

MONTAGE AS AN ARTISTIC TOOL

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Abstract: This article presents some thoughts on the rules of montage, artistry in screen art, and its significance in creating the rhythm of a film.

Keywords: idea, cinema, television, shooting, frame, montage, rhythm, unified film.

Annotation: The article presents some considerations on the rules of editing, artistry in screen art, and their significance in creating the rhythm of a film.

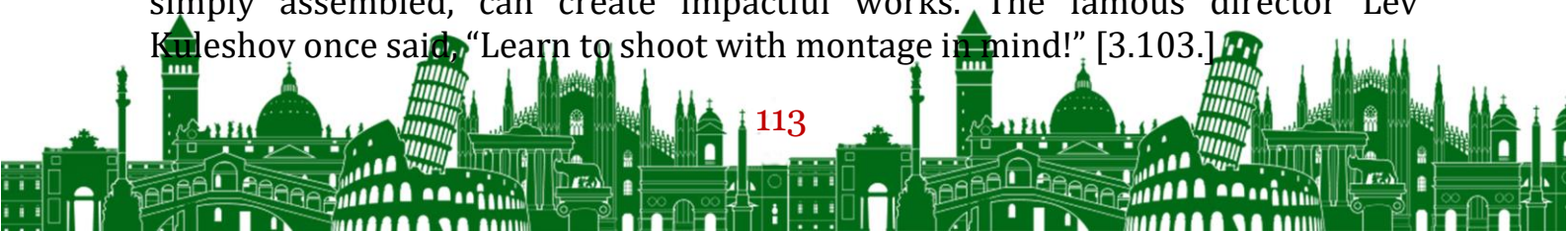
Montage: The Essence of Film Creation

Modern audiences are well aware that a film is created three times. First, the film's idea is conceived and written down as a script or script plan. Second, it comes to life on the filming set. Third, it takes its final form on the editing table. The author's idea is refined and completed throughout all stages, culminating in the montage process. [1.153.]

Human imagination is incredibly rich. To bring the author's concept to the screen, the film undergoes several stages. During all these stages, it is crucial to plan the montage carefully. While writing the script, it is important to consider how the film will be shot and whether the montage will be able to convey the intended idea. During the filming process, the director and cinematographer must work with a thorough understanding of montage principles.

Renowned art scholar Paul Rotha stated: "Montage is not confined to the walls of the editing room. It must be present at all stages of filmmaking: in the script, in the cinematographer's work, in the interpretation of the filmed material, and in the harmony of image and sound." [2.58.] As highlighted, the idea of the montage process must accompany the inception of the film's concept. During shooting, it is necessary to plan the film's montage, taking into account camera angles, framing, lighting, and color dynamics. Otherwise, all your efforts and expenses may be wasted. A film that lacks a planned montage from the outset is unlikely to succeed.

In screen art—whether it's feature films, television programs, or advertisements—achieving the intended goal requires effective use of various shot types, such as close-ups, mid-shots, and wide shots. Only a cinematographer who plans in advance, positions the camera correctly, and finds the right angle will produce meaningful frames. Capturing moving images naturally and expressively is essential, as this influences the clarity, artistic depth, and engagement of the montage. A skilled cinematographer's shots, even when simply assembled, can create impactful works. The famous director Lev Kuleshov once said, "Learn to shoot with montage in mind!" [3.103.]



Montage is considered one of the primary visual and artistic tools of screen art. Particularly in the fantasy genre, where imaginary worlds, unique visuals, and extraordinary creatures are to be created, understanding the rules of montage and the possibilities offered by modern cinema and video technology is essential.

At first glance, montage might seem like the simple process of combining separate frames. However, this is a basic and incorrect assumption. Montage is a process with visual and artistic features, playing a leading role in creating artistic imagery and the rhythm of a film.

Through montage, artistic forms, visual tools, and sound merge to create a viewer-friendly visual piece. Montage connects the events in a film, ensuring their logical sequence and smooth progression. It enhances the plot's impact, contributes to the development of action and tempo rhythm, and guides the audience to better understand and reflect on the events. [4.28.]

The main task of montage is to unify all the visual and audio components of a film. By organizing sequences, frames, and scenes—considering elements like lighting, color, movement, sound, and music—it enriches the visual narrative, directs the viewer's attention to key moments, and conveys the emotional essence of the story.

Montage creates a believable visual illusion of time, space, and the author's artistic vision, offering the audience an engaging and aesthetically fulfilling experience.

Types of Montage

There are three main types of montage: sequential, parallel, and associative.

1. **Sequential Montage:** This connects events in logical and chronological order, making the narrative and the film's idea understandable to the audience.

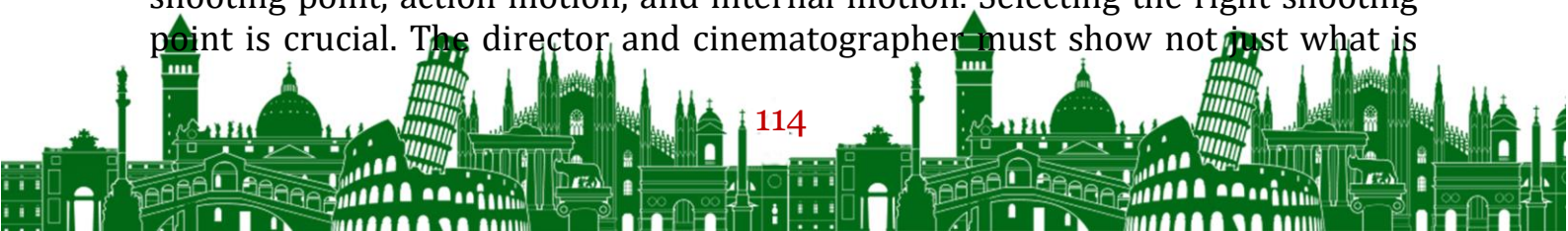
2. **Parallel Montage:** Events happening in different locations and at different times are shown simultaneously, allowing comparisons and contributing to the development of the storyline.

3. **Associative Montage:** This juxtaposes different visual images to create meaning through comparison or metaphor. For example, showing a quarreling person followed by a barking dog conveys the character's emotional turmoil. This technique intensifies the narrative and conveys complex ideas through simple visuals.

Key Principles of Montage

Screen art comes alive with motion, which must align with the film's concept and purpose. Meaningless motion detracts from the narrative. Correctly executed motion enriches the film's content and keeps it engaging for the audience.

Motion can be categorized into three types: motion towards the correct shooting point, action motion, and internal motion. Selecting the right shooting point is crucial. The director and cinematographer must show not just what is



happening in the scene but also where the characters are positioned. If the shooting point is incorrect, the scene's spatial logic and artistry will suffer. Similarly, maintaining the 180° rule during dialogues ensures clarity and spatial continuity. When filming actors during a conversation, it's crucial to choose between a 360° or 180° shooting method. Shooting in 360°, where all sides are captured, can make it unclear where each actor is positioned. On the other hand, with a 180° approach, the actor on the right side of the screen will consistently appear on the right, and the actor on the left will stay on the left.

To maintain this clarity, the cinematographer must mentally divide the 360° space into two halves—right and left—and commit to filming only from one side. Crossing to the other side is not allowed, as this ensures that the audience perceives each character in their proper position. Filmmakers refer to this technique as the “line of action.”

However, in dynamic shots, this rule is often broken. When the camera moves, it crosses the “line of action,” which creates a deliberate shift in perspective. This technique, known as the “figure eight,” is commonly used and is generally understood by viewers.

Another important consideration is the direction of the characters' gazes. Neglecting this detail can lead to inconsistencies during editing, where a character might appear to be looking right in one shot and left in the next. This can confuse the audience about what or where the character is looking at.

The same principles apply to sports broadcasting. Without adhering to these rules, it becomes challenging to determine where the players are positioned or where the opponents are.

To ensure visual coherence and maintain the audience's understanding, filmmakers must always keep these guidelines in mind during the filming process.

Violating this rule might confuse the audience. In sports coverage, the same rules apply to avoid disorienting the viewer about the positions of teams.

Tonal Montage: This technique is based on adjusting the light levels of individual frames, either reducing or increasing the light from light to dark or vice versa. Maintaining the same light tone throughout a scene is generally preferable. Tonal montage is primarily based on the emotional mood of the scene, helping to create either an upbeat or melancholic atmosphere.

Intellectual Montage: This is a clever, intellectual “puzzle” whose solution is both moral and engaging for the discerning audience. Logic, intuition, intellect, and knowledge often lead to artistic discoveries.

Montage isn't just about connecting frames to convey meaning. It's possible to achieve the goal by showing the first and second frames, while leaving the third frame out, creating meaning through the combination.

Multi-layered Image Montage: Using computer software, multiple images or compositional frames are stacked one on top of the other to create a unified



image. The director plans the shoot carefully to ensure the images fit together seamlessly. In this montage, multiple frames can be combined.

Today, filmmakers often use classical techniques—combining individual frames and creatively utilizing inside-frame montages to enhance their work.

Inside-frame Montage: This involves the movement of the camera over a long period, during which the scene's static and dynamic elements, including the actor's various actions, are captured in different plans—detailed, large, medium, and wide shots. The event and actions within a single frame are linked, reflecting the scene's evolving content.

This type of montage is dynamic and always in motion, requiring a complex mise-en-scène within the frame to develop a cohesive thought. The director, actor, and cinematographer all must move intentionally, carefully planned to achieve artistic harmony.

Montage of Hundreds and Thousands of Frames: A film consists of hundreds or thousands of individual frames. Only by carefully selecting and adhering to specific rules when linking these frames does a coherent movie emerge. The key focus here is on the sequence of frames, their compatibility, and the smooth transition from one to the next. This ensures the artistic quality of the film, helping the audience understand the overarching theme and the emotional states of the characters.

Psychological Continuity: According to the meaning and content of the film, the sequence of frames should be psychologically coherent. Each frame logically flows from the previous one or begins a new subject.

Music-based Montage: The rhythm of the montage is dependent on the rhythm of the music on screen. The rhythm of the music and the music beats guide the transitions of the frames. Music creates the atmosphere and evokes the author's emotional response to the events. It enriches the dramatic content of the scene, helping to reveal the emotions of the characters.

Noise-based Montage: During the montage process, it is important to ensure that noise and its source are in harmony. The noise on screen helps to create an image, define the mood, and heighten the dramatic situation. It can express the inner emotions of the character and can even have a stronger impact than the visual.

Perception-based Montage: The first frame must be conceptually connected to the second, and the second to the third. This connection continues in subsequent frames. This principle is the basis of montage and is known as the “Kuleshov effect.” If the stated rules are followed, the montage becomes perfect and creates an artistically mature work.

Montage Rhythm: The rhythm of the montage is an indicator of the duration of the frames, the nature, and intensity of the movements.

1. The montage rhythm reflects the different durations of the frames (the length of the shot).



2. The montage rhythm shows the exchange of places (spaces) in the frame, indicating the intensity of the transitions (the shots and places).

3. The montage rhythm also reflects the character and type of movements in the frames, showing the changes in the characters' actions (the difference between adjacent frames).

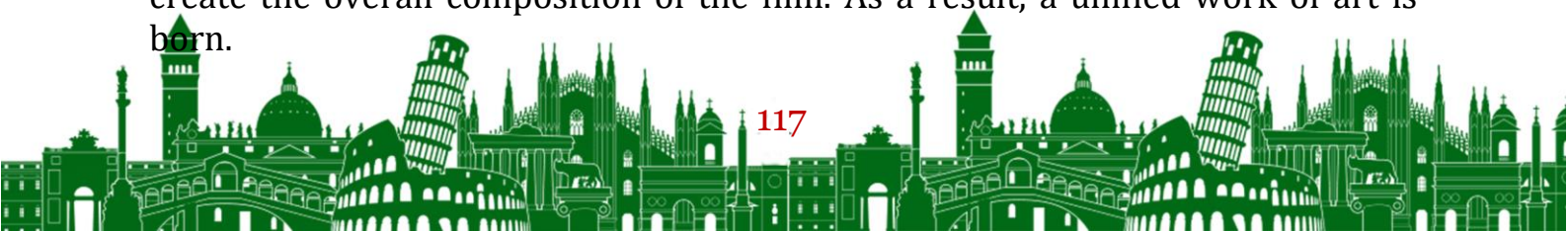
Thus, in a film, we define the rhythm of the montage by identifying the movement in three directions: the changes in time, place, and the nature of the movement.

In every form of art, there are rhythms that regulate and provide unity. The rhythm of the image is created during the filming process by the cinematographer. In montage, the rhythm of the film is created. It is important not to confuse rhythm with movement. Movement refers to the actions within a frame, whereas rhythm pertains to the length and brevity of the frames arranged sequentially in the montage process. Rhythm regulates the form, style, and spacing between the frames and forms a rhythmic composition. The rhythm gives the viewer both the actual length of the frame and the dramatic meaning, ensuring the continuity of reality. The director determines the duration of the frame based on the emotional state of the scene. The duration should be sufficient for the audience to understand the meaning of the event.

"The order of assembling the pieces determines the rhythm of the movement in the montage. It requires editing in addition to logical and consistent presentation. Moreover, it defines the rhythm and shows the director's attitude toward the event on screen."

Directors strive to reveal the spirit of the film through rhythm. When frames are placed for a longer duration, the rhythm slows down, and when frames are placed for a shorter duration, the rhythm accelerates. This either strengthens or diminishes the emotional state. Short frames and rapid transitions increase the viewer's attention and tension, intensifying the dynamics of the film. Quick transitions are particularly effective in tragic or action-packed films. In such films, short frames are used to show rapid movement, violence, conflict, sharp clashes, fear, cruelty, and similar situations. Extending the duration of a frame slows down the rhythm and creates calm and peaceful situations. By linking short and long frames, filmmakers create the emotional state and rhythm of the film. The action in the frame plays an important role in the intensification or reduction of the rhythm of the montage. It is important not to forget that the composition of the frame, the plastic solution of the image, the music, and the sound all contribute to the creation of rhythm.

The composition of the plot in the screenplay, the composition of the frames during filming, the composition of colors, sound, and music elements, and all compositional characteristics come together during the montage process to create the overall composition of the film. As a result, a unified work of art is born.



In the creative process, the playwright, director, cinematographer, artist, actor, and sound designer all contribute to the creation of the work. Montage unites all of these into a cohesive whole. Montage is considered one of the main tools that conveys the film's message to the audience. "S.M. Eisenstein repeatedly emphasized, 'Montage is the unity of the film, its idea.'" Indeed, in montage, participation is required from the initial to the final stage of the process. Only then does the film's idea, along with the expertise of the director, cinematographer, lighting specialist, acting team, sound designer, and editor, come together to create an artistically mature and unified work.

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