

# VISUAL ELEMENTS OF THE FILM

## Tips for brainstorming, developing, and scripting the visual elements of your film

**Visual elements are made up of:**

- **INTERVIEW**
- **ACTUALITY**
- **SCENIC SHOTS/LOCATION**
- **OBJECTS**

When planning the visual elements of your film think about the main objectives of the film - what is the purpose of the film, and what is the most visually dynamic way to tell that story.

### **Brainstorming:**

Using the script as a starting point -

- List out all of the things the audience will expect to see in a film about this subject.
- Think about how you can film these elements in a way that is visually interesting, beautiful (if possible) as well as energetic. e.g. Instead of filming a coffee cup (with coffee inside), film a cup of coffee being made - the milk being frothed, the coffee being poured. It won't always be possible to have an action shot but where possible keep in mind action: **ENERGY** and **BEAUTY**.

### **Creating references:**

To help brainstorm ideas think about the subject matter of the video: what images best show that subject matter in an interesting and exciting way.

- Look online for similar video content that you can use as a reference point.
- Check out social media accounts with similar subject matter.
- Take screen grabs of images you like and include them in the shot-list, so you have a guide.

### **The Location:**

Once you have decided on the location, visit it before the shoot day (known as doing a 'recce') to prepare and research what backdrop is available and what is on display that can be filmed, whether that is the landscape/environment or the interior. Even if it's a location that's very familiar to you (like your workplace) try to see it as a newcomer would - consider what shots and angles would

give the best impression of the space., or if there are things you could move, remove or change before the shoot. Think of the kinds of shots that will best showcase the space.

- Wide shots establish the location, helping the audience understand what type of place this is e.g. beach, shopping centre, kitchen.
- Mid-shots are good for showing activities (cooking, making), and are also good for the interview set-up.
- Close-ups are good for showing details (the pattern on a dress, the garnish on a plate).

Note: Make a shot-list or list of scenes you want to shoot to help keep track and check-off on the shoot day.

### **The Interview:**

Next, think about where exactly the interview will be filmed.

- Will you have/need artificial light? Natural light is nice but can change rapidly on the day (the sun can go in behind clouds, the sun will go down eventually).
- You will have briefed the contributor beforehand and have a strong idea of what they will talk about on the day. Use the pre-interview chat to figure out if there are any props that the contributor might talk about that are relevant to the subject matter, which they can bring along on the day and you can capture on camera, e.g. a photograph, or their own specific tools etc.
- After the interview is filmed, record some actuality/b-roll with the contributor - this can be them doing the activity they were talking about (making coffee if they own a cafe), or just walking in the location if there isn't an obvious activity that they can participate in.

### **Actuality/B-roll: Action and Objects**

The video needs to include footage that best celebrates and promotes the story you are trying to tell. E.g. if your film is about a cafe and the objective is to get people to visit, then some visual elements will be:

- Cafe's sign/front shop, so it's recognisable
- The variety of coffee and menu, the unique offerings
- Showing customers enjoying the atmosphere (meeting up with friends, working on their laptop, getting food to-go) helps promote the cafe as a nice place that meets several different types of customers' needs.

## **Post-production**

Other visual elements separate to the footage shot by the camera and which would be added the film during the post-production stage of the film, may include:

- Text, e.g. the website, phone number, opening hours, address.
- The logo of the company/project
- Creative special effects/animation

## **Shot list:**

Once you have brainstormed around all of the various ideas listed above - make a list of shots/scenes to film that is manageable and achievable for your project.