

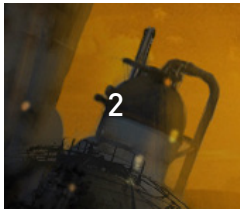
bad faith

The road to dénouement in a short film

VICTOR CHAM

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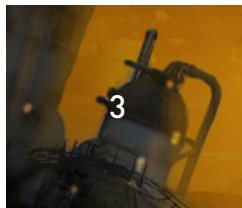
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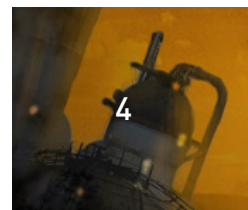
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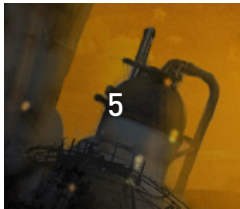
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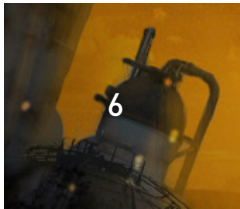


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Victor Cham.....

8TH OCTOBER

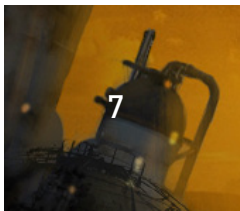


I N T E L L E C T U A L P R O P E R T Y R I G H T S

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Victor Cham.....

8 T H O C T O B E R



A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to my primary supervisor, Dr. Welby Ings, Associate Professor of Design at Auckland University of Technology, for his invaluable guidance and contribution.

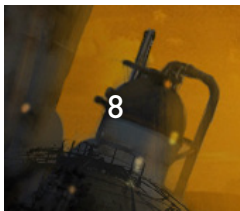
I am also grateful to my secondary supervisor, Andrew Denton, for his time and advice.

I would also like to express my appreciation to AUT University's School of Art & Design for the research stipend and campus facilities associated with the realisation of this project.

I am indebted to Ivan Liang (as a photographer, storyteller, and digital technician) for the way he wrapped around this project his substantial professional skills and creativity.

I would also like to thank Judith Sansweet for her careful proofreading of the exegesis, and my friends and fellow classmates for their opinions and encouragement throughout the year.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family, especially to my loving parents, for their love and unwavering support throughout the duration of my studies.

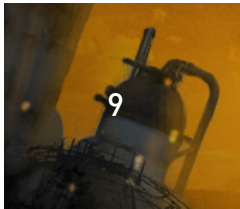


A B S T R A C T

Bad Faith: *The road to dénouement in a short film.*

This project is about storytelling. It explores the potential of narrative by applying Jean Paul Sartre's notion of Bad Faith (1969) to an animated short film. The work employs a linear narrative that is played out inside a distinctive renegotiation of a culturally hybridised urban environment. Thus, the stories world is a liminal space (Kim, 2010), between the photographically 'real' and the imagined.

The project uses painting, photography, and animation in a highly distinctive manner. Structurally it explores the potential of dénouement to provide retrospective meaning. However, narratively it relates the story of a girl with a damaged self concept who revisits events that caused her initial lost of identity. In this regard, she embarks on a journey (through a liminal state) from Bad Faith to self-realisation.



S Y N O P S I S

Claire is a little girl trapped in a world of childhood memories. While watching an old VHS recording of her parents, her strange doll companion comes to life and encourages her to chase it into an unsettled external world. In her hand, the doll carries a newspaper clipping that contains a truth Claire has been unable to face. As the child and doll navigate their way through a series of strange environments, the truth Claire has spent a lifetime trying to avoid is gradually made clear. Finally, she comes to accept an incident relating to her parent's death, buried deep in her memory.



I N T R O D U C T I O N

Bad Faith is an animated short film that is concerned with both narrative form and the potential for image and sound to convey meaning. This exegesis, divided into five chapters and a conclusion, contextualises and explains the created work.

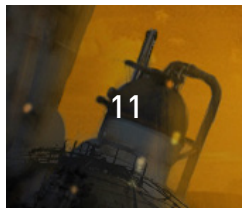
The first chapter *positions myself as the researcher*. This is because the inquiry requires a search for the discovery of meaning and draws upon subjective experience. The chapter discusses liminality as a transitional space that I experienced as an immigrant who moved between worlds of differing built environments and social identity. The chapter also outlines the origins of my creative considerations and my reasons for undertaking the project.

The second chapter of this exegesis offers a *review of existing knowledge* that influences or contextualises the film. In doing this, the research inquires into specific graphic and animated treatments of storytelling in films. It also discusses the work of other narrative illustrators and considers theoretical ideas impacting on the research.

The third chapter examines the *overarching methodology* used to develop both the narrative structure and aesthetics of *Bad Faith*. This section discusses (in relation to specific experiments) the use of a heuristic inquiry as a methodology for effectively drawing the film into being. In doing this, the chapter considers Moustakas' immersion and acquisition as phases of engagement during the development of the film's story and diegesis.

The fourth chapter considers *critical ideas* impacting on the narrative and the protagonist of the short film. In this regard, it discusses theories related to bad faith (Sartre 1969) and liminal space (Turner 1969). Positioned alongside this discussion is a consideration of Freytag's theories of *narrative structure* (1968), and *dénouement*.

The final chapter of the exegesis offers a *commentary* on specific visual and audio treatments in *Bad Faith*. These include relationships between photomontage and painting, colour as a transitional device, sound design, and the mirrored image. These treatments are unpacked and discussed in relation to specific design decisions affecting the construction of the film.



chapter 1

POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER

POSITIONING THE RESEARCHER

At the age of four, I left Hong Kong and migrated to New Zealand. In leaving a physically constrained city, I adopted a different style of living. As years passed, English became easier, friends were closer, and leafy suburbs became more familiar. I soon felt quite at home in my new country, yet at times I still feel inexplicably unsettled and dislocated.

At times I questioned the strange antiques around the house (Figure 1.1) and practices of religion that suggest another place and set of cultural values. Occasionally, I still flick through snippets of my past in our family photo album (Figure 1.2). These photos and people feel like fragments of my childhood; distant yet familiar.



Figure 1:1 (Cham, V. March 2011) Cultural artefacts and practices of religion in my family home.

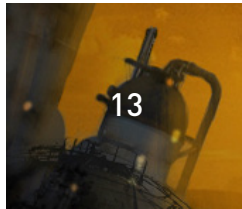


Figure 1:2 (Cham, J. & Leung, T. April 1990) Family and childhood photographs taken in Hong Kong.

Recently, during a visit back to Hong Kong, my sense of 'in-between-ness' became tangible. In this city, the spoken and written language was not foreign, but vaguely familiar. The intricate transport network and densely populated places were disquieting. The skyscrapers that dominated the immediate horizon seemed like concrete walls (Figure 1.3). In this world, distant relatives cared for me, yet the relationship felt strange and alienated.

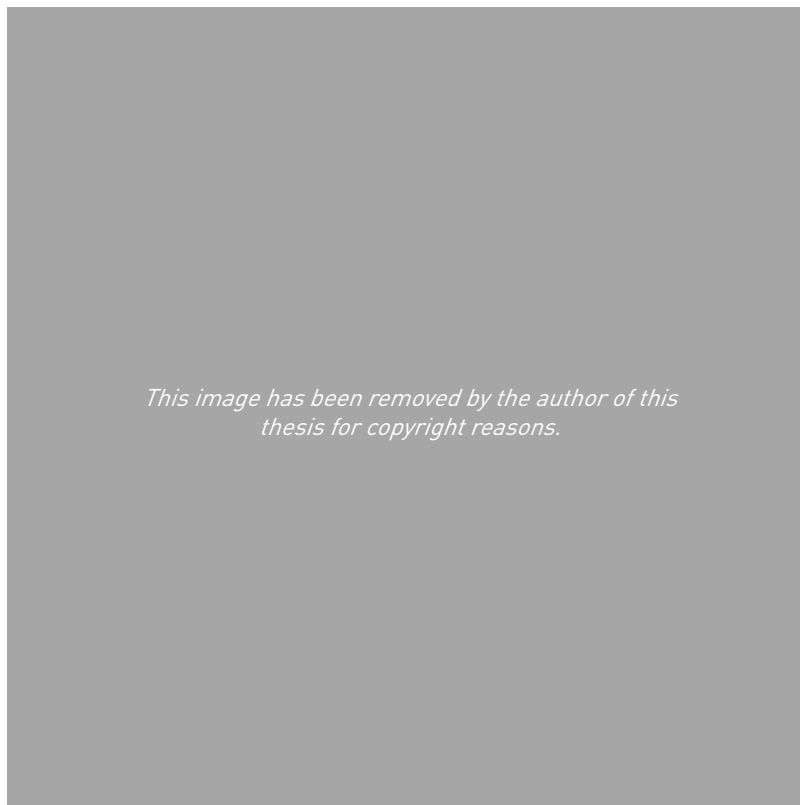
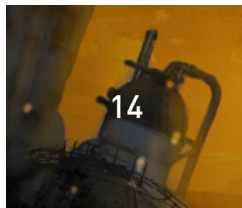


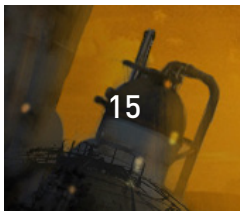
Figure 1:3 (Cham, V. January 2010) Photographs of Hong Kong.

However, in revisiting these events, places, and people, I considered the hybrid nature of my identity. Travelling between two culturally diverse environments I felt like someone caught between intertextual references. There were dichotomies that created living wholes. I was of neither place, but somehow of both. The fusion of familiar and unfamiliar made me contemplate perceptions of the 'real' and the imagined. It was this strange state of hybridity that inspired the world of this short film.



Thus *Bad Faith* is a search for identity. The protagonist is not me, and the narrative is fictional. However, the liminal space the child searches through draws inspiration from my experience of hybridity. Transitioning from a two-dimensional medium to a spatial-temporal environment requires me to address illustration in a wider sense. I have created visual narratives using pace, space, and sound (as well as elements that have traditionally been part of my visualisation of illustration for print).

Bad Faith is designed to transcend the conventions of written and spoken narrative. It seeks to explore the sophisticated potential of the image as a means of telling stories across borders. These are the borders that have been instrumental in shaping my identity.



chapter 2

REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

REVIEW OF EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

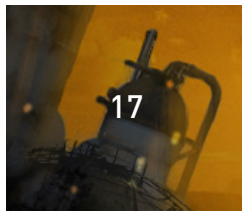
Bad Faith is an animated and illustrated narrative that has been influenced by a number of ideas. This chapter, in providing a review of contextual knowledge, offers a brief overview of contributions from other thinkers to the development and explication of the work. The review is divided into four sections that deal, respectively, with non-spoken animations, liminal space, bad faith, and sequential art related to dénouement.

NON - SPOKEN ANIMATIONS

Bad Faith is an animation with minimal dialogue. The film constructs its voice through the creative interweaving of image and sound. The utilisation of sound adds emphasis and contributes to the rhythmic structure of the screen event.

Non-spoken animations seek to engage with audiences irrespective of the limitations of written or spoken narration. Often these works do not seek high levels of internal (cultural) logic, but instead draw distinctive ways of speaking from seemingly illogical connections. As a consequence, the films speak across borders in a manner that suggests a globalised familiarity, yet a fascination with the enigmatic. It is through this engagement with cultural liminality that they attain distinctive levels of signature.

Three films that explore this non-spoken form of communication have been influential in the development of this project. They are *The Triplets of Belleville* (Chomet, 2003), *Basin Street Blues* (Monkmus, 2006), and *La Maison en Petits Cubes* (Kato, 2008). The absence of dialogue in these films calls for the use of exaggerated actions and reactions. In addition, the works feature distinctive character design and visual environments. These treatments are used to replace aspects of narration that would normally be carried by speech.

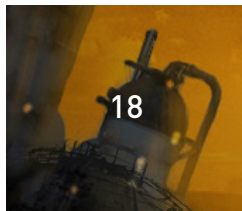


V I S U A L T R E A T M E N T O F L I M I N A L S P A C E

Liminal space may be understood as transitional space. It is a state of reflection or in-between-ness that protagonists in films sometimes traverse in the pursuit of true identity. A significant number of writers have discussed this phenomenon including Gennep (1960), Turner (1960), Campbell (2008), and Viljoen and Merwe (2004).

The envisioned liminal space in *Bad Faith* relies on active imagination and a process where a conversation develops between the viewer and his subconscious. Here, the viewer is not attempting to translate what an environment means, but to dwell inside it and experience its nuances and suggestions. Films and animations that use this approach to liminality include *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001), *Mirrormask* (McKean, 2005), *Tekkon Kinkreet* (Arias, 2006), *Pan's Labyrinth* (Del Toro, 2006) and *Lovely Bones* (Jackson, 2009).

In these works, liminal space operates as a world wherein the protagonist enters a protective and constructed illusion. By dwelling in these simulated environments, we question the ability of the protagonist to exist in a healthy manner in the real world and turn to explore the impact on their emerging identity.



B A D F A I T H A N D T H E P R O T A G O N I S T

Bad faith is a philosophical concept where one fits comfortably into an inauthentic role or context to escape from the freedom of choice. Writers like Sartre (1969), Ashman (2008), Hoffman (2004), Connor (2001), Sherman (1995), and Spade (1996) note that in this state one constantly shifts between one's social role and one's true character. The result of this is the construction of a dual-consciousness.

In the film, *Bad Faith*, the protagonist journeys from self-deception to self-realisation. In films dealing with this kind of journey, sometimes a doppelganger, (a metaphysical double of a living person who represents the sinful side of the protagonist), is introduced to provoke the protagonist into self-realisation. This phenomenon is evidenced in films like *Perfect Blue* (Kon, 1997), *A Beautiful Mind* (Howards, 2001), *The Machinist* (Anderson, 2004), and *Black Swan* (Aronofsky, 2010).

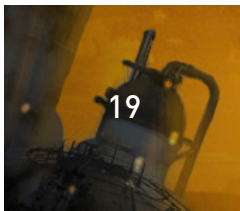
SEQUENTIAL ART RELATED TO DÉNOUEMENT

Dénouement is a form of closure¹ in narrative. It refers to the degree to which the end of a story reveals the effects of all the causal events. The concept has been discussed by a number of narratologist and film theorists including Freytag (1983), Heimerdinger (1999), Thomas (1999), Thursby (2006), Yanno (2006), and Irving (2010).

In the film *Bad Faith*, elements in the story are set up as enigmas that are resolved by the film's dénouement. This approach to image-based narrative, outside of film, is evidenced in certain graphic novels including *The Lost Thing* (Tan, 1999), *The Arrival* (Tan, 2006), *Night Cries* (Goodwin and Hampton, 1992), *Mr. Punch* (McKean, 1994), and *Mirror Mask* (McKean, 2005).

The treatment of dénouement in the work of these graphic novelists is of significance because these illustrators have traversed demarcations between illustration and filmmaking. In so doing, they have introduced distinctive approaches to closure and the realisation of meaning into the treatment of dénouement and wider narrative discourse.

¹ The term *closure*, as I use it here, is not to be confused by its use in comic book theory where writers like McCloud (1993), use it to refer to elided time that is not represented as illustrated moments. In other words, it exists in the gutter between frames.



chapter 3

M E T H O D O L O G Y

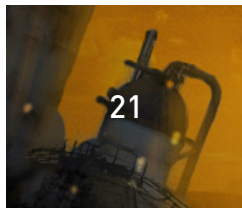
HEURISTIC INQUIRY

The overarching research design constructed for resolving this project may be broadly understood as a heuristic inquiry. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) suggest, "...heuristics offers an attitude with which to approach research, but does not prescribe a methodology." (p. 42). Moustakas (1985) says:

Heuristic research is a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience. It requires a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. Its ultimate purpose is to cast light on a focused problem, question, or theme. (p.40)

Because a heuristic inquiry is heavily dependent on intuition and experimentation, a number of theorists have suggested the use of either methods of systemising, or rules for heightening the chances of creative discovery when employing it as a form of inquiry. However, in approaching this research question, it is Moustakas' (1985) three-phase model for systemising a heuristic inquiry that is of particular use.

Practitioners who utilise a heuristic inquiry negotiate an individual path through questions arising in the research project. This process involves self-learning and self-discovery as well as the exploration of new connections. Because a heuristic inquiry affords the researcher flexibility, informed subjective response, and the ability to work towards unknown outcomes through rigorous questioning, it is an appropriate framework to use for this project. This is because the creative nature of my work involves the need to discover new experiences in order to attain a higher level of originality.



MOUSTAKAS' THREE-PHASE MODEL

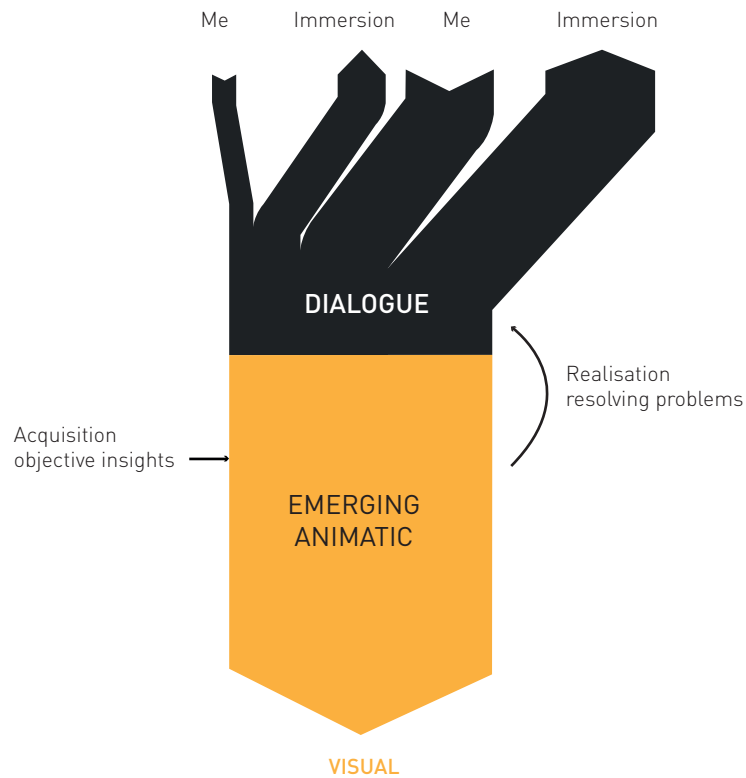
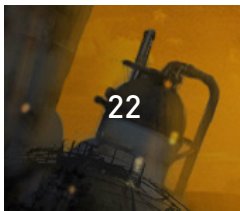


Figure 3:1 Moustakas' Three-Phase Model when applied to the thesis project (2011).

The first phase of Moustakas' (1985) model suggests self-exploration through a process of *immersion* in the question, problem, or theme. The second phase, *acquisition*, suggests data gathering and being open to new information. The final phase, *realisation*, involves a synthesis of data and a resolution to the question, problem, or theme.

The three-phase model is used within my inquiry to support a process that interweaves theory and practice. However, phases described by Moustakas (as they are used in this project) are not mutually exclusive; they leak, overlap, and because they do not follow a linear process, they operate in a flexible dynamic of evaluation and revisiting. Because they alter in different arenas of engagement, the exegesis considers their use in four specific ways. Accordingly, it discusses the application of heuristics under the headings: conceptual work, storyboarding, image-making, and animation.

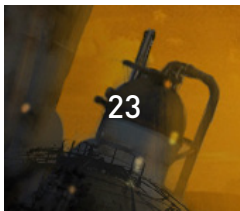


CONCEPTUAL WORK

By conceptual work, I refer to the process of ideation. This is a period when one draws initial ideas and approaches into being. It is also a time where, in a heuristic inquiry, one is in a state of immersion with the question. The design of *Bad Faith* relied heavily on the use of immersion. This is because the emerging animatic required the researcher to engage in an ongoing dialogue with his work and reflect upon his experiences of liminality. As ideation began, I produced sketched visualisations. Concurrently, the reflection and refinement reshaped and restructured the questions I was asking myself (Figure. 3.2).



Figure 3:2 (Cham, V. April 2011) Rough sketches of characters and environments



Schön (1984) suggests that sketches have the ability to create virtual worlds and help us to explore the felt-paths as a character of the story might experience them (p.159). However, although sketching (as a form of exteriorisation) made manifest my thinking about the liminal world, the texture and feel of the film's diegesis was developed through a process of immersion². The congested world in which the girl in my film lives was created by revisiting, in my memory, cityscapes I had experienced: those of my Asian childhood and my European adolescence. Fused hybridisations of these worlds involved a blurring of elements that combined aspects of real world memories and nuances of liminality (Figures 3.3 & 3.4).



Figure 3:3 (Cham, V. April 2011) Early concept sketches of the urban environment. Here we see creatures fused with elements of both worlds.



Figure 3:4 (Cham, V. April 2011) Early experiments with colour palettes. Here I was experimenting with various digital and non-digital media in an effort to establish a sense of hybridity.

² Miller (1993) suggests that ideation "is usually a passive state where we are not trying to be creative but are receptive to experience and ideas" (p.74).

From this immersive state, my ideation processes began to engage with external processes which Moustakas defines as acquisitional³. These external processes involved accessing data (as reference material) from external sources. Thus, the character design and refinement of the film's diegesis moved out of the immersive state and began drawing into itself existing physical data. This data included reference photographs of Hong Kong streets, carnival theme parks, children's toys, and tram interiors I photographed at the Auckland Museum of Transport and Technology.

The process of integrating data from the immersive process and the acquisitional phase involved sketching and drawing *world compositions* (Figure 3.5). Sketching enabled me to give tangible substance to my thinking and *feeling* about liminality. Rodgers (2000) acknowledges the usefulness of drawing in such processes when he says that sketching has "the potential to act as both a facilitator and recorder of creative acts, presenting opportunities for improved evaluation and the restating of problems" (p. 452). Thus, sketching allowed me to realise my thinking in concrete terms, and produce ideas that could be opened up to external review and critique.

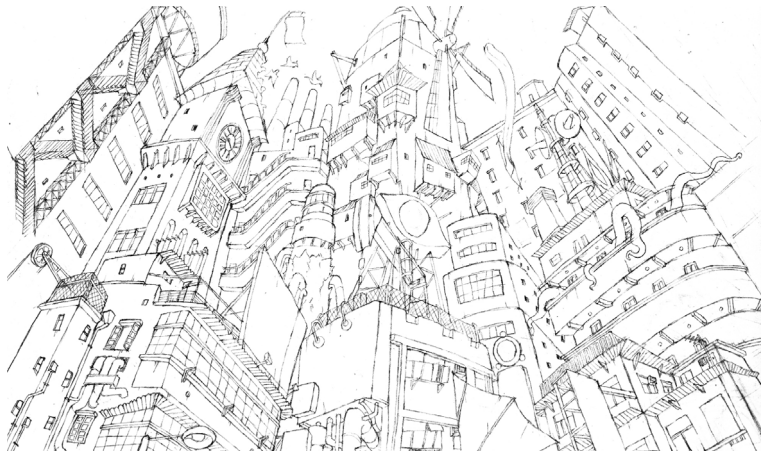
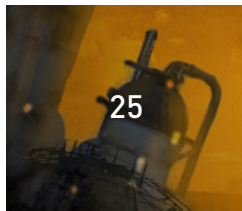


Figure 3:5 (Cham, V. April 2011) Drawings using photographs as a reference source. This approach enabled the integration of hitherto unexplored elements.

³ The acquisitional process is what Moustakas (1990) describes as a "new discovery of something that has been present for some time yet beyond immediate awareness" (p.30). These submerged experiences he suggests, re-surface and enrich past understandings and knowledge.



STORYBOARDING AS AN ORAL AND VISUAL PROCESS

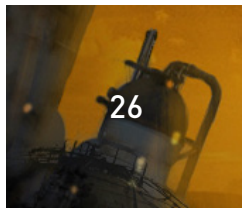
In developing the story for this film, I began to collect narrative data. Normally, one would assume that this might take the form of physical data (like existing stories and narrative analyses), but the content of this film was developed through a process of aural acquisition and internal storytelling.

I deliberately spent time with friends and colleagues who were accomplished storytellers. In conversations, we would exchange our stories, views, and beliefs. I would describe and trial my emerging scenarios, and they would suggest ideas and raise questions. In this way, the storytelling process moved back and forth in a manner in which the teller was simultaneously in a state of creation and reflection. In this regard, data acquisition was partly dialogic (Figure 3.6).



Figure 3:6 (Cham, V. May 2011) Discussions with friends and colleagues that led to variations of perspective in both data generation and plot development.

This process described by Schön (1984) may be understood as acquisition where “the situation talks back, the practitioner listens, and as he appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again” (p.131). Ideas I gained from this process were internalised and added to refined internal retellings. The story remained relatively amorphous, but through a process of retelling, certain harmonies and correlations began to surface within it. Once the final story was decided upon, I began to resolve the narrative’s episodes, arcs, and visual metaphors through digital storyboarding⁴.



Here, the interweaving of images and story worked side-by-side, accompanied by concurrently refining film scores⁵, atmos⁶ and foley⁷. The audioscape of the emerging film allowed me to test and design the overall mood and pacing of the work. In this process, I made manifest my thinking so it could be discussed more fully with others. This is the process Moustakas (1985, p.52) calls realisation. Describing it as “a quest for synthesis through realisation of what lies most undeniably at the heart of all that has been discovered,” (Figure 3.7); it is essentially the drawing of ideas into physical form.

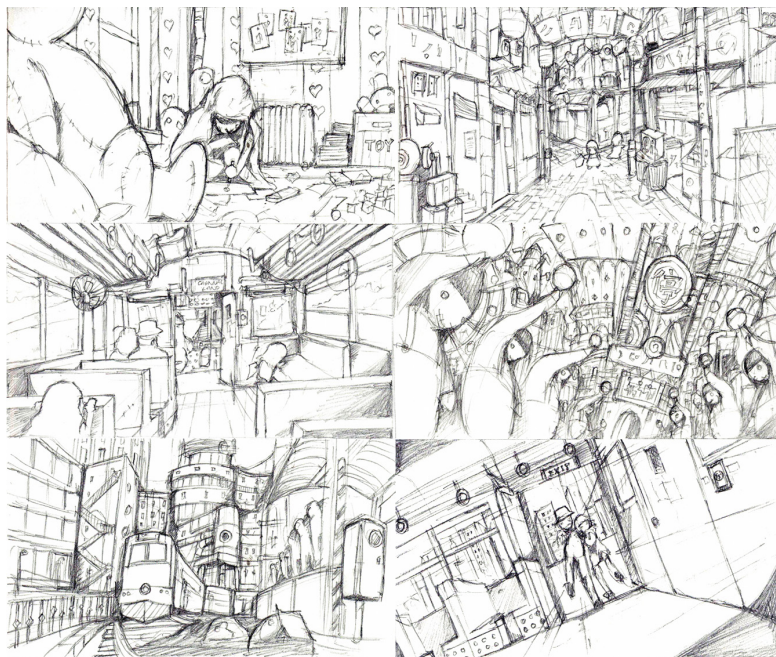
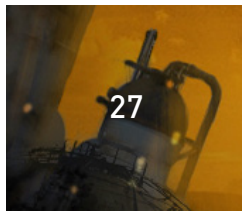


Figure 3:7 (Cham, V. May 2011) Quick sketches indicating potential character movement, camera angles and scene transitions.



⁴ By digital storyboarding I mean that images were not drawn out on a conventional storyboard. They were assembled in Adobe After Effects and played down repeatedly. This enabled me to consider the potentials of movement, pace, sound, and narrative emphasis in an integrated manner that is difficult to achieve on a piece of paper.

⁵ A film score (also called background music or incidental music) is the music written specifically to accompany a film. As part of the film's soundtrack, it is normally supplemented with dialogue, foley, and atmos.

⁶ Atmos (also called ambience or atmosphere) comprises the distinct and subtle sounds created by an environment. Atmos is constructed either during production or post-production, to provide a sense of location with sonic space.

⁷ Foley is a term used to describe the process of live recording of sound effects. These are created by a foley artist. These sounds are added in post production to enhance the quality of audio for films.

I M A G E - M A K I N G

The images in *Bad Faith* are highly distinctive. They are made from a fusion of photography, collage and painting. Initially the work did not explore this level of hybridity. Early considerations were simply painted (Figure 3.8). However, as I began to consider the nature of liminality as a form of 'in-between-ness', I sought out ways in which my process of image making might complement the core ideas in the work. This period of reconsideration became a transformative phase in the research project. I was troubled by the generic 'look' of my early designs but uncertain how I might rectify the situation.

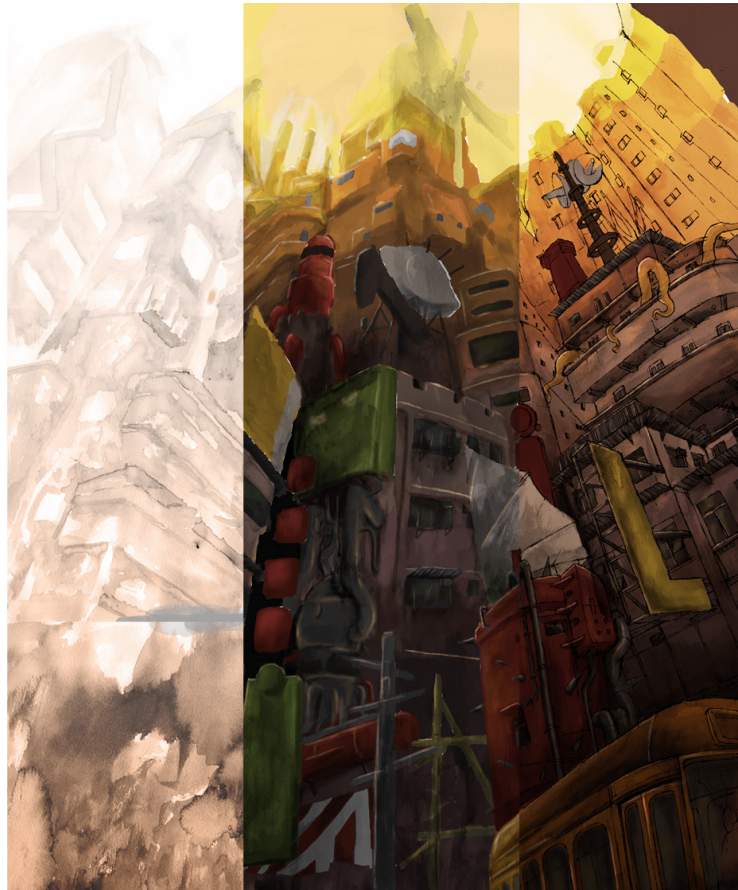
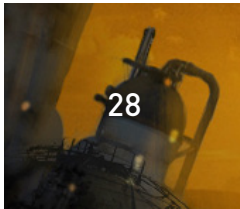


Figure 3:8 (Cham, V. June 2011) Portrait digital painting with watercolour overlay to simulate a corroded texture. The illustration uses additional black lines to emphasise specific elements in the work.



Scrivener (2000) suggests “uncertainty is the primary factor in triggering a change in drawing structure” (p. 465). He suggests that it does this by “recognition of failures or by promoting reasoning [...] and stimulating a recall” (ibid.). As a consequence, I recalled the photographs that had been collected in my parent’s albums. These were fractured pieces of my childhood. I wondered what might happen if I was to take these kinds of image and combine them with the drawn expressions of worlds I imagined. Thus, I was interested in the potentials of a liminal space between the photographic and the drawn.

Accordingly, I begin to create rough hypotheses through a process of photomontage. Here, Moustakas’ phases of acquisition and realisation were working in tandem. The environments I created began as photo clear-cuts and were assembled intuitively⁸. I began rearranging these pieces of photomontage in order to establish a relationship between differing elements but also to create a sense of perspective⁹. Because the created worlds were designed to feel constrained, I experimented with the potential of layering and clustering elements, (Figure 3.9).

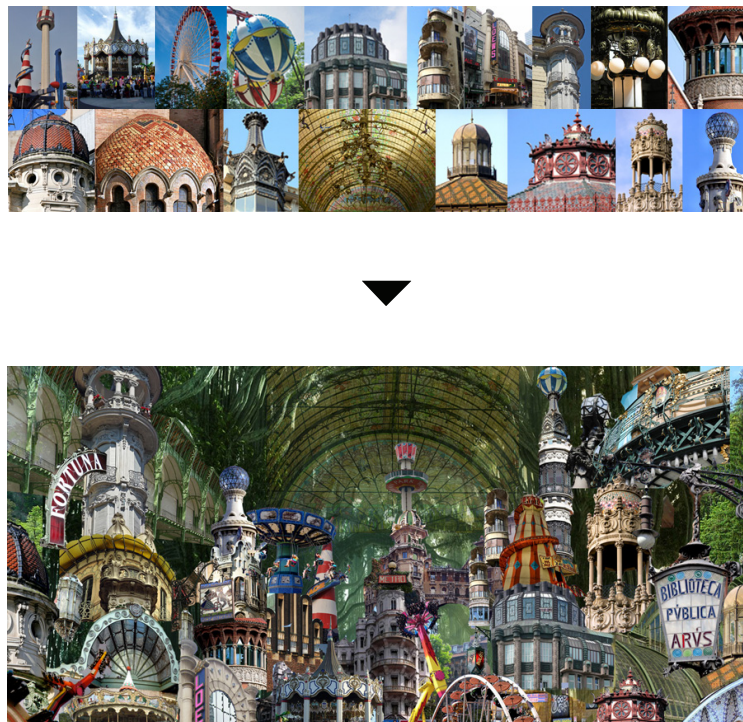
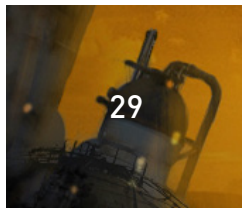


Figure 3.9 (Cham, V. June 2011) A collage of rough clear-cuts. In this process each photograph is singled out and tested for positioning and perspective.

⁸ While Moustakas considers intuition as a feature of immersion, other writers on heuristics, Kleining and Witt (2000), Sela-Smith (2002), and Ings (2011) suggest it may permeate the whole of a heuristic inquiry.

⁹ Schön (1983) describes this process as “probing, playful, activity by which we get a real feel for a thing. It succeeds when it leads to the discovery of something there” (p.145).



Once these photomontages indicated potential for further development, I began to mesh photos with digital painting (Figure 3.10). In this process, I returned to Moustakas' state of indwelling. I immersed myself in a world that began to grow around me. I felt and smelt, and tasted the textures and sounds that my images suggested. The 'sensed' data was folded into the concurrently designed soundscape and grade¹⁰ for the film. In this dynamic, I also began to refine and draw harmonies between shape, colour, lighting, pattern and space in the work (Figure 3.11).

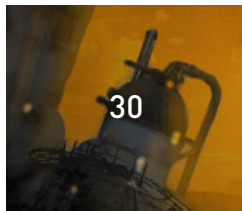
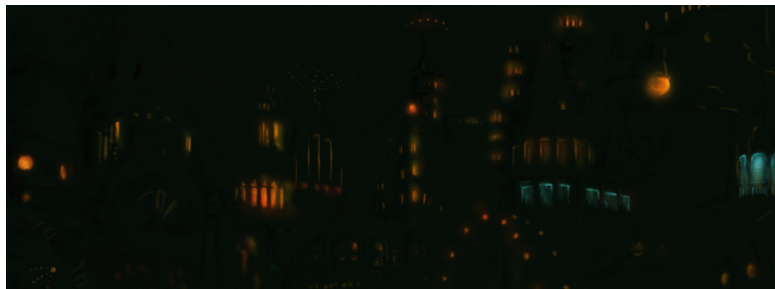
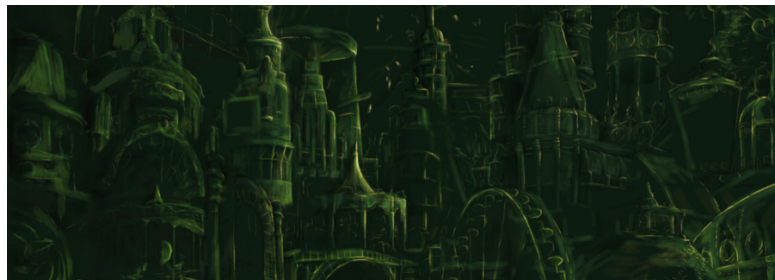


Figure 3:10 (Cham, V. June 2011) The blending of photomontage and digital painting in Photoshop.

¹⁰ Grade is a technical term that refers to the colouration of a film.

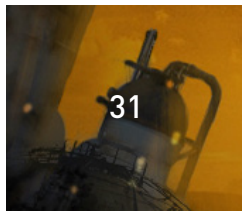
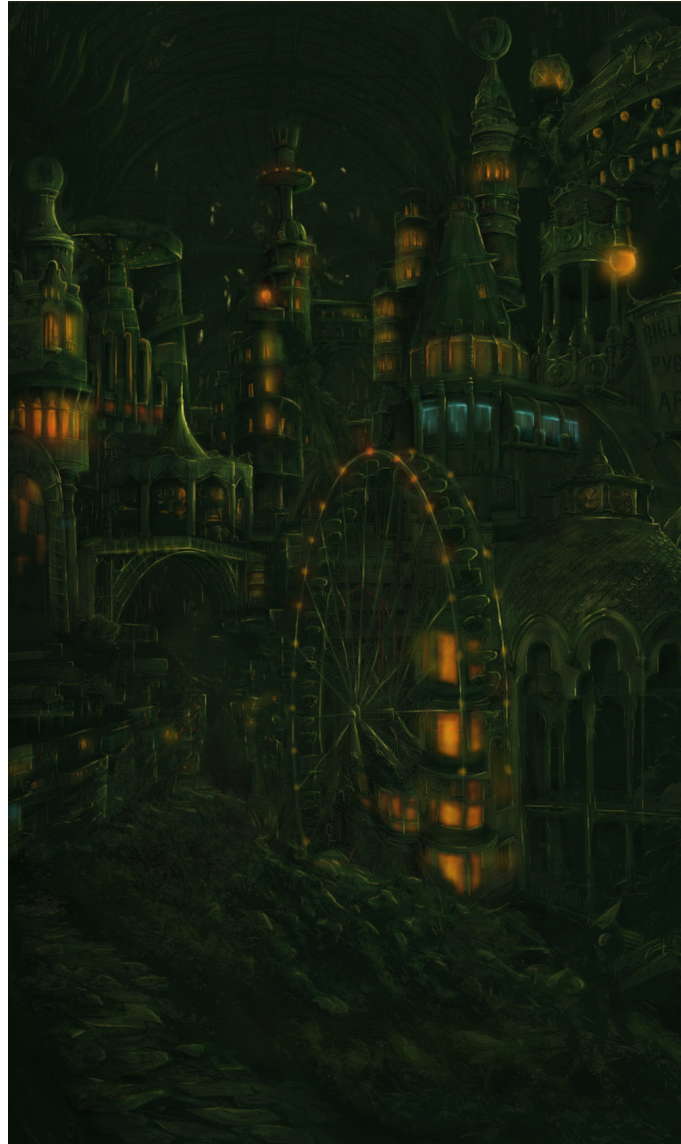


Figure 3:11 (Cham, V. June 2011) Notes to myself relating to harmony within the constructed worlds and the incorporation of new photographs to enlighten the environments.

A N I M A T I O N

The state of indwelling enabled me to re-familiarise myself with my childhood experiences and the environment of Hong Kong. In this sense, Moustakas (1990) suggests, indwelling “carries a sense of total involvement in a research theme or question in such way that the whole world is centred in it for a while” (p.47).

Drawing upon my sense of hybridity, I began to animate the film’s protagonist. To do this, I attempted to immerse myself temporarily into the position of the protagonist (as she appears in the narrative). In this regard, I tried to sense what it was like to live in bad faith in an emotionally and socially constrained world where my movements might be stilted and controlled (Figure 3.12). Moustakas (1990) describes this fusion as being a “song into which the researcher breathes life, not only because the question leads to an answer, but also the answer itself is infused in the researcher’s being” (p.43).

By role-playing the protagonist, I was able to make decisions regarding tactility and movement that could be translated into animation. As a consequence, when we look at the film, we see the child as both part of, but also somehow separate from the world in which she lives. She is animated and lit in After Effects but her world is a detailed orchestration of photographs and drawings (assembled in Photoshop).

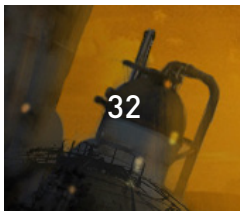


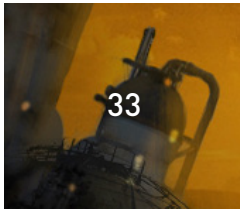
Figure 3:12 [Cham, V. July 2011] Images showing role playing as the protagonist.

C O N C L U S I O N

Through a fusion of methods and positioning, the project edged forward. Moustakas' phases bled into each other and my journey cycled back on itself or moved sideways when I sensed that new considerations might lead to fruitful opportunities.

In truth, Moustakas' model as a seamless linear progression cannot be said to describe my research journey. However, his phases are useful in explaining the nature of approaches to data, and its reconstruction in the work. The research design developed for this project orchestrates immersion, acquisition, and realisation as an integrated process into which one final factor was introduced. This is the phenomenon of external review. External feedback enables a designer to explore alternative viewpoints and 'readings' of his emerging text. This helps him to critique the quality of his communicative skills.

However, Sela-Smith (2003), in her critique of Moustakas' method, suggests that unless this process is handled carefully, the resulting work may lose some of its integrity and idiosyncratic 'voice'. Therefore, in my project external reviews were framed as questions rather than critiques. This was so, as the designer, I was able to reflect upon and digest the problem by pulling it into the immersive state.



chapter 4

CRITICAL FRAMEWORK

C R I T I C A L F R A M E W O R K

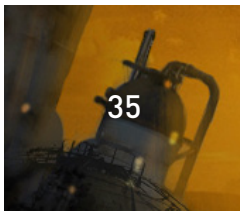
This section of the exegesis provides an overview of theory that was influential in developing the film's story and narrative discourse. It deals with three ideas: bad faith, liminality, and dénouement.

B A D F A I T H

In existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's book *Being and Nothingness* (1969), he discusses the concept of bad faith as an act of self-deception. Spade (1996) suggests that self-deception begins with a lie; this usually involves the liar and the lied-to; however, in bad faith, both the liar and the lied to are the same person.

Ashman (2008) suggests that in such circumstances, the lie may be seen as a disguise to conceal one's true character. The result is that one exists in an inauthentic manner defined by one's social role. Meiri (2005) suggests the reason for indwelling in bad faith is to escape from both the anxiety of making choices and the anxiety for being responsible for one's actions. Thus, one lies to oneself. As a consequence, one constantly shifts between one's social role and one's true character and thus creates what Sherman (1995) calls a "double property of the human being." Sartre illustrates this concept with his example of a café waiter.

"The waiter is a man who is playing a game. His attitude is a little too enthusiastic, a little too ingratiating; he balances his tray on one hand above his head, continually losing and re-establishing its equilibrium; his actions and speech are akin to those of an automaton. He is playing at being a waiter, just as a soldier plays at being a soldier and the grocer plays at being a grocer" (Ashman, 2008, p. 297).



For one to avoid falling into bad faith, Hoffman (2004) suggests one must acknowledge one's true character (what one is) and consciously identify one's social role (what one is not). It is then that one is able to maintain a balance between the dichotomies, and consequently learn and grow into a more authentic being. Connor (2001), in response to this idea, suggests that it is possible for one to live in bad faith. This, he argues, is when one is able to seal oneself in one's perfect memories and live in the past. This process, he argues, effectively seals out the current self.

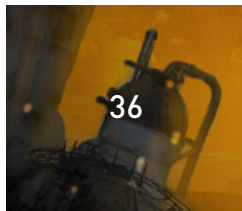
L I M I N A L S P A C E

Liminal space is a space that is barely-perceptible, transitional, and in-between. Gennap (1960), Turner (1960), Mfa and Smelt (2007), Kim (2010), Miller and Jung (2004), and Davis (2008) all suggest it is often an isolated space where social structure is temporarily disrupted before being reconstituted again.

When an individual enters liminal space, their existing identity and social roles are disregarded through the process of self-realisation. This is done in order that they might attain a transcended stage of growth and individuality. Campbell (2008) suggests that the purpose of a liminal space is "to conduct people across those difficult thresholds of transformation that demand change in the patterns not only of conscious but also of unconscious life". (p.6)

Liminal space (liminity) was a term coined by Van Gennap (1960) to define a ritual space. According to Viljoen and Merwe (2004), it is a celebration of a person as they progress from one status to another. They suggest it can be divided into three phases: separation, transformation (liminal space), and re-incorporation. Miller and Jung (2004) suggest that in the first phase an individual detaches themselves from one status in a culture. They then pass through a hybrid space belonging to neither the figurative nor literal realm, but rather borrowing a few attributes formed by the dialectic between the two. Finally, the individual adapts and synchronises the dialogue between both worlds. In this state, they are re-incorporated into society with a new status.

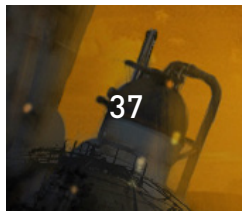
In terms of storytelling, Campbell (2008) suggests that hybrid spaces enables the protagonist to journey successfully through "formal, and usually very severe, exercises of severance, whereby the mind is radically cut from the attitudes, attachment, and life patterns of the stage being left behind" (p.6).



However, Turner (1969) believes that liminal space also has the potential to shape thought and personal experience. In this site, an individual reacts with discomfort and becomes disorientated as their social role (comfort zone) dissolves. Liminality he suggests may be considered a withdrawal into a state of self-reflection where one can examine one's core values and self-evident truths. In this occupied space, the boundaries of one's thoughts, self-understanding, and bounded behaviour become undone, resulting in an extension of one's periphery.

Turner (1969) believes the shifts of old to new social roles signify an archetypal reference to death and rebirth. This transformative attitude, he suggests, relates to nature, and its life process can be interpreted as a manifestation of Carl Jung's transcendent function¹¹. Psychologically, a liminal space signifies the "omnipresent cycle of the demise of one psychological position and the ascent of a new one." Miller and Jung (2004, p.106) suggest that this transcendent function can be seen as an expression related to synthesis, harmony, and completion.

Thus, liminal space, in my work, refers to a region between two comprehensive states. In *Bad Faith* it is not only the space between self-deception and realisation, but also the visual ethos of the culturally hybridised world through which the protagonist must make her journey. Graphically, the work complements these ideas by composing a method of illustration that explores unstable potentials between the established states of the drawn and the photographed.



The second cluster of critical ideas impacting on my film relate to narratological theory.

¹¹ The transcendent function is a psychological concept where a person moves through a life cycle of transitional experiences and various behavioural transformations towards individuality.

D É N O U E M E N T

Dénouement means unknotting in French. It is a form of closure in which the structured end of a narrative reveals the effects of all its causal events. Thomas (1999), Thursby (2006), Yanno (2006), and Griffith (2010) suggest it is normally a final scene or event that explains mysteries and straightens out misunderstandings

The term *Dénouement* is an element in Gustav Freytag's (1968) dramatic arc. Freytag suggests that drama may be divided into five parts; exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement (Figure 4:1). Exposition describes a basic conflict that sets the story in motion. It is followed by a series of causal events that intensify the story's conflict towards a rising action. The climax is the peak of interest or the most suspenseful event. The narrative arc then gradually falls as the story reaches a turning point and a resolution. Thursby (2006) and Fant (2010) suggest that this turning point puts an end to the conflict in the story.

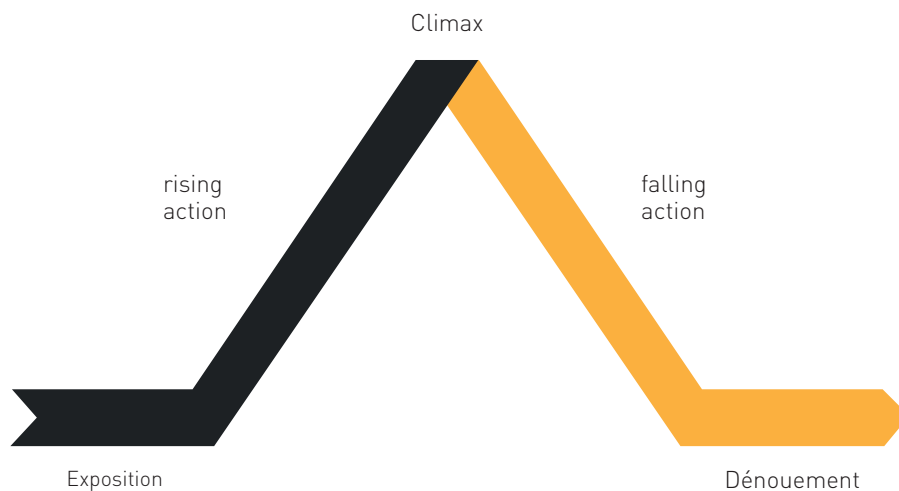
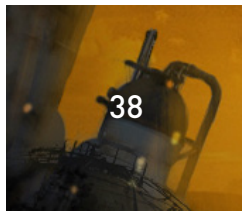


Figure 4:1 Freytag's (1863) pyramid of dramatic structure.

In terms of dramatic structure, a number of narratologists have presented ideas that impact on the design of *Bad Faith*. Thomas, in 1999, suggested that increasingly in modern narratives, the falling action is steeper and this increases the height of the climax and its dramatic impact. In *Bad Faith*, we see this illustrated diagrammatically in Figure 4.2.



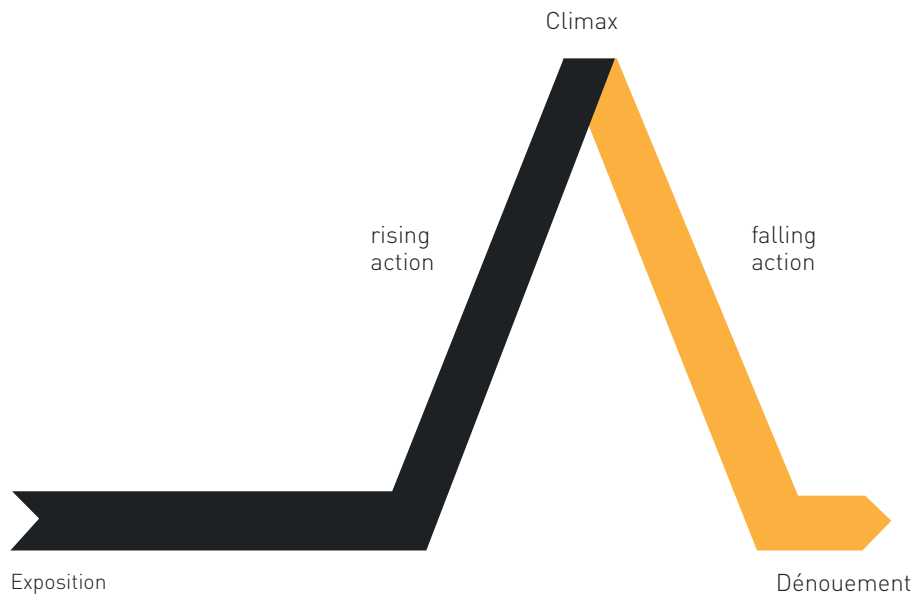
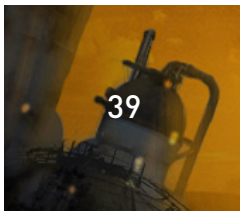


Figure. 4:2 Freytag's pyramid when applied to the film *Bad Faith* (2011).

When comparing *Bad Faith* to Freytag's structure, we see the climax occurring much later. As a consequence, the fall to *dénouement* is correspondingly more pronounced. Thomas notes that the consequence of this variance in structure in contemporary storytelling is that the climax is located closer to the end of a narrative. This causes a prolonged rising action which compresses the narrative background and complex actions into comparatively short performances within limited time frames. As a result, the narrative is tightly edited and more confined to a certain continuum because of its densely packed present and past actions. Conversely, an early rising action opens up a narrative in which the tension between moments lessens.

Reale (2009) critiqued Freytag's dramatic structure in terms of the impact of contemporary approaches to musical counterpart. Reale argued that the repetition of musical elements could potentially bring the audience to *dénouement* and visuals themselves would resolve outstanding dramatic complications. Reale suggests that a piece of music and narrative have moments which require a stimulation to recall themes, and thus bring the audience to closure. Interfaces between melodic and conventional narrative devices, he suggests, elevate the potential for them to work as a unified whole and also to allow music and *dénouement* processes to be understood and interpreted beyond their own contextual boundaries.



In *Bad Faith* we watch and hear a narrative. Although the protagonist only speaks one word in the story, we understand the liminal and disquieting nature of her situation through an orchestration of melody, sound, and visual (animated narrative). We might consider 'musical counterpart' in *Bad Faith* as both melody and the subtle orchestration of foley and atmos. The composition of aural elements provides an accompanying 'text' that heightens the sense of depth and anticipation in the narrative, and also draws our attention to specific plot points.

Through the use of audio information we sense the 'wholeness of the text' because it is underpinned by an adapted central score, *Audio Jungle* (2008). The path to dénouement, although traceable through the visual text, uses audio counterpart to suggest an emphasis and draw our attention to elements that will become significant in the film's closure of meaning.

In Figure 4.3 the musical counterpart produces a soothing atmosphere that creates both contrast and a sense of questioning. Accompanied by breezy synths, this aural atmosphere surrounds the film's dénouement and emphasises a sense of calmness and clarity. In this comparatively serene phase of the film both the protagonist and the audience recall and draw understandings from past events.

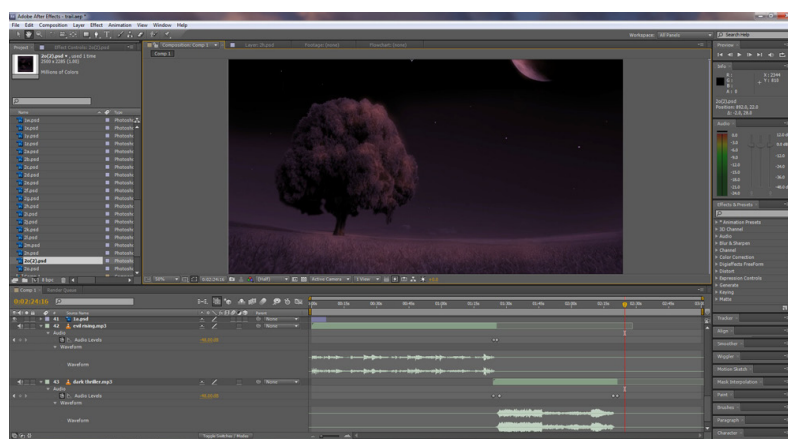
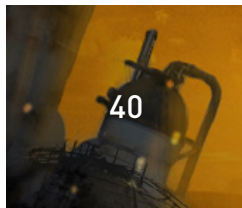


Figure 4:3 (Cham, V. July 2011) Stills from scene five where musical counterpart was used to accompany the film's dénouement.

chapter 5

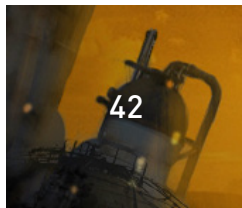
C O M M E N T A R Y

PHOTOMONTAGE AND PAINTING

The film *Bad Faith* uses an illustrative method that combines photomontage and painting. This technique is a consequence of my creative consideration of experienced cultural liminality. If we treat photomontage as a fusion of photographs, then each photograph may be perceived as a fragment of the 'real' world. Conversely, painting (treated as an imaginative, abstract medium) may be conceived as a form of designed fantasy. The merging of these modes of representation enables the creation of a world that is both familiar and unfamiliar. It suggests a disquieted synergy.

Within this hybrid world, the limited scope of reality may be extended. Ulmer (1985) suggests that photomontage "breaks the continuity or the linearity of the discourse and leads necessarily to a double reading: that of the fragments perceived in relation to its texts of origin" (p. 88). Highmore (2002) suggests that the elements in a photomontage create a sense of alteration or unevenness that is seemingly held together by temporal dimensions. The addition of painted elements demonstrates what Halkes (2006) calls a "human fabrication of the painted truth" (p. 58). Here he suggests, the smoothness of the brush deceives the viewer by implying a timeless continuum of the metaphysical world. Through this, the constructed image suggests an alternative that invites the viewer's suspension of disbelief.

Liminal spaces are decoded individually according to an individual's imagination and previous experience. Jung (2001, p.171) has suggested that "active imagination" is the first step into illusionary worlds. Visual images aid this initiation by stimulating the subconscious, or by providing a space and atmosphere where illusions may be perceived as credibly as any reality (Adams, 2004, p.8). Once inside images, one may engage in a conversation with the visuals in what Watkins (2000) defines as imaginable dialogues. Because the film *Bad Faith* draws upon my lived and imagined experiences of liminal space, it has been useful to explore fusions between photography and painting as both metaphor and technique (Figures 5:1-5:4).



This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.

Figure 5:1 Hong Kong as a photographic recording. It is this conglomeration of buildings and signs that formed part of my memory of a city of walls that scrambled up to the skyline.

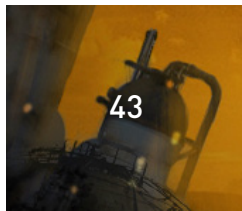
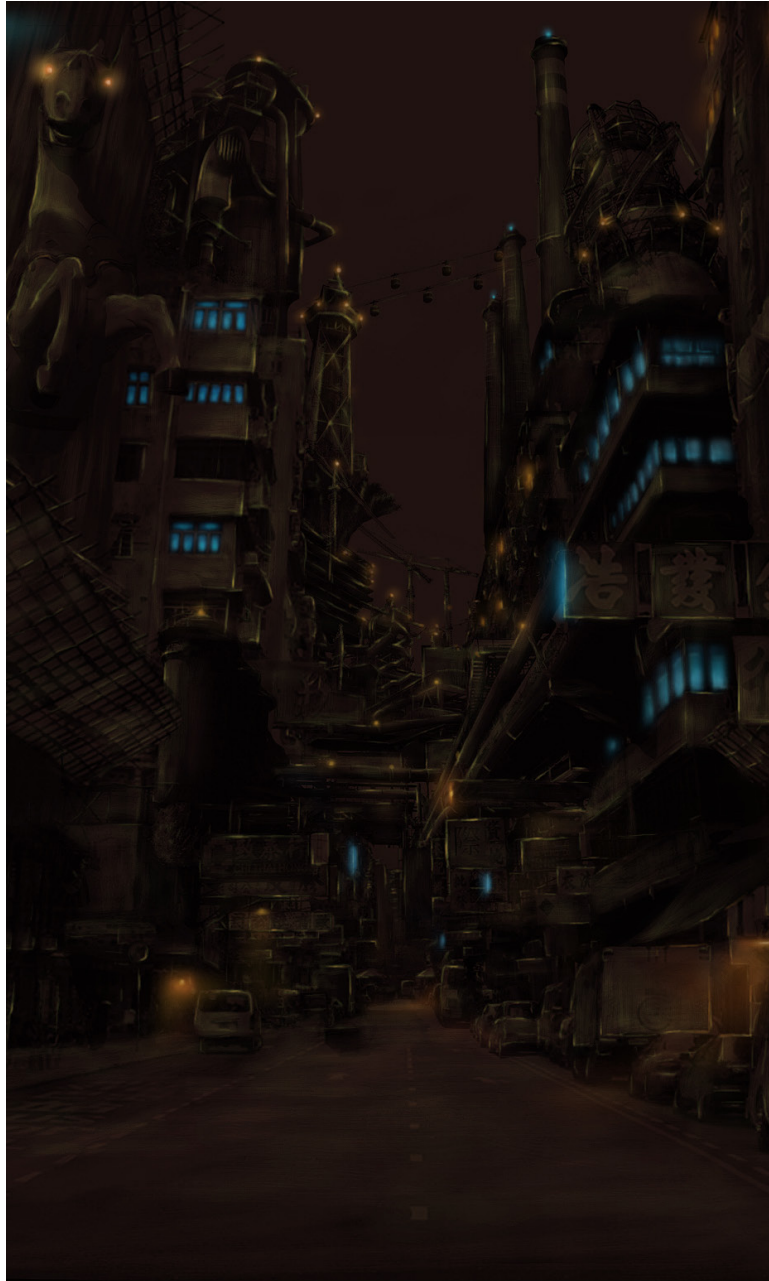


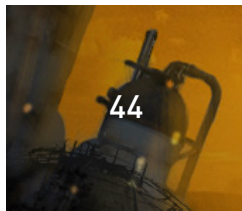
Figure 5:2 (Cham, V. July 2011) Illustrated environment from scene two in *Bad Faith*. Here, the sense of congestion has been captured and extended so the 'foreignness' is an experience of liminality. We see a photographed and painted world that we understand and concurrently misunderstand. Its foreignness is signified in the unfamiliar signage and ornamentation, but the use of space, (emphasised) is associated with known built environments.



Figure 5:3 (Cham, V. July 2011) an environment from scene three in *Bad Faith*.



Figure 5:4 (Cham, V. July 2011) constructions of photographic elements and painted effects.



COLOUR AS A TRANSITIONARY DEVICE

The treatment of colour (grading) in *Bad Faith* is seemingly exaggerated. As a result, specific areas of the colour spectrum have been emphasised and others omitted. This approach not only enhances the impact of the visuals, but also produces a higher level of continuity between scenes. In transitions between scenes, I use colour in subtle ways. The most evident is my use of dominant colours taken from one scene that I embed as tints or shades in the following scene (Figure 5:5).

This approach creates a subtle seamlessness, despite the fact that worlds within the story are dramatically different. The technique also acts as a facilitator to represent the passing of time in a narrative (Figure 5:6).



Figure 5:5 (Cham, V. July 2011) Sequential scenes showing the transfusion of colours from the first into the tints and shades of the next.





Figure 5:6 (Cham, V. July 2011) Stills from scenes one and five showing gradual changes in colour as the story develops.



Vernallis (2004) suggests colour can be treated as a structural device to divide a short film text into sections. However, if misused it can reduce or “suppress the narrative thrust altogether, appearing to constitute a thing in itself” (p.127). She suggests that colour and sound are intrinsically linked. Both have a similar nature; colour has gradient and music has wavelengths. As counterparts, their values may be reduced or enhanced in order to convey an emotion or mood. She argues that colour and sound elicit a form of ‘biological response’ (p.125) in viewers because they both calm or excite the unconscious mind.

In my film, colour is also arranged sequentially to represent a transition from bad faith to self realisation (at the point of *dénouement*). In conveying the environment of bad faith, the film uses a metallic deep blue to signify the alienation of self-deception. This colour scheme is set against a calmer orange-purple signifying a state of calm self-realisation (Figure 5:7). The cooler blue palette is designed to suggest a solemn, internalised stiltedness. By contrast, the purple and oranges at the end of the film are relaxing and calm in their harmonies. In the liminal space that connects these worlds, we see a combination of dirty reds and greens that emphasise the journey’s unsettled state (Figure 5:8).



Figure 5:7 (Cham, V. July 2011) Comparative environments from various scenes showing contrasts in grading that signify the irresolution and eventual resolution of the protagonist's self.

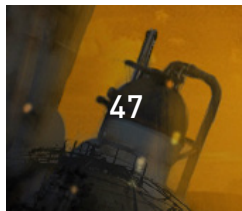
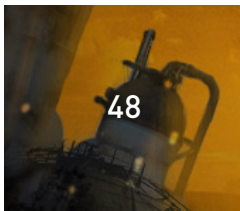


Figure 5:8 (Cham, V. July 2011) Colour treatments in scenes three and four. Both of these environments exist in the liminal phases of the film and integrate a higher level of colour discordance.

S O U N D D E S I G N

In *Bad Faith*, image and sound work in collaboration. This produces a sense of continuity and enables me to moderate or emphasise narrative issues relating to dislocation and discordance. When I edit scenes or actions to the beat of the score, I am able to draw emphasis to transition or movement respectively. By orchestrating this technique, I am able to emphasise either the flow or clarity of the narrative. This approach is particularly useful in drawing attention to plot points or actions contained in a scene. Thus, beyond creating atmosphere, sound design is utilised in *Bad Faith* to supply additional information, convey a mood, and produce a distinctive rhythm in the work.

Whiteley (1997) suggests that rhythmic synchronicity between visual and musical content can inform the viewer of both underlying structures and surface details. As such, she suggests it “is integral to the effective functioning of the narrative” (p. 261). *Bad Faith* uses this relationship between rhythm in image and rhythm in music to achieve a sense of movement and continuity. Because the film edits scenes in relation to beats in the music, I am able to create subtle cohesions between different worlds within the narrative. However, I also use relationships between sound and image to emphasise changes as we approach the film’s *dénouement*. At the climax, both the protagonist’s movements and the intensity of the music increase. However, as the protagonist’s movements slow down upon self-realisation, the music concordantly becomes more relaxed and peaceful.



M I R R O R I M A G E S

In unpacking certain design features of the film, it is useful to finally consider the distinctive way in which reflected images are employed as a visual metaphor for *Bad Faith*. In the film, mirrors often appear opposite to each other in corridors (Figure 3:10). This positioning emphasises the concept of bad faith where the observer is translated endlessly (and falsely)¹² within the scope of a mirror frame. In the film *Bad faith*, reversed typography is also employed to create sensations of unfamiliar/familiar experience in liminal spaces. Although type is clear (and to a certain extent familiar), its reversal compromises its readability and emphasises its foreignness (Figure 5:9).

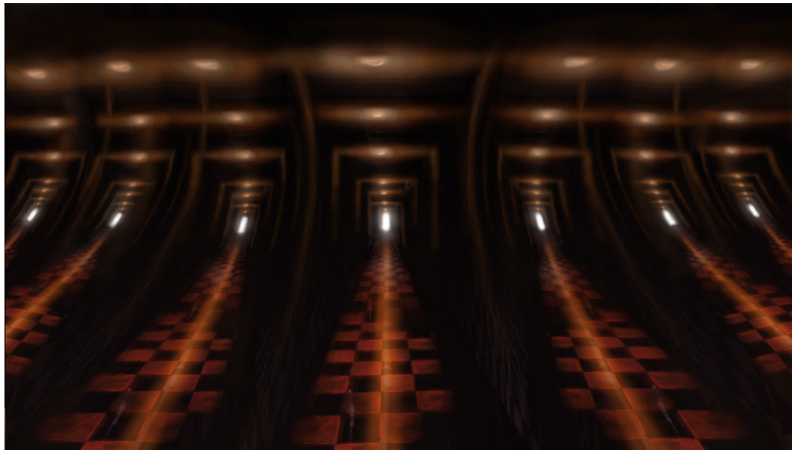
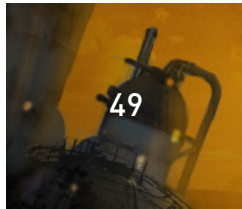


Figure 5:9 (Cham, V. August 2011) Frame grab from scene three showing the placement of mirrors.



My use of mirrors as a metaphor in *Bad Faith* is cognisant of Lacan's (2001) theory of the mirror stage in an individual's development. In this stage, he suggests a child may discover and develop their self-image through the use of a mirror. Dor (1998) discusses Lacan's theory. He says that a child before the mirror stage in their development views their body as unified or incomplete. He suggests that the mirror "puts to the test the (child's) fantasy experience of the fragmented body, vestiges of which reappear in certain dreams and in the process of psychotic breakdown" (p.95). Lacan (1949) suggests that the mirror stage may be divided into three distinctive periods; the first is the belief of mirror image as real. The second is the process of realising the mirror image is false. The third is acknowledging the image and utilising it to assemble the incomplete body.

¹²The reflected image is not a true recording of the self; it is a reversal.

This process may be related to the concept of bad faith where the protagonist moves from a period of self-deception to one of self-reflection in a liminal space. In the state of self-reflection, self-realisation occurs and the individual moves towards self-actualisation. In the film, the mirror operates as a gradually transforming metaphor for the self. As we progress through the story, mirrors reflect a distorted body image. However, once the film reaches *dénouement* we see reflection (in the closing frames) becomes a signifier of acceptance and self-actualisation, self realisation (Figure 5:10).

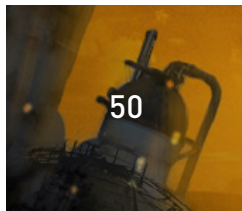


Figure 5:10(Cham, V. August 2011) Comparative frame grabs from scene five showing the use of reflection in the unstable liminal space where the child's identity is confused, and at the end of the film where a level of self-realisation has been achieved.

CONCLUSION

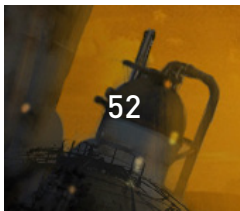
C O N C L U S I O N

The short film, *Bad Faith*, is a form of animation. Presented on a high-definition screen, in a projecting room in an exhibition gallery, it illustratively traces the story of a young girl's journey from self-deception to self-discovery. Although the narrative is shaped by the idea of bad faith, this serves primarily to heighten the originality of the work. The story is designed to raise questions and to provoke. It is concerned with character and motivation that are embedded in such a manner that one 'reads' the work as something more complex and nuanced than a simple cartoon.

This has been a complex research project. It has been multi-faceted and required the harmonising of diverse ideas and illustrative styles. In its realisation, it has sought to position itself as a form of hybrid. In this regard, it draws upon considerations of liminal space as a means of heightening both the illustrator's and storyteller's signature. It has taken an exorbitant number of hours to complete. The film uses over-constructed environments into which a vector-animated character has been introduced.

As an undertaking, it is of course in excess of what one might normally see invested in a Master's thesis. However Douglass and Moustakas (1985) say that a heuristic inquiry is a "dedicated pursuit inspired by a hunger for new insight and revelation. When commitment to the search is passionate, it moves beyond the usual energy that we bring to our lives; it carries the urgency needed to reveal and explore shadings and subtleties of meaning. Perhaps more than any other component, passion in the process of discovery distinguishes heuristic search from other models" (p. 41).

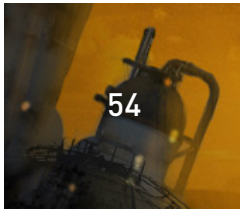
This has been a passionate thesis. It has been more than design, it has been the bringing of a story into being, and in this process it has brought to the fore a consideration of my personal experience of liminality, not as a narcissistic indulgence, but as a tool for developing a level of signature in my work that until now I have been unable to achieve.



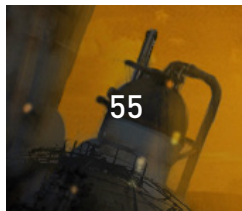
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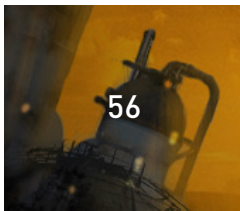
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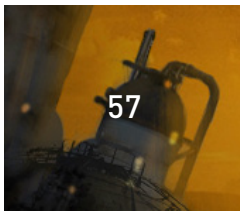


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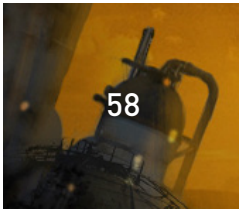
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A P P E N D I X

C H A R A C T E R N O T E S

Claire

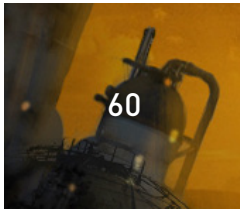
Claire is a little girl who lost her parents at an early age. This has led to abandonment issues and a low sense of self-esteem. The child is reclusive and has retreated into a world of dolls and collected memories. Living in an emotionally and socially constrained world, her movements are stilted, and although her curiosity is easily piqued, it is rigidly (and almost ritually) controlled. Her character arc moves from bad faith to self-realisation. She is not unintelligent, but has avoided coming to terms with her parent's death.

The doll

The doll is smaller and faster than Claire. It has striking resemblances to her, but its purpose is that of an agent for self-realisation. The character arc of the doll moves from a perceived threat to a helper. The creature is made of soft cloth; as a consequence, it is damaged through years of use. The toy operates as an observer, nurturer, and repository of truth.

The parents

Claire's parents operate as unstable revelations. In the story, we sense that they had a happy relationship that was brought to an untimely end. They are in their late twenties, conservative but loving. They are not designed with distinctive personalities because they serve a secondary role in the story as signifiers of the truth.



P R O D U C E R ' S N O T E S

Software used:

Adobe After Effects CS5
Adobe Photoshop CS5
Adobe Soundbooth CS5
Adobe Final Cut Pro

Copyright music/ sound purchased and mixed

Evil Rising *Audio Jungle* (2010)
Dark thriller *Audio Jungle* (2010)
Truth Exposed *Audio Jungle* (2011)

Intended submission to national and international film and animation festivals

Flickerfest [academy accredited] (est.1991)
Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival (est.1981)
New Zealand International Film Festival [Homegrown section] (est.1969)
Tokyo Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (est.1999)
Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival (est.1997)
Taipei Golden Horse (est.1962)
Canadian (Toronto) Worldwide Short Film Festival (est.1988)
Siggraph USA (est. 2003)
Stuttgart Trickfilm, Germany (est. 2009)
Zagreb World Animation Festival (est. 1972)
Brussels Fantasy Film Festival (est. 1983)
Interfilm (Berlin) (est. 1974)

