

# C101 Media

## HOW FILM "SPEAKS"

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### Filmmaking is...

- ▶ an integrative art
- ▶ about making choices
- ▶ a visual art, but unlike photography
- ▶ a time-based art, but unlike theater
- ▶ more like poetry and music



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## Building Blocks of Film Language

### Basic Shots

- ▶ Long Shot (LS) – to orient the viewer
- ▶ Medium Shot (MS) – closer look at character/objects without losing context
- ▶ Close-up (CU) – to reveal and emphasize detail

### “Dramatic Emphasis”

- ▶ how you use and order these shots creates meaning and style
- ▶ the way you want the viewer to experience the film as it unfolds (“journey”)

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## Example: *Porcelain Unicorn* (2010, 3:02 by Keegan Wilcox)

- ▶ Part of Phillips Parallel Lines Competition
- ▶ Six lines of dialogue:
  - 'What is that?'
  - 'It's a unicorn'
  - 'Never seen one up close before'
  - 'Beautiful'
  - 'Get away, get away'
  - 'I'm Sorry.'



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## Example: Porcelain Unicorn (2010, 3:02 by Keegan Wilcox)

- ▶ things to consider while watching
  - what happens
  - who are the characters
  - where are we?
  - what are the camera angles and framing?
  - is there camera movement?
  - how do particular elements make you feel?

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## To summarize

### Language of Cinema

- ▶ creates "screen space" or geography
- ▶ creates "screen time" (contract or expand)
- ▶ creates believable world that feels real and continuous
- ▶ creates meaning, communicates story, attitudes, feelings, atmosphere
- ▶ Builds on common understandings and conventions (historical and cultural knowledge)

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## The Reality of Shooting



- ▶ “out of continuity” (not in story order)
- ▶ Efficiency is key
- ▶ Camera set-ups
- ▶ Continuity System

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## Shooting for Coverage

- ▶ Master shot / establishing shot



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## Shooting for Coverage

- ▶ Master shot / establishing shot

- ▶ **Cut ins / inserts**

- Two-shot
- shot-reverse shot
- over the shoulder



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- ▶ **Cutaway**



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## Summary Coverage

- ▶ Master shot / establishing shot
- ▶ Cut ins / inserts
  - Two-shot
  - shot-reverse shot
  - over the shoulder
- ▶ Cutaway



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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action



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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action
- ▶ **Screen Direction**



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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action
- ▶ Screen Direction
- ▶ **30° rule**



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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action
- ▶ Screen Direction
- ▶ 30° rule
- ▶ **Eyeline cut**
  - implies continuous space
  - Match sightlines



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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action
- ▶ Screen Direction
- ▶ 30° rule
- ▶ Eyeline cut
  - implies continuous space
  - Match sightlines
- ▶ **Match on action**
  - implies continuous time
  - Match motion

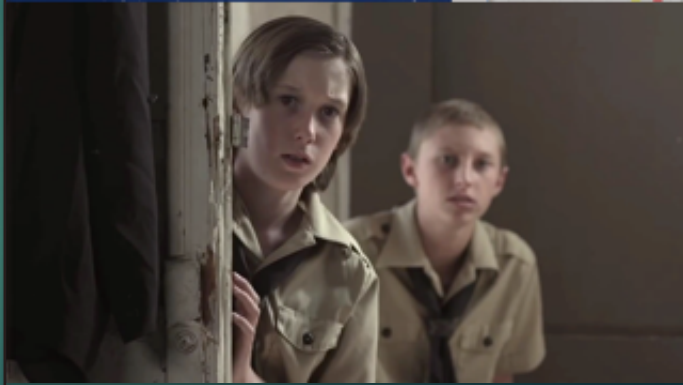


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## Shooting for Continuity

- ▶ 180° rule/axis of action
- ▶ Screen Direction
- ▶ 30° rule
- ▶ Eyeline cut
  - implies continuous space
  - Match sightlines
- ▶ Match on action
  - implies continuous time
  - Match motion
- ▶ **Cutaway (again!)**



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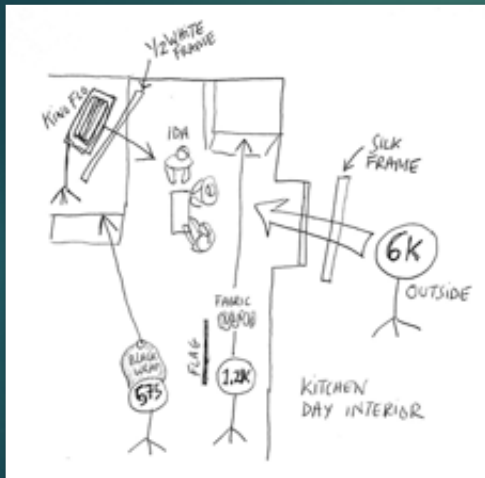
## Summary Continuity

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- ▶ Screen Direction
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## The Overhead Diagram



Keeps track of the **geography**

- ▶ Determine action axis
- ▶ Determine sightlines
- ▶ Determine screen direction
- ▶ Determine lighting

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## The Storyboard

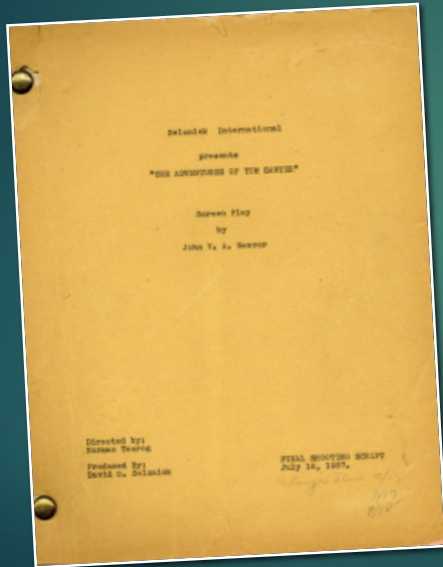
Communicates the **visual flow**

- ▶ Shots (scale, angle, light)
- ▶ Movement
- ▶ Blocking
- ▶ In "edited" order



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## The Script

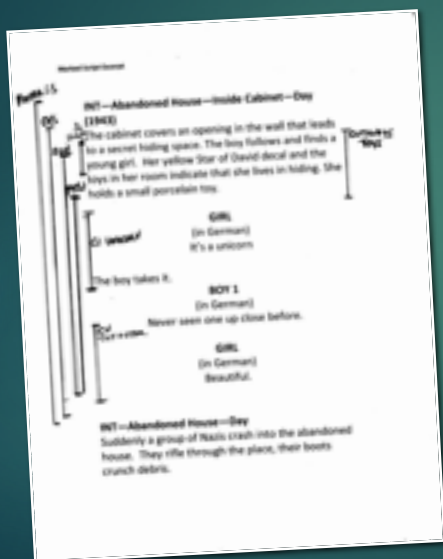


Communicates the **dramatic flow**

- ▶ Action: what characters do
- ▶ Dialogue: what characters say
- ▶ Settings: where things happen
- ▶ Time: when things happen
- ▶ But **not** specific camera shots and angles

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## The Shooting Script



Communicates the **set-ups**

- ▶ Coverage
- ▶ Important detail
- ▶ Other notes

The Shot list

- ▶ Organizes shots for actual filming (by set-ups, practicality, etc.)

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## Creative Choices — Framing



▶ Foreground - background



▶ Frame separate or together?

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## Creative Choices — Camera Angles



▶ High Angle



▶ Low angle

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## Creative Choices — Focal Length



▶ Telephoto ("zoom in")



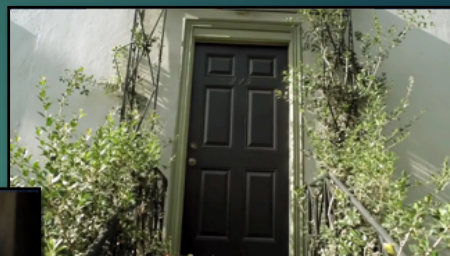
▶ Wide angle ("zoom out")

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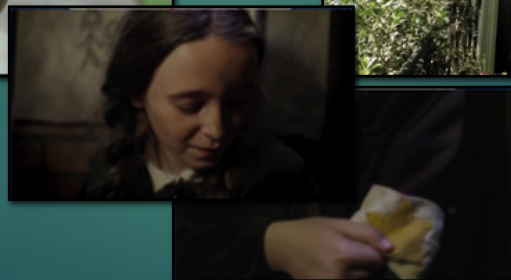
## Creative Choices — Camera Movement



▶ Camera follows action



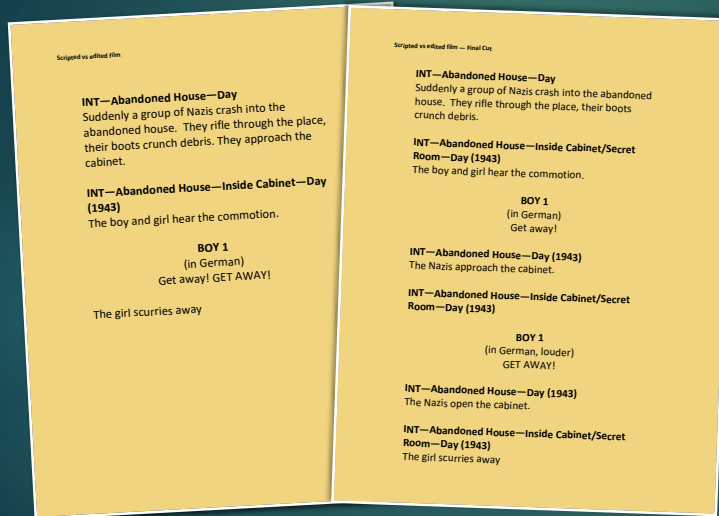
▶ Camera pushes in and emphasizes



▶ Camera tilts and makes connection

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## Script vs. Final Cut



### Dramatic Action and Pacing

- ▶ Intercutting
- ▶ Expand or contract time
- ▶ "Dramatic emphasis"

### Remember

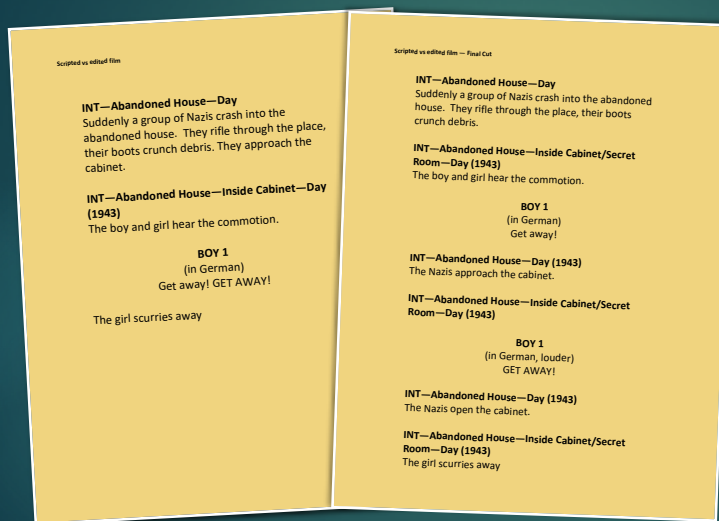
- ▶ 6 lines of dialogue
- ▶ 2 pages of script

### Final Cut

- ▶ 3 minutes
- ▶ how many cuts?

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## Script vs. Final Cut



### Dramatic Action and Pacing

- ▶ Intercutting
- ▶ Expand or contract time
- ▶ "Dramatic emphasis"

### Remember

- ▶ 6 lines of dialogue
- ▶ 2 pages of script

### Final Cut

- ▶ 3 minutes
- ▶ **109 cuts!!**

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## Application



- ▶ Why learn all this technical stuff?
- ▶ It's all about making choices
  - Convey information clearly
  - Create mood and tone
  - Must fit together and cohere
- ▶ Intention! Planning! Preparation!
- ▶ It usually takes longer than planned
- ▶ Kogonada's "Anderson Centered"

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## Example: Wes Anderson Centered (2014, 2:21 by Kogonada)

- ▶ Visual essay on filmmaking style
- ▶ Kogonada made movie Columbus (shot right right here in Indiana)



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