

IF I HAD TO L(EA)VE

Dissertação defendida em prova pública na Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias no dia 13/09/2018 perante o júri nomeado pelo despacho de nomeação N° 279/2018 de 3 de Setembro de 2018 com a seguinte composição:

Presidente: Prof. Doutor Filipe Soares Branco da Costa Luz (ULHT)

Arguente: Prof. Doutora Maria Mires Does Santos Carriço (Fac. Belas Artes UPorto)

Orientador: Prof. Doutor Paulo Renato da Silva Gil Viveiros (ULHT)

Vogal: Prof. Especialista José Miguel Ruivo Ribeiro (ULHT)

Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias

Escola de Comunicação, Arquitetura, Artes e Tecnologias da Informação

ULHT

2018

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank all the jury members to be interested in my work and to evaluate it. I also want to express my gratitude to my Coordinators, Professors, colleagues, family and my friends for supporting me during my work and believing in me.

Resumo

Este relatório tem como objetivo mostrar minhas intenções e meu procedimento de trabalho para fazer um curta-metragem como projeto final para o Mestrado em Animação. Sendo assim, o filme combina duas técnicas: animação 2D e Scratch e pintura em filmes Super 8.

Pelo fato do tema versar sobre razões de imigração ilegal, o processo de trabalho começou por uma fase de pesquisa que, conseqüentemente, partindo de fatos reais, evoluiu para idéias e metáforas, originando a história em si. Nesse sentido, o roteiro e o storyboard foram mutuamente desenvolvidos e aprimorados, e acompanhados, posteriormente, de um som Animatic.

Por fim, a fase de animação teve início durante o trabalho com o som, dando surgimento ao filme SE EU TIVESSE QUE DEIXAR.

Palavras-chave

Imigração ilegal, Animação, Experimental, Abstrato, Histórias reais.

Abstract

This report aims to show my intentions and my work procedure to make a short movie as a final project for the master degree Animation Arts. The film combines two techniques: 2D animation and Scratch and paint on Super 8 films.

The movie is about illegal immigration reasons. Thus the work process started by a research phase about the topic. Real facts evolved into ideas and metaphors then to a story. The script and the storyboard were mutually developed and improved, then led to a sound animatic. At the end the animation phase started while working at the same time on the sound to give birth to the movie IF I HAD TO L(EA)VE.

Key words

Illegal immigration, Animation, Experimental, Abstract, Real stories.

Abbreviation and symbols

APA American Psychological Association

ULHT Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias

General Index

Introduction.....	8
Synopsis.....	9
1 - Intention.....	10
1.1 Subject/Story.....	11
1.2 Visual style	11
1.2.1 Character.....	11
1.2.2 Technique and graphic style	11
1.2.2.1 2D Animation	11
1.2.2.2 Scratch and painting on old Super 8 films.....	11
1.2.2.3 Sound.....	14
2- Methodology.....	15
2.1 Research and inspiration phase.....	15
2.2 Creative process starting.....	16
2.2.1 From reality to ideas	16
2.2.2 Ideas evolution.....	18
2.3 Realization and evolution	18
2.3.1 Visuals, writing, storyboard, Animatic.....	18
2.3.2 Animation, Story and evolution.....	20
Conclusion	29
Bibliography.....	30
Content Table	32

Photography/Image Index

Figure 1, X struggling in the see, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	13
Figure 2, X drowning, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	13
Figure 3, X standing in the middle of the ruins, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	13
Figure 4, First draft of ideas into images, 2018.....	17
Figure 5, Boat filled with immigrants in a stormy see, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	20
Figure 6, X drowning, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	22
Figure 7,8, X standing in the ruins, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	22
Figure 9,10 X Piano player and flower exploding, 2018.....	23
Figure 11,12, baby walking toward X, 2018	23
Figure 13,14,15, X's pasts rewinding, 2018.....	24
Figure 16, X trying to breathe out of the water, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	25
Figure 17,18,19,20 X in jail remembers watching TOP HAT If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	26
Figure 21, 22, X running toward a border and a hand catches him, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	27
Figure 23, 24, X's rewinding pasts, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018	28
Figure 25, 26, 27, 28, From the storm to the calm , If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.....	28

Introduction

This report explains all the phases of the realization process of my final project. In fact as a student in the Animation Arts master degree, I had writing, sound, animation classes... And this final movie is a way to combine and to apply what I learned from these courses and add on another technique: scratching and coloration of old super 8 films, to make it more original and personal.

In my country Tunisia there is a lot of illegal immigration. But also in all Africa mediterranean illegal immigration is very common. And even outside my continent in Mexico, Afghanistan, Syria, North Korea... I always wondered why would people leave while endangering themselves. I wanted then to learn more about the subject and consequently to show the illegal immigration reasons in an abstract way that is still strongly linked to the real but with different treatments and metaphors.

This movie is indeed inspired from real stories/events happening in societies that encounters 'clandestine' immigrations but shows them in an unusual way.

To start it is important to learn more about my intentions for this project first for the story part then for the visual style and finally for the sound.

In a different part we learn about the methodology of the work development starting from the research and the inspiration phase that lead to the creative process and then to the different steps of realization and the evolution of the project.

This report follows the APA standard for the quote and references.

Synopsis

A small boat filled with migrants encounters a storm.

While drowning, « X » faces his pasts: he remembers all the painful memories from different places, different times and different lives that forced him and his companions to escape hoping for a better future.

1- Intention

1.1 Subject/Story

Since 1993 33.293 persons have died trying to migrate illegally to Europe (Hamza, 2018). More than 3 100 migrants are dead or disappeared in the Mediterranean in 2017 (Duriez & Amar, 2018). In the other part of the world twelve percent of all foreign nationals in South Korea are illegal immigrants (Spracklin, 2018)...

We talk about immigration in our daily life. We have seen it everywhere in the news, documentaries, reportages, movies... But we start somehow to get used to it and to its images. The subject doesn't bother us as much as it did before. That's why I decided to talk about it again in a more global but abstract way.

I don't want to tell the story of one case particularly or one type of illegal immigration or one country. I want to talk about the powerful reasons of immigration in a subtle way that could reunite somehow a lot of immigrants from different countries.

I decided then to create one character that will have different pasts and who could have left anywhere. We can relate this idea to the Quantic Mechanic with its parallel worlds: the same person could have left so many different lives in different times and spaces.

Besides all the stories and the details are inspired from real references mainly in North Korean, Syrian and mediterranean immigration. The purpose is then to address the reasons of illegal immigration in an abstract way. Although the story is based on real life it is told and shown differently. It's not a movie with a classical dramaturgy where we understand everything from the first side. The viewer should be active and not only receptive. He needs to think, try to see with another eye: a metaphorical eye. He needs to dig into the details to understand this little puzzle between the character's past and present life, drowning in the water/ but also drowning in reality before he left his country, suffocating in this stormy sea/ but also suffocating because of the stormy war or any unfair condition he has been living.

The viewer has the freedom through the abstract treatment to find out his own story and to relate to other people: a friend or an immigrant he met or seen on TV... But there is always an idea behind that he needs to relate to which is: War, lack of freedom, Tyranny, no liberty of expression or thoughts, indignity, injustice ... are the reasons that push people to leave and to 'gamble' with their lives.

1.2 Visual style

1.2.1 Character

The movie is based on only one character even though in the beginning he is on a boat with a lot of other people. All of them have no faces. They are only there to symbolize the presence of other humans. It doesn't matter how they look like. The idea is then to be as neutral as possible.

« X » the protagonist is a representation of a human being. Whether he is white, black, yellow, red, a boy or a girl... it doesn't matter. He is a person from the world. He can be from Korea, Syria, Africa... That's why I decided to take away the face because usually it's a personal particularity and it could be very expressive.

The character is a stick man, drawn in a very simple way. He could also be drawn by anyone: young or old, when asked to draw a human. It should be close to people so that while he doesn't have particularities in its physical aspect the viewer feels its familiarity.

1.2.2 Technique and graphic style

1.2.2.1 2D Animation

Following to the character style, the whole graphic style is very minimalistic and simple. Most of the drawing are a bit childlike.

The use of 2D animation is then this link between the child drawing or any person's scribble and the movie. Anyone could find/see some of his drawings in there.

But I also decided to work a lot with black frames, white drawn lines and some dark paintings to mark a big contrast. It's a child drawing style but with a heavy atmosphere. And of course a heavy context and spaces: war, prison, drowning...

The only two moment where I change the brushes are under the water and at the end of the movie when the storm stops. First to feel the different space up/under the water. Second to feel a certain relief, a change. And to give hope after this heavy atmosphere.

1.2.2.2 Scratch and painting on old Super 8 films

Following the experiments with direct animation on filmstrip in the late 1930's made by Len Lye and Norman McLaren, Stan Brakhage poetic cinema, inspires me a lot.

I particularly like the use of plasticity in its works and the way he combines different techniques. Such as in Dog Star Man(Brakhage, (prod).& (Dir),1961-1964) cycle in which he uses superimposition, painting on film, the use of negative, distorted lenses...

The idea of exploring the features of the medium and not only stopping at the narrative aspect of the film but offering a very perceptual experience catches me a lot.

“Imagine an eye unruled by manmade laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception.”(Brakhage, 1963, p25).

Besides the Jackson Pollock style presence and its corporality in Brakhage’ s works inspired me in drawing/scratching the lines in the super8 old films.

I decided to exploit a harsh visual aspect that this technique can provide. So I use thick, imperfect white lines scratched on top of the black super 8 filmstrip and few colored painting above to obtain a visual contrast.

Furthermore the idea itself of reusing old films is very linked to the past. So I decided to use these visual moment superposed on the 2D animation when X is drowning in the water. In fact this is the moment when he starts to remember his pasts. So the use of these visuals symbolize the link between the past and the present. And the first time he starts drowning and seeing all his messy past the colors are very dark. But while getting closer to the end, the colors become clearer and brighter until the sun appears and the storm ends.

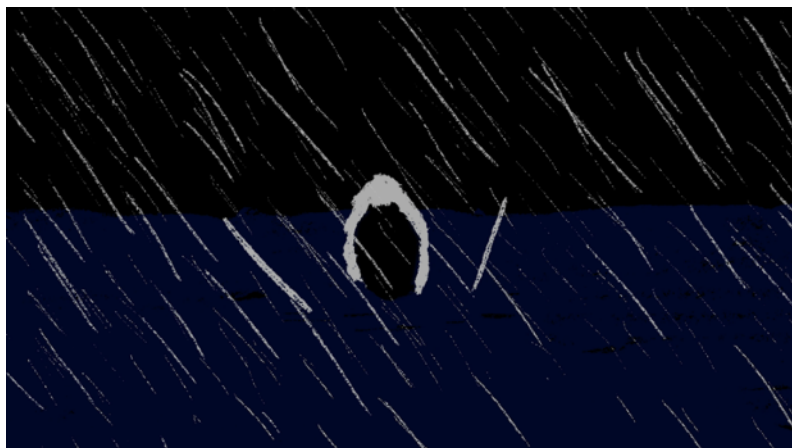


Figure1, X struggling in the see, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018



Figure2, X drowning, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018



Figure3, X standing in the middle of the ruins, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018

1.2.2.3 Sound

For this movie there will be music, sound effects, sound design, and realistic sound for what is happening in the scenes. But I decided to have all the movie with no dialogues, no words except those from the music.

The Red turtle movie (Dudok de Wit (Dir), 2016) is a great movie to refer to.

According to Dudok de Wit:

« Dans les films du Studio Ghibli, par exemple, la présence du mystérieux est très bien utilisée, je trouve. [...] C'est tellement simple d'expliquer les choses par une réplique, mais il y a d'autres moyens, bien sûr. Je pense en particulier aux comportements des personnages, à la musique et au montage. Et, en l'absence de dialogue, les sons des respirations des personnages deviennent naturellement plus expressifs ».(Michael Dudok de Wit, Allociné, 2016)

In fact even without the presence of dialogues the movie is very powerful because of this highlighted expressivity of the body and its sounds and movement and not its voices.

In the continuity of wanting the movie to talk about a person from any part of the world I didn't want to choose any language to speak with except the body language and its sounds. Besides the movie is based on almost only one character X and I don't like to have him speaking to himself. The image should speak. The body too. And the atmosphere of course with the 'bruitage' should express more than dialogues.

2- Methodology

2.1 Research and inspiration phase

The illegal immigration topic has always touched me and I always believe that it must be hard for immigrants to take the decision of leaving their country illegally ‘throwing’ themselves in the unknowable and the danger only because there is a little hope that they will live better. Therefore I wanted to learn more about the common reasons between different illegal immigrants from different parts of the world and create a movie around the subject.

The research phase is dedicated to dig more into these reasons.

I watched then a lot of reportages, documentaries, saw photographs, read articles and heard testimonies of illegal immigrants from different countries.

I started to write all the informations that touched me the most and were stronger to my eyes.

I learned that the Mediterranean illegal immigration reasons are mainly poverty, unemployment, misery, indignity, ...

Then I ended up with few stories that touched me the most in Syria and North Korea and that were more about the freedom deprivation, the lack of liberty of expressions, of choices, war, tyranny...

« For four long years of Syria’s civil war, Ayham Ahmad found a way to bear the unbearable » (Alfred, 2016). He carried his Piano with him to a refugee Camp in Palestine and played songs about the struggle to survive and about peace. However the Islamic State militants took control over the area and set Ahmad’s piano on fire while he was trying to move it out of the camp. This was the time when he decided to go to Europe even though he was the one not encouraging people to risk their lives sailing to Europe through his songs.

The other story is discovered toward the eyes of a little girl that recounts how terrified she was watching the friend of her mother being publicly executed because of watching a Hollywood Movie (Habib, 2017). And she wasn’t the only one! Over 80 people have been executed by firing squad in North Korea for watching foreign films or having a bible. And they forced over 10,000 to attend the executions in 2013! (Hall, 2013).

Nowadays North Korea increases maximum penalty for watching foreign films to 10 YEARS behind bars! (Bayliss, 2017)

Back to Syria, Mohamed escape because he just reached the age where he has to do his military services. But he didn't want to be a soldier. He is against the war and refuse to kill any people. He just wanted to leave in peace(Franceinfo, 2015).

This story could also be linked paradoxically to a north Korean soldier that defected through the 'heavily armed' border to South Korea where they opened fire at him trying to stop him from crossing. After being saved in South Korea he assured that he will never go back to military system again(Lotto Persio, 2017).

I made a smaller list of these stories and started to question myself how could the selected examples be expressed in different ways but also in a more global way.

How is going to be the format of my movie and how am i going to be inspired from them without documenting them explicitly?

2.2 Creative process starting

2.2.1 From Reality to Ideas

I started to draw little by little in one paper the main reasons of immigration. I needed to put the ideas I collected into small drawings instead of only words as a starting point.

I draw in the middle one big rectangle where a stick man called X is drowning in a stormy sea near an overturned boat. This is where I decided to link the present and the different pasts.

Then every time he drowns under the sea he starts to see different painful moments of his pasts.

The first one is the past of a person leaving in the war. I draw small frames going down from the middle image in one direction like a vertical storyboard in the left side of the paper. In these few rectangles all the village is turned into ruins only piano sounds gave life to this emptiness. But bombs and screaming would always come back to invade the space and ruin this peaceful moments. A baby is also present in one of this pasts. He could be X himself born in a country where he kept leaving in the uncertainty of death. Or his son that wont have a future because he might have died in this war.

Then we go back to the middle image (X drowning in the sea). X will try to breathe and then goes back under the sea and starts to see again other pasts. The past of the censorship, the dictatorship and the lack of freedom.

In another direction from this central frame, others are drawn vertically to the bottom.

X is sitting in his jail bed looking at his window when suddenly it turned into a Hollywood movie that he enjoyed watching. Then he remembered himself running toward a border trying to escape but once he reaches the border a child appears playing with soldiers.

X left his head again out of the water to breathe and then go down again.

The past that treats poverty is drawn with new frames getting out from the central image in a different direction (right side of the paper). X is standing starving in the middle of the forest. He starts to hallucinate and starts to see a food rain. All kind of food coming to him from the sky.... Then suddenly he sees himself in a deserted surface with only few dry trees and money coming down from the sky. Then a fire starts and burn out all the money while X trying desperately to save few bills.

This is how the first ideas around the story started.

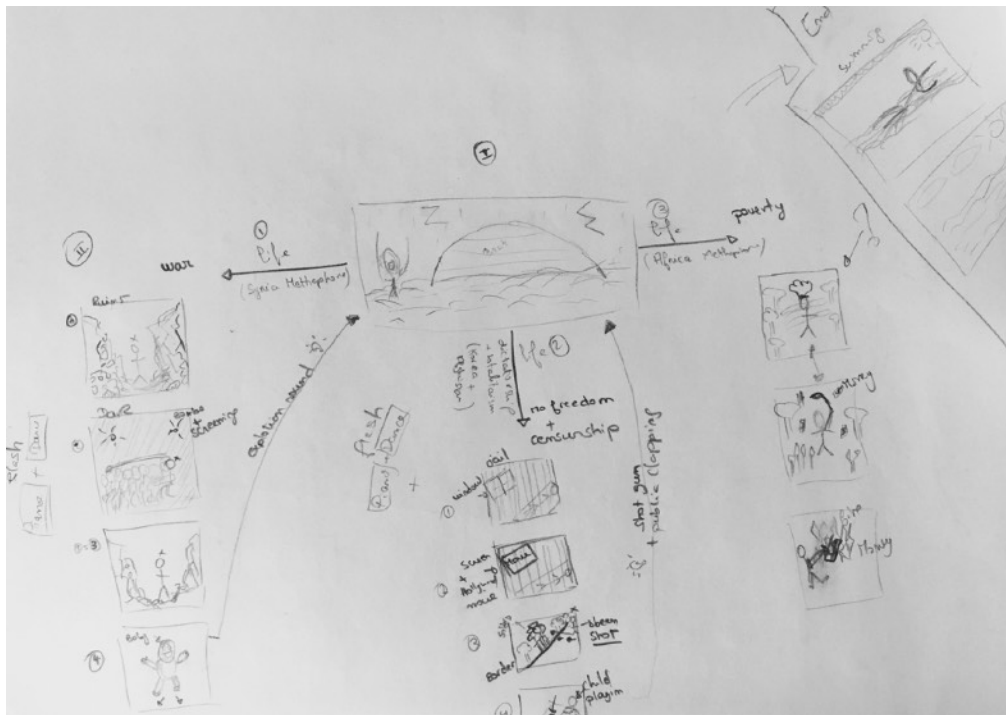


Figure4,First draft of ideas into images,2018

2.2.2 Ideas evolution

After a while I read again the examples I collected and looked at the paper in which I draw my first ideas. Then I started to think how to include more reference to the real stories implicitly, and how to create larger metaphors out of them.

I decided then to have X at a certain time of his pasts as a piano player in the middle of a ruined village. Flowers start falling from the sky and once they reach the floor they explode. This moment is a reference to the extremists that damage every beauty and dismiss the liberty of expression. The flower of passion but also the flower that usually the public nicely throw out of pride of their artist are turned into Bombs ruining every life in the surrounding. Besides the flower thrown in the air could be seen as the symbol of peace, the music as the art and the culture and oppositely the explosion as the consequence of the war, of the tyranny of any lack of freedom that our sad world suffers from and push people to leave.

Furthermore I decided to show X in jail because of these liberties deprivation. He remembers watching one of Hollywood emblematic movies *Top Hat* (Mark Sandrich, 1935) as a reference to the Korean law but also more generally as a contrast between the unfair censored life and the Hollywood dreamed life where the tap dancer Fred Astaire sings « Heaven I am in Heaven.... ». It is also a way for X, thanks to the cinema power, to identify with the characters and to feel free to dance with them for a little while and forget about the injustice of his country.

Finally the idea of running toward a border could refer to a real story (Korean soldier defector for example) but also to any other person from anywhere in the world trying to escape to a better place. The border is then the metaphor of the limit between the unhappiness and the misery and the opening of a 'nicer' world or hope.

From these metaphors and the ideas elaboration my movie started to take life.

2.3 Realization and evolution

2.3.1 From Visuals and writing to Animatic

I started to write the script and made some drawing test to decide the visual style. I always like to write and draw at the same time. To me the evolution should go on in parallel. They mutually inspire me.

At first I started the movie with only one man in a small boat and then a storm strikes and his boat overturned. Then I changed this shot with a small boat overfilled with a lot of people instead of one. In fact this could relate more to an illegal immigrant boat than to one person in a small boat that could have been fishing.

The frame of immigration is then posed from the starting of the movie where the storm is present with its heavy rain and thunders.

I wanted to impose a heavy atmosphere from the top, show the danger that people are taking when trying to escape. Thus, it's more likely for the viewer to wonder too why would people gamble with their lives and leave their country. And this is what the movie is about.

The scene started with only black background and white thin lines for the characters and thick lines for the waves. Then I decided to change the sea to a darker blue because i wanted to have few colors in the movie to play with its symbolics.

Then I decided to draw another frame in the middle of the movie with the same brushes and style to see how it could look like. So i draw the ruins of the village with a thin scratchy line. And I found that the style fits well the scene.

Oppositely to that I wanted the visual style to be different under the water as expressed previously. And I used smoother blurred texture to have a different atmosphere and feeling of spaces... Drowning under the sea was the moment that opens the labyrinth of pasts. It has to be different that's why I used also the scratch and painting on the Super 8 strip-film.

Once the graphic style settled as my starting intentions I draw all the rest of image of the storyboard. I started to do the animatic always with the sound to have a better feeling of the space but also of the real timing of the scenes.

The first version of the animatic contains the three different parts discussed previously. But after doing some trial and talking with my professor José Miguel Ribeiro and my colleagues I decided to delete the third part about poverty and to keep the others while elaborating them more. After all poverty is one of the most common reason of immigration in general and we have seen it a lot. And the way I decided to show it was very explicit: food coming and money burning... And this is not the main purpose of the movie. However talking about the war brings the poverty and the misery context indirectly. So I decided to eliminate this part.

Finally I made the necessary changes in the script and added few frames more in my storyboard and then made the new sound animatic version.

2.3.2 Animation, Story and evolution

I started then to animate the first scene of the movie but it was very hard at the beginning. This scene was a challenge for me.

At first the rain was almost vertical and stopped when the sea started. The sea was only in one layer and not very fluid. The boat was very static moving from left to right and the people followed exactly the direction of the boat. Then after the advice of my professor I added to the rain 3 different layers and make it longer. It fills now the whole frame and not just stopped before the water. I added a second layer of the sea to make the movement of the stormy waves look more huge and important. I changed the movement of the boat and the people. They are synchronized but more with a delay.

I also added a time where the boat completely disappears behind the big waves and reappears again to avoid the monotony.

With a thunder white flash we switch to the next scene where the boat is already overturned in the sea and three people drowning in the water.

At first the three were having the same exact loop movement but with different timing. But it was very cyclic and monotonous. So I changed for each person new movement and new timing. Sometimes one lasts way too much under the sea, the other stays up more and can swim better...

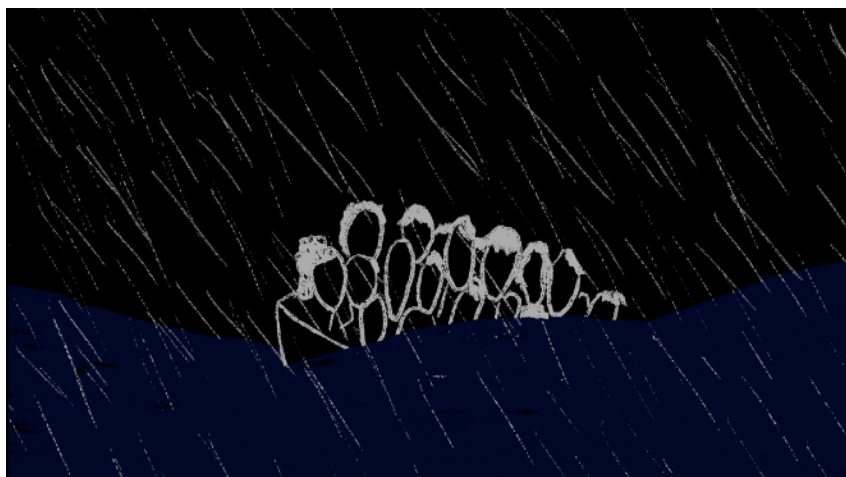


Figure 5, Boat filled with immigrants in a stormy see, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018

The next scene we ‘zoom’ into X in the water after a thunder. He is trying to keep himself out of the water but getting tired he starts to drown. And then we get to the next scene where X is moving under the water and the painting scratches appears progressively. I decided to make these two scenes more recurrent in the movie because it’s like a cycle between past and present: drowning and remembering.

As an inspiration to this, one of my professor showed me the animated movie *Revolver* (Jonas Odell (dir & prod) Stig Bergqvist, Lars Ohlson, Martti Ekstrand (dir), 1993) where few details keep coming back during the film. The movie is based on the repetition of the actions. At the end to the same scene of the drowning guy comes back. Like a cycle we always go back to him. All the movie is based on repetition although the dates where changing. I like this cyclic presence that is a bit frustrating.

In my movie X tries hard to stay out of the water. Then he gets tired. Go down under the water to relax his muscles after all the struggle. This is when he starts remembering all the different pasts. And once he can’t breathe anymore he lifts his head out of the water and the same scenes rappers again... It’s also a way for the viewer to understand through this coming back to this scene the coming back to the present time.

The drowning scene was also a bit challenging because X should move under the water so that we don’t believe he is dead. But also not too much because the scene is composed from too many different layers and it’s visually complex: A very transparent layer of blurred live action see, few layers of dark bleu shaking in the background and the colored film scratches.

The next sequence is within the war village. X stands in the middle of the ruins without moving. Only the background is shaking heavily behind him. The scratched colored lines from the drowning scene changes from horizontal thick lines to greenish thinner but more present lines going in all direction. The choice of the timing of this scene was a bit hard. In fact X is just standing. Nothing is happening. But I want the viewer to feel this heavy atmosphere provided by the simply drawn ruined village. X is standing there observing his pasts. Observing lives passing or also paradoxically lives passing away.

I also decided to keep longer the colored scratches as it is the link between the past and the present especially that it’s the first time that he drowns and starts to see his pasts. I added a change in the texture and the direction because he is seeing a past in the past.

Besides I like its visual presence. I think it is strong to have the contrast of X not moving at all. The ruins vibrating strongly behind him and the scratches with its heavy texture passing through the frame very fast and interfering with the background. Then after a while with a reversed zoom the background goes in the back really fast, and X's body and head gets very closer to us and disappear to leave space to another village part. The scratchy well determined lines get also transformed to lighter transparent bigger stripes and disappeared as soon as a piano player appears in the street of this village with his piano over a halo.



Figure 6 X; drowning, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.



Figure 7,8, X standing in the ruins, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.

At first I draw the piano and the light coming from above but I didn't put a shadow under. After showing the scene in class we felt that the musician and its instrument are a little bit glued to the village street. So I added a black shadow under the piano and a little bit of grey to make it feel a bit more natural even though it's not the realistic aspect that I am searching in this movie... But it felt better to the view.

This is when the flowers start to fall down from the upper side of the frame. For the first version all the flower had almost the same size and rhythm. But changing the scale of few of them and making them bigger was a better decision. In fact it gave to the scene more depth of field and to the flower a bigger presence. Especially that the biggest flower disappeared

first from the screen but weren't the first ones to touch the floor, then exploded with a delay. Which make the scene more surprising.

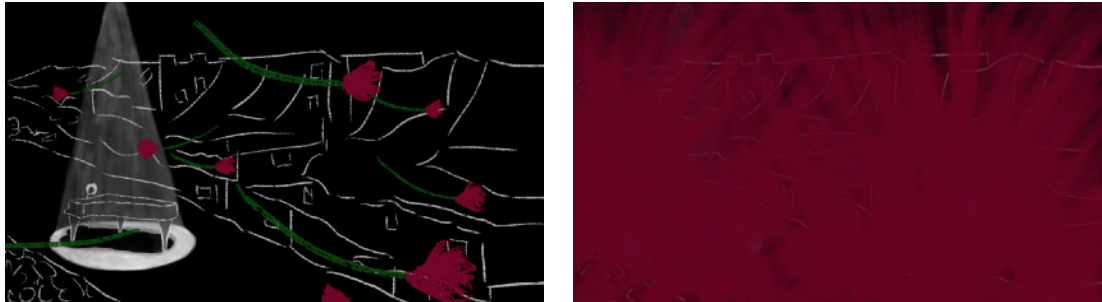


Figure 9,10, X Piano player and flower exploding, 2018.

After the explosion of all the flower the screen become all red. As soon as this red disappears X appears again in the same position as in the beginning of the sequence: standing in the middle of the ruins.

Then again with the same reversed zoom X's head disappears and leaves instead a baby body walking toward as. Then in the next scene we see X in a different angle of the same village street and the baby actually walking toward him. However as soon as X gets down on his fit and open his hand to take him the baby disappears, and so does X. In the beginning there was a little problem with the baby line size. They were way thinner then the rest of the background and X. Then I changed the size so that it feels more homogeneous. And in the first version the baby disappears in one frame but instead I made his body scatters as if it explodes before he completely disappears.

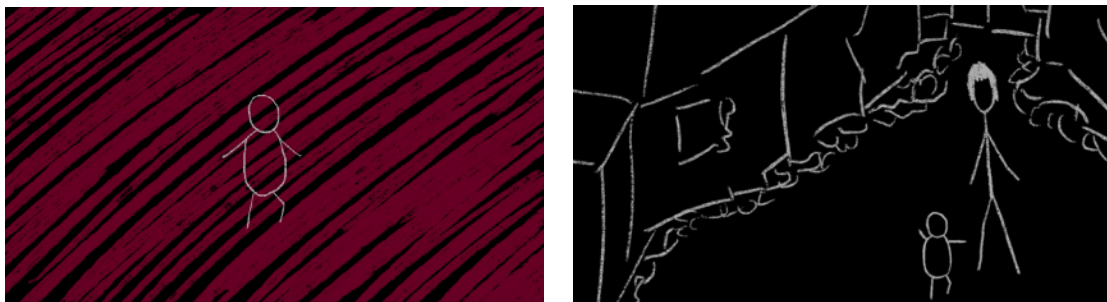


Figure 11,12, baby walking toward X, 2018.

After that a black frame appears and then a rewinding of X's pasts reappears in reversed speed and very fast. However the images are not shown in the same way as before. The elements that we have seen are there: a piano, a village, baby... but combined together with different composition and order. And I also added some family photographs as subliminal images because when we talk about pasts it can't be only the painful memories that pushes him to leave but it's also a mix of everything. Every little memory happy or sad came back to him because he can't stand being under the water anymore. He needs to breathe.



Figure 13,14,15, X's pasts rewinding, 2018.

This time X's breathing out of the water scene changed for the only time. With a subjective view we see X's hands and the sea. X is struggling to breathe and then go down again under the water. I think that to really identify with the character we need to be in his place for at least once. We need to see through him. Although making a subjective view was really hard to achieve I tried hard to make it look as nicer as I can.

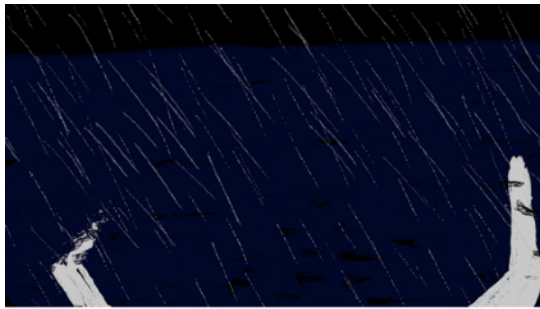


Figure 16, X trying to breathe out of the water, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018

After this scene we go back to the same drowning scene under the water.

Behind the more colored scratches a jail cell appears and X is laying in bed. For this sequence I had to live a directing experience. I asked a friend to animate a part of my movie and he chooses the jail sequence. So I did another storyboard only for this sequence with the right timing and the camera movement.

In fact when the scratches disappears a little panoramic camera movement with a tiny zoom should appears which I felt it was hard to explain exactly. In the beginning he didn't even start from the first frame I wanted to but he did a slightly different movement that I liked too. So I readapted the timing and ask him to continue animating again.

It was a long exchange work. Every time he animated a little bit he sends to me the result. I cut the movement and put again the right timing for him to continue the animation. In fact I also add the music at the right timing and send back to him. But this was also very hard to achieve. I wanted the camera movement to follow the rhythm of the music Cheek to cheek. At the end we had to meet again to re-put the resized TV screen in the right place because the movement wasn't synchronized with the music.

Besides we encountered another issue. We actually don't work on the same software so we have to redo all the animation with the right brushes. And after the export the sound and image weren't again synchronized at all. So we lost too much time trying to figure what happens and how to resolve it. Finally the result was satisfying.

At the end the scene starts with a little panoramic camera movement. X is laying in his jail bed and behind the window appears a little croissant. While the camera starts a very small frontal zoom the croissant metamorphoses and fulfill the screen with shiny blurry white. Behind the window a TV screen appears showing the dancing part of the movie TOP

HAT(1935) over the music Cheek to cheek. Then after a while X remembers himself watching this same movie at home. So with a very fast camera movement we switch from the jail to a living room where X sits on his sofa in front of his TV watching the same movie. Then a hand start knocking heavily on a door.

This was the part that my friend animated and that I directed. This experience is very important and enriching to me because this is what I want to do in the future: directing.

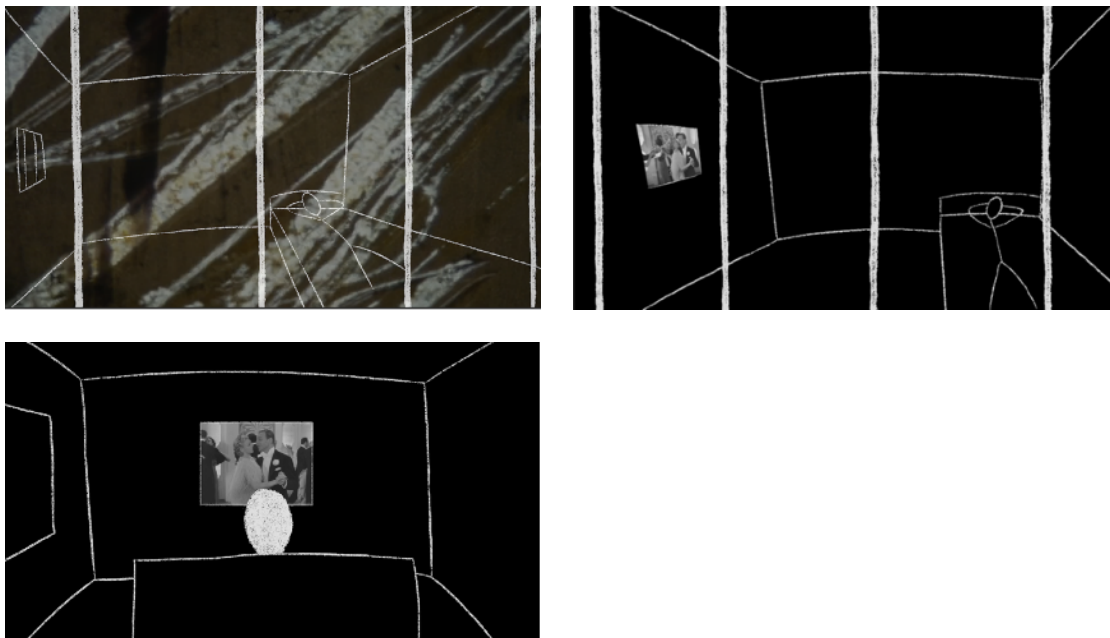


Figure 17,18,19,20 X in jail remembers watching TOP HAT If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018

Straight after X jumps from his window. In the following scene we see a forest, a big wall representing a border and we hear running footsteps. Then X appears in the frame running toward the border. I never draw a person running in a diagonal way and especially from a high angle shot. So at the beginning it was hard for me to find the ‘right’ perspectives. But after few days of trial I was happy with the result.

Then a red light appears in the bottom of the frame with some gun shots noise. X standing in front of the border looks behind. As soon as he turns back a red hand appears from up. He lifts his head up. The moment he moves his feet to try to escape the hand grabs him from the floor and takes him out of the frame.



Figure 21,22, X running toward a border and a hand catches him, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.

Then again we review pieces of his pasts with frames combined together, details mixed, fast photographs to present another lecture of these pasts.

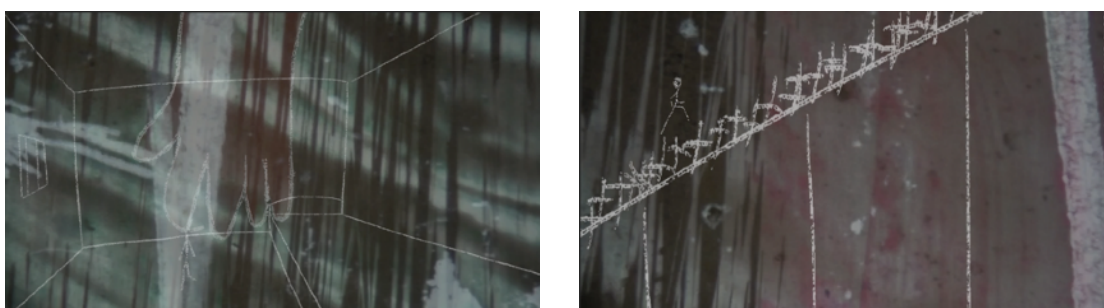


Figure 23,24, X's rewinding pasts, If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.

X lift his head out of the water to breathe. He tries to move a bit out of the water and then let himself go down again. The scratches reappeared but this time with even more colors and very different forms and direction. They get mixed up and messier. Then everything disappears and a dark frame took place over the sound of the air bubbles under the water.

The decision of the next scene was very long. In the beginning I was going to make appear a shiny jelly fish near X and then once he goes out of the water the storm stops. Then I decided to leave this part for a while and rethink about it again later.

After few days the end was very obvious to me. I decided to reappear colored scratches but with lighter colors and smoother texture.

In fact all over the movie the scratches metamorphose and follow the movie atmosphere and X's feelings. And right now with the contrast of a blurred yellow light movement and pastel colors passing by and the piano music that he played in the village : hope is back. All this messy pasts, this painful moments get transformed into beautiful colors and sound and this is how life should be. The colors gets brighter more and more. And the moment he couldn't breathe anymore he left his head out of the water and the storm has already stopped. All the visual style changes at this moment. There is no more black background and thin white lines but a whole drawn degraded bleu of the sea and the sky and a shiny sun fulfill the frame. X starts to swim until he disappears behind the horizon. A typical music mixing some African and oriental sounds appears over the sound of a calm sea and birds. This music for me is a symbol of the roots. Even though X wasn't happy in his country and had to leave he wont forget his origins in case he made it to the other side.

Finally once the animation done I did added changes to the sound with bad quality, did some new sound designs and finally the mixing. I recognize that it was a good decision to work on the sound in parallel to the image.

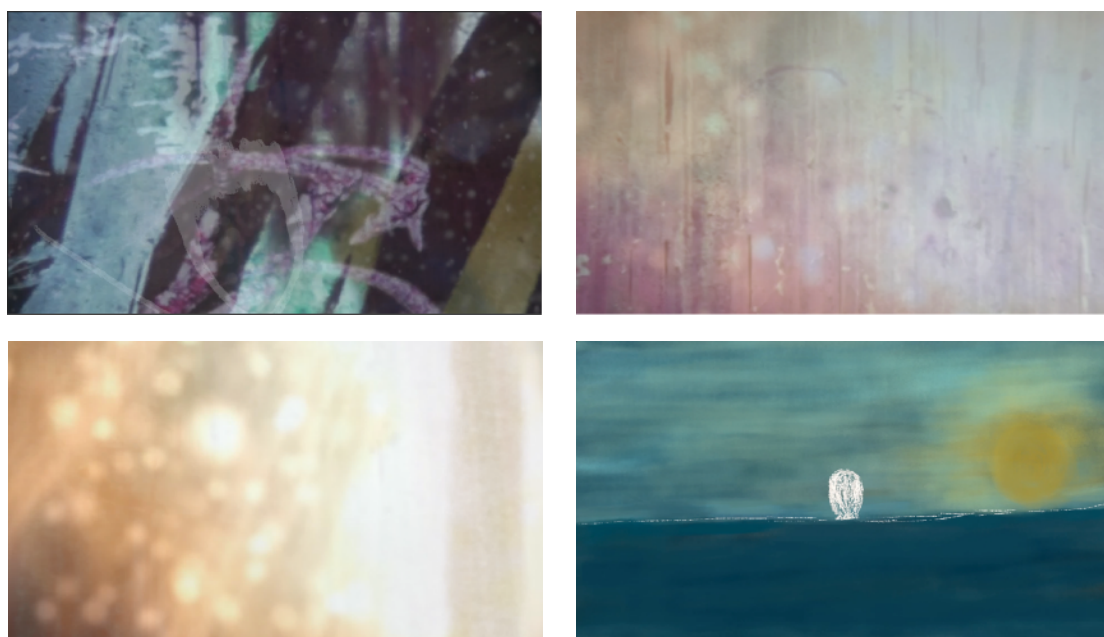


Figure 25, 26,27, 28, From the storm to the calm , If I had to l(ea)ve, 2018.

Conclusion

Realizing a whole movie by ourselves and from scratch needs a lot of steps and time. I believe each person have his own path and own creative process. In my case even though I decided from the beginning to do an abstract movie I have always wanted it to be based and inspired from reality and then add on them with special visual techniques and plasticity. Consequently I chose a theme that touched me: illegal immigration. I decided to do a movie about its reasons. After doing research about real stories I started to put into drawing ideas inspired from them. Little by little the ideas become more elaborated and more metaphors took place. I started to write and to do the storyboard at the same time because I like to see concretely the ideas. It helped me to start having a feeling of the movie. Then I did an animatic with the sound to have a better complete presence of the space and a stronger image. After the last version of the Animatic I made some animation tests to check if the visual style intended fits well the different scene. And finally I continued animating and elaborating the work with the sound more and more while I got to live also a directing experience.

Bibliography

Articles and Journals Online:

- Alfred Charlotte (2016), The diary of Syria's Piano Man On His Escape To Europe, Huffpost, accessed on the 15 January 2018 in https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/syria-piano-man-flees-to-europe-diary_us_55fc7260e4b08820d918a239
- Bayliss Charlie(2017), North Korea increases maximum penalty for watching foreign films to 10 YEARS behind bars, EXPRESS Home of the Daily and Sandy Express, accessed on the 16 January 2018 in <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/786827/north-korea-kim-jong-un-maximum-penalty-watching-foreign-films-10-years-behind-bars>.
- Duriez Julien & Léo Amar (2018), INFOGRAPHIE - Plus de 3 100 migrants morts ou disparus en Méditerranée en 2017, accessed on the 20th January 2018 in <https://www.lacroix.com/Monde/3-100-migrants-morts-disparus-Mediterranee-2017-2018-01-10-1200904860>
- Franceinfo(2015),Migrants : pourquoi avoir attendu pour fuir la Syrie ?, Francetvinfo, accessed on the 18 January 2018 in https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/europe/migrants/migrants-pourquoi-avoir-attendu-pour-fuir-la-syrie_1091121.html
- Hamza,(2018), Les chiffres de l'immigration clandestine en 2017, Accessed on April 2018 in <https://www.webmanagercenter.com/2018/03/22/417598/les-chiffres-de-limmigration-clandestine-en-2017/>
- Habib Rachel (2017), 'Executed for watching a movie': Shocking North Korea story, Sunshine Coast Daily, Accessed on the 15 January 2018 in <https://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/executed-watching-movie-shocking-north-korea-story/3155124/>
- Hall John (2013), North Korea 'executes 80 people for watching foreign films, Independent, accessed on the 16 January 2018 in <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/north-korea-executes-80-people-for-watching-foreign-films-8932104.html>
- Lotto Persio Sofia (2017), NORTH KOREA STILL HAUNTS DREAMS OF SOLDIER WHO DEFECTED, DOCTORS SAY, Newsweek, accessed on the 18 January 2018 in <http://www.newsweek.com/north-korea-nightmare-soldier-defected-doctor-says-721338>

-Michael Dudok de Wit (Dir.) (2016), *La Tortue rouge*, [80min], Belgium-France-Japan, Studio Ghibli et Wild Bunch, Why Not Productions ; Arte France Cinéma, Belvision, CN4 Productions et (coproductions)

-Michael Dudok de Wit (2016), *Anecdotes Allociné*- film muet, accessed on the 14 June 2018, <http://www.allocine.fr/film/fichefilm-243780/secrets-tournage/>

Book:

-Brakhage Stan, *Metaphors On Vision*, 1963, Film Culture.

Films:

-Brakhage Stan (Producer & Director), (1961-1964), *Dog Star Man*, [78min], US, By Brakhage.

-Odell Jonas (director & producer) Stig Bergqvist, Lars Ohlson, Martti Ekstrand (directors) (1933), *Revolver*, [8min], Sweden.

Index

Abstract p 4,8,10,

Animation p 11, 12, 20, 25, 28, 29

Cheek to cheek p 26

Illegal Immigration p8, 10, 15, 29

Reasons p 4, 8, 10, 15,16,19, 29

Super8 p 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 19