Rita Solomko

*Homo Feminus*

Research Plan

1. Content and Concept Research

Since my film directly addresses issues around sexism, ageism, representation of women in the media and toxic beauty standards, I drew inspiration for my project from various entertainment outlets such as art exhibitions, television shows, advertisements, fashion magazines, and toys, and I am planning to use them as symbolic structures to reach my audience. For example, one of the first things that appear in my film is the painting “The Luncheon on the Grass” by a French painter Edouard Manet. While it’s masterfully done and alluring, the nature of Manet’s piece appears rather problematic: it depicts a female nude and a scantily dressed female bather on a picnic with two fully dressed men in a rural setting in France. Sadly, this approach to gender representation can be found in countless works of art – visual art has traditionally been seen as a “boys’ club.” Many critics, even today, overlook talented women artists in favor of their male counterparts. This film is my attempt to discuss the gender identity, the sociological aspects that shapes one’s identity, and how mass media creates meaning about gender and plays an important role in shaping the way we understand gender as part of our own identity. There is a wealth of material on how the advertising industry feed off of female insecurities in both the library and on the web, and women have been revealing their experiences of casual sexism for ages. I have already read many articles on those topics and I will continue to do further research/reading prior to production.

My references include:

The documentary film *The Illusionists* by Susie Orbach that examines how global advertising agencies, mass media, cosmetic surgery and the fashion industry are changing the way people around the world define beauty and see themselves.

The documentary *Straight/Curve* by Jenny McQuaile that features interviews with models of all sizes, fashion agents, designers, and photographers all sharing their own stories and perspectives on beauty standards.

*Gender and the Media* by Rosalind Gill (1st Edition, 2007, ISBN-10: 0745619150)

*Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader* by by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez (4th Edition, 2014, ISBN-10: 1452259062)

*Unraveling the “Model Minority” Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth* by Stacey J. Lee (2nd Edition, 2009, ISBN-10: 0807749737)

*Bad Feminist: Essays* by Roxane Gay (2014, ISBN-10: 0062282719)

*We Should All Be Feminists* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015, ISBN-10: 110191176X)

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (reissued in 2009, ISBN-10: 0345514408)

(These pages and articles were visited in the period between 09.01.17 and 12.05.17 and the links were still valid as of 12.06.17):

*Beauty, Body Image, and the Media* by Jennifer S. Mills, Amy Shannon and Jacqueline Hogue

<https://www.intechopen.com/books/perception-of-beauty/beauty-body-image-and-the-media>

*The Role of the Media in Body Image Concerns Among Women: A Meta-Analysis of Experimental and Correlational Studies* by Janet Shibley Hyde, Shelly Grabe, and L. Monique Ward

<https://shellygrabe.sites.ucsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/10/Grabe-Ward-Hyde-Media-Meta-PB-2008.pdf>

*Gendered Media: The Influence of Media on Views of Gender* by Julia T. Wood

<https://www1.udel.edu/comm245/readings/GenderedMedia.pdf>

*Infographic: The International Model Supply Chain*

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/girlmodel/infographic-model-fashion-industry/>

*New York Fashion Week by the Numbers: More Models of Color Are Working*

<https://jezebel.com/5943926/counting-models-of-color-at-new-york-fashion-week-racial-diversity-is-growing>

Mic: *How Fashion “Solved” Its Diversity Problem* (video)

<https://youtu.be/9OfABnH6hGY>

2. Style

I plan to create a multidimensional emblematic piece incorporating video, lighting, photography, and mixed media. My story will tell the story from multiple viewpoints and each person (each woman) will bring something unique to the story, a different layer of personal experience being a woman in today’s society.

My capstone project is an experimental narrated piece that relies heavily on visual content, so the sound design for this film will be mostly non-diegetic: narrator’s commentary, sound effects, and some instrumental music. The camera angles, framing and pace of the editing will vary somewhat between the different subjective viewpoints and perceptions of different characters, emphasizing the differences between them visually. I am striving for the nostalgic, softer look with warm colors, lower contrast, and a bit of grain. The camera motion in my film is mostly emotionally motivated and constantly moves through the scene to gaze/linger on characters. Close-up shots will allow the viewer to experience an intimate connection with the characters, and will make a statement through the intrusion into their personal space. My piece also will include a little bit of animation and some basic effects in selected shots.

3. Technical Research

My technical research will focus on mastering DaVinci Resolve software for color grading and preparing simple motion graphics and sound pieces for my project. I also need some hands-on practical training on operating lights and filters. I will also be looking at experimental/mixed-media pieces for ideas on editing, transitions, subtitles, etc. My plan is for a relatively low-key production with a small crew and mostly natural light.

4. Timeline / Schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Activity |
| October–December 2017 | Basic content research completed  Paperwork/Pre-Production |
| December 2017–January 2018 | Complete content research  Casting  Location scouting  DaVinci Resolve/Avid training |
| January 2018–February 2018 | Script/location revisions, if necessary  Production meetings  Set design/props creation  B-rolls |
| March | Shooting/Editing |
| April-May | Editing/Color grading/Project completion |