Un Film De Dix Mots

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1. Introduction

This is short description of the making of our film Un Film De Dix Mots. Both of us are students of the French classes being held in IIT Bombay. Our teacher, Ms. Claire Chaize, introduced us to “La Caravane des dix mots.” The basic idea was to create something original using one, some or all of the ten given French words. Now, one of us is a professional writer in English (Neha), while the other is a professor of Computer Science with a specialization in Computer Graphics (Parag). Both of us love stories. So we decided to pool our talents and make a film that involves all the ten words. This film is the end result, and it is our contribution to la caravane.

We describe in subsequent sections the stages in the making of our film.

2. Research

As any good student in French, we started of by figuring out the meaning of each word in English and in French. This involved turning a lot of pages in the French-English dictionary and doing lots of Google searches. The words and their meaning that is closest to the way in which they are used the movie, are given below, in French and in English.

1. Baladeur
   - Un baladeur est un appareil électronique portable destiné à l'écoute de audio
   - Walkman

2. Mentor
   - Un mentor est un conseiller auquel on fait entière confiance
   - Mentor, counsellor, teacher, guide

3. Cheval de Troie
   - Dans la mythologie grecque, l'épisode du cheval de Troie est l'un des plus fameux de la guerre de Troie
   - The Trojan Horse was a wooden horse gifted by the Greeks to the Trojans. It actually concealed soldiers. It modern usage it can be used to mean any object that appears harmless but is actually a bait to make one take their guard down so that they are left vulnerable to a unexpected attack initiated by something contained in object itself
4. **Mobile**
   - Quelque chose qui n'est pas fixe
   - Anything or person which/who is not fixed

5. **Crescendo**
   - Est un mot indiquant qu'il faut augmenter graduellement l'intensité d'un son
   - It is a gradual building up of sound (say in a musical composition)

6. **Remue-Meninges**
   - Le remue-méninges est une technique de résolution créative de problème sous la direction d'un animateur
   - Brain-storming

7. **Escagasser**
   - donner la forme d'une cagasse, abîmer, embêter
   - to annoy

8. **Variante**
   - Différentes suites de coup possibles à partir d'une position donnée.
   - Variant, another meaning or interpretation

9. **Galère**
   - Un navire à voiles et rames
   - Harsh (like the conditions on a slave boat)

10. **Zapper**
    - Changer les chaînes sur le télé
    - Change channels on a TV very fast using a remote control

**3. Storyboard and Modelsheets**

After figuring out what each word meant, we created a story involving all the ten words. We created a basic storyboard in class to figure how will we involve all the ten words in the film. We decided while some would be depicted using drawings, others could be conveyed using the soundtrack. During all this we had to keep in mind how to tell the story in an interesting manner. The storyboard helped us in a first cut shot layout and gave us the keyframes we needed to create for our animation. A part of the storyboard that we made in class is given in Figure 1. We also created some rudimentary model sheets for the two main characters.

**4. Layout and Keyframing**

We then drew the required keyframes in a sketch book with 100gsm paper. We photographed each of these sketches with a Canon 450D camera and transferred them to a computer. Photos of some of these sketches are shown in Figure 2.
5. Cleaning and compositing the keyframes

After transferring the raw drawings to the computer, they were cleaned, colour balanced, filtered and processed. We manually composited and created over 50 keyframes for our movie. The frames were composited using the GNU Image Processing Program (GIMP). Figure 4 shows the raw keyframe from Figure 2 after it has been cleaned. The colour scheme used in the film was fixed in this stage with care that colour used for various characters was the consistent across all frames.

6. Filling in the dialogue

Next we created the dialogue for the film. Seven out of the ten words appear directly in the dialogue. The dialogue appears in written form in interspersed slides between the animation in a style borrowed from silent films of yesteryears. Figure 3 shows one such dialogue frame.
7. **Timing to a soundtrack**

We then searched and selected suitable music tracks and mixed them to compose the soundtrack for the film. We used the length of the music pieces to fine tune the timing of our film. Finally, we multiplexed our soundtrack with the video stream created from the keyframes to get the movie. One of the words is specifically conveyed only through the music of the film.

8. **The Remaining Words**

Of the two remaining words, one is shown explicitly as a drawing in the film while the other is conveyed using a style of frame-to-frame transition. We are not saying which words are expressed where as we want the viewer’s to enjoy the film and discover its hidden charms in their own time.