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1 Introduction

In my last semester, which I spent abroad at the Leeds Metropolitan University, I was lucky to choose my modules very independently so that two of them included journalistic and photographic contents. During one lesson of analyzing photographs the module leader and tutor mentioned the fact that the human memory works in still images, but not in sequences. As I am a visual person who had been intrigued with pictorial composition from my very early lifetime this statement remained in my mind and unclosed the motivation to deal in this work with imagery of stills in the light of the moving image or film.

Since video footage consists of 24 (cinema) or 25 (television) still images per second, the idea of a still to be seen as the core element, appears comprehensible. A closer look at the difference between a still and a moving image directs the attention to the aspect of time, which seems on the first glance excluded in the moment of a still, while the progress of a moving image subsists of time itself, so that one might assume that time is the video's factor to contrast with and separate it from photography (Schüpbach, 1984, p. 12).

From that point of view the moving image allows to communicate the underlying story to a nowadays beholder in a more clear way or in a greater extent than the single still does. However, it is not said that the potential of story telling within a still is not given as throughout human history symbolic imagery has been developed and used to transmit data, messages, and stories, which inter alia brings me to a sight on stills as not excluding the aspect of time but capturing a story and furthermore the duration of time in one single moment (Jehle, 1984, p. 38).

In this thesis the still image is considered as the essence of film - namely as the initial unit to be explored as the burned in and lasting beholder's impression, and furthermore as the audience's door to get involved. To take the interdependence of a film's story, imagery, and sound in account instead of isolating the still (Schüpbach, 1984, pp. 13-14), also it's role is seen in context with a specific music video to be produced, in which imagery works as link between the story to be told in time and the songs' momentary dynamics and moods.

1 Introduction

Since the music video production aims to translate the songs' atmospheres and backgrounds into visuals under specifications and inspirations of existing examples, I want to explore the basic common patterns in the aspects of imagery to get more aware of the visualisation of story telling and further of the artistic license.

So, which theoretical approaches about imagery and which existing models are relevant for the project and how are they applied in the momentum of the music video production? How is imagery - as its implementation is also a question of the available tools - influenced in relation to the specific practical example?

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2.1 The Accompanying Practical Project

A fellow student's decision to direct a three tracks and approximately fifteen minutes long music video for the South Tyrolean band *The Artificial Harbor*, was the initial point for me to get involved as his assistant and to start with the preproduction phase - the collaborative working out of a concept, script and story board, as well as an exposé for the aspired sponsors, while the actual shooting will take place in late September this year.

With the aim, to support the release of the band's new single *In My Dreams*, the music film will merge this song with the two already released and for now remastered tracks *Greenfields* (The Artificial Harbor, 2012) and *Summer, Yo!* (The Artificial Harbor, 2013) by one plot, in which the solidarity and common origin of the band members - as the basis for their departure for new musical shores and chapters of life - will be the subject and shall be visualized creatively with performance and imagery.

The dramaturgical statement is mainly about the band formation connected to the role of friendship in their life's journey, the musical being, and how friends grow together through shared experiences.

Corresponding with a one by one release of the singles, the music film will be separated into three episodes and released one after another. Specifically, it is planned to start with the second episode, so that the first part of the story (and the music film) will be uncovered as last, in order to provide an aha moment to the audience.

2.1.1 Dramaturgic Structure

The title of the music film is *New Shore*. In the following the episodes main functions and contents are described:

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1. *Greenfields*: Establishing and initialization

The South Tyrolean town Brixen and its surrounding area will be established as the venue. The so called myth, an elder wise man to initialize the story and to guard the friends and the audience will be established, while the bandmembers will be established as friends with common origin as well.

So, the friends gather from different locations of Brixen to plan and build a raft for their journey to their new shore.

2. *In My Dreams*: Farewell and retarding momentum (transition)

On the road to the big lake they carry the raft on their shoulders and in sequences of memories they say goodbye to family, friends, things and places of their past. Solidarity and the home location back up their shared leaving.

3. *Summer, Yo!*: Adventure and arrival

Dancing nymphs welcome them lakeside and the raft is set into the water. The long journey into the unknown takes place and finally succeeds: The new shore will be reached again with the help of solidarity. A playful openair get together of the friends as music band afterwards seals the passed adventure.

Hence, conceptually and basically the three songs shall be connected by one plot, of which dramaturgic acts in turn are divided by them and which can be seen as the main structure to be developed in more detail by the script and the story board.

2.2 Still and Moving Imagery

First of all the story captured in a picture to be transmitted is a question of its composition, thus what is how included or excluded. I had to experience that already during my studies in my first (music) video project, when one character should have been established as pregnant. It failed since the belly was not recognizable even though there were two possible shots to show it before the hence by the confused audience wrong interpreted birth scene.

In retrospect an appropriate implementation would have required more conscious and clear artistic decisions about the framing and composition in the preproduction phase in order to communicate the story to an audience, whose comprehension (of a music video's plot) depends absolutely on the provided image, for which the primary focus in the following lies on this aspect and how to approach it.

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Though the given horizontal video format is suitable for the aimed visual narration, since it considers the beholder's angle of view and orientation, which furthermore provides more space for the content, the exclusion of content in order to concentrate on the essential focus instead of distracting the attention, should be emphasized as a strong tool (DuChemin, 2010, pp. 14–19) - not only to direct the attention to the story's current essence, but also to enhance the effect of an event in that way, as it is e.g. realized in *L'Argent* (1983) by Robert Bresson:



Figure 1: The exclusion of visual content. (Bresson, 1983)

A man slaps a woman in her face, but instead of showing the event directly and visually, the event happens off scene. The Close Up of the shaken coffee cup in her hands together with the slap's sound seems to work in a more subtle way and even stronger in its brutality (Schüpbach, 1984, p. 14). It is an example, to establish sound as another distinctive feature to tell a story in the moving image, but also to differ it from a still (with usually no accompanying sound).

In terms of the project it shall be considered in that way, as the sound atmosphere of the actual shoot is planned to be recorded, in order to be able to confirm significant events and atmospheres of scenes acoustically.

To return shortly to the contrasting handling of time in stills and moving images, the flexible scope of the duration of exposure to light in photography actually results in the potential to capture and show time in a single shot - be that a 1/250 second or 5 seconds - while the duration of exposure in film is obviously connected to and limited by the used frame rate of the film camera, and thus

restricted by the possibility (or the attempt) to show the duration of time. Of course this is a logical fact, but in the more philosophical discourse of this work on the role of the still in film it seems remarkable in special, since a discourse about the essence of film has already been going on for a while in the circles of experts (Albera, 1984, p. 66–67).

In this context Schüpbach claims about the relation of film and photography, that the still can be compared with holding breath in time while the moving image breathes in time (Schüpbach, 1984, p. 12). As a photographer is also able to capture the movement in space e.g. by panning synchronously with a moving object by using a long exposure, so that the background blurs (DuChemin, 2010, p. 31), I would even continue this idea and say: Furthermore, photography is like holding breath in space while film is like breathing in space - e.g. changing the shot size and angle with a camera's movement in space by a Pan, Crab, Track, Zoom, Ped or Tilt, as shown in Figure 2.

In this regard we are back at the two substantial aspects which are working strongly together in film: The story to be told in time and to be seen as the (again) breathing of suspense towards the aspired balance - the based conflict and reason for the story (Dürnberger, 2012a, p. 3) - and it's expression within the moments, hence the imagery of the stills.

For my further approach I differ five levels of the image or shot to be examined for imagery, but think that the transitions are sometimes fluid and arguable:

1. The shot's two-dimensional field (composition and framing)
2. The shot's three-dimensional space (depth and focus)
3. The mood (light and colors)
4. The rational analysis (content and symbols)
5. The emotional identification (motif).

2.2.1 Composition and Framing

The first decision of framing applies to the picture's shot size, which can be divided as follows: (a) Extreme Long Shot, (b) Long Shot, (c) Medium Long Shot, (d) Medium Shot, (e) Medium Close Up, (f) Close Up, (g) Big Close Up, (h) and Extreme Close Up (see Figure 2), and which furthermore depends on the aspired type of image.

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The shot size and hence an element's more specific framing and placement in the picture - if it is fully within the frame, if it is lost or even fills the whole screen, and if it is covered or obscured by other elements, or even cut off by the frame itself - expresses its momentary importance and role.

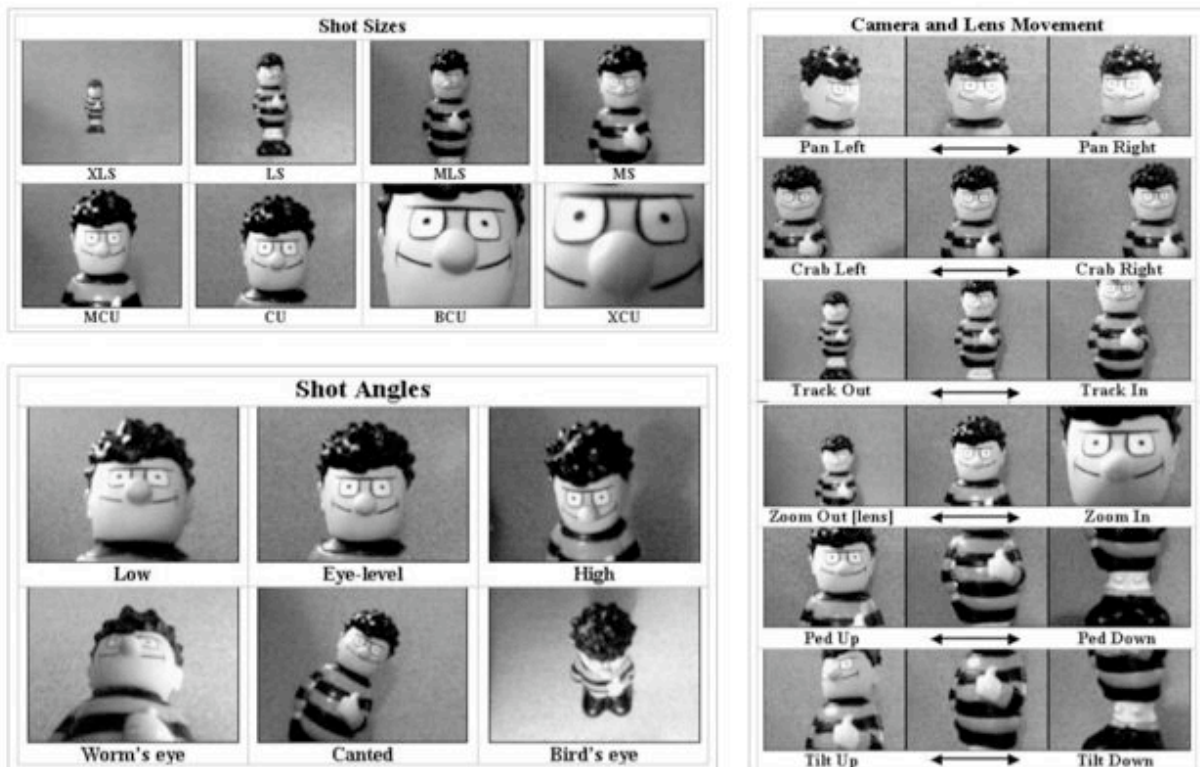


Figure 2: Shot sizes. (Emery, n. d.)

In correspondence with photography the Long Shots are associated with more objective POVs (Point of Views) as a certain distance is related to objectivity, while the closer the shot is, and furthermore the more involved the beholder gets, the more emotionality and intimacy are triggered by the picture. So, at the one end of the Long Shots the aimed focus lies in universal observation, while at the Medium Shots it lies in the level of more defined action or milieu, and at the other end, the Close Ups, the focus lies in the level of emotions and instinct (Albera, 1984, p. 63–64).

Very important for the POV (and thus for the identification with the character) and related to the shot size is the fact, if the shot is taken indirectly - which is the objective POV, half subjective - like over shoulder, which is together with the character, or directly from the characters view and thus as the experiencing character.

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Here the shot angle provides further influence from what kind of perspective the POV is given and if it is experienced as being at another character's mercy, on the same level, or as being more powerful than the other up to beyond everything else (see Figure 2).

The placement of the picture elements to each other within the chosen frame is about their relations to each other, to be implied by geometry, lines, and forms, in order to create tension or balance.

If the Rule of Thirds - to benefit from the natural human points of attention at the intersections, as it is shown in the example of Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) in Figure 3 - or symmetry, or extreme tension e.g. by placing the object in one corner, is applied depends again on the vision (DuChemin, 2010, p. 59–61), thus on the aimed expression in the image to tell the story and to direct the beholder's attention.

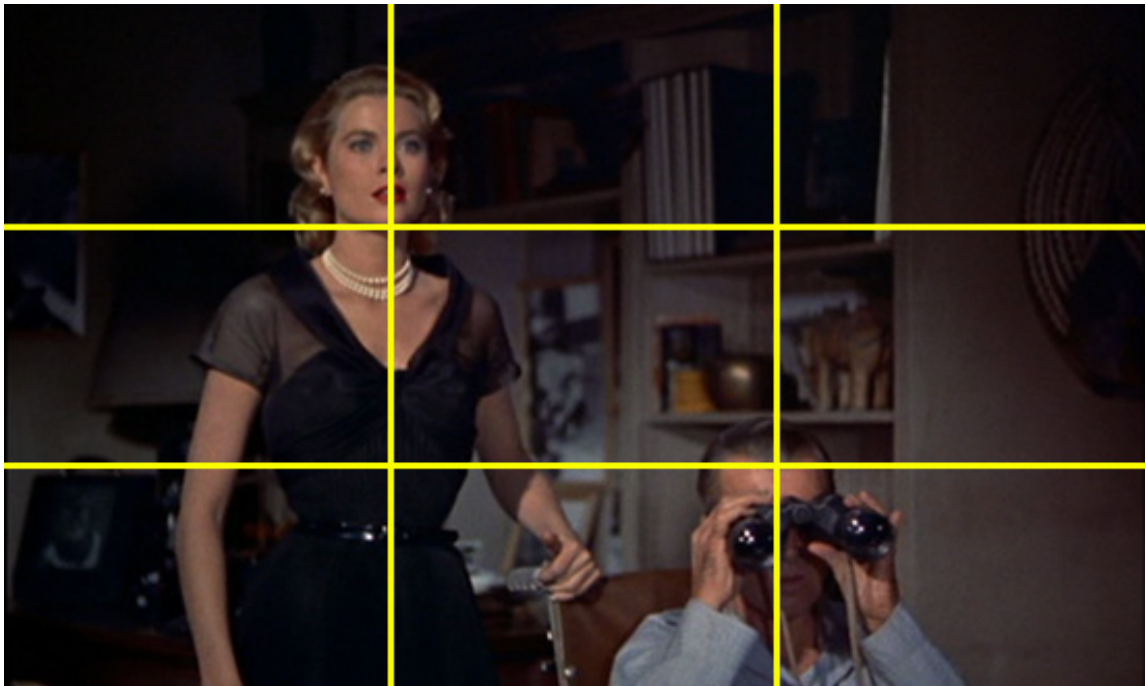


Figure 3: The Rule of Thirds. (Emery, n. d.)

The technical aspect of framing is the choice of the lens. The wider the angle the smaller seem the elements related to the captured space. So, to describe an overwhelming mass of people, it might be better to use a telephoto lens and position with more distance from the scene, in order to compress and transmit the power of a mass, since the effect of a long focal length is to compress the object's expression, which also works for shots of landscapes (DuChemin, 2010, p. 196).

2.2.2 Depth and Focus

The three-dimensional level of the still deals with lines and forms in terms of using perspective and a vanishing point, and its impact on the proportions of the elements - which again can be used to create a contrast between the picture elements and to visualize a conflict, a situation, or action, and furthermore to direct into the picture depth:

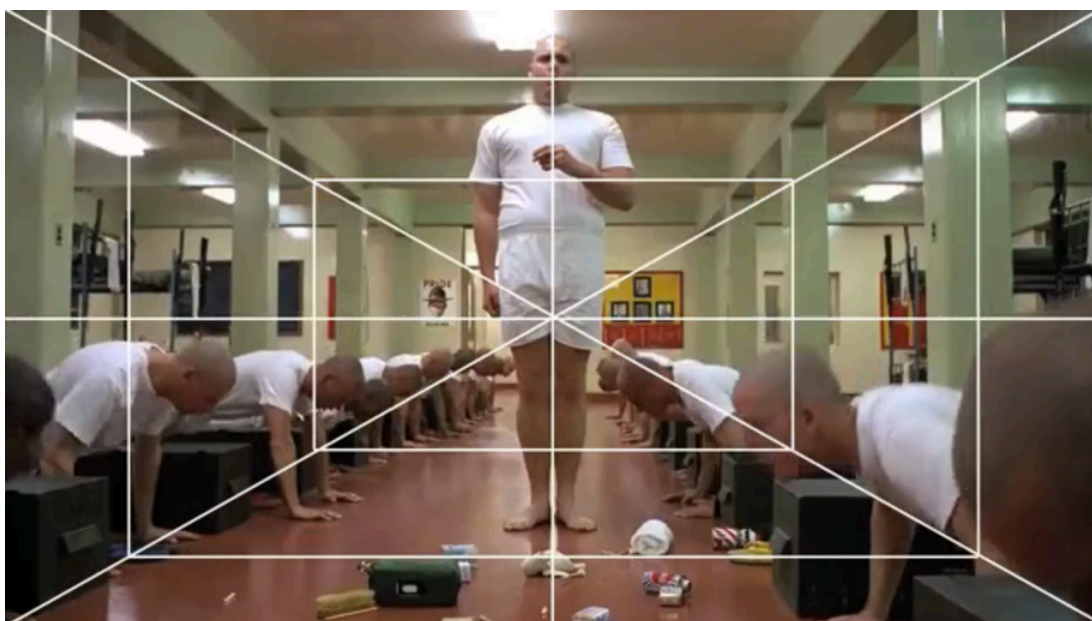


Figure 4: One Point Perspective. (Holmes, 2012)

The already mentioned Rule of Thirds can be considered for the horizon, so that it lies on the upper or on the lower third's line, depending on if it should be focused on above or below of the horizon (DuChemin, 2010, p. 194).

Another way to create depth is to use levels, which mark foreground, middle, and background, while the challenge here is their interaction and to have one level on which the attention lies, even if a small aperture is used and everything in the picture is clear (DuChemin, 2010, pp. 198–200).

For this implementation, a wide-angle lens allows the image's levels to breath and can be positioned very close to the foreground, while then even small changes of the perspective have a dramatic impact on the image (DuChemin, 2010, pp. 198–200).

Furthermore the wide angle reinforces perspectives and differences in elements' sizes, and thus also can be used to describe the element's relation to each other and can help to tell a story by distance instead of intimacy (DuChemin, 2010, p. 56).

An element's movement is an important factor, since it also directs deeper into the image, or out of the image and straight to the audience, which can contribute to a beholder's involvement.

But also to consider, there are the movements out of the image's frame to refer again to the not seen, and therefore to the illusion or the reality of the story's world beyond the restriction of the current picture. Besides the physically implemented reference beyond the frame there are subtler cues like a character's glance and of course the dialogue (in film) to refer to the not seen, which then also can be mental or transcend content.

Here, also the picture depth as the scope to apply the focus in order to direct the attention explicitly - be it on the focused and hence clear element, or be it on a blurred situation and its accompanying sound, or the reaction of the clear subject - can be used to enhance the importance of the not clearly recognizable things.

2.2.3 Light and Colors

Another aspect to create a deep image instead of a flat one, is the contrast which arises out of the dynamic of the occurring colors in two ways and which is defined by the light incident onto the lens: Quality (hue and saturation) and quantity (lightness) (cf. Loncar, n.d.).

Even though the colors depend on the captured light (and the surface condition of the reflecting elements), for the artistic and technical decision it can be distinguished between the light situation and the occurring elements' colors.

For the photographic approach the so called triangle of exposure represents three tools to control the quantity of the incoming light, which are also connected to the depth of focus, the captured movements and the picture's technical quality, and thus strongly influence the resulting artistic expression of the produced picture (DuChemin, 2010, pp. 42–47):

The more open or closed aperture determines the depth of focus and so the attention's direction and spreading.

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The shutter speed influences the captured sharpness of movement or the motion blur. Since the cinema's audience is used to 24 images per second and the accompanying motion blur to provide an as naturally experienced atmosphere, the technological progress of a higher shutter speed and sharpness seems to be not easy accepted (Byford, 2012): E.g. it is hard to imagine that the triggered emotional involvement of Malick's 'poetic' shot in *The Tree of Life* (2011) as it is shown in Figure 5 would work with less motion blur, but higher sharpness.



Figure 5: Motion blur for a natural experienced atmosphere. (Withrow, 2012)

The ISO (the camera sensor's sensitivity to light) influences the pictures quality in that way, as a too high pushed value via the gain control, e.g. in a dim light situation, comes along with picture noise.

So, in order to achieve the aspired image's expression by an appropriate mixture of aperture, shutter, and ISO, which doesn't always catch the wanted quantity of light at the specific picture's parts and elements, furthermore the use of additional lighting and reflectors is common practice, e.g. such as a hot (strong) backlight together with a soft fill (frontal light) and darkness in between, as it is illustrated in Figure 6 on a still of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993):



Figure 6: Hot backlight, soft frontal light and darkness in between. (Nolfo, 2012)

As DuChemin points out, besides the controlled light quantity, which is essential for the technical image quality in terms of the captured information for the editing or the post production, the light quality is much harder to control - especially with natural light - but even more important (DuChemin, 2010, p. 47).

If light is soft (spread, indirect) or hard (direct, straight), if it is warm or cold, and where the light source is located, influences the picture's mood and the coloration and shadows - hence the characterization - of the elements (DuChemin, 2010, p. 49). Figure 7 shows, that also 'incorrect' camera settings are useful to achieve certain effects like a 'Matrix' green, as the setting is tungsten light so that a fluorescent park light is read as green:



Figure 7: Tungsten light as camera setting for 'Matrix' green. (Nolfo, 2012)

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Lighting and coloration of a shot open much more questions and go beyond the scope of this thesis, which emphasizes that there is no right or wrong light in absolute terms. Certain questions about the light's temperature or mixture of warm with cold light, or if backlight is needed or not depend again on the aspired result, so that the right choice for one situation is not meant to be right for another.

The same applies to the element's colors, which should never occur by chance but by design (Nolfo, 2012) as e.g. Bergman implemented his vision of a dark red room to portray his idea of the inside of the soul and selfless love (Ebert, 2002) in *Cries and Whispers* (1972):



Figure 8: Colour design to implement a vision. (Withrow, 2012)

2.2.4 Content and Symbols

With the regard on contrast as an essential way to direct the attention through the picture's content, elements can contrast in:

1. Size: the attention goes to big elements,
2. Lightness: here to the bright elements,
3. Color contrast: to the elements rich in contrast,
4. Color temperature: to the warm elements,
5. Sharpness: to the focused or recognizable elements,
6. Arrangement: to the single elements,

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7. Spatiality: to the elements with perspective,
8. Lines: to obliqueness,
9. Liveliness: to the human or alive elements. (DuChemin, 2010, p. 92).

Furthermore, the elements to tell the story have to be chosen and applied very carefully, because a single element's importance fades with their growing quantity. Thus, often it is better to use less elements and leave a question open, so that the picture carries a myth, hence gains importance in the whole, and keeps the attention (DuChemin, 2010, p. 94).

For this reason an element can bear the function to be a hint instead of giving an absolute obviousness, which means to use elements as symbols, as e.g. in Refn's *Drive* (2011) the plain white shirt is used to symbolize masculinity and to reflect the 'ambiguous motives and the muddled soul of its protagonist' (Laverty, 2011):



Figure 9: The plain white shirt as a symbol for masculinity. (Laverty, 2011)

2.2.5 Motif

The based motif, as the story's driving power (e.g. the search for love or for justice), is about the inherent conflict and is to distinguish from the story's plot (DuChemin, 2010, pp. 76–77) - hence, what happens and what is shown in the picture (content), and which mainly was referred to in the previous chapters.

For the audience the motif serves to identify with the protagonist (main character), since it provides a deeper meaning and empathy (like: 'Oh yes, I know that situation / problem / feeling!' or also: 'I want to experience it'), and so, triggers the demand to get a resolution as well (Dürnberger, 2012a, p. 9). As the inner dimension and the theme of the story, the motif's consideration and relation to the visualized content is crucial for the film's final statement, which is focused on in the next main chapter.

2.3 Context

2.3.1 General Context

As shown, the image's richness in general contrast determines a dynamic range, and hence creates the scope for the picture's inherent tension to reflect the story's current suspense (or balance), and thus the story's conflict visually.

Since a classical story is initiated by a conflict and strives after harmony, the accompanying images which are fraught with visual tension to express the story's moments, strive after a solution as well, and therefore one image can be seen as trigger for another image to be its visual complement to balance out and to provide a satisfying closing to the audience - if the approach corresponds with classical dramaturgic rules (Dürnberger, 2012a, p. 10).

As arts in general - and here a still's imagery in specific - shall be considered in context and refers in a creative way to something, even if it points to another artist's work or to just itself, it can be seen as a contemporary contextual creative statement or reflector in two ways: It can work as a mirror or it can hold a balancing function and hence be a contextual complement.

I want to consider this idea because especially a still out of context confronts the beholder with a wide scope of possible interpretation. The story, seen as the context, in which the still exists thus requires an artistic and furthermore technical decision concerning the used imagery:

The question is about the relation between the story and the imagery, hence if the images should visualize the story as a total mirror (in harmony to it and easy to relate and interpret for the beholder) or in a contrary expression (e.g. showing the dramatic moment of a deep emotional abyss by a very minimalistic symbol, so that the beholder is more challenged to recognize it, which adds complexity).

So, imagery in film can be seen as the opportunity to express an attitude to the film's specific story, as at the same time the story itself is a statement, to be in that way influenced and even changed by the used imagery. It looms, that the decision about imagery is not only a creative and technical one, but also a philosophical question: Downstream or upstream?

2.3.2 Specific Context

1 Visual Rhythm

Since the by now outlined visual aspects of the image are related to the creation of contrast, now I want to establish the context to visual rhythm. While the importance of rhythm corresponds obviously to the fact that it is about a music video production, the visual rhythm can be found and must be considered in every kind of film, and furthermore firstly is based on the composition of the single image (Block, 2008, p. 198).

Compareable to a metronome beat's subcomponents, the visual rhythm depends on alternation, repetition and tempo (Block, 2008, pp. 198–205):

Alternation in a single image can be created simply by the placement of a stationary object, which causes the alternation between space and the object. If the object is set to divide the screen horizontal and vertical equally (symmetry), influences then the intensity of the created beat (as asymmetry causes a higher tension - or intensity).

At the same time, a stationary object creates the needed repetition, since the accompanying division of the screen consists of the so called positive space (accented area, the object), and the negative spaces (unaccented, empty areas), which actually provide the repetition as illustrated by a vertical division in the photograph below (see Figure 9) - while the complete visual rhythm would be revealed by both, the vertical and the horizontal lines.

The tempo of the example in Figure 9 is slow as visual tempo depends on the amount of divisions within the image's frame. The more divisions triggered by all lines, the faster the visual tempo. As one can see, visual rhythm can hold attributes like slow, fast, regular, and irregular.



Figure 10: Visual alternation and repetition by a single object. (Dürnberger, 2012b)

Furthermore, the movement of an object creates rhythm, if the object moves in relation to the frame, which can happen in four ways: Entering and exiting the frame, moving in front or behind another object, moving and stopping, or changing direction. It is to distinguish between this primary rhythm and the secondary rhythm, which is produced independently by a part of the object, e.g. the feet or the hands (Block, 2008, p. 205).

Editorial rhythm arises with the beats of the cuts seen as the accents, while the time between the cuts is seen as the unaccented alternate. So, the basic components of alternation, repetition, and tempo are given again - and: The greater the visual contrast from one shot to another, the more intensive is the produced beat (Block, 2008, p. 209).

It is to differ between editorial repetition, which continues with every cut, and between pictorial repetition, which occurs with similar shots to create visual affinity and decrease visual intensity (Block, 2008, p. 210).

When it comes to the editorial tempo, which can be constant, speeding up, or slowing down, also the transition from visual rhythm to the film's structure, and even the story itself appears. I want to point out that a too slow tempo, and thus a too long time between the shots can diminish the audience's sense of editorial tempo and furthermore of the editorial repetition, as the One Shot technique (continuous shot without any cut at all) represents the extremest realisation (Block, 2008, p. 210).

So, visual rhythm can be achieved by stationary or moving objects, and by editing, while the intensity of a rhythm's beat depends on contrast, be it a contrast produced by the tension of stationary asymmetry, the contrast within the combination of stationary and moving objects, or be it the contrast from one shot to another.

Hence, the link between visual rhythm and the discussed aspects of the main chapter *Still and Moving Imagery*, like composition, light, colors, focus etc., which are used to create contrast and the importance of an aware dealing with it becomes obvious.

Related to music video production, the question of the last chapter about producing a downstream or upstream imagery can then also be considered as the question of how the created visual rhythm conducts to the rhythm of the music, or the music in general - if it behaves in harmony (downstream) or in tension (upstream). I do not claim that one excludes the other.

2 Statement to this Music Video Production

Concerning length and quantity of the footage to be produced, the fact of the more or less inexperienced production team suggests a well planned procedure of the shoot (daily shooting script) together with a detailed storyboard in advance, so that both, an afterwards noticed lack of needed footage and a lack of time during the shoot, can be avoided, and so that even time for not exactly planned but likely needed intercuts is included (Sandmann, 2008, p. 154).

With this approach, a concentrated efficient work and the ability to react flexible at the same time are aspired, to be prepared e.g. if during the cutting phase it turns out that the imagery does not work exactly as it was planned.

Since the productions state is still in the planning phase, thus the preproduction, unlike the common idea of the aspired result, the more practical question of the financial situation is not clear yet.

Therefore, e.g. concerning the lighting of the outdoor scenes (or as I would suggest it in general if there is a source to provide enough light) the cost-efficient passive technique with reflectors, absorbers and diffusers shall be used - rather with self made tools like reflectors made of cardboard and aluminium foil or styrofoam for softer reflection, while the backsides can be painted in matt black for the absorber, but also self made soft boxes or just white umbrellas as diffusers (Sandmann, 2008, pp. 72–74).

The occurring evening scenes in the end will be implemented by shooting with daylight as well, and by using a blue filter and a more closed camera's aperture at the same time (Sandmann, 2008, pp. 146–147).

Furthermore, the handling of the human resources is affected by the finances (besides the student status of most of the team members) so that at the moment it is not to think about professional fees, but just about refund for costs and a proper catering for the shooting. So, the most powerful motivation will not be money but the own enthusiasm, commitment and the action itself.

It looms that the technical and professional standard of the based models, shown in the next chapter, will challenge this production to create compareable images and to reach the aspired atmospheres by simple and affordable tools, whereby the actual obtainable financial capital will set some limits, but not prevent a relatively good and memorable video shooting.

2.4 Implementation

2.4.1 General Visual Concept

1 Inspiration

To get a common idea of the aimed mood and atmospheres, but also to get inspired in the first place, the production team did research to find the models and inspirations by existing music videos. In the following, some of the models will be examined shortly in terms of the pictorial value for the music video production, and in terms of the actually possible implementation related to the production's potential resources.

For the gathering of the friends during the first episode of the song *Greenfields*, the music video Featherstone by *The Paper Kites*, delivers the visual idea of a motivating power to unite individuals:



Figure 11: Visual Idea of united friends for the first episode. (Seamons, 2011)



Figure 12: Visual idea of will power for the first episode. (Seamons, 2011)

The natural and rooted atmosphere and the strong will as well, are the expressions here to be focused on and are both realizable.

The shooting location of South Tyrol will have the main impact on the music film's visual background and the expression of resolve in the actors' faces as a question of human resources seems ensured, since the band members and most of the other actors are professionals or at least are experienced in performing.

2 Imagery in Context

One of the differences to this inspiration is the used character of the myth as a visible external trigger and guide to call the friends to the adventure's preparation. Also, the imagery is closer or more directly connected to the music since the myth uses a drum, which is synchronized with the song's percussion, while also the band member's bodily expression will be synchronized (e.g. tapping the rhythm with the fingers).

For the second episode where it is about to plan and build the raft, the inspiration is taken from the music video for *Atlas Hands*, a song by Benjamin Francis Leftwich. The next Figures show three stills with scenes of journey planning, raft construction, and setting sails. Besides deviations, e.g like that it will be the plan of the construction itself instead of a map and that the construction will be set in a barn instead waterside, the relevant expression for our production is again the here transmitted mood of motivation and working together.



Figure 13: Visual idea of a moment while planning the raft, for the second episode. (dirty hit, 2010)



Figure 14: Visual idea of working on the raft, for the second episode. (dirty hit, 2010)



Figure 15: Visual idea of setting the raft into water, for the second episode. (dirty hit, 2010)

The final scene of the arrival theme in the third episode will picture the reformed friends at an evening gathering under a tree like it is shown in the music video *Out Of A Forest* by the band *The National* (see *Figures 14 and 15*), though a main difference concerning the implementation in this inspiration is the use of animated characters and of stop motion on location.



Figure 16: Visual idea of the final gathering, for the third episode. (Gundorff Boeson, 2010)



Figure 17: Visual idea of the tree and the light situation for the gathering in the third episode. (Gundorff Boeson, 2010)

Remarkeable in this scenery is the border between the familiar, cosily seeming gathering location and the swallowing darkness of the mysterious and maybe ominous surrounding night, which is created by the strong contrasting light situation, and which furthermore can be used to reflect the demarcation between the intimate friendship and the just conquered strange world.

2 General Dramaturgic Structure

The primary outstanding symbolic visualization in our music film will be the old wise (omniscient) man to represent the personalized myth of the band formation and thus the rootedness of their artistic development in origin and friendship.

The performance of the story itself is inspired by the image of Noah's ark, as the band members build up a (comparatively simplified) mean of transport, the raft, and furthermore, as the initial point and a sign for the necessity of the adventure is the starting rain after they followed the call to plan the raft's construction as their first mental approach of the upcoming journey. As it looms, the story's structure is based on the classical drama and the *Heroe's Journey* (Dürnberger, 2012a, p. 10):

Altogether there are two climaxes for the heroes to be mastered. After the heroes receive the call from the myth, the first gathering happens and the raft is planned. The starting rain as the call's reinforcement triggers then a first attainment, as the raft for the journey has to be built. But they are still in the familiar environment.

With the finished construction of the raft, the first challenge and climax is initialized, as they have to leave the common world and their past behind. This first climax bears also the so called retarding moment, which consists of the appearing doubts in every hero, pictured as people and memory sequences which encounter them on their farewell tour.

When the heroes reach waterside, the receipting nymphs symbolize the wardens to the other world and to the second climax - which is the adventure itself - the big journey to the new shore.

This adventure is here the lion's den (or the last fight) as well, as the jointly arrival at the new shore already represents the aim, which is rewarded by the evening musical gathering, after the metamorphosed and grown heroes also have integrated again in their every day's life, the familiar world.

3 General Visual Conversion

Corresponding to the hero status, the camera perspectives onto the main characters will be more from below and the shot sizes will vary from Close Ups (including wide aperture and over shoulder POVs) to Long Shots of the characters, enriched with wide angled Extreme Long Shots of the South Tyrolean landscapes. Thus the audience can get involved with the emotional aspect of a character's personal experience, but also gets a more atmospheric, and still objective overview at the same time.

2 Imagery in Context

A main characteristic - especially concerning the audience's involvement - is the chosen format of CinemaScope which provides the ratio of 2,35:1 (21:9) and thus a really wide horizontal space to set characters into the landscape with an epic look (see chapter 2.4.3 *Story Board Excerpt in Detail*), and which furthermore is to consider for the image composition in various ways:

It enables to direct the attention within the frame differently since more space allows more tension, e.g. by placing the action at the edge (Boorman, 1992). Also Close Ups have to be used carefully, since the space around a face can decrease its emotional power, while an over shoulder shot or the conscious cut between two faces at exactly the same position in frame can create a high level of confrontation (Mann, 1992).

Because of the eventually more of information in frame also the cutting process is affected (Boorman, 1992; Carpenter, 1992), and furthermore, the rendering for TV: Since black bars appear even for the common 16:9 TV screen, for which preventatively the film would have to be rendered for the more narrow format and thus get restricted left and right anyway (Boorman, 1992) - which is why I think, the black bars are to be preferred.

The operated camera will be a Canon EOS 550D and the lenses Walimex 35 mm 1.4, Walimex 85 mm 1.4, Canon 50 mm 1.4, and Tokina 11-16 mm with a fix aperture of 2.8 for a wide angle.

The light and color range shall reflect a thoughtful mood of nemesis and will be strongly influenced by the seasonal situation of the warm autumn light, which shall be enhanced also in the post production phase by shifting the general color temperature to a warm range, and furthermore by producing a breath of retro with a bit desaturation, while occurring Reds and Oranges in the images shall be accentuated.

As it is already pointed out, the imagery concentrates on expressing the songs moods, like the mixture of melancholy and awakening in *Greenfields*, or the resulting big change in *Summer, Yo!* while the lyrics - especially from *In My Dreams* - tell subplots to which the film's story is not directly related.

Considering the based music's (4/4) beat, the film cut will be synchronized with the song's tempo. After the first track *Greenfields* with firstly 120 bpm (beats per minute) and after the intro with 135 bpm, the tempo increases further with the second track *In My Dreams* to 145 bpm, and has a dragging drop at the beginning of *Summer, Yo!* with 95 bpm, before it finally rises again lightly to 105 bpm at the track's last (liven up) part. In correspondence, the cut tempo will

increase during the middle part (first climax, *In My Dreams*), will have a dragging (even psychedelic) start lakeside, and then will drive more prudently with the finalization of the second climax and the reward.

4 General Conceptual Summary

Thus the visual implementation is planned to relate very harmonically to the based three music tracks, reflecting their mood analogously, while the aspired perspectives, the coloration and lighting, and the editing as well, strive for images similar to the chosen models but adapted to the content of the story.

Returning to the formal decision to release the story's three episodes, one after another separately - but starting with the second track *In My Dreams*, hence with the first climax, so that the first episode, the initialization of the adventure, is released in the final - it is about to tell the myth (of the band formation rooted in origin and friendship) in stages and to show the first trigger not until the end, and so, racking the audience with the question or the enigma of the myth's character.

When the first release starts with the episode of *In My Dreams*, as the band members (heroes, friends, main characters) already carry their raft on the street and through their farewell sceneries to the lake, the arising questions, to be answered not until the very end, are: What is it about this raft, where do they have it from and who are those people? Where do they go and why? Who is this old man, how is he involved?

The answers to be given by the last released (first) episode *Greenfields* are then: The heroes are friends with a common origin and have been lead by the wise man to build up the raft, because it is about time to leave this familiar place (and to reach new shores).

In the following a part of this first episode will be examined textually and visually in more detail.

2.4.2 Script Excerpt in Detail

After a firstly silent intro where the location is established, the episode of the song *Greenfields* starts with the establishment of the myth and connects his character to the sound of the song's beat.

In the following, the main characters are shown in some daily routine situations, where then the myth enters their life as a leader to changes and collects them for their gathering, where further the raft's construction will be planned. The script excerpt provides a view on the collecting scenes:

2 Imagery in Context

INT. NIKI'S ROOM - FORENOON

Niki is sitting at his desk, distracted with browsing the internet. His fingers beat the rhythm (Greenfield). He holds for a moment and seems to feel the Myth's eye, who is watching him from outside the window. Then Niki's fingers continue the beat, while in the background the myth continues his path.

EXT. A STREET IN RIGGERTAL - FORENOON

Berni, who is riding his bike, enters the frame from left. Driving across the town, he enjoys the wind and the nice surrounding pretty much. The Myth crosses the street right in front and even though Berni is quite relaxed when he stops, his glance then gets locked and he takes off his already slipped sunglasses.

EXT. SARNS - FORENOON

A lonesome bus station surrounded by nature where just a view cars are passing. Ale is waiting there when he notices steps getting closer. He lifts his head. The myth approaches and passes him. Ales gaze follows.

EXT. BACHDAMM - FORENOON

Jul blades at the Bachdamm and is also enjoying the nice weather and the surrounding. The myth is sitting on a bench. Jul gets distracted, loses balance and stumbles. A helping hand stretches at him. It's Niki, who gets him up.

INT./EXT. CAFÉ - FORENOON

Nora places some cups onto the tray for the guests. When she steps outside, the myth approaches her straightly so that they touch shortly while passing. Nora wants to ignore that but then gets more and more irritated. She serves the coffee while on the tray her fingers are beating the rhythm nervously. When she returns inside, the myth is not among the other few guests. When Nora's look goes outside and she finds Niki and Jul purposeful on their way.

The following story board is a step more into detail, so that just one of the described scenes, namely the last one in the café, is now examined pictorially and cut by cut.

2.4.3 Story Board Excerpt in Detail

With 7 cuts the scenery comprises a course starting with a close view to develop a certain distance during time, which is interrupted from the personal and thus again closer experience of a confrontation within a relatively continuous shot.

Every shot holds an establishing reason or the exposure of an emotional state. Vertically the image is always divided into thirds or halves and besides the spatial perspectives, an imagery depth is aspired by a high contrast of shadows and lights. The perspectives are also chosen to emphasize the character's state and potential inner change within the story:

1. Close Up of putting the coffee onto the tray, indoor, while the background shows the Café as location (Establishing the situation and a narrowed view):



Figure 18: Close Up to establish a narrowed view on the situation.

2 Imagery in Context

2. Medium Close Up of the concentrated face (Establishing Nora as waitress):



Figure 19: Medium Close Up to establish Nora as waitress.

The camera tracks slowly into a Close Up of her face, while she is looking up a bit dulled to target at the outdoor area and then leaves the frame (Establishing Nora's attitude):



Figure 20: A Close Up of her face establishes Nora's attitude.

3. Medium Long Shot from indoor to the outdoor area with Nora stepping outside. (Establishing the targeted outdoor area and implying her will to leave):



Figure 21: Medium Long Shot to the outdoor area as a symbol for the will to leave.

4. The tracking Camera follows Nora over shoulder with a Medium Close Up as the Myth approaches her directly (Establishing the personally unexpected upcoming confrontation):



Figure 22: Medium Close Up over shoulder to accompany Nora's at her experienced confrontation.

5. Close Up and Medium Close Up of the Myth not making way properly for Nora while passing: The camera stays in position and perspective, Nora goes straight into the image to pass the Myth right and the myth goes straight to leave the frame left. Thus the camera starts with a Close Up and stops with a Medium Close Up of the confrontation because of the characters, changing their positions:



Figure 23: Close Up of the Myth touching Nora while passing.

The shot continues with the still camera to a Medium Long Shot while Nora serves the coffee - seemingly unreflected concerning the confrontation:



Figure 24: Medium Long Shot of Nora going into the distance, while camera is in the same position.

When Nora returns, the camera starts with a track out. Averted from the guests, she starts to beat with her fingers nervously on the tray (maybe Close Up from that for an intercut) and her irritated eyes reveal. She then passes the camera on the left as well as the myth did:



Figure 25: Camera tracks out and Nora passes, revealing her nervous state.

6. Medium Long Shot from the return to the nearly empty indoor area, where she expects to find the Myth. As he seems not here, her glance goes out the window (Establishing the pointlessness of remaining in the dull every day situation):



Figure 26: Medium Long Shot to establish the dullness of the empty café.

7. Long Shot from the window view on Niki and Jul on their way. (Establishing the connection between the characters and implies the upcoming leaving from the every day situation):



Figure 27: Long Shot of the window to the beginning of the friend's journey.

2.4.4 Reflection

The given technical resources provided by the involved production team members like the camera (Canon EOS 550D) or the lenses (covering 85 up to 11 mm focal length and a maximal open aperture of 1.4), connected with the present technical and artistic knowledge and skills of the team seem to have the potential to implement a proper film production and the aspired imagery.

If the financial resources are not approaching zero but at least a minimum to afford the other needed resources like lighting, electricity, and food - and thus the down calculated costs of the actual shooting - then the actual result stands and falls even more with the will and cooperation of people who are inclined to do the project for nearly free.

Since the sponsorship is not fixed yet and will turn out during the next months, as also the exposé hasn't been sent out yet, the actual finances cannot be assessed at the moment. But in general, as the technical tools are already available, I am positive and expect us to achieve the visual demand on our production's result.

3 Conclusion

First of all, the philosophically motivated discourse in this thesis about the role of the still in the moving image of film confirmed it to be not only the initial unit from the technical point of view - as the single frame - but also from the artistic point of view, because of the following approached considerations:

As it was already pointed out in the introduction about the time factor in comparison to the moving image, the still can be considered as capable to capture a period of time. But referring to film, the subsequent approach of imagery illustrated, how time is the significant aspect to differ the still from a moving image, and that the still (or frame) reflects a temporary and a local state of a film's story.

In the main chapter *Still and Moving Imagery*, it was found, that the creation of an potent picture to communicate a story - by catching both, the rational (analytical) attention, and the emotional attention - goes along with contrast to be achieved in the various aspects like:

1. An expressive view by the shot size, angle, and the element's arrangement (composition and framing),
2. A proper perspective to direct, the necessary picture depth and a well considered focus (depth and focus),
3. The needed quantity and quality of light and a color's design of the elements to create the aspired mood (light and colors),
4. Carefully dealing with the element's meaning (content and symbols),
5. A clear inherent conflict for the audience's emotional identification (motif).

3 Conclusion

So, visual contrast turned out to be the crucial mean to direct the attention through the image, as it was approached in these aspects of imagery technically and artistically.

The hence implemented imagery expresses then the story's momentary tension or balance, and thus the state of the based conflict visually, so that the achieved comprehensibility provides to the audience the rational access in form of symbolic language as well as an visual access to the emotional dimension to involve the beholder with the protagonist's motif.

Furhtermore, the relation of the used imagery to the story and to the film's sound track was considered, as their relation to each other in general - thus, which of them harmonize and which of them oppose - substantially affects the film's final statement.

In context with the production of the music film, imagery was approached as the link between the story in time, deemed as the rational content, and between the music, here seen as the more emotional, momentary content. Visual rhythm was established as the second crucial tool (in addition to visual contrast, to which it is strongly connected) in order to create again harmony or disharmony between visuals and sound - which was referred to as the downstream or upstream decision.

Since the exploration of the various aspects of imagery revealed these certain links and relations, it can be estimated as relevant in order to become aware of the artistic and technical desicions' impact not only on the final statement, but also on the kind of access to be provided to the audience.

The specific - but not unusual - project's circumstances seemingly have more consequences on the way of the implementation, as the fincances or the availability and skills of the involved people are expected to affect more how the footage will be produced - and less absolutely the resulting imagery itself - as it was pointed out, that the technical requirements can be achieved also with low capital, if there is strong motivation and action.

Now, based on this practical aspect, but also to get back to a more philosophical and wider point of view, I want to establish at the end of this thesis, the pursuing question of how and why a music video production, and arts in general depend on financial issues, and if they should do so - as I estimate the matter of course of the instant answers, one might has in mind, as questionable.

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