

Project Report

Group 5-13



Bravier Chua (2P3 04)

Austin Ching (2P3 02)

Glendon Cheah (2P3 05)

Caleb Chua (2P3 06)

Our Idea

To make a short film following a storyline where money raised by the class was required for donation to the school charity, and our main character, the class treasurer, having recently purchased a Nintendo Switch and boasting on social media, was accused for the misappropriation of the funds.

This animated short film explores how Teng Tjinn faces major backlash and finger-pointing for something he did not do, and warns about the consequences of spreading fake news.

So, why did we choose this theme? We wanted to convey the message of misinformation among people. In this day and age, individuals tend to follow along with what the group at large thinks or does, also known as “herd mentality”. In this instance, the main character, Teng Tjinn’s, classmates believed that he stole the class funds from their fundraiser to purchase a game console. This topic is most relevant now due to the prevalence of social media; conflict had once arisen in our group, ironically, due to misinformation - we wanted to convey that misinformation could be spread within a smaller setting, like in a school.

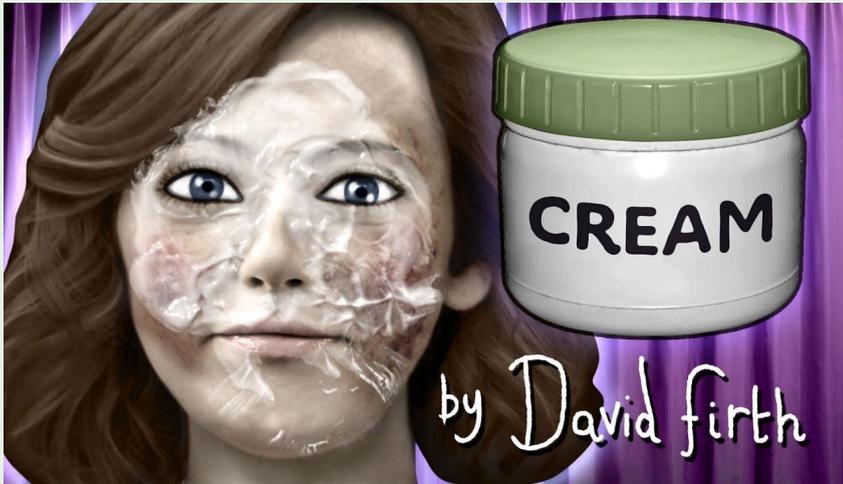
Eventually, the fake news/rumours abound lead everyone to believe Teng Tjinn to be a dishonest treasurer who misappropriated the funds.

In the first place, other people would not have accused the main character, Teng Tjinn if the others didn’t blame him first. This highlights that the most crucial part of preventing the spread of misinformation is not to spread it to other people if you aren’t sure of a rumour’s legitimacy. Everyone has a role in preventing misinformation from spreading even more and worsening.

Initially, we had produced a plot relating to misinformation (in media) affecting the country, ultimately leading to the death of a world leader. However, we felt that the plot was too dark for our target audience, and our target audience would not be able to relate to the characters in our original plot well. Our mentor, Ms Chung, advised us to create our story within a more familiar setting - i.e. a school setting.

We spent much time brainstorming and fine-tuning several ideas, in order to create a relevant idea within a school setting but still convey a similar mood and atmosphere to what we had originally planned.

Artist References



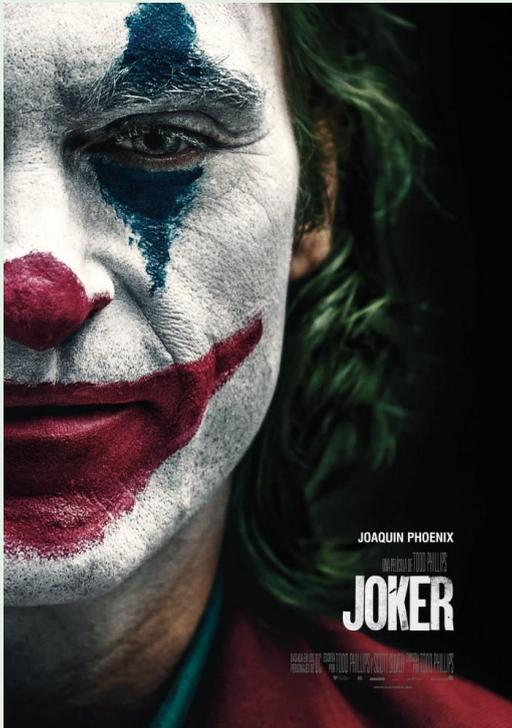
Cream by David Firth.

We drew thematic inspiration from this impactful dark-humour animation by David Firth. Whilst brainstorming, we viewed many different artistic films, looking for possible themes for our short film. At the end of the film, a man's invention - Cream - is heavily criticised, and controversy erupts surrounding this product. This controversy and misinformation is widely spread by various media outlets, ultimately failing the man's business, ruining his reputation and landing him in jail.



We produced our plot with reference to the theme at the end of this film, and crafted it to suit our target audience - Secondary-school students, who can be affected by misinformation (not through media outlets, but) through social media or word of mouth. In our film, we explore this topic but within a school setting and in a smaller scale - but ultimately still causing emotional distress in a student.

Artist References



JOKER by Todd Phillips.

**Soundtrack by Hildur
Ingveldardóttir Guðnadóttir.**

We drew inspiration for the soundtrack from that of JOKER. Throughout the movie, there were many instances of gloomy and melancholic music being played. We mirrored this tone in the soundtrack to compose our own film score and set the appropriate atmosphere for many parts of our film.

We planned many scenes in the film around the mood of the soundtracks in this film, sometimes listening to a few of these soundtracks whilst crafting our plot.

Artist References



The Legend of Korra by Bryan Konietzko & Michael Dante DiMartino.

As we transitioned from live-action to animation as a medium for our film, we referred heavily to different elements in the American motion picture the Legend of Korra by Brian Konietzko and Michael Dante DiMartino to produce our animation, as the visuals in the Legend of Korra are very aesthetically pleasing. We also used certain scenes of Legend of Korra to help construct and fix certain anatomical structures of the characters in Funds.



In this example, we referenced this scene from TLOK to create the structure for Teng Tjinn whilst he walks up along the path.

After reviewing these works,

we gathered several different ideas for our film - mainly the different forms of misinformation. As mentioned before, we had initially started with this theme of misinformation being spread through media outlets, but after reviewing these works, we began to consider other forms of misinformation, for example, in social media. We, thus, explored the other mediums for misinformation - we produced a plot which takes place entirely within WhatsApp. However, we believed that it lacked emotion, and the characters were not easily relatable, as the audience would only occasionally see the main character.

We wanted to focus more on the nuance in the film - sudden shifts in composure, subtle changes in the character's expressions, displaying the character's discomfort during moments of conflict.

After finalising the main idea of our film, we sorted out our roles within the group.

Roles

Bravier Chua (2P3 04), Leader

Bravier, having the experience and the software, handled the majority of the animation process and directed the film. He also coordinated the group's progress throughout the span of the project as Creative Director.

Caleb Chua (2P3 06)

Caleb, having much experience in the field of video production, handled the audio-visual coordination, editing and transitions. He was also a voice actor for the animation.

Austin Ching (2P3 02)

Austin, who studies music composition, experimented with the audio effects, i.e. the foley and the soundtrack, producing around 10 tracks to accompany the scenes in our film. He was also a voice actor.

Glendon Cheah (2P3 05)

Glendon took our ideas and transformed them into a professional screenplay, from which we based the direction of our film on. He also handled administrative matters and served as a voice actor.

A CHANGE IN PLANS.

Initially, we had planned to film our project as it was a medium most of us had experience working with.

However, due to the COVID-19 safe distancing etc. measures & restrictions, we were unable to carry out filming by the time we had finished our planning process, so the original plan was scrapped.

We had discussed several alternate ideas for our film - like changing the plot of our film to suit the current coronavirus situation, or introducing Google Meet into our story as a medium for misinformation.

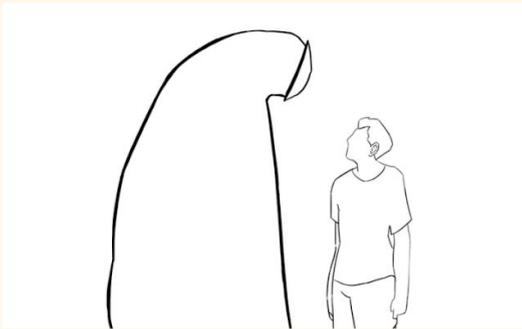
Ultimately, we turned to animation: minimal contact was required and safe distancing could be observed during production. Animation was also a field some of us had experience in.



ANIMATION PROCESS



Basic sketches.



Refined lineworks.



Polished colours.

STILLS



TECHNIQUES/ELEMENTS

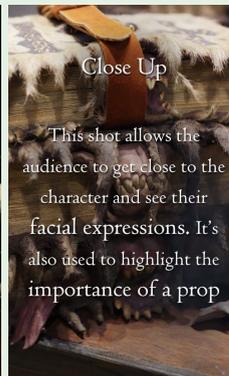
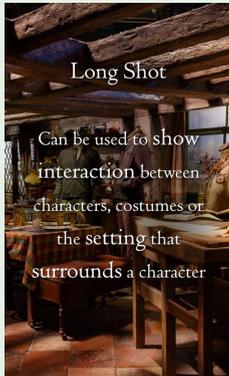
For the production of our film, we explored several elements/techniques of a film, as well as for the planning process, to incorporate.

Screenplay

We had incorporated many professional storyboarding methods from renowned film companies such as Pixar and Warner Bros. They allowed us to create a clean document that we could easily read off and use during filming.

| FULL SCRIPT / FILM SEQUENCING | NOTES |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">THE SCREENPLAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SCENE ONE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">~</p> <p>INT. TENG TJINN'S ROOM - NIGHT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TENG TJINN (writing in notebook) \$699 out of \$500 amassed for donation competition.</p> <p>The heading at the top of the notebook says "Donation competition funds".</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TENG TJINN (typing on laptop in class chat) We have reached, and in fact exceeded, our donation goal of \$500! As your class treasurer, I am so proud of y'all and I'm sure we'll stand a chance in the donation competition and gain recognition as a class amongst the cohort.</p> <p>Immediately after sending the message, TENG TJINN switches to the next tab on his computer, revealing the Nintendo website. On the website displays the price for a Nintendo Switch.</p> <p>CLOSE UP ON the Nintendo Switch's price, which is at \$699.</p> <p>CLOSE UP ON Teng Tjinn's face. He gazes at the computer with a sparkle in his eyes.</p> <p>CUT to TENG TJINN. He sits on the floor of his room, playing with his Nintendo Switch. The title, "Funds" appears beside him, in large words.</p> <p>PAN OVER TENG TJINN'S desk. Some worksheets and stationery are scattered on the table, but his phone is turned on. On the phone is a photograph of the Nintendo Switch on INSTAGRAM, with the caption "Just bought a Switch today, so excited to play it!"</p> | <p>Set location: Teng Tjinn's home</p> |

Types of Angles/Shots/Scales



We paid much attention to the scale and angle of the Point of View for each scene, in order to achieve different dramatic effects. This also applied to our animation after we switched over from film due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Soundtrack/Foley

The film score was largely composed by Austin Ching of our group, with excerpts of public domain music used as well. in various mediums, e.g. solo piano, strings, synth - crafted carefully to suit the mood and theme of the scenes in the film.

The image displays two pages of musical notation for a piano score. The notation is arranged in two columns, each representing a page of the score. Each page contains five systems of music, with each system consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings like *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *ff*. There are also performance instructions such as *acc.*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The pages are numbered 5 and 6 at the bottom. Copyright information at the bottom of each page reads "©2020 Austin Ching © Edition".

For efficiency, we used digital notation software such that the document could be portable and so we could digitally generate the soundtrack.

To compose the soundtrack, Austin used MuseScore because the soundfont was the most professional and realistic, and compared to Sibelius and Finale which he also used, he found MuseScore much more user-friendly.

Reflections

Bravier

As a group, we have dealt many challenges in our PW journey. This year, we faced even more significant obstacles, due to the COVID-19 situation. And as the creative director and the leader of this project work group, I bore the responsibility to solve these problems that we face. I had to think quickly and creatively to face certain problems that we had, i.e. the COVID-19 restrictions and how we had to change the medium for our film to adapt to the current situation.

This project has helped me in many other ways, like bringing a group together and working together despite our differences.

Austin

Having had experience with filmmaking the previous year for PW, I was slightly more confident for this year's film project, and this gave me an advantage. However, the Covid-19 pandemic limited our capabilities to animation only, and I learnt to rewire and adapt.

As a group, we faced certain difficulties, e.g. not being able to meet up in person, disagreements within the group, but in the end we managed to pull through. This project has also taught me to better manage my time.

Glendon

I was hampered down by many commitments and it was hard for me to find time to finish writing the script.

This category was extremely new to me as I did a different category for project work the previous year.

On the week of proposal evaluation, I was frustrated as we were rushing to complete the slides. However, our leader stayed calm and guided us through.

Caleb

Throughout the course of this year's project work, I learnt about working as a group and persevering till the very end. I gained a deeper understanding of unity and teamwork. This project also helped me further develop my editing skills and allowed me appreciate the work put into film.

This project work has also impacted my behaviour and skills. I have learnt to be more professional while settling disputes and keeping myself together even during tough times. I also learnt new editing techniques that I would use in the future to improve my film-making.

Additionally, despite COVID-19 restrictions, I was able to stay focused on our goals and persevere throughout the course of the project.



As a group,

We would like to thank our mentor Ms Chung for constantly keeping tabs on our progress, advising us on various matters such as the direction of our film, and what changes could be made to our plot to appeal to our target audience. She was also one of our main sources of motivation, and without her mentorship and guidance, we would not have performed to the best of our abilities. We experienced multiple setbacks, such as having to practise safe distancing measures, and conflicts arose occasionally between members, but in the end we managed to set aside our differences and pull through with the project. Through this project, we have gained a deeper insight into the field of animation, which most of us were new to, and learnt to adapt to the situation at hand and not falter to any difficulties or changes.

Citations

- Ryan Winslett, R. W. (2014, October 15). *The Legend of Korra Shows Off Its Elemental Combat* [Illustration]. The Legend of Korra Shows Off Its Elemental Combat - CINEMABLEND. <https://www.cinemablend.com/games/Legend-Korra-Shows-Off-Its-Elemental-Combat-67870.html>
- Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. (2019, October 3). *Joker Poster* [Poster]. Joker Official Website. <http://www.jokermovie.net>
- David Firth. [David Firth]. (2017, May 20). Cream [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UgiJPnwtQU>
- Warner Brothers.(2020). *Camera Angles* [Photograph]. <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/17936142001369999/?hl=en>

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