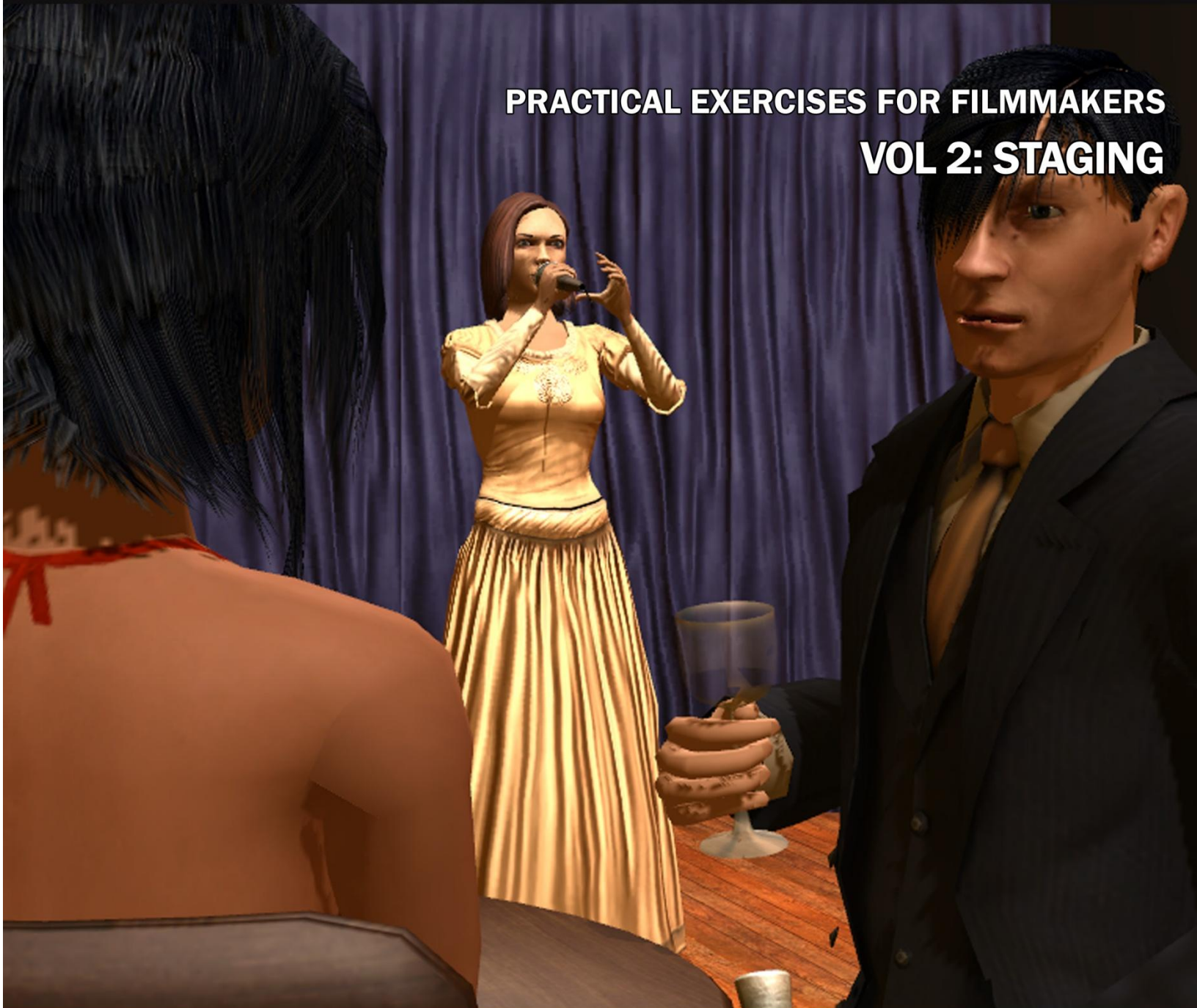


# MAKING BETTER MOVIES

WITH  
**MOVIESTORM**

PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR FILMMAKERS

**VOL 2: STAGING**



**MATT KELLAND**

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***"A really good primer for any film student."***

*Andrew Segal, Carshalton College*

***"This series is useful to all filmmakers - not only Moviestorm users."***

*Michael Cornetto, Simply Scripts*

***'If someone goes through the book and does the exercises, they're going to come out a better filmmaker, no question.'***

*Hugh Hancock, Guerilla Showrunner*

# FOREWORD

**by Phil South**

When I was asked to write the foreword to the *Making Better Movies With Moviestorm* series, I jumped at the chance for two reasons. One is that it was Matt Kelland asking me, the other is that I love a chance to talk about movies. Ask anyone. Ignore their eye rolling, they always do that. It's a sign of their deep fondness for me.

Matt and I have been friends for many years and I often think that one of the reasons that we are still friends after all these years is that he is one of the very few people I've ever met who cares as much about films as I do.

I recall the genesis of Moviestorm very well. It was called Machinemascope back then, and the whole reason it got created in the first place was to answer the question, "is it possible to make movies on a home computer". Of course we now know the answer to that question. It is, and not only is it possible but many thousands of people have welcomed the chance to make their own films, for fun, for education and personal development and for profit.

The problem though, as you're probably aware, is that merely producing great tools and putting them cheaply and easily in the hands of anyone who wants to use them does not guarantee good work. You can hand anyone on Earth a page layout program like InDesign or a music sequencer like Logic, or even a video editing software like Final Cut Pro, but you can't make what they produce any good. You rely on their talent and experience to make good software produce great work.

Now there are a lot of safety nets in Moviestorm, which correct most of the common mistakes that beginning movie makers always make. A lot of composition and lighting stuff has been taken care of, allowing you to focus (pun intended) on the job in hand. And no, the job is not making movies. Nope, the job in hand is telling stories.

It doesn't matter if what you are making is factual rather than fictional. News editors talk about stories too. And a story has a beginning, middle and end, and the structure helps you to "get" what the creator is talking about and enjoy the story they are telling. (And hopefully go out and buy all their other films, but hey – that's just a suggestion.)

But how do you get good at telling stories with cinema? It comes down to experience, of course, and experience comes through practice. So how do you get experience in film making, when it takes so much to make even the simplest piece of film? You have to find actors and crew, there are lights and cameras to buy, writers to bully, locations to find... and there are some scenes you just can't film at all without a crazy budget. It's a problem filmmakers have faced for a hundred years. But now there's a solution, in the form of Moviestorm.

You see, Moviestorm doesn't just allow you to make finished movies if you are already an accomplished storyteller. It allows you to grow your own talent by putting in movie making hours.

As I said earlier, in the world of filmmaking, practice usually involves a lot of equipment, money and mostly time, both yours and other people's. It's hard for most people to put in the hours. It's a lot like a pilot who hasn't got easy access to a plane. So what does he do? He books time in a simulator. Even if a trainee pilot has regular access to a plane, he still books a lot of time in a simulator because it's cheaper and safer than using a real plane. He can practice whenever it's convenient, and by logging enough hours he improves his skills almost automatically.

The same is true of any technical ability which has some art to it. The more you do it, the better you get. It's a creative muscle memory. It's the same with creativity and mastery of your storytelling chops. The more you do it, the better you will get. Shots flow to shots in a seamless hypnotic glide, because you know what you are doing and you know exactly where to go at any one time, in the service of your story.

This excellent series of books will guide your development. In each of the carefully structured and easy to follow exercises Matt leads you through all the movie making tricks you will need, from the most common to the most difficult. It's an easy regime to follow: just read what's on the page and do it. Then do the next one, and the next, and work your way through Pretty soon you'll be flying through them and your mastery of both Moviestorm and film technique will grow.

Most importantly, you can please yourself and as to when you log the hours in your virtual movie-making cockpit. Take your time, and stagger the sessions across a number of weeks when it's convenient rather than try do it all at once. Don't make the mistake of thinking that all you need to do is read how it's done. You've got to actually do the exercises. Try all the variants, review your work critically, and then do the follow-ups. The whole point is that when you start filming for real you've done this so many times that you're instinctively falling back on hundreds of hours of experience.

Always remember, learning to make films to tell stories is not about theory. It's about practice. If you want to get good at telling stories with films, there is absolutely no substitute for putting in the hours. I won't scare you by telling you how many hours they say it takes to become a genius, but it's a lot. Genius will take time, but getting good at telling your own stories just became a lot easier.

Phil South

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# INTRODUCTION

This series of books grew out of a selection of articles I wrote for the Moviestorm blog in 2009-2011 on how you can use Moviestorm to practice film techniques. Several people contacted us to ask whether we had any specific examples of how to do it. I realized I'd talked a lot of theory, but very little practical information. I therefore decided to put together this collection of simple exercises you can do to learn individual techniques.

There will be several volumes in the series, covering a range of techniques including camerawork, editing, lighting, sound, and more. This second volume covers staging - what actually happens on the set.

These exercises aren't specific to making movies with Moviestorm. They're standard techniques that apply to all forms of film. For example, one exercise in this volume requires you to shoot the same scene with and without extras. One from the previous volume on camerawork focuses on filming a scene without moving cameras, and then filming it again but allowing the camera to move. You can take what you've learned to any other film-making medium - full CG animation, live action, or whatever.

The main advantage of using Moviestorm is that you can practice whenever it's convenient for you, and you don't need to assemble a cast and crew each time. And if you're not happy with what you've done, you can easily go back and do it again and again until you're satisfied - reshoots are easy!

The other advantage of using Moviestorm is that you're not constrained by the usual problems of the student filmmaker. You don't have to worry about shutting down city streets to film in the middle of Manhattan or London. You can have a huge crowd of extras. Use cranes, helicopters or other equipment. Film stunt scenes, car chases, and explosions without worrying about insurance or cost. It's a versatile tool that will give you a chance to learn the kind of things that most novice filmmakers can't ever do in real life.

The exercises are all fairly adaptable. Generally, you won't need any particular packs or content: any version of Moviestorm will do. Most of them work on the same principle: take a single scene, and film it in several different ways. You can use the same scene over and over again if you want - I often use a short scene from one of Per Holmes's training DVDs, and another, slightly longer one, from a parody soap opera I was working on some years ago. This is actually a pretty good way of working, as you can focus explicitly on the one aspect you're practicing, and reuse much of what you've previously done; sets, characters, recorded dialog, and so on. You'll also develop an increasing empathy with the scene, and you'll find each take getting better and better, rather like a musician practicing the same piece over and over. When you've worked your way through several exercises, you can compare all the different versions with your first attempt, and see what you've achieved.

This isn't a substitute for practicing with real kit. You'll still need to get familiar with real cameras and lights, and you'll have to get used to working with real actors and crew on real sets. Practicing this way simply gets you used to knowing what you're going to shoot and developing a sense of how it's going to look when it's cut into your final film.

Although most of the book is written primarily for directors, it's useful for others as well. It's an easy method for editors to generate the footage they need to practice cutting scenes in many different ways. It's a good way for scriptwriters to understand how their written words can be portrayed on the screen. It's a useful way for camera operators to practice filming, or for producers to understand how creative choices affect the production costs.

Most importantly, though, it's a way to ensure that when you start making movies for real, you'll know exactly what you're doing, and you won't be wasting everyone else's time and money trying to figure out the basics. As we're fond of saying at Moviestorm, "shoot first, ask questions later" is the maxim of the unprepared filmmaker, and "fix it in post" is just another way of making trouble for your editor.

# EXERCISES

## How to use this book

The book is set out in a workbook format. Each exercise uses a standard structure:

**Technique:** what you're going to focus on

**Scenario:** what type of scene works best for this

**Exercise:** what you do

**Review:** you critically analyze your work and see how the different versions compare

**Follow-up exercises:** more things you can try to develop this technique

In the first volume of the series, we focused on camerawork and how your choice of shots affects your story. This volume is concerned more with what happens on the set and what you are actually shooting.

Of course, camerawork is still critically important, and you will get more from this volume if you've already completed some of the exercises in the previous volume (available at <http://is.gd/2ZrjLs>). The aim is to combine the two skills, and understand the relationship between what you are filming and what the viewer sees.

### To get the best from this book, it's important that you do two things.

First, you must actually do the exercises.

Reading them won't make you a better film-maker any more than reading about sports will make you an athlete. While developing *Moviestorm*, I've shot literally hundreds of hours of animated footage over the last few years. Looking back at the things I made early on, the improvement is obvious. Now, when I need to film something like a simple dialog or a walk, I don't waste time. As I read the script, I instinctively know how I want to film it. Camera angles and moves, cuts, staging, lighting, and even sound come alive in my head. These days I don't even make a storyboard; I simply go straight to *Moviestorm* and block out a rough version - it's faster and more powerful. That kind of fluency comes from having shot the same type of scenes over and over again.

Second, you must be super-critical with yourself when it comes to the reviews.

The aim isn't to complete all the exercises as fast as possible. It's to learn from them and find ways to improve. In most cases, there are no right or wrong ways to shoot these scenes (although there are accepted conventions it's useful to be familiar with). It's about trying out different things to see what happens. Even if they don't work, you've learned something. So don't just give yourself a pat on the back and move on. Be picky. Find the things you don't like. Ask yourself if that scene could possibly be any better. At some point, you won't find anything more you can do to it. So move on, but then come back to it later when you've practiced some new techniques. I guarantee you'll see new ways to film the scene.

# DEEP STAGING

## Technique

**Create shots that make maximum use of the space by having main characters in both the extreme foreground and background.**

Deep staging is a compositional technique that literally “adds depth” to your movie. One of the early exponents of this was Orson Welles in his groundbreaking *Citizen Kane*. Many of the shots in that movie include characters in the far distance as well as near to the camera, which has four effects. Firstly, it gives the impression of a huge space, which differentiated *Kane* from movies that looked as though they were shot on a small set. This adds immensely to the production value. Secondly, it creates emotional distance between the characters; they appear isolated and detached. Thirdly, it creates an interesting visual composition, since one character is so much smaller than the other. Lastly, it enables the viewer to focus intimately on just one of the characters by bringing their facial expressions right to the front.

In the first volume of this series, *Basic Camerawork*, we used foreground objects to create an elementary form of deep staging. Deep staging for characters works in a slightly different way; the foreground character is not just there for visual balance, but is a key part of the story. The background character is usually in much longer shot, which presents challenges for lighting, set design, and costuming if the viewer is to be able to distinguish them clearly. The camera must also keep both characters in focus, unlike filming scenes with extras in the background. Finally, there is a challenge for the actors; the foreground actor is reliant on facial emotion, while the background actor has to use more expansive body movements. This creates a huge contrast which can look awkward if not handled well.



*Left: a basic deep staging setup, with one character in extreme close shot and the other in long shot. Center: a wide-angle lens allows more of the set to be shown and enhances the effects. Right: by changing the lighting on the front and rear characters, you can direct the viewer's eye to the two key parts of the shot.*

Use a dialog scene in a large interior set.

# DEEP STAGING

Film the scene with a conventional conversation staging.

Film it again, but use deep staging to place one character in the foreground.

## Review

How does the deep staging affect the way the viewer understands the scene?

Does the background character still feel significant?

What do you need to do in terms of lighting, set design, and placement to ensure that the background character is distinguishable?

How loud does the background character's audio need to be? Is it realistically quiet or at the same volume as the foreground character?

Is this staging "realistic"? Is this a way people would normally converse?

What sort of scenes benefit from deep staging?

How does deep staging constrain the foreground actor's movements?

How does the acting style of the foreground and background actors differ in the way they convey emotion?

## Followup exercises

Film it again, but with the other character in the foreground. What difference does this make to the scene?

Deep stage a three-person conversation. Put two characters in the foreground, two in the background, or all three at different distances.

Can you deep stage action scenes? What sort of scene would work for this?

# PLANES OF ACTION

## Technique

**Have two things going on simultaneously at different distances.**

This is a further variant on deep staging. However, instead of having just a conversation between foreground and background, you will have two different things happening at the same time. Typically this consists of dialog in the foreground and some sort of activity in the background. For example, a man talks to a cop in the street, while behind them the paramedics are rushing into a house.

This has several important effects. First, it condenses the scene, since you're now showing the viewer two things at once instead of showing them one after the other. Secondly, it creates an interesting visual composition, as there's plenty to look at. However, and perhaps most importantly, it creates complexity in the story-telling, as the viewer isn't necessarily sure where to look. When several things are happening, you're asking the viewer to assess which is most important, even if the two elements appear unrelated. The result is that the viewer becomes increasingly involved in the story: they are looking around the shots, making judgments about what's significant.

Controlling this complexity is the main art of using planes of action. When watching a scene staged this way, the viewer could potentially react in any of the following ways:

*"I just noticed something going on in the background that's probably significant. I'm smart."*

*"Wow, you can clearly see that happening in the background. I totally missed that the first time I watched it. That's neat!"*

*"I was too busy watching what was happening in the background and missed what they were talking about."*

*"What the hell was going on there?"*

Any of the first three reactions can be good: it just depends on how you want your viewer to react. Sometimes you want them to feel smart; sometimes you want them to feel outsmarted. The "hiding in plain view" trick works well for mysteries and thrillers, where you put something in the background but misdirect the viewer so they don't notice it. The challenge is to direct their attention to one or both of the two elements as you wish. You can do this using focus, lighting, and movement. The human eye is naturally attracted to movement, particularly contrary movement, so you can draw someone to notice something by making it move. The effect is magnified if you have things moving in opposite directions.

The risk is that by adding visual complexity you end up overwhelming the viewer and you end up with the fourth reaction. Unless you are deliberately setting out to create a chaotic image, you need to approach this technique with elegance and clarity.

This is easiest in an exterior set where you have plenty of space to work with. The scene should include dialog and some additional background activity.

# PLANES OF ACTION

Film the scene initially cutting between the two elements.

Film it again combining the two elements into one shot.



*You could cut between the officer speaking to the reporter and the cops arresting the perp, or you can combine them into one shot. Framing the background action between the two speakers creates a "window" the viewer is looking through. Framing them on different sides of the screen requires the viewer to focus on one side or the other. When shooting in low light, it can be hard to ensure that the background action is visible.*

## Review

How does using this technique affect the story?

Is it clear where the viewer should be looking?

Can you control at what point you can direct the viewer from the foreground to the background and back again?

How do you frame the shots so you can see both planes clearly?

How does this affect the frequency and type of cuts?

How do you balance the sound between the two planes?

What kind of scenes work well for this technique?

## Followup exercises

Use physical barriers such as doors or windows to clearly delineate the front and back planes.

Create scenes with three or more simultaneous planes of activity.

Stage the scene so the main focus is on the back plane.

# BIG SET, SMALL SET

## Technique

**Shoot & edit the same scene on two different sets and see how the physical size of the location affects the way you film the scene.**

You may have little control over the location you're going to film in, so you need to be conversant with the constraints imposed by the physical size of the set. You may need very different choreography, and this may affect both your camerawork and editing decisions.



*Small set: you don't have much room to show characters entering, and you can't get a much longer shot than this. (By some standards, this isn't a small set: try filming in a typical 6' x 10' bathroom.)*



*Medium set: you have more space to shoot an entrance, and you can easily add in extras.*



*Large set: you can use extreme long shots, as well as cranes or other equipment.*

Use a scene in a single location – either interior or exterior. You can use either an action or a dialog scene, as they will give you different challenges. The exercise will work best if you have characters entering and/or exiting the scene, so that you have to decide how to cover that movement.

## BIG SET, SMALL SET

Film the scene on any set you like. Shoot and edit it however you think it would look best, assuming no constraints on the size of the set. If the set is large enough, add in extras if you want them, or you could use vehicles for an exterior set. Make use of long, wide master shots or long tracking shots to make maximum use of the space available to you.

Now create a new set on a similar theme. It should be at most half the size of the previous one – go for an even smaller one if you want a bigger challenge. Dress it appropriately, removing any props that don't fit. Film the scene again. You may need to remove extras if there's no room for them. Adjust the choreography and camerawork as required.

### Review

Which version do you like better, and why?

How did the change in set affect the story-telling, specifically the way the viewer perceives the characters?

What did you need to change in the two versions?

Did the set size affect the duration? Can you change that with editing?

Look at some selected stills. How was your visual composition affected?

The larger set is likely to have more shots of characters moving around the set. How does this affect the scene? Does this affect whether you're using moving, tracking, or fixed cameras?

Work out a rough shooting script. Did you incur any extra production costs in either set (such as extras, additional props, camera setups, etc)? How much would it have added to the production time (and budget, if you feel so inclined) to use a larger set?

What production value was added by the larger set?

### Followup exercises

Pick a small part of your larger set and film the scene just on that. Now what do you get?

Film a scene with a large cast (20 or more people). Can you make a small set look like a much larger one by creative use of camera angles, lenses, and positioning?

Use a huge set, and see what options this gives you.

# ICONIC LOCATIONS VS GENERIC LOCATIONS

## Technique

### Film a scene in a well-known place

Movies frequently use well-known locations for three reasons. First, they may be central to the plot; for example, it may be essential that a scene takes place in the White House, or in London, or at the Hoover Dam. Second, it adds production value. Third, it gives the viewer something to recognize and creates a context. John Ford's Western movies frequently used Monument Valley as locations, and that has now become a staple image of that genre. Many films use landmarks or buildings such as the Pyramids, Griffith Observatory, or the Washington Monument.

In some cases, the locations are tightly integrated into the scene: a shoot-out at the Statue of Liberty or a chase through the Louvre adds something to the scene. In other cases, the locations are merely scene-setters and are mostly in the background. This is often just a short cut to tell the viewer where we are: if we can see Big Ben through the window, we know we're in London. If the next scene has a view of the Eiffel Tower, we know we've now moved to Paris, even though we may be in very similar offices or hotel rooms.

The location may not be significant or necessary. The shoot-out could work just as well anywhere in New York; it need not be in that place. It just looks cool. In the office scenes, they could equally well be in Manchester and Toulouse, or it may not even matter where they are. Adding iconic locations like this is a trick frequently used both by low-budget productions to appear higher budget, and by high-budget productions to create memorable, trailer-worthy sequences.



*Left: scene shot in a generic street location. (This is Norwich, UK). Center: the same scene shot in Trafalgar Square, London. Right: the same scene shot at night near Tower Bridge, London. The street lamp was added for effect.*

Almost any scene will work well for this exercise.

# ICONIC LOCATIONS VS GENERIC LOCATIONS

Film the scene in a generic set.

Film the scene again in a well-known place. You can do this easily in Moviestorm by using a photographic backdrop of the location. You can film directly in front of it (like the old Hollywood back projection technique) or make the backdrop visible through a window.

**Note: in a later volume on editing, we will cover establishing shots in more detail.**

## Review

What does the location add to the scene? What do you lose by not having it?

Was the location in the script? Was it essential to the plot?

Did you have to film the scene differently to make best use of the location?

How much of the location did you have to show?

What would be involved in actually shooting the scene in that location in terms of budget, travel, permits, etc? How could you fake it using CG or other techniques?

## Followup exercises

How much can you fake it completely? Can you use a photograph of one city and convince the viewer it's another?

# FAKE A SET

## Technique

**Create the illusion of one seamless set by splicing together shots taken on different sets.**

In an ideal world, you can find (or create) your perfect set and simply film in that space. In practice, however, you may well find that reality isn't that convenient, and you need to construct an artificial set from carefully edited and well planned shots.

If you're filming in a studio, each room may be a separate set, even if your script calls for them to be physically connected. When filming on location, you can adjust the actual spatial geography to create the set you need; in extreme cases, your shots may be taken in completely different locations.

As a simple example, you can have a character walk down a corridor on one set, and go through a door. The next shot shows him entering a room on another set, but the viewer perceives them as part of the same space, and infers the physical relationship, as long as the continuity does not do anything to break that illusion.

Here's a more complex example from *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*. We see Robin approaching a castle; this shot was filmed at Highclere Castle. We then cut to a brief shot of Marian by a doorway, which was filmed at Old Wardour Castle. Robin and Marian then have a brief conversation; this shot was filmed at Hulne Priory. Finally they go inside together; the rest of the scene was filmed in Alnwick Castle. The viewer, unless they are intimately familiar with English castles – and are paying more attention to the set than the story – won't notice the discontinuity.

In order to make this work, you need to conceal the join by ensuring that lighting, sound, and camera angles all match, and by ensuring that the actors' movements are consistent. It is also critical to make sure that you don't have mismatches between details of the set: if your character is entering a house from a tree-lined suburban cul-de-sac, you can't have a view of a terraced street through the window when you get inside. You also need to try to match the weather: it can't be cloudy in one shot and sunny in another. (This is something you often see in the "goofs" section, as it's next to impossible for the director to control. Judicious use of close-up is the best way to cover this.)



*This shows the same set used in the Doorways exercise below. The two parts of the set are not physically connected. You need to be careful when filming the character passing through the door that you do not show the discontinuity: the center shot is unacceptable, and you need to shoot from a different angle.*

Use a scene that involves a complex location and the characters moving around it. A dialog scene is good for this, as it provides a useful way to cover the joins between sets. You will need to build two sets in Moviestorm; you can build them as disconnected locations in a single scene, or you can build them as two separate scenes and cut them together at the editing stage. Using a single scene is easier; using two scenes is more challenging but a better representation of what's involved in a real shoot.

# FAKE A SET

Film the scene and make it appear that the separate locations are part of the same space.

## Review

Does the join work effectively?

What did you have to do in terms of sound, music, editing and lighting to make the effect work?

How do you ensure that character motion is in a consistent direction? What happens if you don't?

How did you have to film it?

How much planning did you do?

What advantages and disadvantages are there to using this technique? When would you use it?

## Followup exercises

Join three or more locations into a single set.

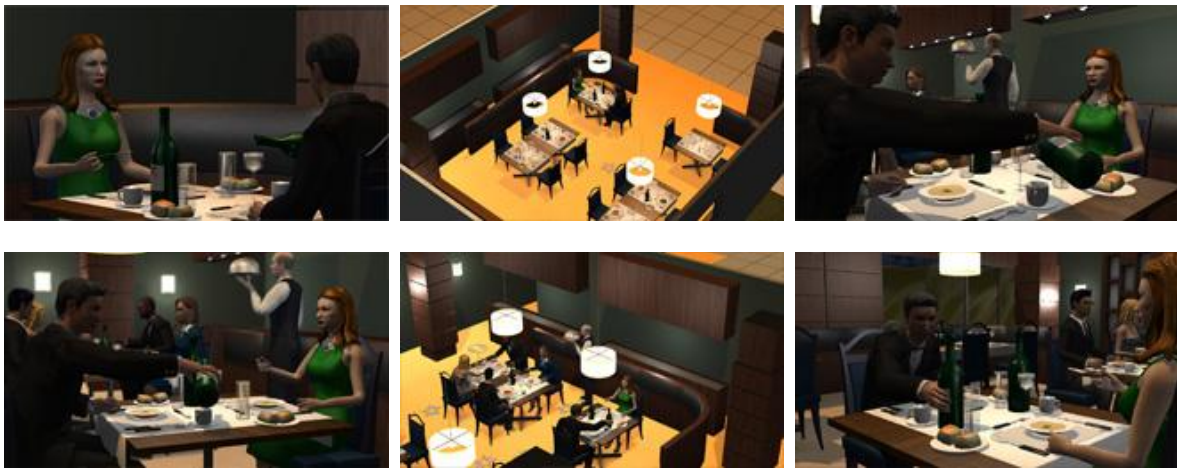
Create a scene where you cut between actors in two locations repeatedly; for example, one actor outside a house trying to get in, intercut with shots of another actor inside, but maintain the illusion that they are the same place.

# USING EXTRAS

## Technique

**Film the same scene with and without extras, and see how that changes the feel of the scene and the way you shoot it.**

One of the things that adds realism, especially to exteriors and public locations, is the addition of extras. However, this requires a different approach to a scene so that the extras add interest but without interfering with the main characters or plot.



*Top left and center: without extras, the scene has to be shot towards a wall to avoid showing an empty restaurant. Right: you can add in just a couple of extras if you are careful with the camera angles.*

*Bottom: adding in several extras allows you to shoot the scene from the opposite angle, into the restaurant. Even so, you may be restricted in your camera angles if you don't have enough extras to fill the set.*

Take a scene in a single location – either interior or exterior. A street scene works well, or else a public location such as a restaurant or hotel lobby. Dialog scenes work best for this exercise.

# USING EXTRAS

Film the scene with just the protagonists.

Now film it again in the same set, but this time include several extras (as many as you need, but more than 10 is probably unnecessary for this exercise). Change the choreography if you need to, and change the set dressing, but work with the same basic set as far as possible. Reshoot and re-edit it any way you feel appropriate.

## Review

What extras did you choose, and why? Did you have any cliché characters (cop, janitor, nun, waiter) or were they all nondescript?

How did adding extras affect the story-telling and the feel of the scene & location? Did you use them for reaction shots? Did you use them as transitional characters to get into or out of the scene?

What did you need to change in the two versions?

How was the space affected: did the set feel too large or too small when you changed the number of characters?

What effect did it have on the sound design?

Look at some selected stills. How was your visual composition affected?

Did you focus on the extras, or did you just use them as human set dressing?

Did this affect the duration?

Work out a rough shooting script. Did you incur any extra production costs in either version (such as extras, additional props, camera setups, etc)?

## Followup exercises

Repeat the exercise changing the number of extras until you find the best number for the scene.

If you're filming an exterior scene, add in vehicles and see what effect that has.

Try it different ways using the extras as if they're important people in the story, and as if they're just uninvolved passers-by. For example, in a hotel lobby, you can have the concierge appear to be listening in to the conversation or not.

Change the extras' costumes and give them different roles to see what the effect is.

Experiment with the sound design to include or exclude sound from the extras. Try putting in additional sound to imply more extras than you can see.

# CHANGE OF PACE

## Technique

**Film a scene in different ways to make it all slower or faster.**

Keeping your viewer's interest for a sustained period of time means not only having an interesting story, but also mixing up the way you tell it. Some scenes need to be fast, others need to be more slow and languid. The balance between them and the frequency at which you switch determines the overall pace of the film. Much of this will come from the script, but you can also amplify this with direction.

In *Vol 1: Basic Camerawork* we looked at ways in which to make a scene take more or less time. This, although superficially similar, is a very different exercise. You can change the duration of a scene by adding in or taking out chunks of time or by adding in extra stage business. Changing pace involves doing the same thing at a different speed, or using pauses for dramatic effect. Slowing down a scene can act as a breather after an action scene prior to some exposition, or create an air of menace before an explosive action sequence.

In a Western, for example, a gunman might stride into a saloon, walk to the bar, and order a whiskey. You could slow this right down by having him pause at the doorway and look around before entering, using dramatic backlighting to create an iconic image and POV shots to set the scene. He then walks in, slowly. Shots of his boots on the floor, with the sound of clinking spurs, create a slow, measured pace. He then arrives at the bar, and looks around again at the other patrons. Reaction shots add to the atmosphere. He nonchalantly adopts a posture leaning on the bar, and there's a short, silent interaction with the barkeep. Finally, maybe a minute after he's first arrived, he orders his drink. The viewer is now ready for him to start asking questions. It's the exact same script, but it's a very different interpretation.

You can do the same with dialog by inserting pauses and reaction shots. You will normally want your actors to slow down their delivery as well; simply adding pauses in post will seem unnatural and staged.

Increasing the pace of a scene usually involves cutting more often, using fast moving cameras, and using more body language. For example, in a scene involving a group of people planning their escape, you can use camera movement and actor movement to make it seem hurried and under pressure.



*Slow the scene down by using an insert on the statue at the start and allowing the main character to enter. Add in a shot on an extra, and use a long shot to both emphasize the space and allow time for the character to cross the park slowly.*

Use a dialog scene. You can do this with minimal dialog and adding non-speaking elements, or with full dialog.

# CHANGE OF PACE

Film the scene at a “normal” pace.

Then film it again, slowing it down or speeding it up as appropriate.

## Review

How does this affect the way the scene comes across? Does the viewer perceive the characters differently?

What did the characters do differently?

How did the camerawork change? Did you use the same shots and cutting sequence?

What extra material did you show or cut out?

How was the duration affected? Is the scene now too long or too short?

How does music and sound affect the pacing?

## Followup exercises

Put scenes into context by filming a sequence of scenes and changing pace between them.

Change pace mid-scene: start with a slow set-up and then turn it into an action scene, or start with an argument and then have the participants resolve it and slowly reconcile.

Change the pace of a scene without changing the duration.

Change the pace of an action scene: try creating a slow-motion fight scene, for example.

# DRAMATIC CONVERSATIONS

## Technique

**Film a conversation in a way that looks good on screen but would be unnatural in real life.**

In *Vol 1, Basic Camerawork*, we covered the standard methods of filming a conversation. The conventional staging for this is to have the two characters more or less facing each other, typically three to six feet apart. This is the way people generally talk in real life; it's just polite. However, this isn't always what you want for films. The main criterion is what looks good on screen, even if that means the actors are in positions they wouldn't normally adopt.

A typical example is where one character is speaking to another's back. This enables you to show both characters' faces straight on, giving the viewer a clear look at their emotions. Seen from the side or in long shot, this would look extremely odd, and the implication would be that one character is ignoring the other. When presented from the front, it merely indicates a level of emotional detachment. This is often staged by having one character staring out of a window.

You can create a different emotional state with the actors in the same positions by having the front character turn their head back to face the rear character: this indicates both emotional detachment and engagement.

Another common unnatural staging is to have characters deliberately facing away from each other. This can create a striking visual image, particularly if you have one character in profile and one full face. This would normally suggest that they do not wish to interact, but in film it does not necessarily have the same implication.



*Conventionally, you would place the two characters facing each other. By placing the man facing away from the woman, you add emotional distance between them, and also allow the viewer to see both faces. For an even more dramatic conversation, place two people well away from each other and facing away (see the Deep Staging exercise).*

Use a dialog scene.

# DRAMATIC CONVERSATIONS

Film the conversation using conventional staging.

Film it again using unnatural staging.

## Review

Does the staging feel odd to the viewer? If so, does it come across as a stylistic choice or a mistake?

What does the staging add to the perception of the relationship between the characters?

How do you get the characters to arrive in those positions without it seeming odd?

Do you need to keep absolute continuity between the master shot and the unnatural shots? How can you use set design to make the actors appear to be in sensible places?

What types of dialog call for this staging?

Does this work equally well with static and moving cameras?

What can you do with lighting to enhance the shot?

What framings work well? Does it work better with close or long shots?

## Followup exercises

Experiment with unnatural staging for conversations involving three or more people.

# GOING THROUGH DOORWAYS

## Technique

**Film someone walking through a doorway.**

Going through a doorway is a common piece of acting. There are many ways to film it, each of which the viewer may interpret slightly differently.



*Arriving at the door: front view shows the character's expression. Rear view shows where she's going. Foot shot makes an interesting change and adds mystery.*



*Opening the door: seen from outside continues the same POV and suggests **going** in. Seen from inside switches POV and suggests **coming** in. The insert on the door handle adds a moment of tension.*



*Entering the room: rear view brings the viewer in with the character. The master shot sets up the new location. A one-shot on the person inside establishes them as an important character in this scene.*

You can do this using a scene with no dialog. You'll need a location with a doorway: either a corridor leading into a room or a street leading to the entrance of a house. You'll need sets for both sides of the doorway, so you can do this as one single set or two sets which you cut between.

# GOING THROUGH DOORWAYS

Film a single character walking along the street or corridor and into a house or room. Film it several different ways, using different shot sizes. You should end up with at least 12 different versions of the same piece of action.

- Static camera on the doorway as the character walks into shot
- Static camera panning with the character to track them to the doorway
- Dolly to keep the character in frame
- Follow the character through the door
- Precede the character through the door
- Cut to the inside as the character walks through the door

## Review

Compare all the versions. What feels different between them?

What difference does it make whether you show the door opening from the inside, the outside, or cut on the action?

Do you need to do anything to tell the viewer where the character has just gone?

How many camera setups does it take in each case? Which is easiest to achieve?

What physical constraints might affect how you film this movement?

What issues do you face when using two separate sets rather than one complete set?

## Followup exercises

Have someone inside open the door. How does this affect your shot selection and editing?

Have a brief dialog in the doorway before the person enters.

Have two people conversing as they enter a room. How do you film this?

How would you shoot the movement without actually showing the door opening by using well chosen shots, editing, and sound? (e.g. reaching for the door then cutting to a shot of the interior)

# ACTION SCENES

## Technique

**Film an action scene so that it's clear what's happening.**

Filming convincing action scenes is one of the hardest things a filmmaker has to do. It's not enough simply to show action happening on the screen. The filmmaker has to make the viewer feel involved, and give them a sense of the tension. Simply delivering an effects-laden adrenaline jolt isn't sufficient either: if the viewer doesn't care about the outcome, they won't experience the emotional ride you want them to have.

This has to come mostly from a combination of staging, acting, camerawork and editing, but a lot also comes from audio. Music and sound effects help the viewer to become more than a spectator.

A major challenge when filming action scenes is to establish spatial continuity and awareness. Occasionally you may choose to disorient the viewer, but most of the time, you need to ensure that they know what is happening and where. This requires close observance of the 180° rule and skilful use of long shots to set the scene, interspersed with close-ups and inserts on specific bits of action.



*The long shot sets the scene so the viewer can orient themselves. The over the shoulder shot allows you to see both the shot and the result. The one-shot is dramatic, but doesn't show us what he's shooting at: this needs to be carried by editing. The shot on the cowering man either reminds us he's important - if we've seen the character before - or adds extra tension.*

Use a gun fight between two people. For this exercise, use an interesting location, and make it a shoot-out, not an assassination or murder.

# ACTION SCENES

Film the scene using mostly long shots with minimal editing and minimal actor movement.

Film the scene again, but use more close-ups, faster edits, and more actor movement; you may wish to add in an element of chase.

## Review

Compare the two versions. Which is more exciting? Which is easier to follow?

How much time do you spend on one-shots, how much on two-shots, and how much on other shots?

What difference does it make using moving or static cameras?

How consistent do you need to be with the action to create an exciting sequence? Can you violate strict continuity and get away with it? (For example, firing too many shots without reloading, or moving the action around the set without showing it?)

How "realistic" is your scene? Is that how people would fight in real life?

How do you work dialog into the scene, and what does it add?

If this was live action, where would you need to employ professional stunt crew?

## Followup exercises

Reshoot the scene and make the viewer root for the other guy – without changing the script or the audio.

Add in extras and film the scene in a crowded location.

Add in a third main character who doesn't participate in the fight (typically trying to hide or escape, but may be a boss or neutral observer).

Film a fist fight, a large scale gun battle, a chase scene, and a car chase.

Experiment with slow motion.

Mismatch the audio and use slow, evocative music over a high-speed sequence.

# TIME COMPRESSION

## Technique

**Shoot a scene or sequence in such a way that time is distorted, but without this being obvious to the viewer or affecting the flow of the story.**

One common film editing trick is to cut the film in such a way that parts of time are removed, so you can get quickly from one setup to another, but without really appearing to do so.

One typical example is if you have a person entering a large room. It would take too long to film them walking the full length of it to get to their mark, so you cut away during the walk and cut back when they are almost in place. If you mask the cut with dialogue, the viewer probably won't spot that they couldn't have travelled that distance that quickly.

Another example is filming conversation in three different locations as people are travelling; one person speaks a line as they leave one location, the response comes as they are walking down a street, and the conversation ends as they enter the next location. The viewer is focused on the words and simply accepts the travel without noticing the logical jumps.



*This conversation can be seamlessly carried on between three locations as they leave the office, walk down the street, and arrive in the coffee shop. Note that the relative positions of the women and their direction of motion is preserved between shots.*

This works best with a dialog scene where the characters have to go from one place to another. Taking either of the examples above, you can shoot in one large location or several different locations. It works best when there are several characters, though you could do it with one character speaking on a phone.

# TIME COMPRESSION

Film the scene in real time. If it's in a single location, fix it so that the characters move between marks in the actual time taken to make the movement. If it's in several locations, film it so that the conversation takes place without being cut.

Now re-edit it and re-shoot it with time compression, so that the action takes place faster.

## Review

How does this affect the flow of the scene?

Does it appear to be a goof? Does the viewer say "huh, how'd they get there so quick?"

Does it make a difference whether you cut during a line or between lines?

In the case of a single location, does it make a difference what you cut away to? Another speaker, another object, or a different view?

In the case of a single location, when should you use master shots and when should you use close-ups for effective masking?

Did you use the same camera angles and movements for both versions? If not, which work better for each version?

What issues do you have with foley to make the footsteps sound continuous?

In the case of multiple locations, how do you cope with different ambience between sets?

How much time can you lose using this technique?

When is it appropriate to use this technique? Why not just film everything in real time as if it were live or documentary television?

## Followup exercises

Experiment with more scenes to see where you can add more movement without adding time or the viewer noticing.

# CHANGE OF TIME

## Technique

**Indicate the passage of hours, days, months or years as quickly as possible.**

Many movies include a piece in the story where a significant amount of time passes. In order to avoid confusing the viewer, you need to tell them that this has happened. One easy solution is to use on-screen text to say something like "Five years later". However, this can appear clumsy, and it can be more elegant to use some visual device to indicate the same thing.

One of the most common tricks is to use a calendar or clock. This has the same effect as on-screen text, but is a little less stark. For short durations, typically hours, you can use a series of shots of a character in the same set: sat at a desk, in the chair, lying in bed, and so on. This often signifies impatience. Weather is a good way to signify months passing: through a window, summer gives way to fall, then winter, and six months can pass in a few seconds. Decay is a good indicator of time: fade from a once tidy house to an identical shot of the same place covered in dust and cobwebs, and years or decades have passed.

More story-based techniques include using newspapers, TV reports or pictures: after the protagonist's first escapade, we see a headline about an art theft. A succession of headlines with ever more audacious thefts take us through his career at high speed, and we can then cut straight to him as a master criminal. Combined with a change in fashion and costume, we can easily tell how much time has passed. You could do a similar thing with a racing driver: after his first win we see him place a trophy in his cabinet. Then we cut or fade to a shot of a cabinet full of trophies, perhaps combined with appropriate sound effects or photographs, and he has now become a world champion.

The other main technique is montage. Use a succession of short shots, usually without dialog, that summarize the main events. For example, you could show a couple eating dinner, walking on a beach, watching a concert, feeding birds in a park, and moving furniture in their apartment; this is a quick and effective way to show they have developed a relationship.



*A change in weather shows that the season has changed, and several months have passed. A clock by the bed is an easy and accepted way to show a change of just a few hours.*

Use two adjacent scenes in story featuring the same characters but some time apart. Good examples would be a couple falling deeply in love; a scientist researching for many years; or a man going off to war or on a mission and returning some time later.

# CHANGE OF TIME

Film the two scenes using a cut and on-screen text to show the time change.

Film them again, using various techniques to indicate the time change. You can add in extra shots or stills as required to create montage. Do not use on-screen text.

## Review

How does using visual techniques instead of text affect the flow of the story?

What additional information can you carry using montage as well as the time change?

Which techniques work best for different lengths of time?

How much time do you add to the movie by using these techniques?

Do you need to use a different visual style for the intermediate sections?

What music works well?

How long is each clip in a montage sequence?

How did you decide what to put into the montage? How did you ensure they would edit well together?

In a montage sequence, how many clips did you use? How much would it add to the production budget and schedule to do it that way?

## Followup exercises

Create a sequence that works effectively over narration or dialog.

Create a sequence with a long duration, so that the characters now appear physically different. How does the viewer know that they're the same people?

# USING COMPUTERS

## Technique

### Film a scene in which someone uses a computer.

Computers are so tightly integrated into our everyday lives that it's almost inevitable they'll pop up in any contemporary movie. They're no longer something you only find in hacker movies, hi-tech thrillers or sci-fi; even if you're making a romcom you'll probably need to shoot scenes where people are sending emails, looking things up online, or writing diaries. However, movie computers aren't anything like real computers, as any programmer or interface designer will tell you. They're not designed to function; they're designed to look good on screen.

The most obvious difference is that generally the text is much larger so that the viewer can actually read what's on the screen. While it's normal for most of us to have several windows open at once, this is rarely the case in the movies unless you want to indicate that someone's a hardcore geek. Then, there are all the added sounds. Movie computers – like most gadgets in movies – make a lot of noise. It would drive you crazy in real life, but it's a good way to tell the viewer that "something technical is happening". And lastly, there's the actual design. Take, for example, passwords. Real computers have a password box which shows a bunch of asterisks as you type and then lets you in or doesn't. When you crack into a movie computer, it probably has some kind of fancy design that swirls around as you gradually unlock it. It's totally absurd, but it adds tension as you see the hacker getting nearer and nearer. It works even better if you have a computer voice counting down, telling you "18 seconds to enter correct password... 14 seconds to enter correct password..."

Creating computer screens for movies is an interesting challenge. Your actors, of course, are not controlling the computers. They're just pretending to do it, and what's on screen is a pre-recorded video that they synchronize with. You therefore need to create that entire sequence in advance and play it back, allowing for all the cuts you're going to use. The more you show the screen, the more you have to build.

How much you show the actual computer is a stylistic decision. You can often get away with filming the people and not showing the screen at all if the dialog can carry the story adequately. This also tells the viewer that what's important is what's happening to the person, not what's happening on screen. However, this can look weak, and you're missing an opportunity to give the viewer a lot of information. If a cop is hunting for data about a criminal, the computer screen can show several pictures, and a load of background information; although the viewer can't take it all in, they can still pick up a lot. (And, if they're so inclined, they can rewind the movie, pause it, and see all the extra data you packed in there. It's a nice place to have some fun.)



*Left and center: This angle is good for seeing the operator, and works well in group shots. Right: you can see the screen, but not the face of the operator.*

Use a scene in which someone uses a computer to carry out a key task (i.e. not just using it in normal office or home circumstances)

# USING COMPUTERS

Film the scene showing the computer screen as little as possible.

Film the scene again showing the computer screen as much as possible.



*What's on the screen? Left: this suggests a highly technical operator. Center: a more fanciful screen, typical of Hollywood movies. Right: a futuristic interface suitable for a sci-fi movie. Compare these to a shot of an actual computer screen in the previous set of pictures.*

## Review

How do the two versions compare? What was it absolutely necessary to show?

How "realistic" are the computer screens? Do they look like actual computers?

What was involved with creating what was shown on the screen? How did you manage the timing?

What sounds did you need to add to make the computer seem right?

## Followup exercises

Film a sequence using a tablet computer or a smartphone. How are they different?

Film a scene in an office with several people using computers.

Have a scene with a giant computer screen as the focal point of the set, such as Mission Control or a command center.

# TV MONITORS

## Technique

**Film a scene including a TV monitor or similar screen showing action in some other location.**

Computers aren't the only type of screen the filmmaker has to deal with. Televisions are equally common, as are monitors for security cameras or similar devices. These are useful for showing what's happening elsewhere, and also for creating a relationship between the events in the two locations. This is most often seen in thrillers or sci-fi movies, but could equally well be used in many other types of movie. One simple example might be a video camera showing who's at the door.

Creating the footage to be shown on the monitor requires some forethought. In theory, you could use a real camera and get the two sets of actors to coordinate their actions. In reality, though, this is usually impractical, as the two locations could be far apart and the shooting could take place on different days. As a result, you need to shoot the TV footage in advance and let the main actors work with it. This is made more complex if you have several cameras filming the same place: the action has to be perfectly synchronized, or it will jar badly.

The action on the monitor needs to be timed carefully so that it meshes well with the main dialog: for example, if the main characters are watching an intruder breaking in, you may have specific dialog that covers his initial arrival and then him picking a lock. The actor playing the intruder needs to know exactly how long to spend working on the lock so that the dialog fits; alternatively, you need to cut carefully to hide any discrepancies. You generally won't get the opportunity for reshoots if it doesn't work first time.



*Left: zombies attack. Right: the cops inside watch them on the monitors. You can show the whole scene from inside, or you can cut between the two scenes.*

Create a scene in a suitable interior location with some dialog, while there is activity occurring elsewhere. Ensure that the dialog relates to what is being shown on the monitor.

# TV MONITORS

Film the scene so that the viewer can see action in both locations using the monitor.

## Review

Is it easy for the viewer to see what's going on?

How do you film the monitor: do you use close shots or do you place it in the background of the shots?

How did you create the monitor feed and ensure the timing matched the action in the main scene? What issues did you encounter?

What difference does it make if there is sound coming from the monitor?

## Followup exercises

How well does it work if you cut between the external action shown on the monitor and the actual location where the action is taking place? What problems does this create?

Create a scene where the character in the main set is directly interacting with the characters in the monitor, i.e. is giving them orders or conversing with them.

Use a computer, laptop, or handheld device as the monitor.

Create a scene with several monitors simultaneously showing the same or different locations.

Create a scene with several monitors all showing POV shots of the same location, e.g. a group of soldiers with helmet-mounted cameras.

# FILMING MUSIC

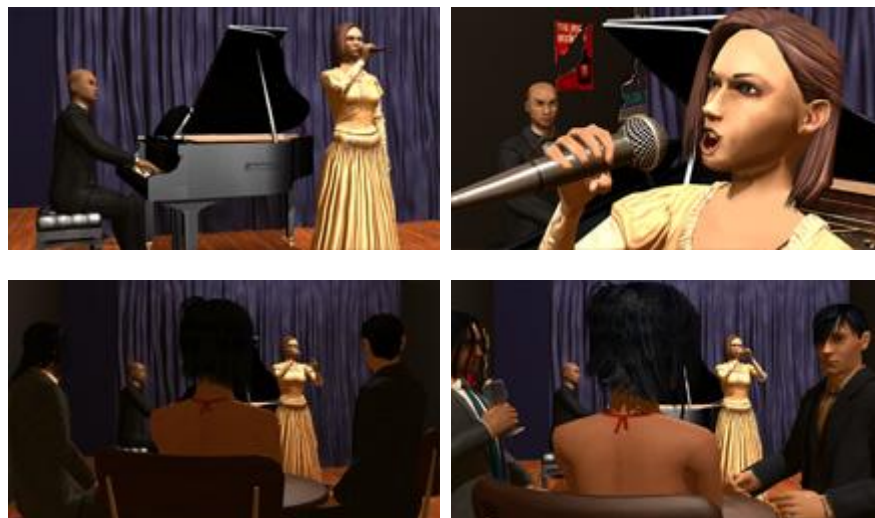
## Technique

### Film a music sequence

Even if you're not making a musical or a music video, you may need to film a sequence that involves musicians. They could be in the background to the scene, such as the cantina band in *Star Wars* or performers at a nightclub. Alternatively, they could be the focus of the scene, such as Jane Horrocks' character in *Little Voice* or Joaquin Phoenix as Johnny Cash in *Walk the Line*. These sequences generally call for a very different technique to making music videos, and treating music in these two contexts requires two different approaches.

The key thing for the director to remember is that when filming background music, the aim is to create context for the scene. Very little of the music may be shown on screen, and it is often dropped into the background of the audio to allow the main dialog to dominate.

When filming a story-focused sequence, the viewer needs to be focused on the performer (and the reactions to the performance). The actual music may well be heavily edited, instead of a full routine. It's not unusual for a whole concert to consist of just one song, often trimmed down to two or three minutes.



*Top: two shots focusing on the musician. These could be an establishing shot or key story elements. Bottom left: the foreground characters are watching the singer, suggesting that she is important to the story. Bottom right: by having the outer characters turn away from the singer, the viewer understands that the singer is relegated to the background.*

For this exercise, use a dialog scene in a nightclub where there are live performers.

# FILMING MUSIC

Film the scene, incorporating shots of the live performances.

Next, add a sequence where one of the speaking characters gets on the stage and either sings or plays an instrument, as if this were a significant part of the story.

## Review

How did you film the two sequences differently?

How much screen time did you give the musicians versus the audience or main characters?

What did you do to the audio?

## Followup exercises

Imagine you have a famous musician doing a cameo appearance in a background music sequence. How would you film it differently to make best use of that person but without detracting from the scene?

Film a scene in a large concert hall or similar venue instead of a nightclub.

Make a music video to the same song in a variety of styles.

Film a complete gig.

Film a concert using montage to edit it down to a few minutes but incorporating several songs and an encore.

# SEX SCENES

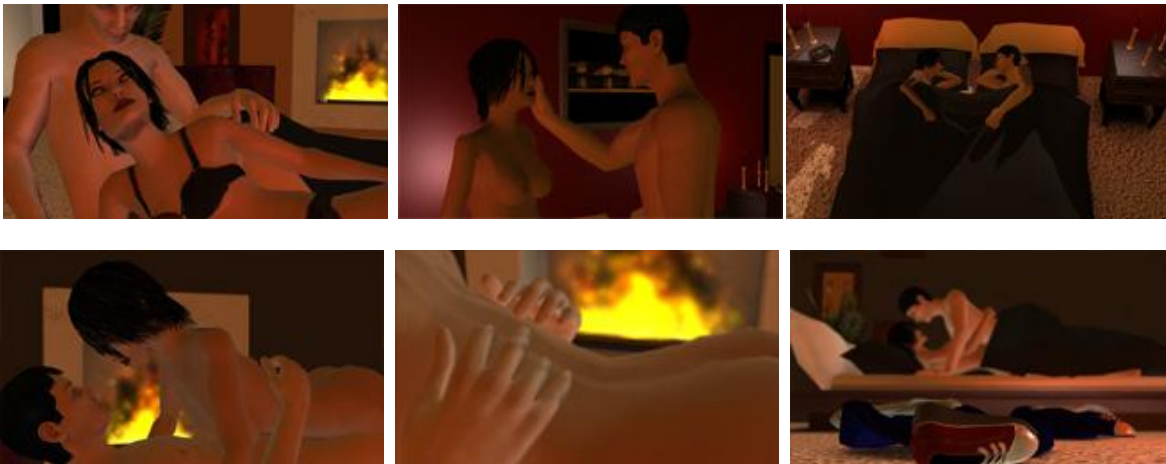
## Technique

**Film a sex scene suitable for an R-rated (18-rated) or PG-13 rated (15-rated) movie.**

It's often necessary to depict sex in movies. This doesn't mean that the movie is about sex or is pornographic. It's just a part of the story, and could turn up in a romantic comedy, a thriller, a horror film, or a historical drama. This is something that needs to be handled sensitively and with very careful regard for both the intended audience and the story. Sometimes, just a few well-chosen shots can convey that sex is taking place – or has taken place – and this may be quite sufficient for the purpose. In other cases, you may wish to show more if it is appropriate, but even so, you still need to balance explicit content with the needs of the story and any ratings issue.

The main thing to realize when shooting a sex scene is that it's usually not about sex. It's about the people, their feelings for each other, and how it affects the story and their relationship. As a result, a lot of what you film may be implied, rather than explicit. You can use lighting to suggest more than you show, or soft focus to create a romantic atmosphere, film cutaways to discarded clothing, or have much of the action taking place under sheets. You may also be constrained by nudity clauses in the actors' contracts, or you may have to cut in shots using body doubles. Sex scenes as they appear on screen are often very short: you show the beginning, and then dissolve to another scene or afterwards and let the viewer's imagination fill in the rest.

Of course, this is one thing they don't teach you in film school, for obvious reasons. It's important for your actors to feel comfortable while filming a sex scene; although they may be used to the idea of kissing another actor, shooting a naked sequence in front of a film crew is a stressful experience, and you need to reassure them. If you're nervous and unsure what you want to get on film, everyone else will be nervous too. So here's a way to find out what works without embarrassing yourself or anyone else.



*A moment of tenderness sets the scene. Fade to black, then the bed shot makes it obvious what has happened. If you need to show sex on screen, you can do it effectively without too much detail.*

Moviestorm has a pack designed for filming sex scenes which includes nude characters and some sexual animations: After Dark, available at <http://cloud.moviestorm.co.uk/download-1.4/AfterDark.addon>

# SEX SCENES

Film the scene showing as little physical contact and nudity as possible but make it obvious what's happened.

Film it again using more explicit shots to make the scene titillating but not pornographic.

## Review

Does the scene get across the emotions you wanted?

Did the sex feel like an integral part of the story or was it unnecessary?

How much intimate detail did you have to show to make the scene work?

How long is the scene?

Compare the two versions: did the characters do different things, or did you just film and edit them differently?

What did music and sound effects add to the scene? How much can you imply using these instead of visuals?

Did you feel comfortable planning, shooting and editing the sequence?

What would you do differently if you were filming with real actors?

## Followup exercises

Film scenes trying to evoke specific emotions: pity, disgust, love or comedy.

# ABOUT MOVIESTORM

Moviestorm is a low-cost, easy-to-use animation tool. It's not like other animation tools though – it's more of a virtual film studio. Controlling it is much like playing a game – if you're familiar with *The Sims*, you'll be able to use Moviestorm right away.

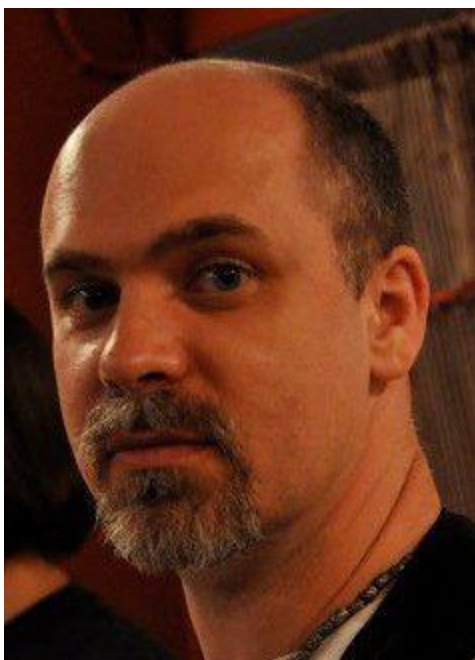
I've been part of the development team for Moviestorm since the beginning, along with my long-time friend and collaborator, Dave Lloyd. It grew out of our desire to make insanely ambitious movies despite having no budget, no kit, and no training. We realized that animation was the way to go, but neither of us knew anything about 3D modeling or 3D animation. We just wanted to direct movies. So we decided to build a tool that would allow us to do that. It doesn't create movies that rival the visual quality of Pixar or Dreamworks, but we never expected it to. Those kind of movies take huge budgets and thousands of hours of rendering time on expensive kit with large teams of highly trained artists. We wanted something quick and easy that we could use working solo on our home computers – even a \$300 bargain laptop. We've started to think of Moviestorm as a film sketching tool – it's fast, it's versatile, and you can get your ideas across very economically.

Along the way, we realized that Moviestorm could be used for more than just making cheap movies. We're now seeing people around the world using it for pre-visualization on professional productions, in classrooms, for business presentations, and to help teach filmmaking.

You can get Moviestorm for Windows or Mac from <http://www.moviestorm.net>



*Moviestorm screenshots: set building, directing, editing*



*Matt Kelland is one of the founders of Moviestorm. He's also founded several other companies, including one of the first ISPs in Britain way back in the early 90s, one of the first mobile phone games companies, a digital & transmedia publishing house based in Los Angeles, and an events promotion company in Orlando, Florida. Matt has also written or contributed to several books, designed computer, board and card games, and has had his animations shown at film festivals around the world, including Sundance. He now lives in Orlando, and spends his free time cooking, listening to local blues bands, and avoiding the theme parks as much as possible.*

*He blogs, irreverently, on a range of topics, occasionally including films, at <http://mattkelland.blogspot.com>*