

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS LORENZO BUTTURINI

The “Design for short film” module has been a proper rollercoaster of emotions. It has been an entirely new experience and probably the one I was looking forward to the most. The brief itself required to decide between three different options: realising multiple white card models, creating visuals with powerful visual impact or producing a short film. The one I chose was the latter. It required to come up with a concept, a well-executed storyboard, research boards, thumbnails, a reflective analysis piece and, finally producing, editing and designing a short film. Back when I was attending level 5, I remember seeing some of the Level 6 short footages thinking how astonishing they were. At the time, it seemed impossible that I could have accomplished anything remotely as polished as what I saw. When we got introduced to the module, I clearly remember how I felt. So many emotions came rushing through my mind: excitement, thrill and, most of all, fear. I was so pleased with the idea of producing and designing my short film but also worried about the very little time available.

Firstly, I had to come up with a good concept for my video and decide the format I wanted it to be. Since the very beginning, I was extremely confident about my idea. I intended to create a teaser trailer for an existing show called “Euphoria”. The show is about a teenager who is struggling with drug abuse. With no control over her addiction, she is being consumed by it until she decides to get some help. The themes explored in the show are dark, political and current, so I wanted to capture the essence of it. I aimed to visualise a hallucination the main character was experiencing. The picture would have looked aesthetically pleasing whilst still showcasing elements of danger, melancholy and sadness.

Then, I asked myself how to demonstrate it visually, so I decided to design the whole set and later build it and film it. Since the very beginning, I could picture exactly how everything would have looked like, including the tiniest detail. It worked perfectly in my head. However, at the time, I could not see all the issues that would have eventually followed. Once I made up my mind on the concept of the video, I began researching, looking for inspirations, and ideas to back it up. I started producing a quick storyboard to have a clearer picture of the final product, collecting the items needed and crafting some of the props. Everything was working smoothly up to the day I pitched my idea to Emma. I showed her what I had, and she shared her concerns. I was putting too much effort into creating a nicely-filmed and edited video. Doing so, I was not focusing on what the real aim of the module was: the design aspect of it. Suddenly, the accuracy of the feedback made me open my eyes. When I fixate on a concept, it is hard for me to let it go or see all the complications that might come with it. In my vision, I wanted to create a visually pleasing work using a powerful aesthetic. However, this aesthetic would have been achieved mostly by strong contrasting lights and smooth camera movements. The initial set was too simplistic and just required dressing props rather than crafting some items. I believe I got blinded by the excitement of producing a short film and doing so, forgetting what to prioritise. This meeting with Emma made me reflect on some of my initial decisions. Therefore, I concluded that I would have added more elaborate props. This way, the design aspect would have been more compelling and on track with the brief.

A couple of weeks had passed since we started the module. According to my schedule, it was time to start building the main set; which involved creating a tent (and crafting some of the props needed). That is where everything started diverging from the original plan. The setting

I was assembling looked entirely different from the one I pictured, and most of the material I ordered online never got delivered. I started to panic because every attempt to build the perfect scenery seemed to fail. Then reality hit me: filming with a professional camera was not as easy as I thought. Also, I lacked the experience to create a professional-looking film. To better define my ideas, I had another meeting with Emma, where I talked her through my doubts and concerns. After I calmed myself down and could finally think clearly, I came up with a solution: switching the whole concept into animation.

I did not consider doing animation at first since I was focusing all my attention on filming. However, it made much more sense. Creating an animation would have involved practising my drawing skills and would have given me all the freedom I needed to be as creative as possible. Suddenly all the initial excitement came rushing back. Therefore, I rewrote my schedule (keeping it as tight as possible), and I started. I used my initial storyboard to back me up with the atmosphere I wanted to convey, and I dived straight into it. Creating an animation was not easy at all. To achieve my goal, I had to learn the basics, following multiple tutorials on LinkedIn Learning. Hours were flying by on the computer, and I spent most of my time working on a Wacom board. The more frames I created, the more excited I got. At this stage, I could not wait to see the result. Creating an animation had its perks and its disadvantages. It was fun to do, but also it involved an enormous amount of hours. Once I had the right number of frames, I had to combine them into a video file and add a soundtrack to bring it to life.

I can easily say this was the most intense module I had to face since I started university. The global situation we are living in made the whole process more challenging. I also believe that focusing all my attention on this project has helped me take my mind off the pandemic. Undoubtedly, there were times where I found it extremely hard to keep myself motivated, especially when everything seemed to go wrong, but I always pulled myself together. Managing my time throughout the whole process was the real challenge: the amount of work to deal with was gigantic. However, planning my time helped me having an overall idea of where I was supposed to be with my work. Despite having multiple moments where I doubted myself, I also believe I have never felt prouder of the result achieved. Seeing my animation coming together, thrilled me and made me realise how hard work can pay off.

Throughout this module, I learned so much both technically and about myself. One of the outcomes was the challenge of creating the animation using Photoshop. I never had the chance to explore this before; I firmly believe it is going to be extremely useful in the future. This short video will become part of my portfolio and will help to make a better impression on future employers.

On a more personal level, I understand that this module helped me find out some aspects of my personality that might sabotage the way I deal with tasks. For instance, I have always known myself to be a schematic person, trying my best to achieve my ideal “perfection”. I appreciate this side of my personality because It allows me to be ambitious and to dream big. However, sometimes, this characteristic of mine leads me to get stubborn with my ideas and not willing to adjust or change my work. It also means that whenever something doesn’t go accordingly to plan, I start panicking and feel overwhelmed. I believe that throughout these seven weeks, I finally understood the importance of being flexible. A perfect example is that initially, I got stuck with the thought of filming my project: however, after some consideration, I realised my

idea would not be as successful if I stuck to the initial plan. It took me some time to realise my mistake, but once I made up my mind, I felt unstoppable.

This module reminded me of how frustrating making mistakes can be, but it also taught me that it is perfectly normal to make some. It is important to remember to learn from them, not to give up and to find the motivation to do better. On a lighter note, it also allowed me to remember how deeply satisfying and motivating spending time drawing is. I have always loved sketching, but in the last couple of years, I didn't spend much time on it. This project gave me the perfect excuse to bring back this passion of mine. Lastly, throughout this journey, I realised how useful asking for feedback is. When I felt the most confused and lost within my thoughts, receiving feedback helped me clear up my mind. It also helped me look at my work from a different perspective. Despite all the difficulties, I am pleased with the outcomes. The excitement I felt when I saw the result was worth the challenge. This module has taught me so much in such a short amount of time, and I firmly believe that it will be extremely beneficial for my future career in the film industry.