Lyrical Juxtaposition: The Collaborative Storytelling Project
Arts 291 Experimental Media in the Eternal City
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André Breton's maxim "Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table" is an expression of the belief that simply placing objects in an unexpected context reinvigorates their mysterious qualities." gathered from Jonathan Lethem's essay "the ecstasy of influence: a plagiarism" in Harpers Magazine

Project Description:
For this project you will be capturing ***visual and audio phrases*** that you will share with each other as components that will become poetic, individual narratives. Each of you will record symbolic movements (or signifying actions), sounds, objects and interesting locations around Rome and on our travels. These clips should be aesthetically/intellectually alluring in some way, drawing the viewer in (compelling), holding their interest (sustaining) and surprise them occasionally (the unexpected). These variable arrangements of scenes and sounds will elicit suggestive narrative/poetic ideas. During the shooting you will become familiar with using the camera for video. You will also capture audio either on the camera or with a separate recorder. I will give you a list of types of shots to practice. You will then load your best clips onto one hard drive, from which you can all choose each other's recordings to work with. You will transfer chosen clips into Premiere Pro on your hard drive and use them to create a *loose, associative* narrative. The material you have to work with will suggest a process and style to you. The end product will be around one minute in length and have an intentional structure. Your audience is a wider gallery audience.

Goals:
To imagine short visual and aural phrases that are NOT clichés.
To learn camerawork, sound and image editing.
To respond to the material at hand and find a way to create a narrative with it.

Process:
1. Get familiar with camera, lighting and technical gear.
2. Shoot at least 6 of each of the following types of images/sounds using each other as crew but individually learning/trying all aspects of the process. (Try at least 75% of the suggestions from the Pre-Production notes that follow)
    Location:
    Find two locations that are under-known to us and shoot some establishing shots, mid-range shots, close-ups. If you move the camera, use smooth motion in the form of slow tilts, pans and zooms or have elements and people move in front of the camera. Try some unusual points of view: birdseye, wormseye, etc. You may also chose to use subjective hand-held camera in these locations, but I want to know you can use smooth action too.
    Symbolic Action:
    Find a person or object that can move in front of the camera to imply a mood or event that is NOT clichéd and might be interpreted various ways. *(For example: a foot twisting on the ground could be stamping out a cigarette or dancing, a hand dropping could be in shock or sleep)*. You can also make symbolic actions with *objects* that are unusual or aesthetically or intellectually compelling.
    Sounds:
    Use camera or audio recorders to collect sounds. You can find or make the sounds. Sound effects made apart from the location are called Foley sounds. You may add these if

you like, but be sure to gather some *ambient* sound in each location. (room tone without voices or other noises)

3. **Edit:**
Use the footage from the entire class to learn to edit in Premiere Pro.
In the end you will select several visual and audio elements to create your narrative.
I will lead you through exercises to learn the software.

4. Write a narrative in words that arises from the clips you have chosen and the experience of arranging them. You can add it as a voice over, or have text on the screen. It can be poetic, a series of words, definitions, or a crafted (very) short story, or a series of facts…it can actually be quite minimal? *Try to have the feel of the image and sound reflected in your words: are they smooth and slow (legato) or punchy (staccato), is the subject hard and difficult, easy and loose, chewy and thoughtful? Let the way you write and the words you choose reflect this tone.*

5. Present: your work in successive critiques that emphasize each segment of the process.

HERE IS A SECTION FROM THE VIDEO PRODUCTION NOTES TO CONSIDER:

Point of view *establishes the video maker as either:*
Objective: observing the action from outside the subject (documentary) (camera is smooth or stationary) (viewers can forget the camera exists)
Subjective: taking on the point of view of a character, when the camera movements mimic a character or look at other characters. This leads to viewers thinking about the existence of the camera.
Using Camera Angle: Use camera angle along with other video elements to emphasize your point. (Looking down on a figure makes it look helpless, looking up looks powerful)
Cinema Verite: Camera acting impulsively or unpredictably, searching for subject, swish pans, handheld, etc... implying a consciousness of camera presence.

Frame within a Frame: Using interior compositional elements to set apart part of the image to impact the meaning, creating a focal point, a sense of theater, a sense of isolation, etc...

Compositional Considerations:
The arrangement of the elements is called "mise-en-scene." (how the "set" looks, location of cameras, movement within frame, etc
Consider the elements and principles of design/composition to create interesting shots.
- what is the focal point?
- What type of balance are you using?
- What degree/type of color will emphasize the mood you intend?
- How does the type of movement of either the camera or object support this?)
- How is the image unified?
Remember screen aspect ratio 9x16)

Consider dividing the screen in thirds and having **focal points** at the intersection of those lines.

Consider the **eye room**, (space in front of the character's gaze) creating a sense of direction.

Consider the person's relationship to the camera/viewer: Is their gaze off screen implying action beyond our sight? Is it directed back to the viewer (a dialog/confrontation, etc?) Avoid convergent lines between main subject and background (like a tree growing out of someone's head, unless you desire that awkwardness)

Consider these creative methods while shooting:
Use a Tripod to pan or tilt
Use a dolly (luggage with wheels?)
Hold the camera low or get up on something high.
Use a crane.
Use the Osmo Pocket to do a steadily moving shot
hand-held motion
changing the axis of the camera,
masking off part of the image,
edit using multiple images on one screen
shooting through a semitransparent object, a mask or matte,
bounce off a mirror,
use non-traditional or spot lighting (a flashlight, cell phone, etc)
use a projected background or project onto an object while taping,
use a color you will later key out either in background or elsewhere (clothing)

Consider these Type of Shots:
Establishing shot: wide shot that lets viewer know context at onset.
Medium shots: show action, dialog
Close up: shows emotion, details
Still shot: keep camera still allows action to take place within subject (internal action)
Moving: pans, quick cuts, tracking create mood (action or disturbed, violent)
Swish pan: pan quickly (blurred) landing on subject. Creates movement, rhythm, tension.
Shoot to edit:
Let movement go off and on and off screen
Don't change framing on shots you want to edit together
Shoot from multiple angles for variety
sense of continuation (consider action leaving one frame and going into another)

EDITING OPTIONS:
Jump Cut: an abrupt cut from one image to another jolting the viewer
Continuity Cut: Cut on action or in the same direction as the movement, same subject: Goal smooth, unobtrusive cut.
Layering: one image over the other with blending through opacity or blend modes
J / L cut: where the audio or video continues while the other track changes. Provides a smooth bridge between elements.
Transitions: moving between shots.
Multiple Frames on One Screen
See this list:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinematic_techniques