

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The 'Black girl's 'Mane' issue was my second idea. I did have some shots planned in my mind when I first conceptualized the piece, yet I still had not figured out a structure which would reasonably make the piece flow. I used the small Sony DV camera to film this piece, it was the first time I had not used this camera before and I did experience difficulty with it, it did however come as an advantage when it came to transport, when I had to lug around equipment alone. On days where I had to walk exceptionally long distances, Koketso Potsane, a second year journalist, budding filmmaker assisted me and so we both did each other a favour; while I depended on him to help me carry stuff around, he was my own personal intern.

Starting with a separation of the screen into nine blocks, I placed snippets of different footage that I had shot for the piece, which included the people in my interviews. I made each but one block black and white. The centre block was the only one in colour because I wanted to bring out the introduction for the soundtrack that features throughout the piece. This is footage of drama student and singer, Alude Mahali singing on the Rhodes Theatre stage. Here I did not use any additional sound tools but the microphone that Alude is singing in, and also because it was shot in a theater I thought the camera microphone camera would be enough. I used stage lights which were great and provided various hues, together with a smoke machine, which Clay Williams helped me with. I wanted to mimic a smoky jazz café feel.

For this part, because Alude's block extends to fill up the screen. I had to speed it up, so that it increased in time with the bit that she was singing, unfortunately this did add a bit of a 'chipmunk' sound to her voice, although some may not notice if they are not familiar with the original sound.

The song that Alude sings and hums throughout the piece is a poem that I wrote entitled; "little girl"; this helped in terms of copyright issues and such.

The second part of the script is somewhat of an introductory montage before the piece actually starts, which includes brief comments about my respondents' hair, so the viewer

can know what the piece is about without having to decipher the title for too long. In this whole introduction I increased the colour contrast and balance because of two stubborn shots whereby I struggled to find the right correction to make it look natural enough.

The first part of this introduction is a filming of a rehearsal of one of Alude Mahali's untitled directing piece which was based on the issues of being a black girl, touching on stereotypes, nuances, problems and fortunately for me ; hair!

This particular part has obvious audio problems, it has a little bit of sound from unassociated footage which comes from another shot within the piece, I recognized this during the editing process and thought I fixed the problem, but it seems not. The silence in this shot is a bit confusing to me as I had filled left and I had listened to the sound on headphones before recording to tape.

With regards to visuals, what was happening here is a enactment of a hair salon scene, the speaker is supposed to be saying; "My hair is black, short curly, soft" along with the words rolling up the screen. The other speaker then says; 'your hair is everything'.

Throughout this whole introduction I increased the colour contrast and balance because of two stubborn shots whereby I struggled to find the right correction and grading to make them look natural enough.

One such shot is the one which follows the rehearsal. In a medium close-up is Sifiso and Natasha sitting on a bench outside the Drodsty lawn on a bench, The colour was too dark and blue which I tried to brighten but too no avail, so I decided contrast and hue balance was the answer for both this and the next shot. Natasha spoke in the interview but was overtaken and often interrupted by Sifiso in conversation which made it difficult to cut.

The next shot is of Nono of Victoria Primary School talking about what she does with her hair. Here the problem was the camera work as the picture goes out of focus . I treated it the same way as the others in the piece, so that the problem could be lessened. For both this footage and the one of Natasha and Sifiso I used a rifle microphone (as, in fact, I did with most of the footage in the piece) as there was more than one person and one lapel was giving me problems because it did not fit in the camera

The end of the introduction takes us back to Alude singing on the same stage from a different angle close-up and side profiled it then pans across to a dark part of the theatre where the title words appear. I made the word 'mane' a different colour so that it would stand out as a pun. The camera then moves upwards to the stage light briefly before the light disappears and the words are against a black background with Alude humming the 'little girl' song.

What follows is one of a few subject dividers in the piece; a still with titles which serves as a title for the issue about to be responded on. These run throughout the piece

An example is the first one; 'good hair'. I use this particular still because this model has what one would ideally label as good hair, but it is obviously a weave as black ethnic hair does not grow that long. I had initially used a picture of a little girl with a big afro, but part of the problem of my editing was that I kept losing footage and clips which I had saved in the D drive, so this (and most of the other stills used) is a second choice. Each subject divider is placed on a track with Alude humming the song. I purposefully asked my questions through these titles to avoid my voice being too prevalent in the piece

So this where the documentary finally begins with full on responses to the questions, represented by the tiles.

Responses from the Vg girls mostly came in a chorus and I used that because it gave everyone a chance to respond without the tedious process of waiting for an answer from each child.

Admittedly, the camera work here is bad as the camera moves around, I think it because I was trying to involve everyone's response and holding moving around the rifle microphone as well, the fault was mine by not placing the camera on specific centre and further back in many instances, so that I would have to move it around in order to include everyone.

There is also party scene where I asked questions to random people .I could not introduce the party for longer, or any of the interviews that I used. I used a lapel microphone on the girl because of the background sound.

Another problem I found, that I also could have worked on is that the shots in the piece move past a little too quickly.

There is a group of guys that I caught off guard at the day Kaif and also at Olde 65. Here I used a rifle microphone. The same problem with the moving camera occurred here because of trying to get everyone in the shot and because I did not know where the next answer was coming from.

The piece is based on talking heads whereby I use different shots of different people in different spaces, so that in the end although everyone is unassociated, the unified responses come through. A lot of the people in the piece were caught off guard, and I did not pin-point them out when I chose them; which is why I used the credits that I did at the end; "Thanks to all who contributed" instead of a whole lot of names because the responses didn't really have to do with people but what was actually said.

Things that I would like to add in a re-edited version of this documentary are superstitious myths surrounding hair, and images of black Barbie as well as hair salon shots, and fix the sound