ADVANCING FILM THROUGH ART & DESIGN
A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE THAT FINE ART AND DESIGN HAVE ON THE INDEPENDENT FILM MARKET

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GRADUATE THESIS
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ADVANCING FILM THROUGH ART & DESIGN
A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE THAT FINE ART AND DESIGN HAVE ON THE INDEPENDENT FILM MARKET

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. (LUO).

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ABSTRACT
The Influence of Graphic Design and Fine Art in Film is a exploration into the impact that an investment of the arts has on film and more specifically the independent film market. Most independent filmmakers have to develop their productions with little to no budget. In doing so they must work to create a marketable film to the best of their ability. There in-lies the issue; they are doing it to the best of "their" ability. The issue that is in focus with the notion of ability is that a major component that is left out of the equation to produce a successful film is the much needed (and much rewarded) investment in the arts. By utilizing such things as concept art, storyboard, image boards, computer graphics and design, you will garner a stronger and more efficient production than that in which get your the closest to your desired results and success.
**OBSERVED PROBLEM**
The problem that we have to observe lies within the importance of the graphic design industry on its art variant the film industry, more specifically the independent film market. Particularly the problem is the lack of investment and interest in developing strong sound design that will aid in the interest and distribution of their product. Within the independent film market the issue is that many producers of lower budget independent films tend to invest all of their resources into the video elements and see the art and design components as a final piece that they can get by with minimal effort and focus. This lack of interest in the arts has been a key reason why they have lost out on maximizing not only their potential in the project but also their revenue.

**PERSONAL PROBLEM**
As a person that is both a fine artist/designer and filmmaker, I have been in the position where I had to decide how to best focus on the designs and what style would be best in the development of our production and brand as a whole. Also being in this industry I have noticed how so many other filmmakers have lost out on success and brand building due to their lack of use of the arts within the context of their production.

**MISSION**
The proposed thesis topic is focused on the necessity and advantages of art and design on the three phases of the filmmaking process (pre-production, production, and post-production). This will allow for independent filmmakers to develop a greater interest in the investment of the arts which will facilitate growth and opportunities for artist and production advancements.
INTRODUCTION
The information presented is a review of the research thus far regarding the subject of the influence art and design has within the medium of film. The goal is to present a foundation in which establishes how film influences society, as well as design and from there building them together to form a complete assessment of the topic. This review focuses on research that establishes how the visual language is used as a form of communication and then transitions to explaining the basis of the entertainment industry and how through the combination of graphic design/fine art and film they are able to influence and achieve the desired results for a production, particularly for indie films.
THE VISUAL LANGUAGE

The visual language has the ability to have a message and convey that message in a unique medium that can be understood universally. There are various forms of the visual language; i.e. fine art, fashion, photography, literature, and film. What these mediums will allow you to do is take a message and present it as symbols or to contain symbolism which speaks to a viewer and aids in developing a connection. As designers our job is to navigate that conversation as a visual moderator. We are essentially story tellers and the methods in which we will be able to convey that story helps us to have a deep connection to those that are viewing our content. Designers give meaning and purpose to the designs that are developed. Paul Caputo (2008) writes, “A carefully planned and designed sustainable facility accomplishes the important task of reducing or eliminating environmental damage, but it also is part of a message. It is a source of meaning” (Caputo, p. 8). What this shows is that there is a power in that form of communication. Within those aesthetic visuals lie an ability to relate to people on a level that is nearly impossible by other means. The arts have a way to speak to the depths of a persons soul and helps them realize so much about themselves and at times to escape the world in which they struggle.

The visual language is very important in the context of the establishing the tone and voice of your message. People are able to truly connect through that message and you are able to obtain their attention and focus as well. Using mediums such as design that type communication can definitely be established.
THE FILM INDUSTRY

The film and entertainment industry (for example) make billions of dollars a year off of this “conversation”. That is due to the fact that they are able to really maximize their resources and they invest in the one thing that will draw interest and attraction to their production, and that being...art. Within the journal “Principles Governing Film Influence” (1952) it states in one of their articles, “Reinforcement: Films are of the greatest influence when their content reinforces and extends previous knowledge, attitudes, and motivations; they are of the least influence when previous knowledge is inadequate, and when the film content is antagonistic or contrary to existing attitudes and motivation” (Principles Governing Film Influence, pg. 28).

Now many people will overlook this due to the fact that
its not promoted in the process; however, it would not be possible to make it through that process without their investment in the arts. That is the issue that is found within the lower budget productions. They tend to invest everything in making sure that their product looks great. Although a great product takes a great investment, it means nothing if there is not an investment in the one thing that will ensure the success within the development in each phase of their project. The arts have the capability of fostering and developing a strong successful approach to whatever you are creating. If a filmmaker introduces the arts into each aspect of their film, they give it the greatest possibility to be successful in all three phases (pre-production, production, and post-production).
The Influence of the Industry

The entertainment industry is one that amasses billions of dollars a year by “feeding” their audiences with content that connects with them on various levels. Particularly focusing on film, there is a great connection to it because of its ability to influence individuals. That influence is generated by various factors that work together to tap into the interest and focus of its viewers. In the article “Principles Governing Influence” the author writes, “The influence of a motion picture is specific, not general. The influence of a motion picture increase as the content of the film is directly relevant to the audience reaction it is intended to influence” (Principles Governing Influence). The key word in that statement is intentional or rather intent. The production companies that have had the greatest success with their projects mainly do so because of their focus on the arts to maximize their exposure, production quality, and revenue.

“The influence of a motion picture is specific, not general. The influence of a motion picture increase as the content of the film is directly relevant to the audience reaction it is intended to influence”

There are various factors which contribute to having success in each phase; however, the foundation of those successes lie in how the arts are best utilized. As individuals look at the final product of a production they give little thought to the full scope of what it takes to have a full fledged film. In the basis of the skeletal structure of a film you have music, photography, acting, computer graphics
and imaging, among many other elements. Each of these are various aspects of the arts and have the ability to make something beautiful when connected and given the proper focus and attention. These are the underlying methods of influence due to the fact that they connect with individuals in their own unique way. For some people the musical scores resonate with them and draw their interest in while for others it's the graphics.

As you start to peel back the various layers of a film, however, you tend to see how art and design plays the greatest role in the success of a production. Motion pictures, and any form of entertainment, have a major ability to influence people because of its relatable nature and unique factors. The language that is developed through the arts tend to reflect the inward thoughts and desires from those individuals. Each person has their own connection to the media and thus will have their own experiences in which they will help to direct their focus. The principles that aid in directing their focus provide options to build that foundation.

The reason for the influence that film has on a society is due largely in part the the appreciation for the art of the filmmaking process and the artistic practices that go about to aid in the production of the project. Elements such as culture and change may play a prominent role in the creation and development of a film. Also intellect plays a very important role in the connection to a film as an influencer. Certain levels of intelligence and social awareness will draw a viewer's focus to rally behind a film for support so that they are able to truly establish a firm grasp of the relationship that grows through this particular form of media.
PREPRODUCTION

Art as a Foundation

“Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth”. That truth is what we search for and what provides the methods to build our interest. That interest leads us towards the ability to influence. Influence, like everything else, has a foundation and with art the pre-production process has the same basis. As people are developing their production (after the script and cast have been set) people usually develop their shot lists, storyboards, and concepts through artistic practices and applications. A storyboard is a collection of thumbnail sketches and drawings of a shot list that will aid in the cinematic composition of the film and gives the team a way to “see” the project without having to have already shot anything. By drawing out the angles and cast positions, they are able to figure out what needs to be adjusted prior to beginning principle photography. Also this can aid in the set development with how a sketch can show what “world” is best to create to depict the character in the best light for the story. It is a method of experimentation in which prompts the production team to pursue a path that will garner the greatest success of their project.

During the preproduction phase you are able to play around with various “puzzle pieces” that will show you what the best course of action to potentially take would be. The issue that occurs with independent films is that they tend to move quickly into the production phase without giving the proper focus and attention
to the preproduction process. It is essentially about learning to crawl before you can walk, yet so many filmmakers tend to try to run and would rather stumble multiple times and show the effort rather than taking those baby steps to give your “child” the ability to gradually develop into a sprinter.

What the preproduction process allows you to do is to create a formula in which you will be able to know what you are doing, what you are desiring to do, and what you are doing will potentially become. Once you have a method through your foundation you will be able to become consistent and grow from that. The interest that you are looking for from your potential audience derives from this exploration and experimentation phase. The visual aesthetics that you incorporate into your project are what initially draws in the audience to have that sincere and intriguing interest in what you are creating. You’re able to establish a style and formulate stylistic principles that creates your “footprint” with your productions.

In the text Creating the Look; the importance of production design and the graphic, European influence Mark Coppos & Brent Thomas (1986) writes, “ Artists tend to paint things the same kind of way. As a photographer, I tend to solve lighting problems the same kind of way. I tend to compose things the same kind of way. Always experimenting with new stuff, but there’s like, I don’t think you make a night and day shift from one commercial to the next” (Coppos & Thomas, p. 4B). Preparation tends to lead to a powerful presentation.

An additional advantage of art within the context of preproduction is that art can be utilized in concept art and design, along with production design. Illustration, which is the foundation for concept design, focuses on establishing general places, characters, costumers, and color choices that will be utilized in the film. The next step from the storyboard design is building the world in which that story will take place. Developing concept art is vital in this process for it gives you the opportunity to visually see how your aesthetic choices will look...
in a two-dimensional format. For films that are based heavily on certain thematic elements from books, this particular section of the filmmaking process yields to the marrying of concepts to strengthen your position.

**Art as Inspiration**

That is another way of increasing influence with your audience. An example of this is found with renowned director, Zach Snyder’s production *Watchmen*. What is so special about this film is that it is a visual masterpiece and was able give a frame for frame adaptation from its comic book counterpart. The announcement of this film drew heavy interest as the comic of the same name is widely regarded as one of the greatest graphic novels of all time. Paying homage to the comic that inspired the film created a base that helped in its success. When this film was made it centered around a narrative that speaks about New York being destroyed by an atomic explosion.

Due to the nature and the problems that were faced on 9/11 Snyder was able to build a film that drew interest from comic book enthusiasts along with film enthusiasts. Bob Rehab (2016) writes, “Released in March 2009, Zack Snyder’s film version of *Watchmen* was a very ambitious experiment in hyperfaithful cinematic adaptation. Taking its source, Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’s 1987 graphic novel, as script, storyboard, and design bible, the production vowed it would treat the famously complicated narrative “like an illuminated text, like it was written 2,000 years ago.” (Rehak, pg 154-159). What this film showed is that sticking to the source material can be extremely beneficial and utilizing resources can garner some truly popular results. Like other films of the same genre, or even films of other genres, using art as an inspiration and/or even as a way to build your production to be successful could be extremely beneficial in this first phase.
STORY BOARDS

As stated before, storyboards are a collection of thumbnail sketches and drawings of a shot list that, once developed, is a necessary aid in the cinematic composition of the film and provides a way to have a presentation of the project prior to the production phase of a film. Storyboards are the visuals that showcase a sequence of images that displays the narrative and move from scene to scene. Usually it is accompanied by a brief summary of what is going on within the shot as an aid. Storyboards take into account the various factors that are necessary to explain the visions that the director is attempting to bring forth. Visually you are able to see what's happening moment to moment. They are often times considered graphic organizers and are utilized in a multitude of disciplines for the purpose of seeing a blueprint of the story. Storyboards originated in the 1930's under the direction of the Walt Disney Company for the purpose of organizing their visual narratives. At its core, a storyboard is a comic adaptation of the script. They have a variety of advantages in addition to helping focus the story. One of them being an aid in developing the budget for a story. Due to the nature of the visual information that is presented in a storyboard, viewers are able to use a storyboard to help structure the budget for a film. Also they are able to help
display the movements that a director desires for the actions of the actors. It is a method of experimentation that helps to save time during a production because if the director and producers know the flow that they desire, then that cuts down rehearsal time, as well as production time thus saving money on set. That money could then be reinvested into other areas of the production to strengthen it as a whole.

**CONCEPT ART**
The next stage up from storyboards is concept art. Marc Holmes writes, “Concept art is a tool that allows the director to guide the visual styling of the project with a cycle of rejections and approvals” (Holmes). Concept art is very important in the production process due to its ability to take a frame, either from the storyboard or the script itself, and develop a detailed concise presentation which can aid in setting up the set to accommodate all the needs of the production for that specific scene. Concept art also helps to develop a style for the production. Sometimes you may have an idea of what you want the end result to look like and creating concept art will aid in giving you a greater example of experimentation to get things to be exactly as you are desiring them to be. You are able to realize what may or may not work visually and to see if you need more or less elements to help push your concept visually. Concept art also creates a sense of consistency with the tone of the production.

**SET DESIGN**
Set design is a very interesting component of the preproduction process. During this portion of the process designers will develop blueprints for the sets. A majority of the time there are sets that have to be built or sections of a particular room that will be developed in addition to actual spaces that can be rented or purchased. Artists are brought in to create either two-dimensional or three-dimensional set designs that will be the foundation for the actual sets that will be produced during the production phase. It is important to have artists for this particular portion of the preproduction phase due to the nature that it requires not only architectural elements but also visual aesthetics that will fill that space to make it feel “real” in regards to the environment that is needed for the production.
PRODUCTION
This phase of the filmmaking process is the most important in the sense that this is the point in which you actually film and develop your production. The production phase is when all of your planning and preparation becomes a possibility. Where art becomes important at this point of the production is that now there is a foundation to build from. In the preproduction phase the filmmaker has created elements that they will use to generate the flow of the film.

Where many films have tended to struggle has been when they rush or even skip the preproduction phase and move to the production phase. Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). That is true in so many situations. The Bible also says to write out that vision. The art that is created during the first phase is the visual realization of that vision. It is developed so that the production crew can “run” with the vision to see it come to fruition. The production phase allows a filmmaker to test out their experiments by making the two-dimensional vision a three-dimensional reality. Art was used as a means to build the blueprint and now through the means of photography that
Art & Design as a Asset

During production there is a major need for art and design in a variety of ways. For one, design is used to make the content that shows up within a finished film product. Magazines, books, flyers,
banners, billboards, and all the other assets that show up in a project will be generated by a designer and built up in a way that compliments the needs of the story. Art as well becomes very important as a decorative aesthetic element in which helps to make buildings, rooms, and other environments feel more real. Essentially what is being stated here is that without art there is no reality. Boris Grois (2008) writes, “Traditionally, art was divided into pure, contemplative, “fine” art and applied art—that is, design. The former was concerned not with reality but with images of reality” (Grois). The separation that is normally viewed with these two distinct disciplines is made unified through the necessity of generating a reality in a film production.

Reality, however, is a very subjective thing. There are billions of individuals on Earth and that means that there are billions of realities. Although this is true, there are some realities that overlap and allow others to relate to each other. That is a very important element in the creation of a production and is truly made manifest through this phase by the filmmakers. Incorporating the actors within this phase allows for those various and unique realities to be present and thus there is a major focus to make these realities be conveyed in the greatest ways possible. Grois (2008) also writes, “Instead, these artists and theoreticians want to be politically and culturally engaged in social reality; they want to reflect on their own cultural identity, express their individual desires, and so on” (Grois). This is due in part to the desire to connect and influence the audience in which their film is set to be delivered to.
“Traditionally, art was divided into pure, contemplative, “fine” art and applied art—that is, design. The former was concerned not with reality but with images of reality”
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A FILM

People have a tendency to desire an escape from their reality as well as having a reminder of it. That is the psychology behind this phase of the filmmaking process. Writing it out in a script, and then drawing and developing it through conceptual art means will help you build something that has the potential for success; however, there must be a connection. The filmmaking process is one that develops a solution in a way to what has been problematic in society. The solution that becomes presented in a film provides a way in which a film not only speaks about life and individual situations that are both existing fictionally and non-fictionally, but also relates through the established connection of an individual’s own experiences. In the text *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* by Gen Doy (2005) she writes, “The Symbolic autonomous controlling subject is also a person who addresses us, individual to individual—a person with a distinct voice, a specific history and an identity” (Doy). To understand perspective you must understand why that perspective exists. That voice which speaks to the soul of an individual is why major productions invest so much in the preproduction process and take a tremendous amount of time and effort in the production phase because creating the content that will facilitate that conversation ends up requiring a ton of effort and attention.
Art, Design, & Emotions

Everyone has, at one point of their life or another, experienced a painting, a photograph, or film that has connected with them on a deep personal level that makes them react or respond to whatever stimuli that is being presented to them. When you dissect this and look deep within the core of its foundation, you will find the influential force behind this is art and you’re able to see how that art can be manipulated and ordered to develop an emotional response.

Focusing on art as a precursor of influence, you are able to see that through the various forms of art there are ways that influence can occur due to relational aspects that are presented through the chosen medium. Back in the preproduction section, we noted the famous saying “Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth”. Truth is a subjective notion and to each individual viewing art, design, or film, they will typically have their own truth, their own reality in which they will relate to what is presented.

When people see art that has a narrative or ideal that they can connect with, they gravitate to it and will have an interest to support it. Generating a relationship through the use of art has the ability to give you a road to be a type of “puppet master” holding the heartstrings of an individual. When an artist creates a work of art in any medium, they do so first and foremost for the love of the craft. In doing this, as an artist you are placing pieces of yourself into your work. Your stylistic choices will be used to convey your narrative or message. You then have the next
level of this which is presenting that message to an audience. Now as an artist, or even just as an individual, when you present something, you hope that the reception of that work aligns with your thought patterns and focus or at least that they will be open to being receptive of it.

An artist will utilize all of the elements and principles of art and design to “write” out their message. Using aspects of art such as line, shape, color, and form, an artist develops a system to build the compositions that frame the world in which message is contained. When the message is obtained and perceived by society it can vary with how powerful its influence can be. Sometimes that message can be so profound that it has the ability to influence and change an entire society. Jeroen J.H. Dekker (2009) writes:

“These strong feelings of embarrassment, so convincingly analyzed by Schama, eventually were overruled for a major part of the population by the vast consumption of beautifully and sumptuously manufactured moralistic paintings on the family, parenting, childhood, and education. This consumption was possible for that part of the middle class that was both financially able to buy these paintings and mentally willing to be taught by them. The vast production of such paintings suggests the existence of a strong belief in the power of images—in particular, paintings—for moral use” (Dekker, p. 167).

“A picture is worth a thousand words” is the phrase that comes to mind in regards to Dekker’s writing. He goes on to write about the idea that there is a belief that an image has the capability to change behavior patterns and the mentality of an entire society. This is due to the tendency to reflect what you see. If a work of art presents certain elements that resonate to the soul of a person, it can be a catalyst for change to be that physical reflection of what has been presented two-dimensionally.
Graphic design, a method of art, is the bridge between so many facets of art, or rather the arts as a whole. With design you are able to combine, fine art, photography, literature, and additional artistic elements to build a composition that depending on the factors and conditions of its contents. A graphic design professor of mine at Georgia State University is often quoted by his former students for his constant reiteration that graphic designers are story tellers. Whether that be through a poster, logo, print advertisement, billboard, banner, etc., the designs that are presented and developed by a designer have a way of providing a method of communication that helps to “speak” to individuals and thus open the door to potential influences and interest.

Just as art has a way of influencing individuals, graphic design can do so in a variety of ways because it is a more controlled method of communication. Graphic design presents a very precise and direct message that can be used for relaying information, presenting an argument, drawing interest towards a topic/even/ideal, as well as, a vehicle propaganda. Propaganda presents us with an easier avenue towards understanding the truth behind art being a method of influence.

Looking at designs such as those during the World War II era we tend to see the influence that they had at conveying ideologies and aligning those ideals with the mentality and behavioral patterns of the societies in which they were created for. During this period we had posters from the United States that promoted patriotism and unity, and garnered interest for men to join the war effort and for other citizens to aid in the development of items beneficial for the campaign they were on. On the opposite end we are able to see in Germany, the Nazis utilized graphic design to promote fear and hatred towards specific races, groups, and countries. Although graphic
design was the vehicle that was used to spread their messages, what we are able to see is that this particular method of art has the ability to be used for any every type of influence that may be desired. Even connecting back to Dekker’s writing, graphic design was used in the instances of the Norman Rockwell illustrations. These iconic illustrations were essential in promoting a growing, thriving, loving, caring society. They gave a sense of a desired identity. That is what leads to that connection with the viewer, the sense of identity. The identity that is found within the art is able to connect and give a reality that is either similar to the viewer, one they would like to have access to, or one they are attempting to escape from.

Art provides a narrative and displays a perspective. The same elements presented in a image can be utilized to speak in various ways. A prime example is found in art created to speak on Colin Kaepernick, an NFL player that took a knee in protest against police brutality but during the national anthem. Take for example the artwork displayed to the right. The top image displays a football player sitting on a pile of military helmets. This can be viewed as a sign of disrespect and cause you to have a certain mentality or even a basic thought of his actions and can be utilized as a vehicle of propaganda to be against his cause. Then on the other end if you use the same elements you can show the military supporting the actions of Colin and with the text display the narrative that he is brave to stand up for what he believes in with the rights provided by those that make the ultimate sacrifice for us to do so.
Another example of how art can speak is found with art inspired by the narrative of Toy Story 3. In this Pixar production the lead toys find themselves trapped in a community that separate the “lesser” physically inferior toys from the “normal” ones to keep there society perfect. That is reminiscent of the World War II era with the Nazi party and what they did in their community. This poster above was inspired by Anne Frank’s story of hiding from the Nazis. The font and poster style is inspired by German war posters to further that connection to that dark history.
**SET ART, GRAPHICS, and APPLICATION**

After you have the designs created for the set design in your preproduction process you are now able to develop the proper set based on the blueprint and mockup that you constructed. Also you are able to gather together the necessary set art, and graphic design, that is required to make your set come to life. A movie, television show, commercial etc. would never exist without these elements. All of these aspects of art and design flow together into what is known as production design.

Production design as stated before, brings the set to life. Without the art, designs, props, and set structures, the reality that is desired would not be possible. These sets overall establish the tone of the entire project. A example of this can be found within the movie *Dunkirk*. This film is a World War II reinactment of the battle of Dunkirk. The cinematography is astounding and breathtaking. However, in order to make that whole environment come to life, they had to have an extensive amount of production design. Production designers generate everything that takes place outside the actors and because of their work the production has the world it needs to exist properly. Due to the preplanning that took place, the production is able to budget accordingly to build the proper set.
POST PRODUCTION

This is the final phase of a production. Many individuals feel that this is the easiest phase where there is just editing and premiering. Although these are two key elements within this particular phase, there is so much more that is required and a major amount of what is left is dependent on the arts. After a film is complete with the other production phases, postproduction begins and it is at this point we have the editing and developmental process of fine-tuning the work but also the building of the brand and marketing that brand so that they are able to have the success that they initially sought at the beginning of this process. With the independent film market this is ultimately where they have the greatest issues. This is because they skip some essential components of this phase. They tend to just edit their film, make a trailer and a poster, then premiere it. They may be successful and win a few awards and get minimal exposure; however, with a greater grasp of incorporating the arts a basic production can become a phenomenal one.
Branding a Film

A brand is the foundation for any business, person, and/or organization. The right brand can help to motivate people to get behind whatever you’re presenting. Proper branding can be a strong factor to influence individuals. A brand is usually touched on during the first phase of filming and then developed thoroughly during this final phase of the filmmaking process. A graphic designer is heavily influential during this process due to the fact that they are responsible for the elements that the branding will be centered upon. In the text *Back To The Drawing Board: Graphic Design and the Visual Environment of Television at Midcentury* Lynn Spigel (2016) states, “Graphic designers have been hired to produce, develop logos and branding elements which aid in the agenda from the agency” (Spigel, p. 28-54). The agenda is to develop a strong product that gains the interest and desire to be viewed and supported by the masses. Prior to the end of the production there are no video visuals that can be given to promote the film and gain the interest or have that influence to draw people in towards their production. It starts off with the a logo, or poster, or even a flyer to start generating the buzz in which there will be a significant amount of interest from the onset.

However, To have a strong established brand you must devote the necessary effort to planning and designing for your demographic. You must incorporate elements that will connect to the viewer and that will gage their interest. This is through the use of symbols and/or symbolism. By effectively generating these things you are able to maximize your results.
Marketing

Once you have established a brand, you have to market that brand. You must have something to market before you can actually engage in that process. Marketing is a major component in the development of a brand as an instrument for your production. You can have the greatest concept and product but without proper marketing there is very little chance for its growth and ability to reach its greatest potential. Proper marketing and planning starts with a strong foundation with visuals in many forms and with those visuals their messages can be sent. It is essentially the narrative of the product. That is the driving force behind marketing.

A story presented through the marketing is a great way to connect with the audience and gain their support. The media that is released during the postproduction phase allows for the story to resonate with individuals as well as helping to prepare people for the content that will be released. It can be seen as the pregnancy stage of the filmmaking process. You know a birth is coming so things will happen to help prepare the world for it. Now a key factor that is important during the marketing process in this phase is that you must understand your audience that you wish to cater to. You definitely want everyone to have an interest in your production; however, to gain a major stronghold with your production you must first get the basic understanding of who the center of that potential expansive base will be.

As the target audience is established, marketing becomes more focused and centered. The
marketing helps to take both the brand and the message to the viewers and then from there garners the interest that is necessary for true growth and development. The greater the marketing strategy with the foundation in design, the greater the reception and revenue. The marketing strategy implements the path towards influencing and connecting with the masses. There are many ways the marketing can be exhibited and delivered and each viable option will create a different experience and connection. Based on certain aspects, such as age and culture, that marketing strategy has to be delivered in distinct ways in order to be the most effective. J.T. Luo (2006) writes, “The influences of trustworthiness may not be equally effective across all types of users. Many studies have shown that users differ greatly in terms of their readiness to trust a web site, and users react differently to on-screen characters, based on their own personality and other dispositional traits” (Luo, p. 112). Mostly the content that is released to the masses is through social media and the web. It is easily available and can be spread in greater ways. By honing in on these various “roads” the production has plenty of ways to truly become successful.
BRANDING GRAPHICS
As discussed previously, a brand is the foundation for any business, person, and/or organization. The right brand can help to motivate people to get behind whatever you’re presenting. The brand centers the entire production and creates the basis for how that production will be shared with the world.

MARKETING MATERIALS
Once a brand is completed then it provides a way to have it expanded. The marketing materials carry the message of the brand and generate a greater level of interest in the production as a whole.

EDITING OPTIONS
In post production, graphics are necessary to incorporate names, company logos, connection graphics such as text messaging, transitions, computer graphics imaging etc.
THE ELEMENTS OF ART AND DESIGN
Within the arts, there are certain elements and principles that help to design and facilitate the foundation. The eight elements of art are key components that center and focus the building of a strong composition in art. The elements are listed as such:

Line
Space
Shape
Form
Color
Value
Pattern
Texture
THE ELEMENTS OF ART AND DESIGN IN FILM

In regards to film these elements and principles that are found within art, are able to be applied from an artistic perspective and adapted into the cinematic world to improve the quality of a production.

Space is extremely influential in a film production. Space is used both in the natural to draw attention to specific elements as well as symbolic to display a particular narrative.

Line is utilized in film to help develop perspective. Many directors use shots with a specific line to direct the eye of the viewer.

Color is used in film to emphasize characters or elements as well as to aid in displaying a time of day and to separate people and place. It is also used to convey emotion.

Shape can be utilized to take on the characteristics of elements that help further the space and flow of the story.
Depth of field is important in film because it helps to drive the visual components of a film and focuses on specific forms of the components that are within it.

Value is used in film to add aesthetics which can set a particular mood in a film. The brightness or contrast of the colors, and saturation levels can evoke responses and connections from the audience.

Texture can be used to depict atmospheric perspective as well as to specify a particular form to distinguish its purpose and can show the tone of a scene or the film as a whole.

Pattern is used not only in wardrobe but also to develop a rhythm in film. Visually a pattern can be an aesthetic or a plot device.
ELEMENTS OF ART PUSHED FURTHER
Cinematography has its foundation in art and design which helps to center and focus the entire development of a production from start to finish. After building on the developments that are produced from the elements of art and design, cinematography and photography take things a step further by pushing specific elements to develop subcomponents which help to create a stronger production. An example of this is found with the concept of shots.

Shots
Shots are the stylistic choices that are chosen to create the form of a frame and establish the basis of the visual narrative of a film. There are a variety of shots that are available to choose from and each one is a mixture of certain elements and have a distinct purpose regarding their use. A shot contains the distinctive elements that creates the world the viewer sees. It is an “eye view” from the perspective of the audience in which allow for a film to tell its story.

Why this is of particular importance is that with how the shots present the elements that build the world of story, they end up developing a road or avenue in which influences emotion and draws distinctive responses from the audience. This establishes art as a basis of influence in that it uses its foundations to create a formula that directs the viewer towards what the filmmakers objective is for each particular scene and film as a whole.

This is first established through the use of shot sizes. Certain sizes will give you a specific emotional connection. An example of this is found with the image presented.

A wide shot can be used to establish a space or in the case of this image to suggest a sense of loneliness or emptiness. In this particular shot you are able to see a space of large open
home with a single figure that is presented in a symmetrical shot. This goes back to the earlier presented statement of how shots combine various elements of art to influence the audience viewing a film.

**Shots As A Method of Influence**

Shots such as this one are carefully planned aesthetic choices for influence and to evoke an emotional investment into a character or setting. There are a variety of shots that aid in pushing for a particular response or to push the narrative (Medium shots showcase the body so that action can be presented, while shots such as the Extreme Close Up aids in connecting the viewer for an emotional response to a specific character). Shots are based to present the story in a way that will make what is being presented, relatable to the viewer. Within film there are connections that are established between the viewer and the presentation. Karen Simecek writes, “A perspective often also imposes certain evaluative attitudes and emotional valences on its constituent features” (Simecek, 500).
What this goes to show is that by controlling what the viewer sees, you are able to affect their responses, whether you are pushing for a positive or negative one. Imagery has a way of creating a visual representation of a particular focus in which the viewer is subject to respond based on the manor that the subject is delivered.

The manor in which a subject is presented is best formulated during the concept phase of the filmmaking process (preproduction). As stated before, it is during the preproduction phase that assets such as storyboards, concept art, and additional visual imagery are utilized to create the foundation for what types of shots will be used for each scene of the film. These particular assets allow for the filmmaker to play around with sketches to see their film before they even start the production phase and build the best shots.

**Composition**

Building the perfect shot requires having a basic understanding of composition. Sketching out the shots you would like to use is the best way to take advantage of developing the specific shot for what you need. This is when a key aspect of art and design comes into play on a greater scale. That being...the rule of thirds.

The rule of thirds splits the frame, or the composition for that matter, into three equal spaces that aid in aligning and developing the visuals. A seasoned filmmaker and artist knows how to best build the composition of a frame and this will be the “pointer” to establishing the focus of a particular aspect of the visuals that are being presented at any given moment.

Additionally the composition of a film frame is affected by other elements of art and design such as pattern, symmetry, and texture. Having the proper frame takes more than just an understanding of what looks good visually as a whole. Certain patterns will attract individuals and can create a visual vibration that adds a sense of movement and
SU ST AINED SCENE SV 5

Stationary at bedroom doorway J walking in

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tension. On the other hand understanding the elemental properties of texture can also aid in pushing your filmmaking to new levels. Going back to what was written previously regarding atmospheric perspective, you will see that elements that are closer to the “point of emphasis” are typically sharper and more detailed than that which is more so an addition to the shot not a defining or key element.
CONCLUSION
The independent film market has a vast level of potential in the creation of successful projects through the ability to influence and communicate with its intended audiences. By establishing a brand through the process of incorporating art in the filmmaking process that provides a foundation for the necessary elements to have a successful production. By marketing properly and understanding how to use visuals and symbolism effectively your audiences will garner you the results you desire. Through the use of symbols and building up to a two dimensional representation of the production, then translating that to a third-dimensional format, the road to having a successful production can be possible if given the proper focus and effort. R. S. Yan (2011) writes, “Since ancient times, people have been searching for ways to use visual symbols to express ideas, communicate feelings, store memories and knowledge better, and deliver information more convenient” (Yan, p. 121).
Marissa Kelli Korshak <kellikelli19@gmail.com>
to me

Hey Jamal,

Please see the attached document for your reference. Thank you so much again for choosing me to be a part of your assignment. Best of luck to you sir.

Best Regards,

Dora Manu

This is great, thank you so much!

Thanks a lot for sharing.

Thanks a lot.
Q&A Jamall McMillan

1. **Question:** What is your profession?

   **Answer:** My profession currently is in the Art Department as an assistant property master on “Last Call”. I am also apart of IATSE Local 479 which is production crews, based in Atlanta, GA.

2. **Question:** What purpose do you feel art and graphic design has within your profession?

   **Answer:** Art and graphic design plays a very vital part of my profession. Daily we are faced with the challenges of having to create a piece of art or graphic art design for a scene in some cases short notice. My current department falls under the umbrella of Art Department for these reasons.

3. **Question:** How do you utilize art in your profession?

   **Answer:** I utilize art daily in my profession by not being afraid to get my hands dirty as it comes with the territory. I have assisted with the creation of everything from providing graphic art designs for a piece in wardrobe to purchasing animal fur and creating a fake animal for set purposes. Having a creative mindset that is able to align with the director’s vision is key.

4. **Question:** What are the advantages of artistic practices in your profession?

   **Answer:** The advantages of artistic practices in my profession is being able to embark on new inventions and creations. Also having the knowledge to assist family and friends whom I have the pleasure on educating about the film and TV world.

5. **Question:** For filmmakers what ways did your art and design aid you in the three phases of production; pre-production, production (set art, signage, etc.) post production (i.e. CGI, marketing materials, etc.)?

   **Answer:** Though I am not technically a “filmmaker” just yet, I would say without the graphics arts the entire vision of a sitcom, commercial, movie, cartoon etc., would not have any legs to stand on had it not been for the graphic arts or Art Department. Pre-production is very crucial when planning to implement creative ideas, which is why pre-production is taken so seriously. Marketing material and graphic art need to match in order to be appealing to audiences.
6. **Question:** Would you recommend art and design practices for other independent filmmakers?

**Answer:** Absolutely I would! Art and Design is needed in order to have a successful run on any set.

7. **Question:** Is there a time that you wish you would’ve used art and design more for a production?

**Answer:** No, because I have always been a part of the Art Department, so I had no choice. However, I can state that there have been times where had there not been tight time restraints, the art design my department was creating, could have been greatly be improved.

8. **Question:** Any additional comments about the topic that you feel would be beneficial?

**Answer:** My last remarks would be to be open to changes, criticism and other opinions of your work. Always have a variety of options to show the directors, producers etc just in case the piece of art you love does not make the cut. I love my career never and there is never a dull moment!
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Jamall Rashaud McMillan

Thesis Project: The Impact and Influence of Art and Design on film

Questions for Interview (May be Video Recorded or written)

Name:

1. What is your profession?

Actress and Independent Filmmaker

2. What purpose do you feel that art and graphic design has within your profession?

Art and graphic design helps us to be able to brand ourselves, market ourselves, and paint our stories. I believe that art and graphic design is imperative for an artist career. It aids in your credibility as just not an artist but an entrepreneur.

3. How do you utilize art in your profession?

I utilize art in various ways with my profession, whether it be through set decoration, movie flyer, promotions, advertisements, marketing, wrap gifts, etc.

4. What are the advantages of artistic practices in your profession?

The advantage of artistic practices within profession is individuality. Utilizing art within my films assists me to color a story through my lens, through my point a view. Someone else may have the same story but it will not look the same because the way people color and see things are all different because we have different backgrounds, ideals, etc. Art helps me to bring a story to life. Art helps me to be able to show something without necessarily having to say it with words. I can show pain and despair through colors and art without the character having to say “I am pained, depressed, and sad.” It also helps me to fill up a room and make it pop or fulfill dead space.

5. For filmmakers, what ways did your art and design aid you in the three phases of a production; pre-production, production (set art, signage, etc.) , post production (i.e. CGI, marketing materials, etc.)

Pre-production: When I was budgeting, I knew to have a certain look and feel I wanted for the film, there were certain locations that were going to cost me more money to make realistic and art was a major component of that because it is considered “set dec” (decoration).

Production: As mentioned above, art helped to bring the story to life. I utilized art to cover brands and signs of buildings and made it the “Doctor’s office” in the film, etc. I was able to turn a business center into a doctor’s office just by utilizing art and props.
Post-production: Art is very important in post. When art is done well on set, there is not much you have to try to cover or fix in post. Marketing is key with filmmaking and with good marketing and promo materials it can help to seal a deal.

6. Would you recommend art and design practices for other independent filmmakers?

Most definitely. When I see independent films, if the cover for their film is just something they made themselves on their computer it turns me away from desiring to watch the film because it looks thrown together. However, if an independent film has a good film cover, it tells me that they are serious and probably put effort, work, and some kind of budget into their project. That is what I do and that it what I respect.

7. Is there a time that you wish you would’ve used art and design more for a production?

Of course, there are always times you wish you could have done or utilized more. However, budgets and time were a major factor in that. I do not have any regrets though.

8. Any additional comments about the topic that you feel would be beneficial?

Invest in art and marketing it will help take you as an artist and entrepreneur a long way. People will take you more serious.
Girl!!! Tell me why I just ran into Michael Chandler from high school... and his wife.

Stephanie // 5:23

Lol!!! OMG? Are you for real? That is crazy. I can't wait to hear this story.

Brooke // 5:23
INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL PROCESS

As a fine artist, graphic designer, and filmmaker I have been able to develop a broad world view regarding these various disciplines of the arts. Developing a topic to formulate this thesis made me consider the multiple avenues that could intersect and also to the best means to address a key problem that I have found within the nature of filmmaking, or rather independent filmmaking. There are a variety of ways that these disciplines interact and it is through that interaction with my own personal experience that I have come to find out that many independent filmmakers tend to overlook a key aspect of the filmmaking process that is truly essential in developing a strong, cohesive, and successful production and that is the nature of incorporating the arts in film. So many “content creators” typically focus on just developing a project to just say they were able to complete it and will not take the necessary precautions to build towards their key objective. As we all know, art is very influential in not only making any particular project successful but also in regards to developing a film; through the use of storyboards, concept art, designs for the production, as well as postproduction materials. The thing that became truly interesting to me is the why. Why is art so influential and beneficial? Why does the incorporation of art tend to lead to a stronger production while others suffer because of the lack of that investment? It was due to question that surfaced such as these which led me to figure out the reasons to that “why” and then to create a project that aided in establishing visual proof to show these benefits and to also push for independent filmmakers to invest in the arts for not only their personal gain and success of their productions but also to aid in the growth and the development of the graphic design and arts community as a whole.
TO BEGIN

In order to find my “why” and to prove its benefits I had begun by investing time in searching for films that utilize art and design in a major capacity, as well as those found within the independent film markets. After searching for these I looked and found independent productions that had a lack of investment in the arts. I started off with the biggest budgeted movies due to the fact that they have a large percentage of their budget that is usually invested in the arts in some capacity or another. Recently I had the ability to work on a Marvel film production where the budget was well over 150 million dollars. With a budget of this scale they are able to have multiple departments that are completely devoted to the various avenues of the arts. Most noticeably is the production artist department, as well as the on set art director. What you are able to take away working behind the scenes on such productions is that they understand the need for the arts in a film to truly sell the reality that the filmmaker is attempting to build. Even prior to this thesis project I tended to always engage in conversation with the various artistic individuals on these sets to pick their brains regarding their purpose on the set along with the true need and nature for their occupation.
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
As an actor I am able to work on various films and televisions series and by doing this I can speak with so many different individuals that really help me to understand every facet that goes into making a production. One of the most interesting conversations that I have had were in regards to the many ways that graphic design can be utilized in a film, not only in the marketing and promotional aspects but also within the actual filming portion itself. Little things that I had often overlooked or taken for granted such as the poster on the background wall of a bedroom or even the name plate on a desk. A graphic designers role for a production is to make the set look and feel just as populated and detailed as if it was the a real location that you could see everyday.
GAINING KNOWLEDGE
Speaking with an on-set graphic designer, from a recent production, I was able to learn so much and establish a great business connection. What I learned from her was that between the two departments of graphic design and production design, there lies the foundation for that “world-building” aspect of the film production process. It primarily begins within the preproduction phase after the script is generated. They break down everything and try to image what would this setting be like and consist of per what is written for them. They plan out the colors that will be in the rooms and all imagery and detailing necessary to bring it to life. I was amazed at how much work was done to really sell what was written and then presented in a visual format. Then on the other end we have to on-set artists who have to paint the walls that the designs will go on and also whatever paintings, furniture, etc. that will accompany the set. They typically spend hours upon hours just building a set from the top down in order to have everything look as natural as possible.

From there I started speaking with postproduction coordinators, and directors. Postproduction coordinators are the individuals on set that are responsible for taking what was developed and filmed during the production phase and navigating all of the needs to get it ready for distribution. This involves overseeing the editing of the production, approving reshoots, also deciding what graphics that should be incorporated in the production. That can range from popups to names, to even the CGI (computer graphics imaging) that is needed for adding to the overall production value.

Then there are the directors. Being a director myself I am always extremely interested in the various aspects of their mental processes and how that guides them from their initial thoughts to bringing it fully to life. What is common amongst all big time directors is that they are extremely invested in two things, storyboards, and graphics. They have a great understanding of what is needed and they know that storyboards (and depending on the level of need, concept art) have a way of aiding a director to develop a blueprint of what is needed. The storyboards allow for people to see a generic understanding of what the director is perceiving in their mind and then from there the production teams will generate everything to make that sketch a “masterpiece”.

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PLANNING
After playing back every conversation that I have had and each experience that I have been able to have as a filmmaker, fine artist/graphic designer, I was able to develop a plan to take an idea from just a thought towards a successful production using fine art and graphic design as a direction.

The Idea
Coming up with an idea for this proved to be more challenging than I thought. I wanted to make a production that would include the need for specific shots due to the emotional nature found within the narrative. So I started to think of something that would show a sense of vulnerability. Suicide is the topic that came to mind. It was something that I battled with for years and when those thoughts came up I would often create my own narratives regarding those thoughts and there are millions that struggle with it each and every day.

The focus of the story centers around a character named Sondra. She is a woman who has recently given her life to Jesus and it has changed her. It has changed her personality, her perspective, and the various relationships that she had for years. I created the narrative that she has struggled with suicide for years and when she got saved, that is when she was given the peace that surpasses all understanding. However, the “honeymoon” period of her new found faith is seemingly over when she starts to lose the things and people that she loves the most. During an intense moment of weakness she is dealing with an internal battle of life or death. Her inner demons try to instigate her towards taking her own life while God works to show his love for her and provide a way of escape. The film focuses on the hardest battle of her life at the moment when she reaches that “crossroad”.

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EXT. APARTMENT VARIOUS

It is a apartment complex where we see our first shots. Music plays softly in the background. A cloudy gloomy day surrounds the complex.

INT. APARTMENT

Inside we move through the various rooms of the apartment. It's a mess, well lived in.

Shots we see:
-piled dishes
-faucet dripping with water

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

We see Tracy sitting alone in a room all by herself rocking back and forth mumbling something to herself. Its completely quiet to the point that all we are able to hear are the sounds of a ticking clock.

We see a shot of a bible on the dresser

We cut to the side of her and see she has been crying her heart out, really going to something that has taken her out of herself. She has a rubber band around her wrist flicking it repeatedly. We see some cuts on her wrist that have healed so its showing that they are from years ago. We finally hear what she was saying

TRACY
I just want it to be over...I just want it to be over...I just want...

We see there are some dressers open and emptied and on the dress we see attached to the mirror a photo of Tracy with a man holding her, presumably her boyfriend.

Tracy looks over at the photo, pauses and then gets up and walks over to the photograph. She picks it up holding it examining it for a few moments then...

TRACY
why did you do this...why did you hurt me...
INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

From a profile shot we she’s alone but then a figure comes to her ear

DESMOND
you know why...

Tracy hears but does not physically respond she knows its just in her mind but it feels so real. She starts to seem so defeated.

DESMOND
such a Jesus freak...who would want to be with anyone like that...

TRACY
its just who I am...why can’t you accept that?!

DESMOND
who would?! thats why I went with your best friend. At least she knows how to put her man first and not some fantasy. No one will ever want you...look how lonely and pathetic you look...Not even your God wants you

TRACY
That’s not...

She turns towards him and then we see that he’s gone. She becomes angry and throws the photo and then turns her attention to the ceiling

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

TRACY
are you happy now!

Her anger swells as she starts taking whatever she could find and throwing it screaming

She then sits down and starts shaking. She is becoming severely depressed again. She goes to her nightstand and opens the drawer. She stares at the contents for a moment and then picks up what is revealed to be a knife.

She holds it as tears start to run down her face. Her breathing becomes heavy. She looks down at her arm. The thought to end it grows more and more.
She stands in the silence of the space as we see the room seem larger to show her isolation on a greater scale.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

We see on her face that there are thoughts on her mind. She closes her eyes as we hear whispers. The suddenly the whispers turn into a voice and a new figure.

MANDY
I warned you what would happened if you kept up with this religious nonsense...

Tracy pleads for her to stop but Mandy persists

MANDY
when you went to that church and got "saved" everything changed...you didn't want to do any of the old things that we did together and you started to push us away

TRACY
No...no...no I didn’t I was just---

MANDY
Yes you did! It was Jesus this, and Jesus that. No wonder your "man" came to me.

Tracy looks at her stunned with the tears rolling

TRACY
I just wanted you both to share in the joy that I have

MANDY
(laughs)
what joy? You screwed up your life, hurt the ones that loved you, so tell me...what joy...listen, you wanted us to feel this happiness huh...then why don’t you go away permanently....that will bring us happiness.

Tracy doesn’t know how to feel. This woman was her best friend her entire life. She looks down at the knife again. Mandy touches her hand.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Mandy
It could all be sooo simple. If you really love us just do it.

Mandy takes her hand with the knife in it and then slides up her sleeve to reveal the scars.

Mandy
and this time don’t fail at this like you have failed at everything else

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM

Suddenly we see the figure vanish. Tracy is all over the place in her thoughts. She clutches the knife more. The thought to end it all grows stronger as if she has made it up in her mind. In her own voice we hear the whispers

Tracy
I’m done fighting...I just can’t take this anymore...you...(she looks up)...you said you’d always be there for me and that your plans were to prosper me and not to harm me but look! I’m hurting! I’ve lost the love of my life! I lost my best friend! (beat) What do I have left?!

She turns towards the mirror but doesn’t look at it. She drops her head

Tracy
what do I have left?

Suddenly her phone begins to ring. She looks at it but doesn’t answer it. It continues to ring. For a moment that is all that we hear. Then it stops. There is silence as she stands still frozen.

Then the phone beeps again. There is a voice mail from her another friend.

Tracy fights the desire to open it but then does, still holding the knife in her hand.

Tracy Friend V.O.
hey, I know we haven’t spoken in a while and this may be a little random but I just feel led to tell you to read John 15:9-11. I love you sweetheart. call me soon

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Tracy doesn’t know how to feel. But when she heard "I love you" that did something to her. She places down the phone and moves over to the Bible. She flips through the pages and we see her read it. The words move her. We don’t see the words but form her reaction we see how powerful they are in this moment.

The battle wages on as she really is at a crossroad. She drops her head as if she is praying and pleading with God for direction.

We see the words now.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

The whispers grow as the room seems to spin. The whispers tell her to end it and then others tell her to keep pressing on. Then suddenly they stop.

We pull around to her face, eyes still closed. Then suddenly they open straight to camera breaking the fourth wall.

We see the knife. In what seems like slow motion her hand opens dropping it. The knife falls

CUT TO BLACK

THE END
LOOK BOOK
A look book is a very important step in the development of a film production. Many filmmakers tend to overlook this necessary step due to the fact that they either have never seen one themselves or they underestimate the potential of how this can push and develop their creative processes. A look book helps to establish the tone of a production before preproduction has even fully begun. What I did for our lookbook is to have a graphic design presentation that I could take to producers and investors that shows my intentions with the film from the tone to the locations. I researched and developed a package to explain the details of the production so that others may understand.

Purpose & Tone
The greatest aspect of a lookbook that is found is the initial purpose and the tone. Regarding the purpose of this production, I wanted to create a film that touched on the nature of suicide and the thoughts and emotions that occur when people are going through the act. Now this was not to say that this is the only way it happens but rather a relatable experience that touches on the supernatural, the mental, and the physical aspects that occur within that moment. The idea was to have the purpose within the film along with a strong intent to keep it focused and centered.

After deciding on the purpose and having that clear focus, the next step was to establish the tone that would center the entire production. I wanted to have the film be very real and grounded in that reality. So what I did first was research movies that sort of have similarities with the elements that would be incorporated within the productions. I started off with the fact that faith would be a very prevalent theme within the story and thus worked to find faith-based films that had very real narratives that people could relate to and help them to see a visual reflection of themselves.
The Choice
CONCEPT BOOK V 1.0

Synopsis
The choice is a story about a woman named Tracy who is at a major crossroad in her life. Her boyfriend cheated on her with her best friend and left her under the basis that it was due to her faith and how it has separated them. Having struggled with depression and anxiety prior to becoming a Christian, she now fights with who she was and who she is in Christ. Feeling that there is nothing left to live for she must decide if she wants to push forward or give up. She must make...a choice.
Then I tried to find films that went in deeper to the conflict that would be presented in the film. For this I wanted to think outside of the box to challenge myself to have a film that is grounded within faith and yet still have a universal flow that would appeal to anyone. Having the three films that I did helped me to truly obtain the foundation to make my production success.

It is really a truly amazing thing how something so simple as a look book can help you to be lightyears ahead of everything regarding the filmmaking process. Also look books can be a tremendous asset to acquire funding and interest in your product.

You are able to see the story development, the characters, and locations in a look book. These element will help you to stay true to your vision. You are able to find images that help to express every aspect of your vision.
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Desmond

TRAITS
- selfish
- destructive
- deceitful

Deion McMillan
as Desmond

KNOWN FOR:
-W.A.W.L.A.M. as Keon
-SUSTAINED as Dan
CONCEPT ART
This was the first film that I actually utilized concept art for in this capacity. It was interesting to develop the art and push the concepts that were in my head. After I obtained my cast and the location that we would be shooting the film, I was able to develop a few concepts to see what my vision would look like in the physical world. I kept my concepts simple just to give me an idea of placement and structure. It was interesting to see how impactful having concept art can be for film.

It helped me to see that I was moving in the right direction for the production. After having the art work finalized I was able to really push my shots more during the production phase. I had thoughts about drawing out each type of shot I wanted to incorporate in the film; however, having the concepts that I developed in this manor helped me to easily obtain a flow in the film that would have been otherwise difficult if the concept art had not been created.
PREPRODUCTION
During this phase I had to start breaking down the script. This is so I would know what I would need to have during each of the scenes; not only what shots would be filmed but also what items the shots would consist of. A major step that should be taken before you even begin thinking of formulating a plan for a film is to secure a location. In my original storyboards I based the shots on the location that I was going to originally shoot at, my house. However, as I was pressed for time with my actors I had to rework my storyboard to be based on the new location, as well as simplifying shots so that I could best manage the time that I would have on set.

Opening Section
The film starts off with an opening sequence that shows the “emptiness” that is found within the narrative. In the original script I started out the movie with an exterior shot of an apartment while it was raining. Due to the fact that I filmed everything this September in Georgia there were plenty of opportunities that I could have filmed the way that I wanted to and obtained a rainy day scene. However, when I realized that my location was changing I decided to simplify and focus on a conveying the beginning of the story a different way.
The Choice
SCENE 1
In the first scene of the script we see an apartment complex which was switched to a house. The focus of the shot that was needed was to set the “stage” for the isolation. Per my original storyboard sketches I wanted an angled shot of the apartment we would push into the the building in a zoom shot. After the location switch I decided the shot needed to be a frontal establishing shot. I wanted to use the night time to isolate the home and show that it is a pretty nice sized home and with that it would give the foundation that I desire.

When we moved into the production stage of the process I had to decide on the time of day that this film would be. I wanted to stress the isolation and loneliness that was needed to be exhibited from the character. I realized that the best way to do this was by having it as a night scene. The contrast and dark values that I planned with my sketch showed me that filming at night would allow me to make the house stand out by focusing the lighter values, make the least contrast on the house. The brighter spaces will become the focus and this will in turn influence the viewers eye towards the area of the shot that I desire them to do.

Having the plan made the shooting process extremely easy and we were able to complete that portion quickly in order to move on onto the next setups. In postproduction I was able to play around with how much contrast and value shifts that I wanted based on the shots that I took and this just strengthened the visuals overall helping to make for a nice opening. I also shot the swing from multiple angles to lead into the house.
SCENE 2

Preproduction
The second scene of the film was written to bring the viewers into the apartment. The storyboards, at this point were generated to give an idea for the furthered emptiness of the environment that our lead actress will be in. Coming from the exterior shot of the house, we see the drawings have the clutter spread out. The desire is to have it show that she came into the house and in her anger “trashed” the living room. This scene will establish the mood of the character which will negate the need for a full backstory to set the stage for the narrative. Drawing this out allowed me to have a better sense for how cluttered the space should be because too little and it feels planned and too much gives the impression that this character may be borderline psychotic.

This scene would not only have the introduction to the interior of the house, it would need to move throughout various areas of the house to lead into the main setting where the majority of the narrative will take place. The challenge that I was that having a bigger space was not necessarily a good thing without a plan. Changing locations gave me more flexibility to utilize space more than my apartment; however, with having a drawn out plan along with the shotlist and
storyboard, I was able to film quickly without being overwhelmed by the changes. When you have an entire setting that offers you a lot of room to play around with you have to plan accordingly.

**Production**
The shots that I developed in my storyboard allowed me to be able to transition from the page to the screen. I decided to transition by leaving the door open and then revealing the interior space and then pushing into the living room showing the flow the everything. The goal was to visually narrate this sequence in a way that the audience would be able to truly understand what had preceeded the initial narrative of the film. This sequence allowed for a visual flow that did not rely on actors and dialogue but rather focused on having the shots and letting their compositions dictate the story. Setting up and executing the shots became extremely easy due to the preproduction process.

**Post Production**
After getting the various shots that I needed, the focus became about how to best place those shots in a sequence that flowed effectively to tell the story the way that I wanted. I started by placing each of the images in a way that helped me to play around in post. As I played around with the placement I also decided to work on the compositions of the shots by cropping and adjusting the saturations and brightness. The end result gave me a flow that presented a nice buildup that opens the film in a better way than I imagined.
SCENE 3

Production
This particular scene was actually the one that we shot first because it was the most difficult to shoot. Pulling from my desire to have the shots to display this isolated individual, I had to have my shots a certain way to express that. I started by drawing out images that really showed space. The weight of the compositions had to have an assymetrical weight to display the main actress. With her being the first character that we see in the film I wanted to make sure that her introduction compliments the visuals constructed for this scene. So initially I had to develop a set of sketches to exhibit how best to do this. My sketches initially covered the space seeing her in a nearly empty room, sitting on the bed while we enter the room. When I did my updated sketches, this afforded me the chance to maximize the space more than before.

Production
During production, this scene went by extremely smoothly. Going from the sketch to the production process to a scene of this level would normally take about a one-two hours to complete due to the lighting and setting up the shots. However, because of the preparation that I had through my preproduction process for this scene, we were able to knock it out in less than thirty minutes.

Post Production
I was able to get pretty much the exact shots that I drew up in my initial sketches. This helped me to be able to really edit it the way that I wanted without compromising. The flow of the story remained consistent from the first two scenes which was very satisfying.
SCENE 4-6

Preproduction
This is the hardest sequence of the film. During this part of the production I knew that I wanted to develop a flow where we would see the main character alone and then when the other “people” are introduced I would need shots that could seem that they are there although they are not. So my shot list/story board was developed to cater to that thought process. The shots had to be set up to showcase both her alone and with other people, yet be able to transition back and forth.

Production
Moving into the production phase for this sequence made me a little nervous. The reason being that we only had a little under two hours to complete the film. However, we were able to continue our flow of shooting quickly. Each shot was set up quickly and we moved even faster from set up to shooting. We moved so fast that the cast had time to get breaks between the shot set ups and that helped with giving a fresh performance each take.

Post Production
I was extremely pleased with how this whole film came together; however, I am the most pleased with how these shots that made up this portion of the film. As an independent filmmaker I normally have to settle for whatever shot I could get and then try my best to make sense of them in post production. This time, because of the investment with my storyboard/shot list, I was able to know exactly how to edit because I was able to obtain every shot that I initially wanted in the first place.
SCENE 7

Preproduction
This particular scene should have been a sequence similar to the previous three scenes. What helped this to flow as one was the preparation that came from the previous. The shots needed to be simple for this scene because it has to settle the story. At this point we have reached the climax and now we are into the resolution. So the shots that I sketched were more so the opposite of the beginning ones. There are a lot of poses close up to the face to see that reaction as well as some shots that reciprocate previous ones to show the difference in the beginning of the story and the end.

Production
We were able to shoot these shots in just under 15 minutes. I shifted some of the angles of the shots from my initial sketches, yet at the same time they maintained the same visual weight that I wanted. This final sequence came together seamlessly.

Postproduction
The amazing thing that happened in this phase of the production is that I actually had more footage to play around with moreso than I had begun to expect. This afforded me the chance to expand my ending in editing and then condense to keep the pace of the production the way that is best overall.
The Choice
Sometimes we must choose to live not just to live

Coming 2019
MARKETING

Marketing for this film was a very interesting process. Due to the psychology that goes into the thoughts of a suicide, I decided to have the poster to sort of stand as its own narrative. My focus after sketching was to develop a series of items that would establish a brand for the film, as well as express a snapshot of what the story is about. I also wanted to give myself the same conditions that many independent filmmakers would have to deal with. So what I decided to do was to use only a few layers that anyone with a basic understanding of Adobe Photoshop would be able to create.

I went through the entire film and selected screenshots instead of having a proper photoshoot to develop the graphics for the film. In doing so I wanted to show the focus on everything “being in her head”. So first step was to find the best image of our star actress Ebony
N. Mayo (Graduate from Liberty University with a degree in Psychology) and then base the branding and full development of the marketing materials on this as well.

After watching the final cut of the film with the literary graphics associated with it incorporated, I decided on using a screenshot from the title card of the film. It felt only benfiting to use this particular moment in the narrative because it truly expresses the conflict of the story.

Then from there I wanted to develop these particular graphics for the film:

- Coming Soon Poster
- Coming Soon square image for Instagram
- Official Poster
- DVD case insert
- DVD disc design

I started off with the official poster and worked backwards because I wanted to start off where everything would lead up to. After having the end result of the design, I noticed that I wanted to use certain elements in the others to keep them connected as well as, to have them unique in their design and purpose.

I kept these extremely simple with the foundation that “less is more”. Utilizing the elements and principles of art and design to develop these graphics pieces truly helped me to create something that I feel is simplistic in nature yet dynamic. As a major test for the marketing, I started to promote the designs to a few individuals in the entertainment industry and obtained a vast number of positive reviews and growing interest in the release of the film. Inorder to gain an honest response I neglected to inform people what the movie was about due to the fact that I wanted to see and hear their responses based on the artwork. Everyone had their own unique answer to what they thought the movie was about and through those various talks I was able to generate greater conversation and interest.
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CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

In conclusion what I learned throughout the research and the process of creating this film is that through the incorporation of art and design, production quality was improved in four key areas; efficiency, interest (generating aesthetically appealing designs), creating a relatable reality, and communication. What I found out was that these are obtainable results that any independent filmmaker can achieve just through investing in artistic practices within their production process.

The first result that was obtainable through art and design being integrated in the filmmaking process was efficiency. The phrase “time is money” is something that is true in any business sense, even when working on a low budget independent production. The rule of thumb in a film production is that each page of a film equals one minute of screen time and each scene translates to a few hours of production. However, we were able to develop our film in less than 3 hrs. That is a record compared to many independent productions regardless of their length. The efficiency that we were able to have because of the use of art and design allowed us to really capture all of the shots and to even get more options during the shoot than we initially expected. We moved so quickly through the production phase that we were worried we would miss out on some things, yet we lacked nothing. If we were to take these basic components of art and design and apply it to a larger scale production it could lead towards greater results and thus show that art and design can make any production better, independent or studio funded.

The second thing that I found to be influenced by art and design is interest. Now my production was created with no funding whatsoever, as with many independent productions. However, the goal for any production remains the same; that is to gain interest to achieve whatever goals that you have set. Where many independent productions fail, is that they desire for people
to gain interest due to who is apart of the production or if by chance they are able to gain viewers at a festival or premiere. Art and design practices allow for you to be able to gain interest and excitement regarding your product prior to even releasing your project. Interest is what you need if you would like your project to be successful and that starts with the presentation. Not the film itself but rather the elements that are associated with it; the marketing materials, concept and story board art, even down to the graphics that go within the film. Art has the capability to draw interest through aesthetically appealing designs and execution. All you have to do is make that investment.

Thirdly, there is the ability for art to create a relatable reality. Film has the ability to transport you to a world that is different from your own but also is grounded in a sense of reality. It is an art-form that makes you realize what it is like to be in another place, in another persons shoes, or even to make you reflect on where you are in your own life. Regardless of the reality you connect with visually, it still takes the presence of art and design to build that “world” and make it functional. Working on this film, as well as others, I have noticed that every artistic practice involved helps make what the viewer sees feel more real. You want to transport the viewer and make them feel that they are where you want them to be. In the literary sense words and phrases help the reader to reach that destination but for film it takes stimulation of the eyes. That is through incorporating art and design. And finally, we have the most important result and that is communication. Whatever you create in life you want to communicate with others through it. Whether that is to convey a story, spark a conversation, to inspire, or even to make someone feel something in particular, you have to generate something to spark that conversation. Art is the best vehicle for that conversation to take place. It is a universal language that speaks to all peoples of every society and background. For my film, I wanted to communicate a few different things. I wanted to first speak
out about suicide prevention by showing that other people go through it, as well as, to show that there is a way of escape, and finally to know that you are not alone. Through the use of the visuals from the designs to the film itself, I wanted each aspect of the production to communicate these things in some way and I feel that it was successful in doing so. Even the type of shots that are used to create the story communicates something and invokes an emotional connection and/or response.

The issues with many independent filmmakers is that they tend to rely on basic structures of a film to find their success and they overlook the potential of having art and design incorporated into the production process. I understand that having an art and design background provided me a greater advantage in the development of my film; however, it does not have to be something complex to obtain the results that you would like. Everything that I created could be generated by anyone with any level of knowledge of the art and design principles. It is only about investing in it and applying it. Greater investment yields greater results.
POST THESIS APPLICATION

After the conclusion of this thesis project, I had to focus on how to apply the research and aspects of the project to real world situations. After providing the necessary information to show that art is an essential and beneficial addition to an film production, the focus now is to create a way for independent filmmakers to have these services available.

I decided to take these services and create a division in my business that can facilitate the needs of the various filmmakers that we see to work with. In order to do this I developed a one page parallax site that would promote the services of the business as well as provide an example of our services in action.

After obtaining insight from my Thesis Committee, I worked on applying the various pieces of advice that I was given and figured out how to consolidate the information so that I am able to give just enough to draw clients in without giving out too many elements of my process.

For the site I provided just enough information to have a basis of proving point to the independent filmmaker market and through the communication that would be established. Through this service filmmakers would have access to the same level of structure that I utilized to develop my short film.

What I desire to do as well is to have a series of workshops and classes that will touch on the foundations of the application of art and design in film. This will be to gauge interest and develop a core connection with potential productions that may utilize our services as well as for consultation. With these services the objective will be to establish a greater interest in the arts with filmmakers and producers. Having a variety of options to cultivate this interest will produce results to change the culture of the independent market.


LaViers, Amy. Controls and Art: Inquiries at the Intersection of the Subjective and the Objective, Springer, 2014./


