

OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title: THE FUTURE OF VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS IN FILMMAKING
Thesis author: RIYANA LAMA
Programme of study: Department of Cinematography
Programme type: Master

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:

The goal of the work is defined comprehensibly, but the fulfillment lacks the precision.

Topicality of the thesis topic (and relevance of the selected methodology in the case of a Master's thesis):

The thesis theme appears to be very topical.

The relevance of the chosen methodology and the rendition is in a slight conflict.

Scholarly contribution, originality of the thesis, and its utilisation in practice:

The professional contribution can be evaluated positively, the thesis is original, but the use of this thesis in practice is questionable.

Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:

The logical construction and structuring is in a unified sense, but inaccuracies appear frequently.

Formal requirements and requisite contents of the thesis, including its length:

The formal requirements have been met in all aspects. The content of the thesis, considering historical techniques, is extensive enough. However, the thesis lacks profound description of current technologies.

Work with information sources:

The work of the candidate with information sources is sufficient, perhaps even meticulous.

Level of language, style and terminology:

The language used in the thesis is of a good standard, but the terminology appears to be imprecise, occasionally.

Evaluator's overall summary:

The candidate's thesis, entitled " THE FUTURE OF VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS IN FILMMAKING" attempted to provide a historical overview of the techniques enabling the creation of a back plan of a shot.

The historical techniques described are very extensive, detailed but imperfect.

Unfortunately, most of the described historical methods concerning inserting backgrounds into the frame, can be characterized in this way.

As far as LED projection technology is concerned, the passages related are elaborated in a great detail. CGI technology and its history in film is also included. To choose the most important CGI titles is rather problematic, in an artistic point of view. The Unreal engine, which is considered to be the top of current techniques, is not handled in the most effective manner possible. The purpose of the final thesis of a Master's degree in Cinematography should not be theoretical considerations of the possibilities and implications for the film industry, but practical issues related to the use of LED projection technology and Unreal Engine. The description of the problems and their solutions during the shooting as well as practical scene preparation and opportunities for professional creative work, would be appreciated.

In a practical demonstration of her work, the candidate describes working with LED panels but used as a light source.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

page 7. Mattepaint

Question: what is the important condition for a correct result?

page 9. Front- projection - (quoted from your thesis: "A special screen, known as a retroreflective screen, is placed in front of the actors.")

Question: the image is projected from the front, why there is no image visible on the actors?

page 9. Chroma Key

Question: What does Alfa Channel stand for?

page 10. paragraph repeated twice, accidently: "This flexibility reduces the need for extensive location scouting....."

page 12. (quoted from your thesis: "The use of Blue Screen technology in filmmaking dates back to the early 20th century. One of the earliest known instances of blue screen compositing in cinema is in the film "Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ," directed by Fred Niblo and released in 1925. Cinematographer Arnold Gillespie employed a technique that involved shooting actors against a blue screen and later combining the footage with miniature models and other elements during post-production.)

Question: In what way was the Blue Screen technology used?

Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence: yes

Recommended grade: (average performance with an acceptable amount of mistakes) - **C**

Date of elaboration of this assessment: 31.1.2024

doc. Mgr. Antonín Weiser

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Name of the thesis opponent

(date and signature)