

VIDEO: FILMING WITH SAMANTHA CHAMI



Now that you have watched Samantha Chami's tips on filming and being a DOP (Director of Photography), try these exercises to put some of the ideas discussed into practice.

1. In groups of 3 or 4, **read** through the attached scene from *Romeo and Juliet* (see over). We are going to use this text as source material to film a short scene.
2. After reading the scene as a group, **discuss** what the scene is about and what is happening. What words spring to mind when you read this scene? What do you think the mood or tone of the scene is? Who are the characters involved and how are they feeling? How might an audience feel if they watched this scene?
3. Now think about the **location** of the scene. Where do you think this scene is happening? Is it indoors and private, or outside and public? What kind of location do you imagine this scene might take place in? Where could you set this scene? What is a specific location you could choose to set it in? What kind of qualities does that location have? Think specifically and list all the features of that location, thinking about sounds, light, colours, textures, smells, visual features.
4. Make a list of five **other locations** that you could set the scene in. They could be completely different from the one you thought about in Question 3 – the football field, the canteen, a science lab, the hairdressers, a place of worship, a bush track, the supermarket – let your imagination run free!
5. Next to each of these locations, briefly note how the story of the scene and the characters might need to change to suit the new location.
6. Choose one location that is accessible to you – ie. somewhere you can take a camera and film a scene safely, in or around your school, home or community. With your group, travel to the location and **rehearse** the scene there. Play around with how you could use the location to stage the scene in different ways.
7. **Shoot** the scene on your camera in a few different ways. Your phone's camera is fine – the aim is simply to test some ideas and play!

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8. **Watch** your filmed scenes as a group. What do you think? Which versions are more interesting and why? Which versions are less interesting and why? There is no right or wrong, but you should feel drawn to a particular scene and be able to articulate why you prefer that one.
9. Re-watch your scenes, this time paying particular attention to the **sound**. Did you choose a noisy location? Does the sound captured add to or detract from the scene? Perhaps the sound of a truck going past on a nearby road added a sense of danger? Or did it detract from the scene? Maybe you could hear birds in the background or people's voices. In your group discuss what was helpful, what wasn't, and what you might do differently next time.
10. Next, re-watch your scenes focusing on the **lighting**. Perhaps you were filming at midday and there were harsh shadows on the actors faces? Maybe it was too bright, or too dark? Perhaps the use of filtered light and shadows made the style of the scene interesting. Discuss what you noticed and the effect it created. What would you do differently next time?
11. Finally, pay attention to the **composition** of your shot and your style of shooting. What camera angles did you use – wide shot, close up, mid shot? How did the angles you chose to shoot in create meaning? A low angle shot filmed from below the actor, for example, can make an actor look larger and more intimidating. Was the camera held still for the duration of the shot or did it move around? What effect did this create?
12. After you have discussed all these decisions and your preferences, you can **re-shoot** the scene on another day, implementing your new choices.
13. **Share** the final scene with your class – discuss how many different versions there were, using the same section of text!

Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 1 (extract)

Abraham and Sampson, members of the enemy Montague and Capulet households meet in the street and begin to fight.

ABRAHAM

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

I do bite my thumb, sir.

ABRAHAM

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

SAMPSON

[Aside to GREGORY] Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

GREGORY

No.

SAMPSON

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

GREGORY

Do you quarrel, sir?

ABRAHAM

Quarrel sir! no, sir.

SAMPSON

If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.

ABRAHAM

No better.

SAMPSON

Well, sir.

GREGORY

Say 'better:' here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

SAMPSON

Yes, better, sir.

ABRAHAM

You lie.

SAMPSON

Draw, if you be men.

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About Samantha Chami:

Samantha is a Web Content Producer and Videographer. She works in a variety of different medias creating documentaries, animations, music videos, visual effects and photo and video retouching.

Originally from New Zealand, Samantha graduated Film school in 2003 with a Bachelor's Degree in Media Arts. Shortly after she migrated to Sydney, Australia where she worked as a Production Assistant and Editor before moving to London to work in the Feature Film industry. In 2008 she re-located to California and focused her freelance career in the Skateboarding industry. In October 2012 after a successful crowd funding campaign, she founded the video website Work in Skateboarding in order to promote skateboarding and its career opportunities to potential future generations.

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