

MY AIM(S)

My aims for this project were to convey the sense of being lost in an unfamiliar city and exploring by bicycle. The bike offers a unique way of exploring the city, you can cover a lot of ground and get really lost, but you can also go anywhere that you can go on foot. This means you see the maximum variety of and contrast between different spaces, it also speeds up the transitions between spaces, for example you can be on Princes Street one minute and then the next you're in Dean Village.

There is also an element of being more exposed to the elements than usual when cycling, the wind chill often makes you much colder than you otherwise would be and the wind can help or hinder you more than it does on foot.

So my aims for this piece are really to create a video that shows some of the spaces I've explored in Edinburgh that contrast with each other in size, modernity, cleanliness, traffic, acoustics and in the amount of people that use or pass through the space.

Beyond simply portraying these spaces I want to visually describe the feelings associated with exploring these places and getting lost via bicycle by distorting the images and by cutting together shots from different parts of the city in quick succession.

WHY I CHOSE THE METHOD(S)

The methods I chose can be broken down into two stages, collection of footage from different parts of the city and then the editing and distorting of the footage I've recorded to make it look like visual metaphors for the feeling of riding a bike through those recorded spaces.

The filming was of course the primary method and likely the most important, I knew that this would be the method I chose because it provides a baseline faithful representation of whatever is being recorded and then allows you to distort that in any way you want. I wanted anyone who looked at the video to be able to recognise the spaces if they knew the city, or at least to be able to clearly see the size of the spaces and the surface of the ground, which cyclists seem to consider more than pedestrians. Each different type of ground feels different to ride on, from the smooth tarmac along the big city centre streets, to the pothole mania around Slateford. Video footage is simply the best way for me to display the spaces and textures I want to explore.

The editing of the video was where I could really emphasise the feeling of being lost with visual effects, displacing the image to make unknown streets even more unfamiliar and cutting geographically distant shots together quickly to create that sense of hopping about the city.

WHAT I DID

My first task was to gather as much footage as I needed so I began to cycle around Slateford where my flat is and then into the city centre, making sure to take a circuitous route that I didn't know and to record a lot of clips of the mostly residential streets around here. I tried to take a wide variety of shots, including areas that were residential, commercial, disused, urban, suburban and touristy. Upon arriving in the city centre I began to shoot Princes Street from a few different angles getting footage of the facades of the buildings, some traffic, and the castle in the distance.

My next stop was the tunnel in Holyrood Park, it's quite long and enclosed so it's very different to the other spaces in the city that I had already explored, it also hosts far more graffiti than

any other part of the city that I've found, the closed off acoustics make the bike much louder, whereas in the other clips it's largely inaudible.

Finally I went to the courtyard/front gate of Edinburgh castle to get an overview of the city. Overlooking the city at night felt like a good ending to my exploration, I also allowed these shots from the castle to be non-rolling shots, nearly all the other shots are filmed while actually cycling, giving some more contrast in movement of the camera and also bringing an end to the video in a more relaxed way, with a lot of space and no significant movement.

The next task was to choose which shots to use and then edit them in an order that made sense, and with distortions or effects that served the purpose of the video.

HOW I DID IT

My primary tools were my phone camera(as I had no other option at the time), my bike, and of course the computer.

During filming I would actually just hold the phone and record while cycling, I took all the shots over the course of three nights. I filmed only at night for three reasons: 1. I usually explore like this because increases the sense of exploration through being dark and also the people are sparser but a bit more rowdy and entertaining. 2. It makes it easier to film because there's simply less traffic. 3. It's easier to gain a wider variety of scenes because at night there are bright spaces and dark spaces, but in daylight the difference in light between spaces is minimised.

After filming there was the process of choosing which shots to actually use in the piece. I tried to use shots that were from significantly different looking streets and parts of the city, also trying to avoid shots that were too shaky while retaining some shake to simulate the way a bike makes your head shake while rolling over rough ground.

The application of effects to the video was the next step. I used some video masking and some displacement effects. The first one used is a mosaic like displacement effect that essentially breaks the image into pieces and then lets it reform. I used this along Princes street as I was a bit further from home and (at the time) didn't know the area well, so the effect is intended to represent the feeling of disorientation as you lose your grasp on exactly where you are. In the technical sense how I did it was by first filming and then by making the effect in Touchdesigner and exporting footage to be used in After Effects for the final editing and production of the video.

The masking effect I used to transition between the shot in Holyrood park tunnel and the view from Edinburgh castle was put in both to give a sense of fast travel around the city and also there's striking contrast in size and lighting between the shots so it emphasises the different spaces you can pass through in the city.

The final effect in the video was again the mosaic-like displacement effect but this time applied to text to reveal the title "Night Ride" I used DIN for the font because it's made for signage and road markings.

FINDINGS

My most interesting finding was the wealth of different ways I could film the city, on setting out to film I had quite a narrow view of the different shots I would be able to get. I intended to film different looking parts of the city that had more space, less space and differing amounts of traffic. But what I found was that these spaces have much more to consider when when filming than I originally thought, for example, the sound of the space, the lighting, elevation over the city and surfaces of the road were all things I hadn't really considered before filming and choosing shots to use forced me to

make decisions based on those factors. To sum it up I have a renewed appetite for exploration by bike because this level of analysing a ride is something I've never done before, and it's made me experience it in greater detail, finding more than I expected even though I was already a huge fan of night rides and getting lost.

REFLECTION ON HOW IT COULD BE IMPROVED

The most apparent way I could improve the video is by getting more footage of the city, given the opportunity I would spend a lot more time filming and hopefully finding some new parts of the city that would contrast well with the scenes I've already shot.

The other way the video could be improved is by more thought out editing. I put a lot of thought into the order of the clips and whether there should be a direct cut between them or an effect aided transition but the more I thought about it the more options appeared to me, for example; I wanted to create a sense of hopping around the city very quickly, and I have one shot of Edinburgh castle, and one shot taken from the castle, I should have cut directly between those two shots instead of having a shot in between. More filming would have given me more options to re-arrange the clips in a suitable manner.