Mickmumpitz AI Film School – Community Project #1

"The [...] Incident of [...]"

Use AI techniques to create a fictional documentary about "The [...] of [...]" (e.g. "The Flowerhead Epidemic of 1969", "The Catnado of Mousemantown", "The great glitching plaque of New York") about an imaginative, supernatural incident that changed the world forever. The documentary should include:

- At least one talking character including lip sync (interview subjects, for example).
- Story (Not just a list of things that happened, tell a dramatic story!)
- Cinematic shots of the incident
- Voice Over
- Sound design and music
- Title and lower thirds

What's the goal?

The goal of this collaborative project is to learn traditional filmmaking methods, principles, and vocabulary and learn to apply them using new AI tools.

I want to show the importance of understanding classic cinematography despite all the technological advances, and how this knowledge can be learned through rapid prototyping and the accelerated iteration that AI tools enable, bringing your work to the next level.

By the end, everyone will have created their own AI short film (1-3 minutes) and gained a deeper understanding of the new AI tools as well as traditional filmmaking techniques.

Remember: The main goal is to improve your skills and have fun as a community! Plan your project so that you do not overwork yourself.

How does it work?

Each exercise begins with a short presentation explaining the task and illustrating it with examples. I will share experiences from my ten years in the film and VFX/animation industry and hope for a lively exchange among the participants! A hand out or video recording of the presentation will be provided for people unable to attend.

Each task has its own Discord channel where intermediate results can be exchanged and participants can give each other feedback. After a week, the results are discussed and the next task is started.

And finally, with your permission, I would love to share the process and results on my YouTube channel!

Schedule & Assignments

Kick-off: October 5th, 2023

Week 01 - Brainstorming & Pitch
October 5th, 2023 - October 12th, 2023

Think about an exciting topic for your documentary. You can use AI like ChatGPT to help you come up with ideas and to create a short Elevator Pitch (a few sentences) and a Logline for the project. Use an AI image generator like Midjouirney, Stable Diffusion, or Dalle 3 to create an epic cover image for your presentation (cover image, logline, elevator pitch). The choice of tools for this project is entirely up to you. I'll give some examples in the assignments, but of course you are not bound to them!

Post your Logline, Pitch, and Mood Board in the Discord as a .pdf (Week 01). Give feedback to the other participants. Think from a producer's perspective: Who would want to see this documentary, does the logline work to sell the idea? Is the conflict strong enough? Incorporate feedback from other participants.

Week 02 - Visual Development
October 12th, 2023 - October 19th, 2023

Use an AI image generator to design the visual world of your project and create a mood board. Feel free to try out different styles before deciding on one. Incorporate your journey into your moodboard (and put some notes in there so we can understand the process!). Create concept images for your characters and examples of how you want the world to look and feel.

Include your mood board, character designs, and concept images of the world in your presentation from Week 01 and post it on Discord (Week 02). Give others feedback on their work.

Week 03 - Storytelling & Screenwriting

October 19th, 2023 - October 26th, 2023

Create a script for your story. Make sure to keep it short! You can use LLMs like ChatGPT as author, co-author, main author or script doctor. You can also write your own story. Review your script using the classic storytelling methods presented in the presentation. If necessary, make changes or ask ChatGPT to make those changes for you.

Post your script in the Community Discord (Week 03) and provide feedback to others on their stories.

Week 04 - Prompting, Image Generation & Storyboard

October 26th, 2023 - November 2nd, 2023

We will look at classic filmmaking techniques, rules and vocabulary to guide your prompts. Create a list (storyboard) of all the shots you need based on the template and fill it with the images you create.

Include it in your presentation and post it on Discord (Week 04). Look at each other's storyboards. Do the images fit together? Are they coherent? Is the staging correct to tell the story in the best way possible? Were important rules followed?

Week 05 - Animatic

November 2nd, 2023 - November 9nd, 2023

Use AI voice tools like Elevenlabs to create the voice over. Use an editing program to cut the images into an animatic. You can also add some sound effects and music. Upload the file and include a link to it in your presentation.

Check your animatic: Is the timing right? Does the mood come across well? Are all the shots really necessary? Check out the other projects in the Discord (week 5) and give feedback.

Week 06 - AI Actor

November 9th, 2023 - November 16th, 2023

Use an AI Tool or workflow (D-ID, HeyGen, Runway/Pika + Wav2Lip) to create the shot(s) of your talking character using the generated voices. Try to make it as cinematic as possible. If you are using D-ID or Hey Gen you can try my workflow for creating a 3D camera for that shot.

Edit the results into your Animatic, upload the new version, add the link to your presentation and post it on Discord (week 06).

Week 07 - Video Generation & Editing

November 16th, 2023 - November 23th, 2023

Use an AI tool or workflow to create videos out of your images (Runway, Pika Labs, Blender + Depth Maps). Think about the camera movements you need for the shots and try to create them using the prompts or animation of the camera in Blender. Check that the shots fit together. To practice this, we will look at some classic film examples and editing rules.

Include the link to your rough cut in your PDF presentation and share it on Discord. Provide feedback to the others.

Week 08 - Finalization (Grading, Sound Design, VFX, Titles)

November 23th, 2023 - December 1st, 2023

Finally, I'll give you some tips from the areas of sound design, visual effects, grading and title design. Afterwards, you'll have time to revise and perfect your film.

Presentation of the final movies:

Sunday December 1st, 2023.

Everyone in the Discord is invited!