

Hidden Escapes – Driving Passions

Engaging and Dis(en)gaging from the Trials of Modern Life

Film Project Guidelines

Nearly all of us develop some sort of internal passion or hidden escape from the mass-motion-commotion of modern life. Such escapes are frequently what we do out of an internal passion or creative fire. Frequently, we pursue such passions/escapes because of, or in spite of, the work we **have** to do. For some people, it's an individual hobby. For others, it's an artistic form of expression. The escape may take the form of a collection of objects or some regular activity that we perform. It could involve travel or production of art/performance.

Often, our hidden escapes are in some ways unique to us. They can define us as individuals (different from everyone else). Over time, such escapes can take on the form of tradition, ritual, or history. They usually have lives of their own and may change over time.

They can also make for interesting stories and engaging short films.

Here's your chance. Your job for this first project is to capture one person's hidden escape(s) (or driving passion) and reveal it in an **engaging** short film story.

Think BIG! And Creatively. This should **NOT** be your average talking head sequence of some person telling a run-of-the-mill-Friday-night story. **Just the opposite.** Rather you should aim toward producing a **highly stylized** cinematic yarn in which you get **great interviews, excellent audio**, dramatic lighting, and extremely cool close-ups and revealing CUT-AWAYS.

Consequently, your focus here needs to be on these guidelines:

1. **Get off campus!** This is the place to start telling stories which have **nothing to do with SMC or your friends, roommates, or significant others. Time to step out of the safety silo.**
2. **Strong STORY, WRITING and CONCEPTUALIZATION (including shot lists).** Nearly all great films begin with a great script. Be creative and descriptive with your writing. **(20% of the project grade).**
3. **LIGHTING + Aesthetic COMPOSITION.** Creatively stylized look and feel to your story. Solid lighting and visual composition is essential.
4. **CHARACTER + DETAILS → DEVELOPMENT.** Move beyond "dead-level" story-telling and character development. Breathe LIFE into your "characters" and story progression.
5. **Strongly composed INTERVIEW footage and AUDIO.**
6. **Excellent close-up and extreme close-up footage** ("A-roll").
7. **Interesting shot angles** and superb supporting coverage "B-roll:" (Close-ups and CUT-AWAYS)
8. **At least one SET PIECE-MONTAGE SEQUENCE** with **SLO-MO/FAST-MO footage + creative editing** which helps illustrate and propel the story).
9. **Crystal Clean Audio**—words, music, sounds, etc.
10. **Interesting INTRO, LOWER 3rds and ENDING TITLES** which lead into and conclude your story.

The story you capture can be just about anything and your storyteller can be just about anyone. However, the better they are at story telling (and performing), the better your film is likely to turn out. Be choosy! (One of the first rules of film directing).

➡ Due **Thurs, March 1st** : **PROVOCATIVELY WRITTEN STORY TREATMENT/CONCEPT (1-2 pages single-spaced)** Using the readings Mefford's Writing with a FULL Deck, Horowitz's "How to Write a Treatment," and Cole's "5 POWER POINTS" Readings as your guides.

➡ Due **Tues, March 6th**: **COMPREHENSIVE PLOT DESCRIPTION/PROGRESSION + SHOT LISTS** (min. of 20 shots/act) for 5 acts/scenes (Intro + 3 acts + Conclusion)

➡ Due **Thurs, March 27th**: **INTRO + ONE act/scene EDITED** and ready for screening at beginning of class!

🔥 Due **Thurs, MARCH 29th** : **Complete Film Project!**