

Portrait collage Film analysis assignment

'Feeling My Way' - Jonathan Hodgson

Feeling My Way is a short film/documentary created by Jonathan Hodgson on the walk from his house to his work through the streets of London. It's his subconscious thoughts about the places and people around him brought to life through the medium of animation. There's no real story to the piece as it's just a quick snippet of the creator's life.

The footage was filmed originally on Hi-8mm film during the 2 mile walk then overlaid with hand-painting and drawings, I think the footage was printed out as frames then painted and drawn on then re-animated, but I can't find anywhere exactly how it was created. The technique suits the content because its fast and ever-changing like thoughts, the style and contents of the drawings make it seem quite childlike and simple, but it would have been complicated and time consuming to make. It was filmed on a sunny day which might have been accidental or might have been purposeful, if on purpose it gives a very positive view of London, the lighting and bright colours used in the video suggests to me a very optimistic outlook on London. I think the artist is trying to convey his love for London and the people in it, because of the mediums used there is a cosy, warm feeling to the video. It reminds me of old childhood videos on video tape. It's filmed on an everyday handheld video camera so it's pretty much one continuous shot, there's no complicated angles or purposely chosen lights, apart from choosing what day the video was filmed on the artist has no control over the lighting or mood. It's mostly filmed from the artists viewpoint; this forces the viewer to see through his eyes, in essence becoming the artist rather than a mere observer. You never see the artist apart from as a shadow, this removes himself from the focus of the video so it becomes about the people and things he's walking past. They become the main characters completely unknowingly, they're just living their day-to-day lives unaware of the detrimental role they play in this video. It reminds me of the word *sonder* ("*the realization that each random passer-by is living a life as vivid and complex as your own.*") their seemingly unimportant journeys are now immortalized as a work of art. Reducing these living, breathing people into 2D cartoons has quite a profound effect, I wonder where they are now? What are they doing 25 years later? If they even know they're in this video. It might have not been the intended purpose at the time of creation but as this video was made in the late 90s it also creates a really nice time capsule of London, it's interesting to see the fashion and how much has changed/stayed the same.

The sound from the original footage has been used but it's been distorted; made louder/quieter, played in a loop, edited into a rhythm, changed the timings so it doesn't match up with visuals. The artists footsteps and breathing can be heard throughout the film so, even though he can't be seen, the viewer is reminded he's an ever-watching presence. The footsteps heard throughout sound like they've been recorded separately then overlaid, potentially inside, as they are louder and better quality than the other sounds. The way they echo sound like they're in a room rather than outside. At times the sounds match the drawings on screen rather than then original footage like auditory hallucinations. Some of the sounds are from the original video while some have been purposely chosen and recorded for the final product. There's a repeated sound of a stick being dragged across railings like a child

would do, this reiterates the childlike quality of the video as it's a silly and playful sound. I think at one point the artist is suggesting his hearing has been affected by listening to loud music in the past and there is a slight ringing sound played in the background of the whole video suggestive of tinnitus. He potentially has some negative feelings about work as the sounds get screechy and uncomfortable as he approaches the door. You only hear the artists voice once briefly at the end, I wonder if this is a purposeful choice, once again removing himself from the focus of the video; the watcher, not the watched. At first watch the sounds could be played directly from the original footage but after listening/watching a few times I think it's been edited to seem like this, but they have been specifically chosen to match not just what's on screen but also the artists subconscious thoughts.

I think the main goal of the video was to let you into the artists unfiltered mind and how his creative process works, obviously I don't know how considered the drawings were but they seem on the spot, intrusive even. There's a feeling of familiarity and comfort. Overall, it's a happy video; the colours are bright, the weathers good and he walks at a fast pace. The bad quality of the film makes the video feel like a memory, the blurriness adds a dreamlike quality. It's a familiar route to the artist so it could be a dull experience where he doesn't pay attention to his surroundings but he instead he turns it into a work of art. The descriptive words used are very simple and obvious which reinforces the childlike quality, it's like how toddlers have no filter and just say exactly what's on their mind.

I would recommend this video to someone else; I watched his other videos on vimeo, and I really like his style of animation. A lot of it is hand drawn so there's a uniqueness to it. Also, a lot of his videos were made in the 90s, so they create an interesting time capsule of what animating was like 20/30 years ago. I think hand-drawn, analogue styles of animating age better than digital as digital technology has improved so much yet there's not much difference between using physical drawing supplies now compared to 30 years ago.