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Abhishree Srivastava is a second year college student at Delhi Technological University, pursuing Bachelor of Design. She is interested in visual storytelling, psychological narrative and experiential design through film and visual media. With a focus on minimalism and mainly narratives based on sound and audio, this project shows how emotions like fear, in this case, can be evoked, rather than being triggered.

Fear an Experience

Abhishree Srivastava

Abstract

This article shows the documentation of the process of making a short horror film. The inspiration for the plot of the film was actually derived from a real experience encountered by a student. Rather than using typical horror elements like extreme jumpscare or dark shots, the project explores how a particular emotion, fear in this case, can be communicated to the audience by just sound, pacing, framing, editing etc.

Keywords

Horror movie, Sound Design, Narrative Storytelling, Editing, Character Development, Student Film, Film Making, Camera Angles and Cuts.

Introduction

“Based on true events” is a phrase often used in many horror and thriller films to create fear and uneasiness in the audience, however, in this short horror film- “The Dream”, the phrase can be used for the film’s plot inspiration, with its literal meaning in mind as this film is, infact, based on true experiences.

Whatever one sees on the screen, it is derived from an actual experience of a student, an experience that was disturbing enough to be considered as horror. So in this article, this student-made short horror film at Delhi Technological University, explores how just by using different sounds, pacing and changing rhythm of the videos,

using different camera angles etc. can lace a film with the horror genre, without use of any explicit visuals.

Journey Map of the Movie created

The making of the film was done with a clear plan in mind, however it was an iterative process, as changes were made to the film plot, props and settings when different stages of the film-making process unfolded: -

IDEATION

So, in the ideation stage, the plot of the film was decided and finalised. Everyone in the group first listened to the actual experiences of the student, made notes and a few changes in the plot according to the available setting that they shot the film at.

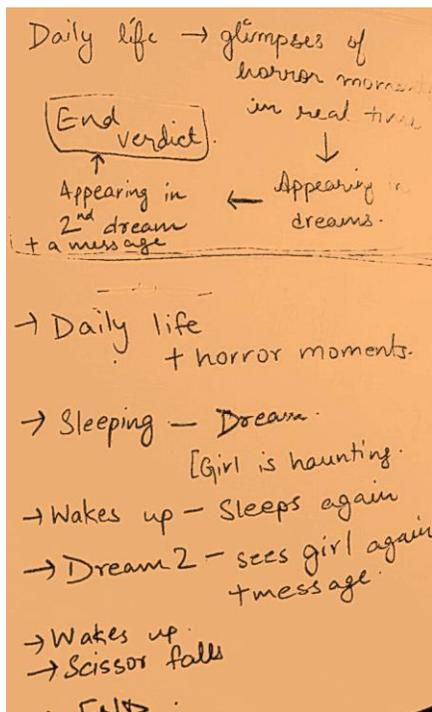


Figure 1: Ideation Sketches

The students mainly focused on the narrative parts of the scene, while keeping the sound effects and camera angles in mind, few

changes and many decisions were made so that the film had minimal narrative but high emotional understanding.

PLANNING

In this stage, the students decided on the concept of elements that were to be used in the film, that includes location, props, character roles, director, shot composition, sound choices etc. Because of the limited time, the main focus area was using the environment for the story to the fullest and keeping a smooth narration throughout.

EXECUTION

The execution phase involves the actual making of the film. Scenes were shot with a particular frame and look in mind, removing possibilities of any extra or unnecessary footage. During this phase, many technical applications were also explored like attention to frames, checking the light appropriate for the scene, making sure to record the scene in the camera angle it requires etc.

EDITING

In editing, things like colour grading, sound cuts, pacing and rhythming the videos, placing them orderly were few of the things involved. Intense background music was cued in certain scenes that were important, silent cuts were made in order to end a particular scene, different camera cuts like L cut and J cuts were used as well for smooth transitions.

CHARACTERS

In the film, there are 2 main characters. The background details have not been specified for each character, leaving the audience to project their own understanding and interpretations to the happening events in the film.

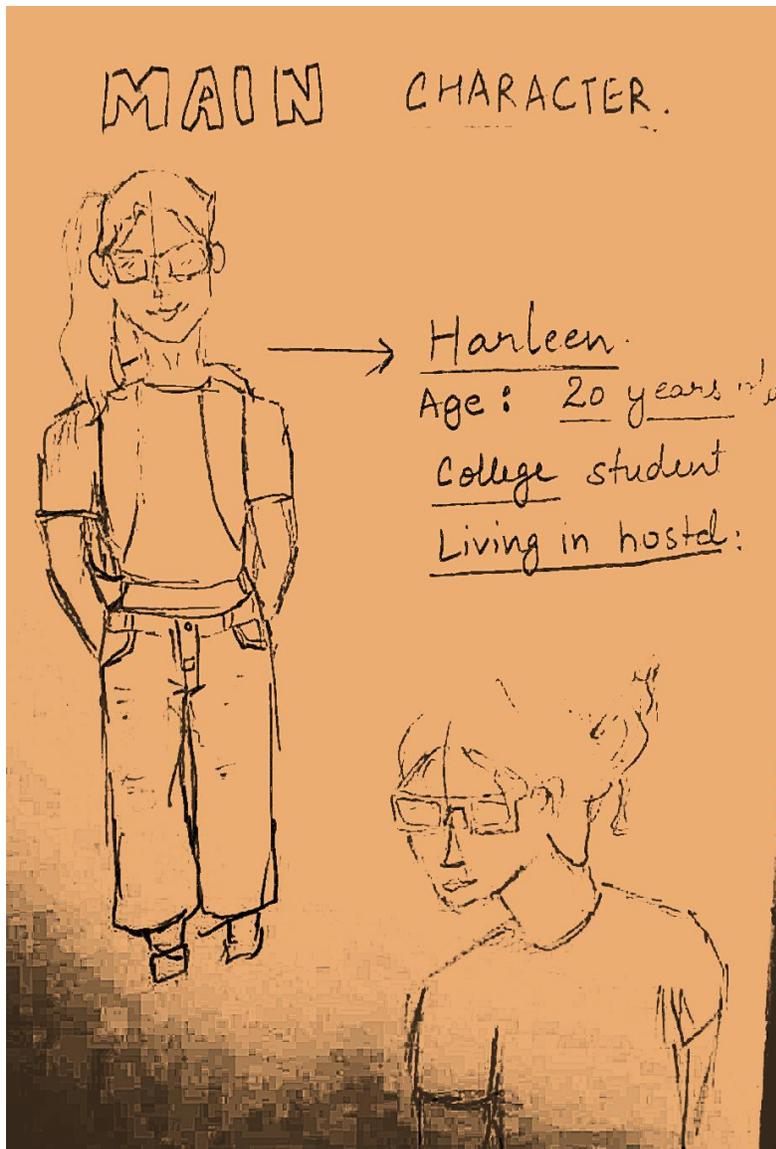


Figure 2: Character Sketches

One is a girl, who is currently living in the hostel in her college. She is shown doing a bunch of things that any girl living in a hostel would commonly do- waking up, brushing their teeth, going to class, working or studying after class, sleeping etc. This character was used to convey fear. The character shows that something is out of place, and gives a series of reactions that indicate that whatever events happened in the film were not right and were unsettling. Hence, this character is being used as a medium to show fear.

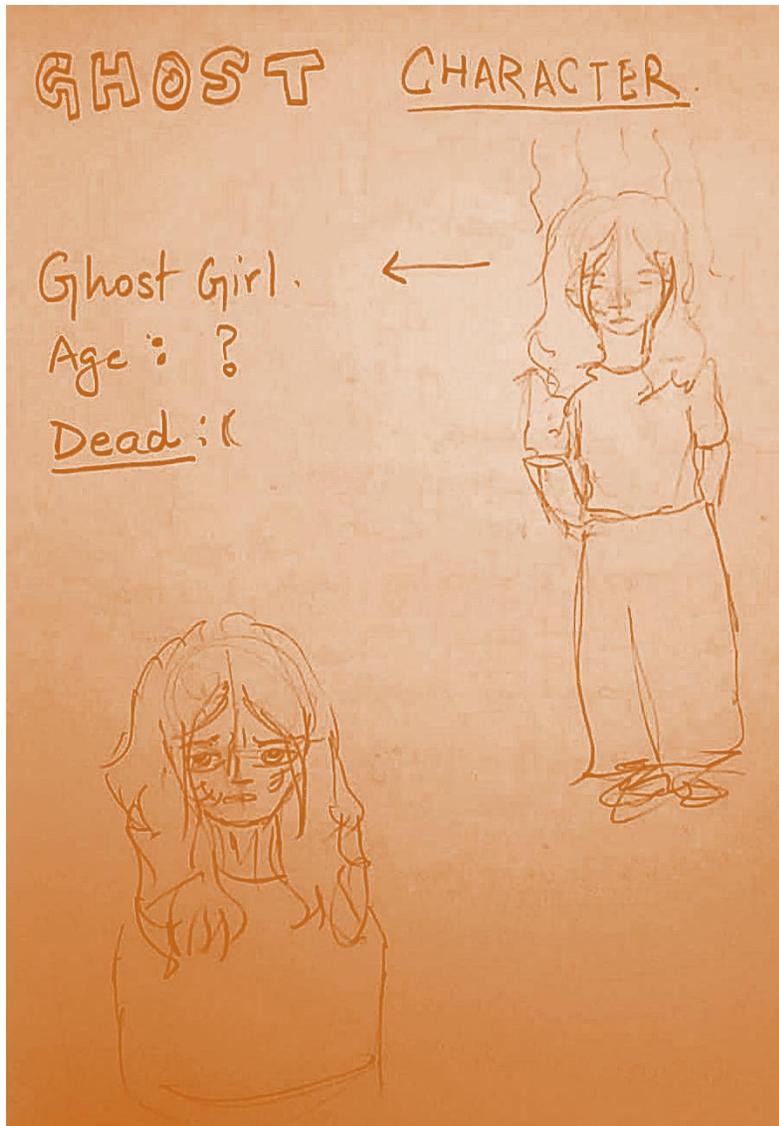


Figure 3: Ghost Character.

The other character is a ghost of a girl. So, at the beginning of the film, her full presence is rarely shown, she is seen as something watching the hostel girl continuously and haunting her as she never comes in front of her. However, there is a perspective changing arc in the film about this character.

Everyone thinks that the spirit is evil and wants to hurt the hostel girl, as she keeps haunting her, but in reality, she is doing- what looks like she is haunting the girl- because being a spirit, that's the

only way she can interact with the hostel girl. And when things got too intense, she started appearing in the dreams of the hostel girl, to give her a message.

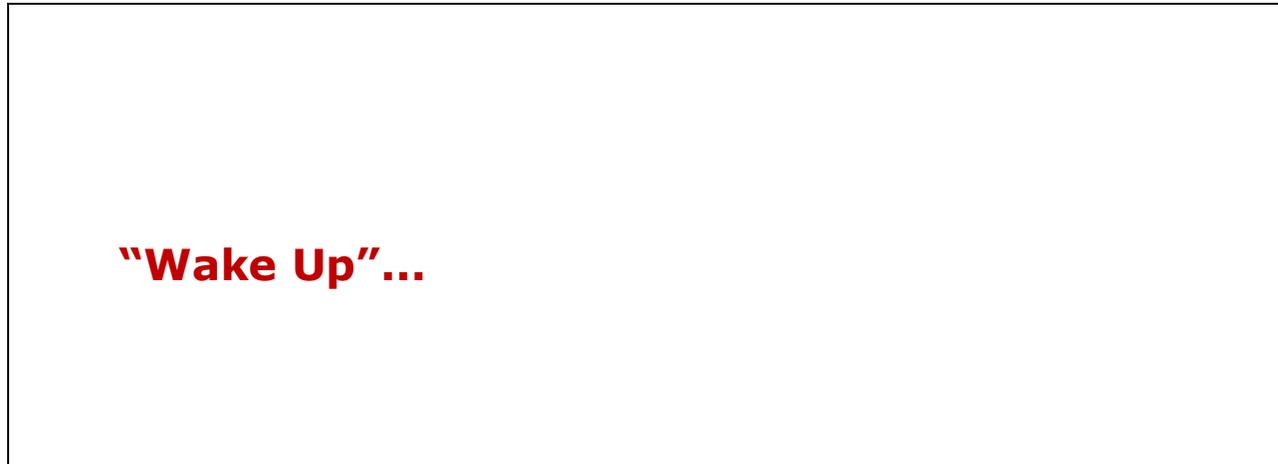


Table 1. Wake Up.

“Wake Up” as soon as the hostel girl wakes up from her dream, the scissors that were hanging above her head, over her bed fell. Had she not woken up; the scissors might have hurt the girl’s eyes. Indicating that the spirit that we thought all along was evil, was actually to save the hostel girl from something terrible happening.

Storyline

The plot of the film involves blurring the line between reality and dreams, making the unsettling idea sit in the audience as the story progresses.

At first, you see a girl that is living in a hostel, going on about her day but throughout the day, she feels like something is near her and observing her. At first, she catches a glimpse of a head, peeking from a wall in the washroom, but when she goes to check it out, there is no one.

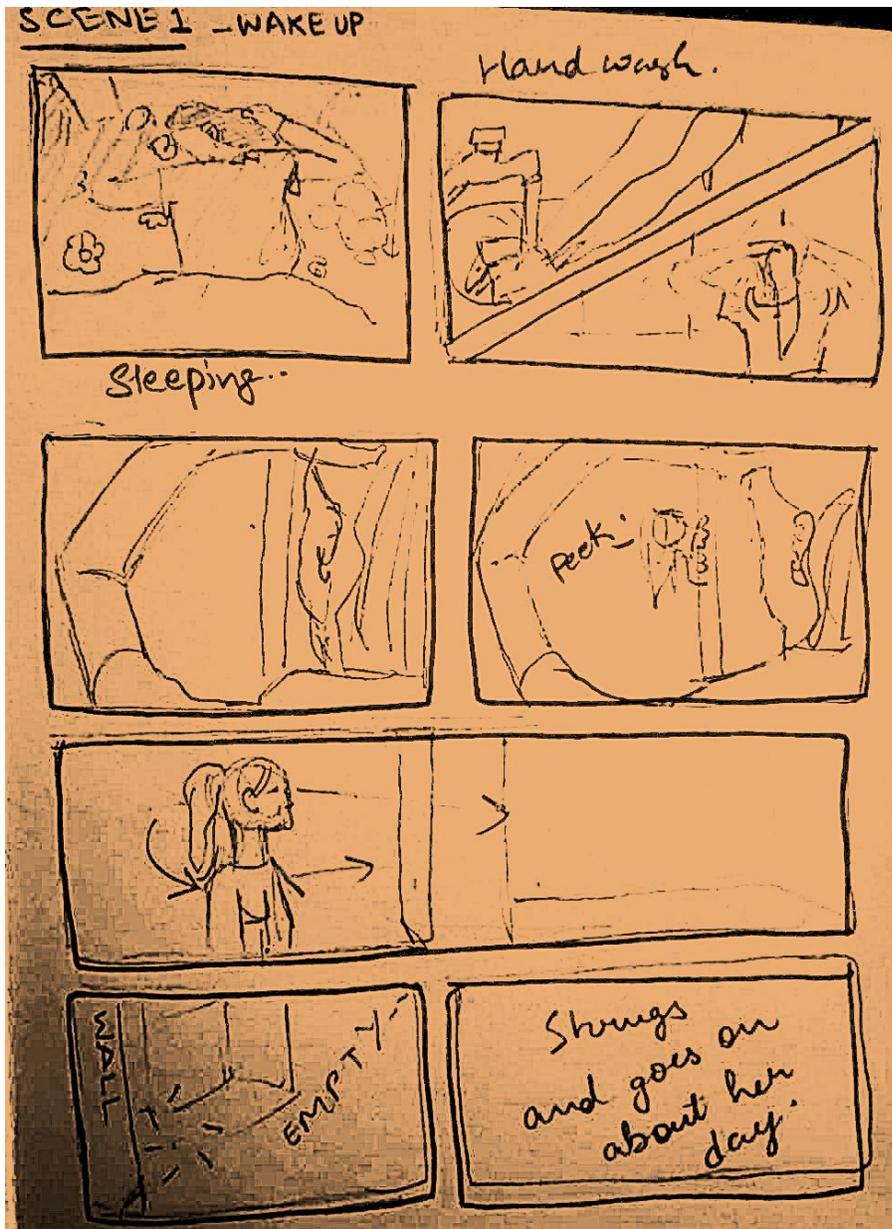


Figure 5: Storyline

Then as she is going to class, she waits for the lift, and while waiting she sees a reflection of a girl standing behind her, but as soon as she turns around, she sees no one.

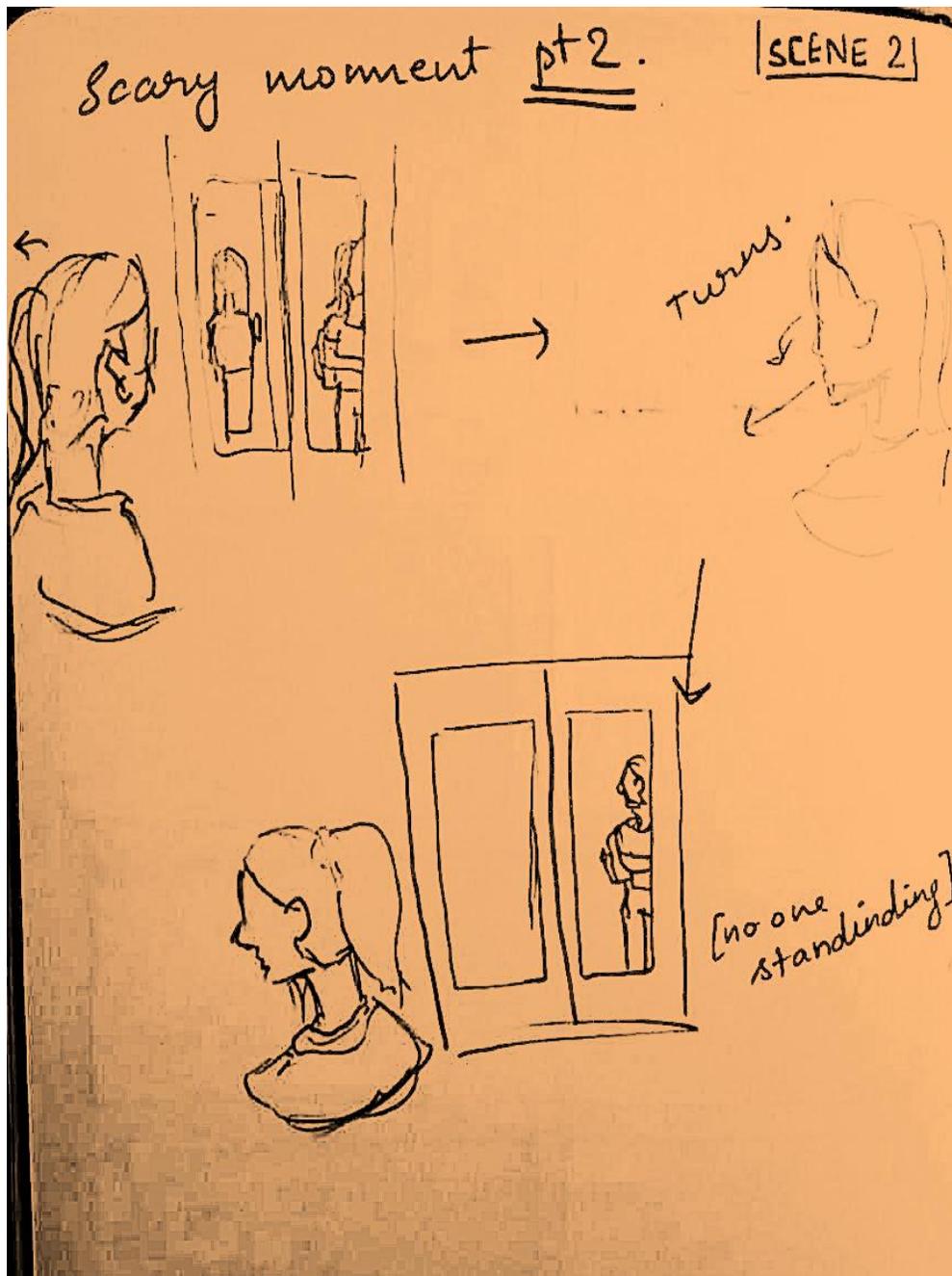


Figure 6: Scene Details.

The time skips to the night, she is studying in her hostel room at night, and eventually gets tired so she goes to sleep.

In her dream, she sees a girl running in the hallway of the hostel and enters her room.



Figure 7: Hallway.



Figure 8: Enters Room.

She locks the door behind her, then sits beside her bed and she sees her own sleeping form in the dream.



Figure 9: Watching her sleep.

The girl had a few scars on her face, was quiet, and almost seemed like a ghost, and she is now sitting beside her bed, just watching her sleep. And slowly, the girl moves her hand forward- as if trying to touch the face of the sleeping girl, getting closer and closer but suddenly-



Figure 10: Hand.

The hostel girl wakes up from her dream.

She grabs a bottle of water as she is a little out of breath, feeling a bit scared of the dream and looking at the place where the girl in the dream was sitting, as if to make sure that she isn't there in real life.

Then after calming down- she goes back to sleep again, only to end up in another dream.



Figure 11: Sitting Across.

In this dream, she is again in her room, sitting on her bed. She looks around in her dream, noticing that she is in her room, and suddenly notices that the running girl is sitting across from her on her bed.

The ghost/running girl sits in front of her, slowly saying “wake up” in a normal voice and repeating again and again, increasing the volume of her voice each time.



Figure 12: Wake Up.

As the voice volume increases, the breathing of the girl also increases, and after the ghost girl says wake up in her loudest voice,

**there is silence, which is broken by a whisper after a few seconds-
"wake up"**

**Suddenly the girl wakes up from the dream, opens her eyes and sits
on the bed.**

Scissors, that were hung from a hook over her bed, fell.

And had she not woken up-



Figure 13: Accident.

**So, the end of the story is that the ghost girl appearing in her
dreams, was actually a good ghost, and was in her own way, trying
to warn the girl. The ghost girl saved the hostel girl from a bad
accident.**

**The intended impact of the film was achieved by using controlled
pacing, sound led storytelling, uncomfortable repeated cues rather
than explicit visuals, strategic camera movements and angles etc.
Some shots were taken in such a way that they restricted certain
information from the audience, for the scene to be shot the way it
was intended to. Moments of silence were deliberately preserved in**

order to give importance to the action being done in certain places of the film.

Music

The overall music of the film included background noises and sounds that were appropriate to the scenes. The sounds used for ambient background are low frequency sounds that manipulate the brain into feeling dread, anxiety and tension by triggering a physiological “fight or flight” response.



Figure 14: Horror atmosphere low frequency sound, (freesound horror)

There are certain areas in the film where the tempo of the sound effect is slow, but increases with the pace of the video, often helping the audience understand the context and nature of the scene.

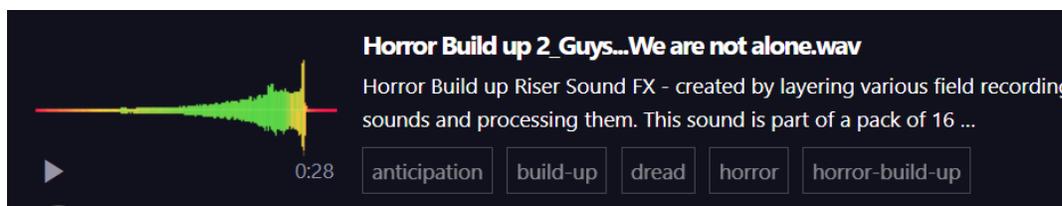


Figure 15: Horror Build up sound, (freesound)

In the picture above, one can see a “Build up sound”, meaning it’s a sound that starts slow in volume and rhythm but gradually increases in volume, as well as speed. This type of sound has been used for the scenes in the film that involve some reveal happening at the end of the audio. Something that helps the audience feel anticipation and curiosity to look forward to the scene.

Issues faced in Various Aspect

Throughout the shoot there were certain issues experienced. First of all, while shooting, it was realised that certain tasks were hard to perform without professional equipment, like getting props ready or getting a particular thing to fall from a distance, getting the appropriate setting of the lighting required by the scene etc. Then there were other aspects as well like in the sound aspect, it was hard to get the sound of the real time scene with the background environment noise, which prompted the students to create their own voice overs even after recording the video for the film or finding substitutes for the audio, which was proven to be a quiet hard, as they had to find audios that suited their footage.

Conclusion

Through the process of this short film making, one learns to demonstrate how any emotion can be well communicated to an audience even without dialogues, simply by using visual cues or sound cues. The journey mapping helps in realising that taking every stage of the task into consideration is important as it helps shaping audience experience. Moreover, the challenges faced during the shoots further elaborates and proves that it encourages thinking out of the box solutions rather than limiting the brain to only existing ones.

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Sailing into the Unknown: A Pirate's Spirit on Campus

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Abstract

This article examines the use of fashion as a narrative tool to explore uncertainty, self-discovery, and growth within the college experience. Through a pirate-inspired outfit worn on campus, the author reflects on the emotional parallels between navigating higher education and sailing into unknown waters. The project incorporates character development, costume design, makeup, accessories, and final imagery to convey themes of resilience, adaptability, and exploration. Rather than presenting fashion as performative or decorative, the article positions it as experiential learning—an embodied reflection of personal identity during a transitional life stage. The pirate metaphor allows space for imperfection, trial and error, and emotional honesty, emphasizing that progress does not require clarity, but movement. By documenting both the physical design process and the emotional experiences associated with wearing the outfit, the article highlights how creative expression can foster self-awareness and confidence. Ultimately, the piece argues that uncertainty can be a meaningful space for growth, and that the journey itself plays a vital role in shaping identity.

Keywords

Fashion as self-expression, college identity, uncertainty, experiential learning, costume design, metaphor in fashion, youth identity, creative exploration, personal narrative.

Introduction

Fashion has long served as a medium of self-expression, storytelling, and identity formation, particularly during transitional phases of life. On college campuses, clothing often reflects more than aesthetic choices; it captures emotional states, evolving identities, and personal narratives. This article explores how a pirate-inspired outfit became a symbol of navigating uncertainty, growth, and self-discovery during the college experience. By combining character development, costume design, accessories, and lived experience, the author uses fashion as a metaphor for “sailing into the unknown,” illustrating how uncertainty can foster resilience, curiosity, and personal evolution.

Sailing into The Unknown

The outfit emerged from a simple but powerful feeling: not knowing what comes next, yet choosing to move forward anyway. Wearing it did not feel performative or theatrical. Instead, it felt honest, reflecting a stage of life defined by curiosity, uncertainty, and a gradually growing sense of trust in the process in Fig 1.



Fig.1 Hourglass with flowing water symbolizing uncertainty and passage of time.

The idea of sailing into the unknown resonated deeply because it mirrored the experience of college life, where progress often happens without a clear destination and meaning is discovered gradually through movement. This illustration represents the fluid nature of decision-making during early adulthood, where time moves forward despite unanswered questions, emphasizing trust in the ongoing process rather than fixed outcomes.

Uncertainty carries both fear and excitement. As a college student, particularly in the early years, there is often an expectation to have answers that have not yet had time to form. Questions about future plans, career paths, and long-term goals are constant. More often than not, those answers remain unclear. While this uncertainty can feel heavy, it can also be freeing. Like a pirate setting sail without a map, not knowing does not signify being lost; it signifies exploration.

Outfit Assembly

Before assembling the outfit, the author focused on defining the character behind it. Rather than envisioning a loud or fearless pirate, the character was imagined as observant, grounded, and quietly resilient - someone who continues forward despite uncertainty and adapts rather than resists change. This character closely reflected the author's own experience as a college student, and it guided every design choice, ensuring that the look felt authentic rather than performative.

The foundation of the outfit was a white off-shoulder dress chosen for its simplicity and symbolism of the old world (see *Fig.2*). The colour represented openness and new beginnings, while the silhouette referenced traditional pirate attire. It was important that

the outfit felt natural and wearable on campus rather than rigid or costume-like. To balance the softness of the dress, a dark corset-style belt was added to provide structure and definition, symbolizing strength and stability amid uncertainty. A layered chain belt further enhanced the rugged, adventurous quality of the look, reflecting the balance between vulnerability and confidence that the author is learning to navigate.



Fig.2 Illustration of the pirate-inspired character



Fig.3 Bear-themed corset detail.

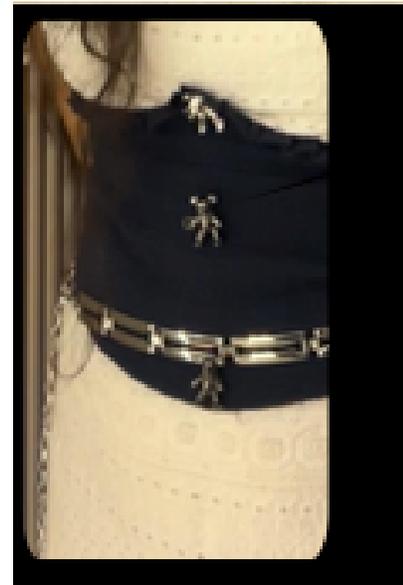


Fig.4 From the Costume

The drawing Fig 2. captures the understated, grounded nature of the character—observant, resilient, and quietly adventurous—serving as a visual foundation for the outfit’s conceptual development. Fig 3. symbolizes familiarity, softness, and reassurance, highlighting how strength can coexist with vulnerability during periods of transition and uncertainty.

Make Up

Makeup was intentionally kept minimal and understated. Dramatic elements were avoided in favour of warm, natural tones that allowed the look to feel lived-in rather than theatrical. This choice emphasized self-embracing over transformation and helped maintain a sense of grounding throughout the experience. Accessories played a significant role in shaping the narrative. The bandana anchored the outfit in pirate imagery while also serving as a symbol of identity. One of the most meaningful details was the bear-themed corset element, which introduced a sense of comfort and familiarity. Incorporating something playful and unexpected represented emotional grounding during a time of uncertainty, highlighting that strength can coexist with softness.



Fig 5. (A) Make up (b) With Shades Accessory

The final photographs captured the emotional tone of the experience. Rather than appearing posed or performative, the images reflect ease, thoughtfulness, and authenticity. Photographs taken with friends were especially significant, emphasizing an important truth: while the pirate metaphor highlights independence, growth rarely occurs in isolation. These represent alliances - friendships and shared experiences that make uncertainty feel less overwhelming and reinforce the idea that exploration is often a collective journey.



Fig.5: Illustration



Fig 6: Shared exploration (a) and (b).



One moment that stood out occurred during a walk to the department on a lightly rainy day. The rain was not heavy enough to stop movement, but it created discomfort. This moment felt symbolic of the author's current stage in life. The rain represented subtle challenges such as stress, doubt, and pressure - elements that may not arrive dramatically but persist nonetheless. Rather than rushing through the moment, the author allowed the experience to unfold

fully, reinforcing the understanding that discomfort is an essential part of growth.

Map

Pirates do not abandon their journey when the weather changes, and students do not stop evolving when the path becomes difficult.

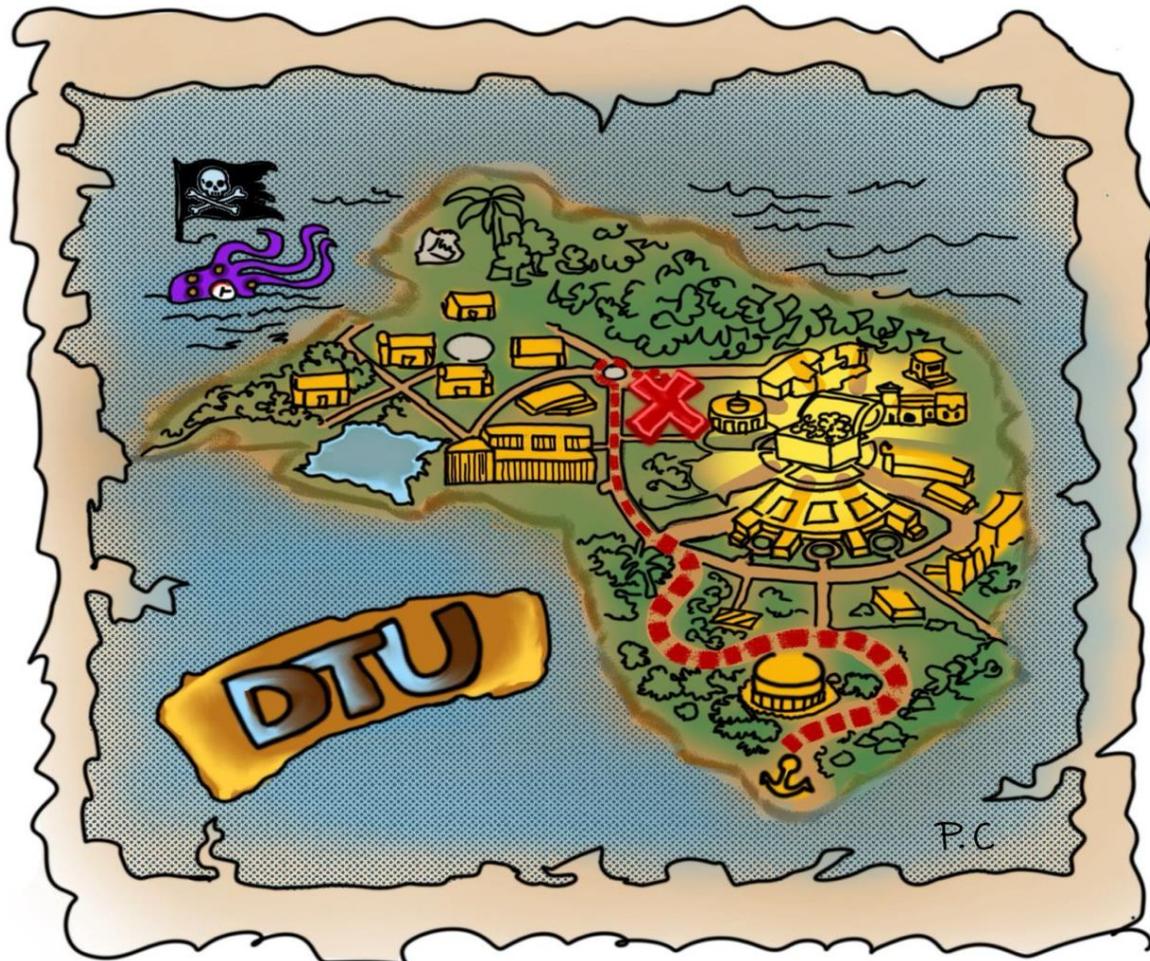


Fig. 6 Pirate map illustration symbolizing journey, exploration, and non-linear growth.

The map reflects the pirate metaphor central to the concept—embracing trial, error, and adaptation—where progress is defined by movement and experience rather than a predetermined destination.

The pirate metaphor is particularly meaningful because it allows room for imperfection. Pirates do not follow linear paths; they learn through experience, trial and error, and adaptation. This perspective offers comfort. Progress does not require having everything planned, only the willingness to keep moving forward. The outfit represents choosing curiosity over fear and movement over stagnation. Wearing it on campus, documenting the process, and reflecting on the experience became a form of experiential learning. While the destination remains uncertain, the journey itself is shaping who the author is becoming.

Conclusion

The pirate-inspired outfit ultimately became more than a stylistic experiment; it functioned as a reflection of an internal journey shaped by uncertainty, growth, and adaptation. Through thoughtful costume design, understated makeup, meaningful accessories, and experiential moments captured in photographs, the project demonstrated how fashion can communicate emotional and psychological states. The experience reinforced that growth does not require certainty, only the courage to continue forward. By embracing discomfort, imperfection, and collaboration, the author found meaning in the process rather than the destination. This exploration highlights how creative expression on campus can become a powerful tool for self-understanding, reminding students that uncertainty is not a weakness, but an essential part of becoming.

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