

Capturing Intimacy and Loneliness: Designing Shot to Visualize Character's Emotional Changes In “Blue” Music Video

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Abstract. Music video as a visual translation, should be able to represents the message of a song. Limited duration of music video, requires creator to design each component of the image to be effective in the delivery of the message. Visual images can deliver communicative – aesthetic function therefore visual images can define an ideas and provide aesthetic experience at the same time. “Blue” is an animated music video of “Blue” an electronic dance music (EDM) song by Tomatow and Nadya Sumarsono. Following the messages from the song, this music video raised the concept of romance experienced by adolescents and its relation on their dependency of future technology (Cyberpunk). This research analyzes the application of shot to show the emotional changes of characters in the music video. Data collection process includes literature study and Reference observation of animation, EDM, cyberpunk visual regarding the applications of shot in its relation to delivering messages in films and animation such as shot type, camera movement, principle composition, and focal length. In conclusion various aspects of shots such as type, movements, and the application of negative space in composition can impact the psychology condition of the viewers to follow what the creator of the music video intended.

Keywords. Animated music video, EDM, cyberpunk, shot design.

1. Introduction

Music video is an important promotional tools when releasing a song to the market. According to Moller [1] music video is a composition of visual images in unity to convey message through visual representation. Every music video certainly has correlations with the song's lyric wether it is explicitly or implicitly. Since MTV (Music Television) was founded in 1981, music video has been inseparable in the promotion of a song. The culture of video music creation itself keeps developing from time to time until now, with many varieties of quality, form, and medium. A medium that is often used in music video production is film and animation. As a medium, animation has an element of advantages that does not exist in a live action film, which is the ability to create a scene or action that is difficult to achieve by live action camera. Animation isn't trying to create an existing reality, but trying to emulate and then modify it to certain extend. [2]. Endless possibilities of visual exploration make animation a really explorative medium. [3]

Animation have some visual component which make itself a unity. A very important component is shot design. Shot in moving image is a composition of images in each scene or action to convey meaning explicitly or implicitly. [4]. Shot as a unit has many supporting elements which are shot type, camera movement, composition, and focal length [5]. Applications of those elements will create a good shot visual. A shot can convey emotional messages intended by the creator, every different composition can generate different meaning and interpretations therefore can emulate certain psychological emotion to the viewer.

"Blue" music is produced by Tomatow and Nadya Sumarsono, the theme of this song is love and fantasy reflected with the love story of 2 lovers. On designing every visual aspect of this music video, first The author examines the song's lyric to further capture the intended message of the song creator in a visual form. This research also review how various shot application can convey the emotional changes of the character in a scene and how every visual element in the shot can create a united meaning / message based on the storyline of "Blue" music video.

2. Research Method

In this research qualitative method are used by reviewing literature and observational study on related previous music video works. In order to obtain the message that the creator of the song intended, the author discuss the meaning of the song through interview process. After breaking down the lyric with the guidelines by the song creator the logline and concept are decided. After the foundation of the music video completed, the development of the music video move to the next stage which are concept design, logline, and storyboard. In order to create the right shot, observational analysis on film shot with related meaning with the project are done. With the data gathered from all the previous process, the author experimented on the shot design and in the end producing the final shot for the animated music video.

3. Story and Shot Concept

3.1 "Blue" Lyric breakdown

First step of designing the shot of "Blue" music video is through defining the song lyrics meaning with the song creator. The lyric breakdown itself being done closely through interview with Nadya Sumarsono (singer song writer). Breakdown process of each verse of the song resulting a main idea / key word "Love and Fantasy" as the main concept of the song. After coming up with the main ideas and concept of the song the Author find a suitable concept of the animation which is "Cyberpunk" world which are defined by William Gibson [6] as a reliance on tools, and virtual worlds versus dealing with real life.

1. "One thing that you keep me going under is every fantasy" Tentang seorang wanita yang senang dengan seorang laki-laki tetapi bertepuk sebelah tangan, sehingga yang perempuan tersebut lakukan adalah berfantasi seolah laki-laki itu bersama dia.	Hatinya ingin meneriakkan sesuatu, ingin memberontak tetapi tidak ada yang mendengar.
2. "Fall in love at the hardest place to be without you, it is inside of you" Tidak ada yang bisa menggantikan laki-laki yang ia cintai, setiap orang berbeda dengan laki-laki tersebut, wanita menganggap laki-laki tersebut tidak tergantikan.	7. "Last time when I hide this feelin, it was you who never gonna see" Cinta yang bertepuk sebelah tangan, mencintai tetapi tidak dicintai kembali.
3. "Ain't no clue aint no blue that comes through" Tidak menemukan petunjuk hidup, tidak menemukan tujuan lagi, tidak ada yang bisa di cintai. Tidak ada hujan, tidak ada angin, tetapi ditinggalkan begitu saja.	8. "Yeah it was you who never crawlin and fallin" Hanya wanita saja yang terus berkorban, sang laki-laki tidak pernah peduli dan tidak pernah mau berkorban.
4. "Whats the true point of view feel brand new" Putus asa, tidak menemukan tujuan lagi untuk hidup.	9. "Ain't no time aint no rhyme such a mime" Tidak ada yang bisa menutupi perasaan yang rapuh.
5. "Ain't no colour no dollar just holler" Hidup tidak lagi berwarna, ingin teriak tetapi seolah tidak bersuara dan tidak ada yang mendengarkan.	10. "What's the hardline when its fine to rewind" Mengapa tidak bisa memutarbalikkan waktu.
6. "Scream in heart takin part nothin start"	11. "Ain't no karma no drama no trauma" Semua drama dengan sang laki-laki membuat perasaan trauma.
	12. "Where's the feelin, freewhilin, no reelin" Dimana tujuan hidup ketika sudah ditinggalkan oleh orang yang disayang dan dicintai.

Figure 1. The process of "Blue" Lyric breakdown (Author's Documentation)

Broadly speaking "Blue" is about a woman who loves a man, but for no apparent reason the man leaves the woman. Feeling depressed the woman tries to overcome her sadness through imagination and fantasizing as if the man is still with her through many beautiful days together. Living in a fake lie created by herself resulting into her addicting on fake imagination or pseudo reality that she has created. With this story, the music video resulted in a concept of "Love and Fantasy".

3.2 Linkage with Cyberpunk concept

The cyberpunk concept created by William Gibson in his book *Neuromancer* (1984), tells the concept of future era where human dependency on virtual reality tools as it is with narcotic dependency on current human era [6]. The use of virtual reality in cyberpunk world is told to imagining or achieving a fantasy according that is not possible to achieved in the real world therefore, an infinite fantasy. This concept of dependency on virtual reality / imagination heavily linked with the concept of dependency on the female character in "Blue" music video. With this concept, the opening shot of the music video tells the audience where the female character fantasizes the male character as if she is still around her.

4. Shot Design Process

This chapter will discuss on the process of designing the shot focusing on aspects of shot design which are shot type, camera movement, composition, and Focal length. The discussion is represented with the 2 scenes that happens in 1st verse and 2nd verse in the bedroom.

4.1 Bedroom shot (1st verse) shot design



Figure 2. First draft of 1st verse bedroom shot (Author's Documentation)

The bedroom shot on 1st verse of "Blue" music video shows the closeness, romance and love between the female character and the male character. The first initial design of the shot illustrates the position of the two characters sitting next to each other with the composition of flowers visual element filling the space around the frame. (Figure 2) The design aspects made, include medium close up shot, still camera movement, and balanced composition with the use of normal focal length of 50mm. This shot design was not used because of the lack of intimacy between the two figures depicted only with a medium closeup composition. The flowers on the environment also does not fill the frame as a whole therefore the wall looks empty and unappealing.



Figure 3. Modification of 1st verse bedroom shot (Author's Documentation)

The modification of the shot design emphasizes on the position of the characters that are lying on a plane with their head back to back. Shot type used in this shot were modified to top shot, wide to close up, stabilize track in, with balanced composition. This composition enabled the flowers on the ground covering up the whole frame because it aligns with the Z axis of the camera. The closeness of the two characters are more visible using the close up shot that are closer than the previous shot composition. (Figure 3)

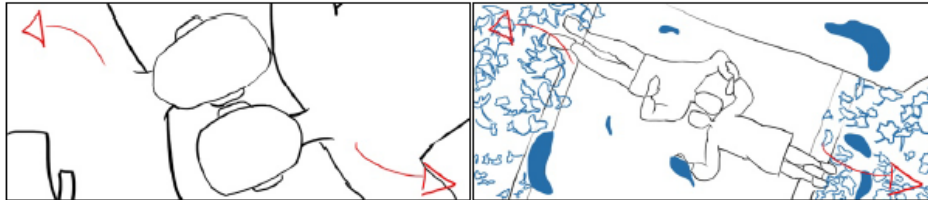


Figure 4. Final design of 1st verse bedroom shot (Author's Documentation)

The final shot design has some minor modifications from the previous design, where the camera movement changes from Stabilize track in to stabilize track out. Reason being, is to maintain the composition through the use of flowers as framing element to lock the main focus and preparation for next verse (2nd verse). The use of track out movement is to show flowers composition from none to almost covering the whole ground. Flowers portray the main character's feeling of love. Close up shot type also supported by the theory by Mercado [5], which is also shows the intimacy of the shot from the observational study of the film *The Shape of Water* (2017) [7] (Figure 6) and *In The Mood for Love* (2000) [8] (Figure 5) that shows the tight intimacy of 2 characters that are shown with close up type shot. Figure



Figure 5 (left). Close up shot from the movie *In The Mood For Love* (Source: *In the Mood For Love*, Wong Kar-wai, 2000). **Figure 6 (right).** Close up shot from the movie *The Shape of Water* (Source: *The Shape of Water*, Guillermo del Toro, 2017)

Camera movement used in this shot are stabilized shot and track out, this shows the feelings of both the characters that are stable and calm, embodied by the stabilized shot movement with minimum vibration. This also in line with the reference from the shot of film "*Requiem for a Dream* (2000) [8] that shows the closeness of the characters surmounted by pile of photos and whosn with the use of track out shot movement. Figure

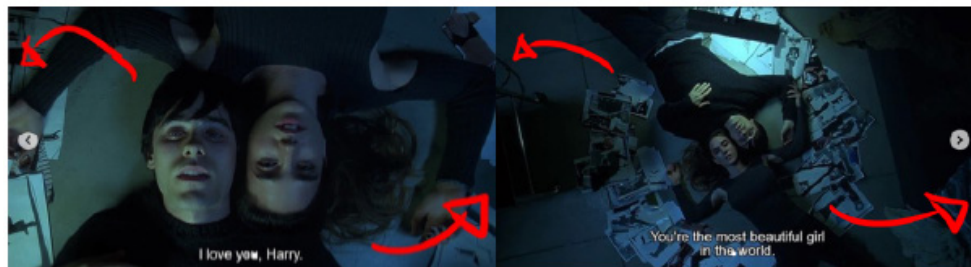


Figure 7. Stabilized and track out shot in the film “Requiem for A Dream”
(Requiem for A Dream, Darren Aronofsky, 2000)

The composition used are balanced, in order to show balanced and calm condition between the two characters according to the theory of balanced compositions [4] [5] and supported by film references [7] [8] [9]. Further modification of the shot is done by adding shadow elements line as a barrier to foreshadow the feeling of trapped, that is to say the main character is just stuck and trapped in her own fantasy. The addition of this shadow composition also refers to applications made in the film “In The Mood for Love” (2000) [8]. The film used the foreground to block the visible overall framing to indicate something that shouldn't be. (Figure 8)

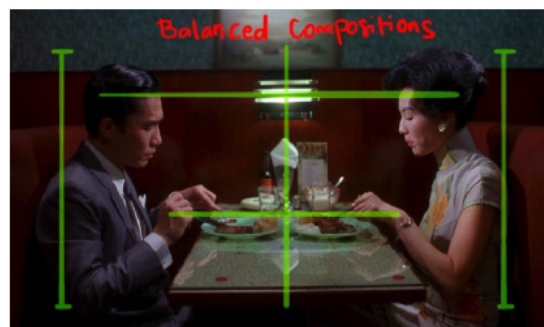


Figure 8. Balanced compositions in the film “In The Mood For Love”
(In The Mood For Love, Wong Kar-wai, 2000)

50mm focal length are used to dictate the generic or normal distance of Z Axis with minimum distortion. This also relates to focal length theory by Mercado [5]. All things considered the final shot of this scene are shown in (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Final shot design application of Bedroom scene on 1st verse in “Blue” music video
(Author's Documentation)

4.2 Bedroom shot (2nd verse) Shot Design

This shot in the second verse shows a female character feeling sad, depressed and abandoned. The female character begins to realize that the male character is just the result of her fantasy. In this 2nd verse there is a transformation of shot style from the 1st verse to depicts her feelings progression to melancholic depression.

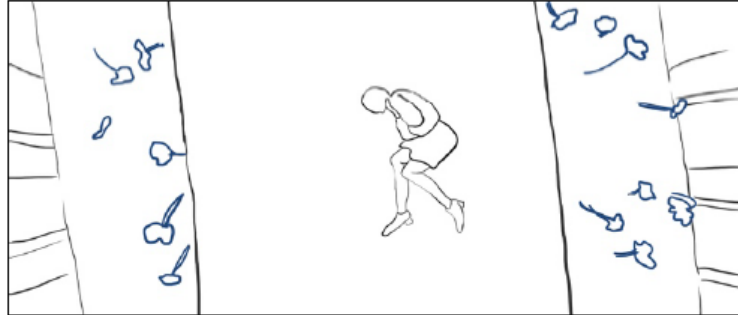


Figure 10. First draft of 2nd verse bedroom shot (Author's Documentation)

The initial draft design (Figure 10) for this shot depicts the loneliness of the character through the choice of medium long shot type with the motivation to show negative space domination on the main character figure. The key props in the shot, the flowers are looked wilted and empty, compared to the 1st verse shot. Second aspect is the still camera movement to represent the character's numb and hopeless feeling. Third aspect are imbalanced composition where the character is placed not exactly in the center of the frame, and also not aligned with rule of third points. The goal of this design is to induce the feeling of uneasiness for the viewer in accordance with the female character's feeling. The final aspect is the utilization of 35mm focal length lens to emulate a great depth on the Z-axis resulting in far distant impression for the viewer. [4]

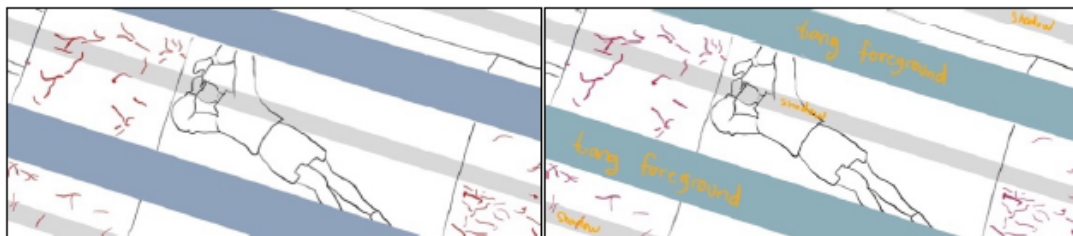


Figure 11. Modification of 2nd verse bedroom shot (Author's Documentation)

Second draft of this shot design (Figure 11), is added with aspect to enforce the loneliness feeling of the character. The use of foreground element of roofing on the set as a blocking and to tighten the framing evoke the feeling of trapped. This trapped impression is a visual form to emulate the character's feeling of entrapment in her own fantasy. The use of foreground element in the composition refers to the reference study of the film "In The Mood for Love" (2000) [8] and "Chungking Express" [10] (1994) which use varieties of foreground barrier to show anxiety feelings of the actor. Other modification of this shot is the handheld camera movement to show shakiness, having said that the unstable camera movement causing a sense of discomfort on the audience, representing the feelings of the female character.



Figure 12 .The use of reflective foreground in the film “In The Mood for Love”
(In The Mood for Love, Wong Kar-wai, 2000)

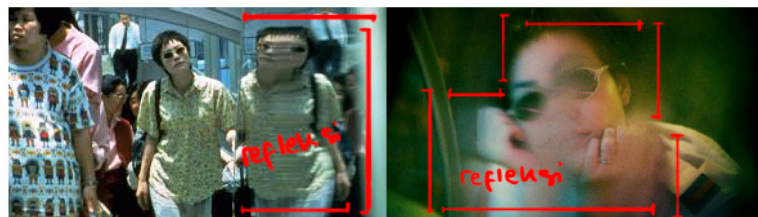


Figure 13 .The use of reflective foreground in the film “Chungking Express”
(Chungking Express”, Wong Kar-wai, 1994)

In the final design (Figure 14), mirror as foreground element are overlaid on the frame to further emulate the uneasiness of the character's feelings. This composition also refers to both of the film by Wong Kar-wai [8] [10].



Figure 14 .Final shot design application of Bedroom scene on 2nd verse in “Blue” music video
(Author's Documentation)

5. Conclusions

After going through the process of designing a shot in “Blue” Music video, we can conclude that to show emotional changes with shot there are several initial process to be done. Firstly, we have to understand the context and the meaning of the message that want to be conveyed in the scene through the shot. With this in mind the function of shot as the main medium of storytelling can work effectively. Secondly, the knowledge of how to design shot has to be maximized through literature review and also through observational study on the reference. This function as the base of understanding the context of the shot design decision.

Designing shot to convey romance intimacy can be done with the use of closeness. The use of close up shot type can depict the closeness feeling, that is to say this shot type can enforce the feeling of closeness through focusing on framing specific objects. With the use of telephoto focal length with the characteristic of distorting z-axis so the background appears closer to the viewer. To design a shot that conveys loneliness, we can utilize emptiness and negative space on the frame. With this in

mind, using long shot can maximise the looks of negative space through the distortion it creates. To that end, using wide lens also enforces the loneliness feeling because of the characteristic of this lens that distort the Z-axis to be further from the viewer.

Camera movement can also affect the psychology of the viewer. Still or stable camera movement will produce calming feeling. On the other hand, the use of handheld camera movement with some shakiness can evoke the feeling of uneasiness and uncomfortable.

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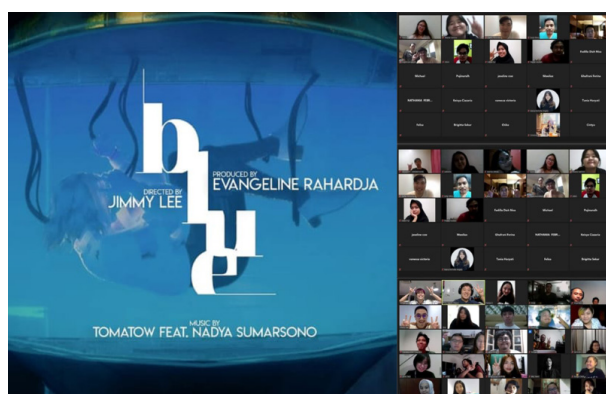


Figure 16. "Blue" Musice video online release (Author's Documentation)

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