

Category 5: Creative Arts

Group 5-21

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The Cycle of Life

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1. Final Product

A short video showing the process of change, specifically getting out of one's comfort zone and experiencing something different

2. Ideation

Originally, we wanted to explore **change** and how it affects us.

Our first concept was "everyone has the potential to change". However, this concept was too generic and lacked focus.

Our next concept was "some changes are not exactly changes, but rather looking at things from a different perspective". However, this idea was abstract and could be difficult to understand and relate to.

Our final idea was "some things are subjected to change, but return to their original state". We decided on this idea as it was relevant to many people as it describes how hard it is for us to change and try something different. It is even harder to sustain that change. In the end, it is so difficult to embrace that change. This idea had room for interesting ideas and development.

2a. Initial ideas

1. We started with the idea of a self-portrait, as a self-portrait can act as a mirror, and we can project what we see ourselves to be easily onto a portrait. A portrait also helps to define that the work is personal, instead of general.



However, after careful consideration, we felt that a self-portrait would fall flat, literally, as it could not express movement and flow. To show change and development, there must be some form of movement, like in animation or video.

2. We toyed with the idea of a measuring tape, as human change behaves very much like a measuring tape. Initial effort must be made to extend the measuring tape; to initiate change. However, there must be constant effort to sustain that change. We thought of building some form of machinery to show this concept, but it proved to be too complicated and difficult to build, so the idea was scrapped.



2b. Final idea

Then, we decided to make a short video. A video can easily show change with time, and could be manipulated to engage the audience and make them understand the work better. The video would be shot in POV. This would help the audience be more engaged, and let them experience what the actor is going through.

3. Artmaking Process

3a. Experience with medium

We did not make any prior experience making a video, with only limited knowledge of editing, hence the whole process was time-consuming and quality was not as high as it could have been. However, we tried to make the most out of it.

3b. Artist references/ inspiration

We took inspiration from commercials, for their fast-paced and engaging content, all within the span of about 2-3 minutes. Many commercials have little to no narrative story, and manage to grab the audience's attention through clever manipulation of visuals.



Mercedes-Benz "Chicken" MAGIC BODY CONTROL TV commercial

We also took inspiration from movie trailers. The length of a movie trailer is also about only 2-3 minutes, but they manage to grab attention through scene cuts, music and setting up expectations.

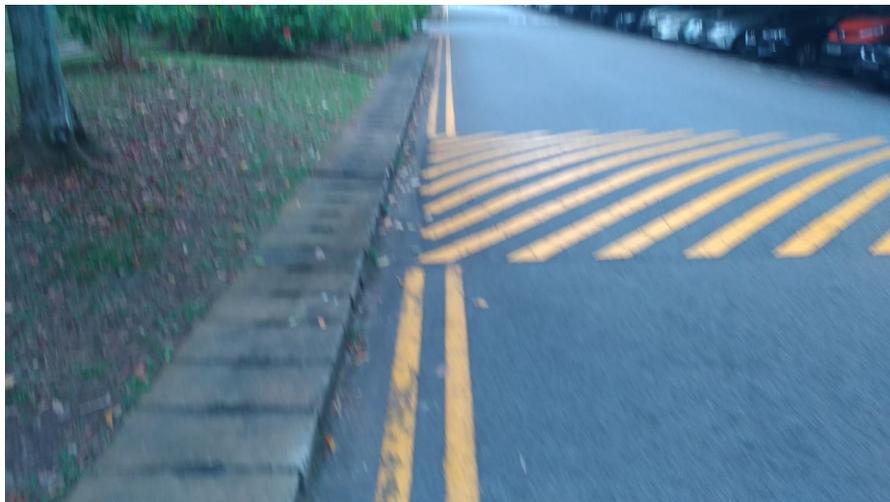


"The Other Side of the Door" Official Trailer

3c. Trials and errors

We made a short 'demo' video to show the judges what the final work might look like. It featured an actor running, then the video rewinding back to the starting point, then repeating over and over. This was meant to show how constant effort must be put in everyday to change and achieve your goal.

Video presented at semi-finals



Start



Running



Rewind to start

However, the judges were confused about what the video was trying to show and felt that the video was not able to bring out our idea properly. After that, we had to relook at the entire concept and try to express it in a clearer and better way.

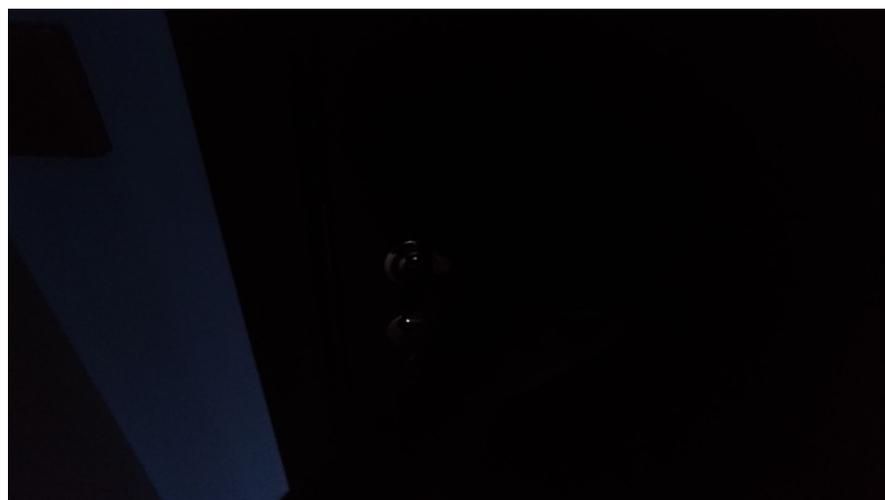
Second video idea

The main concept of the second video idea was that a door would represent the gateway to change. It was also shot in POV and was set in the actor's room. The room

represents a place of comfort, a place where we run to whenever we have problems, to hide from the problems. The actor would be awoken by knocking on the door, which represents the opportunities which we can choose to take or not. The actor takes his time to wake up and open the door, representing how we tend to want to go back to our comfort zone. The actor would open the door slightly, then immediately slam it closed, because he believes what he sees and hears on the other side is scary. He would then walk back and forth with hesitation. This sequence would repeat with the door opening more and more with each time, until the actor musters up his courage, and fully opens the door. He would then discover that what was behind was not terrifying at all, and it was just his imagination.



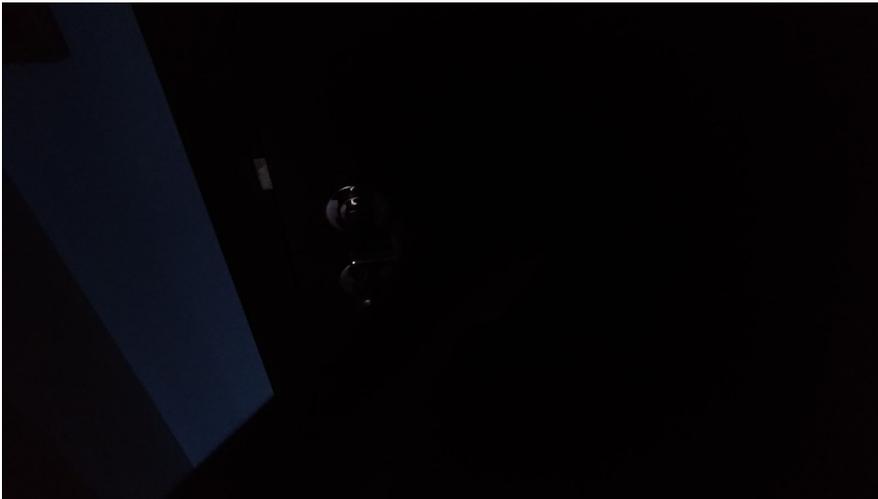
Waking up in own room



Knocking on the door, protagonist goes to open it



Hesitation



Finally opens door

The idea was to create a soothing lighting environment, similar to when one wakes when it is raining outside. However, the specific lighting was too hard to achieve. In addition, it was difficult to make someone opening a door interesting. Thus, we had to change the idea yet again.

3d. Methodology

The final product was filmed with a DSLR Canon camera and edited with Adobe Premiere Pro. Audio recordings were self-made. Music used is copyright free.

3e. Contents of final product

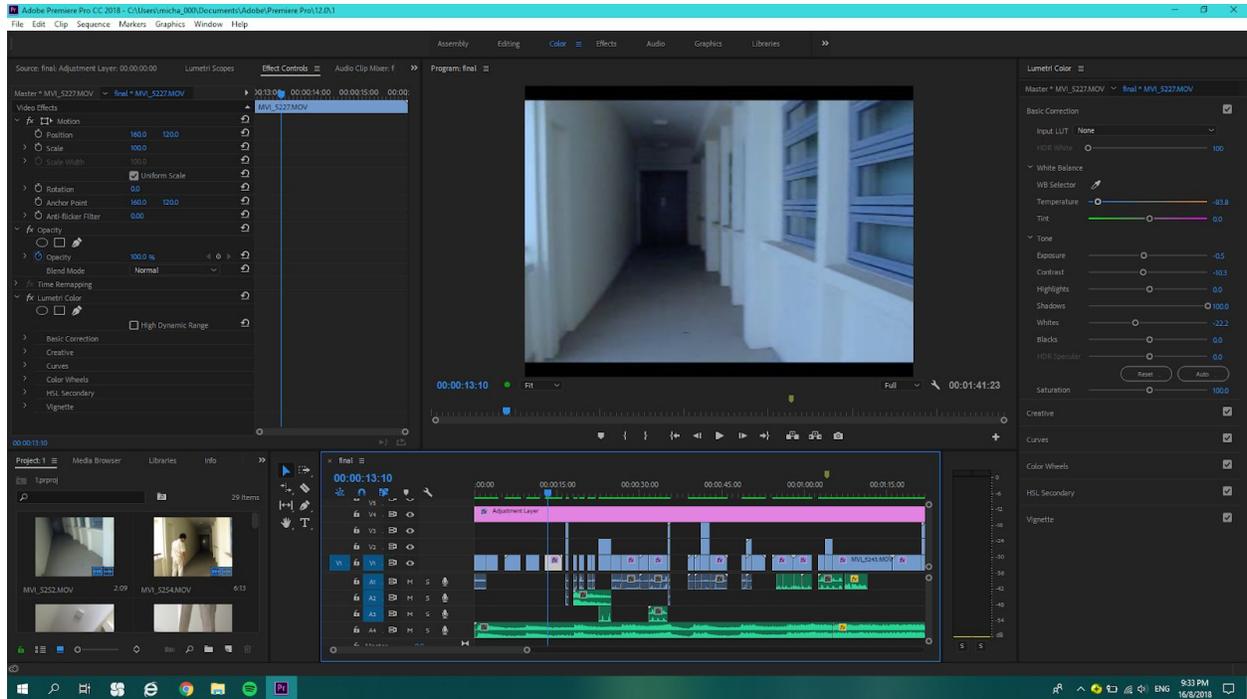
The video has a narrative structure, but the focus is on the message and not the narrative. The narrative serves as a bridge to help explain the concept in a visual form. Hence, the audience is given more freedom as to how they want to interpret the work.

Our video features two camera points of view, one from the POV of the actor, and another at an angle which captures the actor. The protagonist will walk towards a door at the end of a hallway. This door represents the gateway leading to change. As the protagonist walks towards the door, a 'clone' of him appears and blocks his way. This 'clone' represents his inner demon and inner fear, the thing that stops him from making changes. In the process of overcoming this inner demon, the protagonist gets thrashed and beaten.

This represents the struggles embedded in the process of change. In the beginning, not much effort is needed to overcome the inner demon. At later stages of change, it is much harder to force oneself to change, hence the strength and aggressiveness of the demon increases.

Only when he believes that this inner demon is not real and just a figment of his imagination, then he is able to overcome his fear and the inner demon vanishes. He is then able to walk towards the door and open it.

The actor is wearing the school uniform because our problems related to change all stem from school. The unwillingness to want to do homework, the unwillingness to even want to wake up and go to school.



Editing process in Adobe Premiere Pro



Screen cap of a scene in final artwork

4. Challenges faced

4a. Challenges faced in artmaking

Without prior experience with filming and limited experience with editing, it was difficult to produce the best piece of work that we envisioned. We had to look at many online videos to find out exactly how the final work should look like, and a lot of time was used up just trying to conceptualise the work. A lot of time was also spent correcting errors, following online tutorials, figuring out how everything works etc.

4b. Challenges faced outside of artmaking

We formed this group 'by accident' as we were forced to be in same group. We did not know each other at all and this led to many problems with communication. We were not in the same class, had never worked together before and did not know what the other person was like. Group synergy and teamwork was lacking.

We did not meet up often, leading to communication problems with regards to updates of ideas. In the end, there was not enough time to fully discuss and flesh out ideas. There was also not enough time to get the best footage, or edit the best that we could. In the end, the final work was definitely lacking in quality.

5. References

Mercedes-Benz, (2014, September 23), *Mercedes-Benz "Chicken" MAGIC BODY CONTROL TV commercial [Video file]*, Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLwML2PagbY>

Movieclips Trailers, 2015, November 24, *The Other Side of the Door Official Trailer #1 (2016) - Sarah Wayne Callies Movie HD [Video file]*, Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMI6bGS97Ik&t=83s>