

## Guidelines for conducting visual experiments with home movies

This document presents three different modalities of conducting visual research with home movie scenes:

1. digital methods (re-filming scenes, post-production | editing)
2. manual manipulation (process consisting in: printing frames, manual intervention, re-scanning frames and recomposing the scene)
3. Other interventions: adding sound, creative writing, memes, manual interventions/constructs.

### **1. Digital methods**

Digital methods involve the work with digitalised home movies. This procedure applies different visual effects to the scene, using video editing software such as Final Cut or Premiere Pro. The process involves a spontaneous approach, which means that immediately after watching the scene, the viewer chooses what to apply. There are different options offered by such software:

- Drawing shapes, contours or other geometries. This process resembles manual interventions in the sense that they could be applied frame by frame to the images.  
Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWpFOEFPrzE> ,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoWqOVPvhog>,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0433TI3cFE>,
- Applying filters/special effects: Video editing software makes several ready-made special effects available. These alter the colour, exposure or gives a particular effect to a selected scene, altering the aesthetics. Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=550PSVzx4a8> ,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0mgIF18I3A>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPTmRG0gmHk>
- Overlapping or multiplying frames: Working with the same scene on multiple tracks of the editing software enables us to create blurred effects, or specific impressions on how people move and act. More than filters, this way of working does not only apply a general effect. It enables the editor to play around with sensibilities and to fine-tune the effects. Examples: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g5Cq2\\_80k4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g5Cq2_80k4) ,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGnNyVDzwOo>

### **2. Manual manipulation**

Compared to digital manipulation, manual manipulation is much more time consuming. Filmmakers generally work with manual manipulation on the acetate film, scratching, corroding or intervening with drawing utensils directly on the reels. This is an alchemic process that involves most times a degree of danger and specialist knowledge around chemical reactions.

Working with digitalised footage on the other hand, turns this material process into a much more affordable process. Printing out and re-drawing entire home movie scenes can be very time consuming but also very revealing in terms of our capacity to reflect upon these scenes.

The process involves the following steps:

1. Selecting the scene and opening it in a video editing software
2. Printing out the scene as a series of single frames/images. Final Cut and Premiere Pro enable users to print out all the frames in a sequence (Final Cut: File/Share/add Destination/Select: image sequence). Before doing this, we need to apply to the entire scene a mirrored effect.
3. Position each frame, one after the other on a Power Point Document (PPT). Depending on how big the printed still should be, one page can contain 2-9 printed stills.
4. Print out the PPT using a printer.
5. Choose the drawing/printing techniques desired to work on the scene (this procedure can be done both on the printed document or on new paper upon which we decide to completely re-work the scenes): pens, pencils, charcoal, inks, watercolours etc  
In my project I decided to use printmaking techniques to pass on parts of the original image to a new paper and then work around those parts of the images to complete the image (to this aim I used watercolours or charcoal/inks). For how to transfer images on other surfaces please see: <http://casaaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Transfer-Techniques-1.pdf>
6. Intervene on each still with the technique selected, paying attention to follow the order in which they have been printed, so as to have the continuity of the drawing gestures.
7. Once ready each still is scanned and recomposed as a digital sequence of images.
8. Using Final Cut or Premiere Pro, the imported sequence of images is then transformed into a video scene.

3. Other interventions:

These include:

- Adding sound: use the video editing software to add a soundtrack to a scene. This can be a downloaded copyright free piece or our own recordings.
- Creative writing: this process involves an imaginative reflection on the visualised scene. This can be done in front of the computer or while visiting the same places in which the scenes have been shot. Based on the context of writing (where), the outcome takes up a different signification.
- Memes: selecting a scene and imagining what is going on in there by constructing a 'story' around it is called meme. Memes are generally amusing and witty reflections on gestures and attitudes going on in these scenes. Adding dialogue boxes to the characters of these scenes, imagining what they would be saying or constructing thought-bubbles are two possibilities of imagining such stories.
- Manual interventions/constructs: printing out specific stills from a scene or a series of stills, enables us to work also manually with these artifacts. This kind of interventions do not suppose that we simply draw on these images, but that we intervene in a mixed way (cutting, gluing, collage, etc) so as to transform the scene/printouts into architectural constructs/mechanisms rather than mere 2D representations.