

Culmination Project

Project reflection

Short film: “No Safe Place Except Faith”

Sepideh Keshavarz Saleh

This film depicts the struggles of mental illness. The protagonist of the film suffers from chronic depression and anxiety disorder. She finds meaning in life as she embraces religion as means for internal peace. I tried to portray a raw struggle of mental illness in hopes to capture the reality of battling an internal torment, which is still often stigmatized by our society. I believe mental illness receives improper representation in the media, oftentimes romanticized or exaggerated. A 10-minute glimpse into the world of my protagonist will help viewers to get a better idea of the real struggle that people with MDD (major depressive disorder) and anxiety often face.

On this project I worked as a director, producer, storyboard artist, cinematographer, editor, and I did a voice narration of the film. This was very challenging doing everything by myself. I procrastinate a lot but having a schedule was very helpful and I made sure I do everything on time, and this is something I'm happy about. I managed to do everything on time. Time management was one of the things I learned from this project other than color correction and scheduling.

I have experienced so many new things and I have learned new techniques. Having a shot list is every important, it helped me organize my thoughts before filming started. I remember the first location we went for filming I had no shot list for that specific location, and I was lost, and I had no idea what I was doing. so, the more preparation you put in before you shoot, the better your product will become. My film took place in 7 different locations, and I made sure I visit those locations before we start filming. because it helped me to prepare and let me know what equipment I needed.

February 12 was our first day of shooting and March 1st we finished with filming. since I only had one actor it was easier for me to schedule a time to shoot, and we were able to do this in less than 3 weeks

Having a storyboard gives you a good idea of how your scene will play on screen and is a very important part of the pre-production process because it tells how the story will flow. I can say it made my job easier and saved me a lot of times because I knew what shots I needed and which to put together.

Color correcting was one of the things that I enjoyed doing in this film. I'm happy to say that I made sure those shots that were flat, desaturated, and with low contrast gets fixed by correcting exposure, balancing the contrast, fixing highlights and shadows. Increasing saturation gives an underexposed look and decreasing it, an overexposed look. I made sure to keep the balance and add it without damaging the exposure.

I hope the viewers can see exactly how techniques are executed. Editing can take a lot of work, but it will be worth it to see your finished product and to see how others benefit from your knowledge and expertise. There are many aspects to developing this skill and this project was an excellent opportunity to start. This will completely change how I would do things for the following projects. Editing this type of film was challenging because it's the key to blending images that you can formulate a way to put it all together.

I hope this film can reach those who have their own difficulties and offer a place of compassion and respect for the silent battles that aren't vocalized. This is a great opportunity to have an impactful message, while also expanding upon my video editing skills