

Educational material

The Chihuahua Shake



CLASS DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: 4th grade

TEACHING AREA: Croatian language

TEACHING UNIT: The Chihuahua Shake

CLASS TYPE: Analysis and interpretation of a short animated film

DURATION OF A TEACHING UNIT: 45 minutes

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- participates in the Digital Film EDUcation workshop organized by the Croatian Film Association
- attends a lecture in a digital environment
- notices the connection between film and the world that surrounds it
- recognizes the characteristics of film language
- expresses personal opinions and attitudes
- connects the theme of the film with everyday life

KEY TERMS:

off-screen sound, pre-title sequence, shot, editing transitions, use of colour, subjective shot, camera movement, dynamic camera, zoom, musical, animated film

STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

- expresses personal feelings, attitudes and experiences
- connects previously acquired knowledge
- watches freestyle films
- expresses impressions after watching the film
- analyzes the film on stylistic and content levels by answering guided questions
- completes a quiz to self-evaluate knowledge

THE CHIHUAHUA SHAKE
Canyons College, USA, 2024

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. What kind of art do you like the most? Why?
2. What can inspire an artist to create?
3. Do you think artists experience creative crises? What might be the reasons?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short film The Chihuahua Shake produced by Canyons College from the United States.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. Pay attention to the colours in the film and how they contribute to the atmosphere.
2. Pay attention to the camera movement.
3. Pay attention to the shots and editing transitions.

WATCHING THE FILM

EXPRESSION OF STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

What do you think of this film? Be sure to provide arguments for your impressions.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. **How does the plot begin after the opening credits? What do we see and what do we hear?**
With a black screen, and we hear a voice counting off-screen.
2. **Which shots follow? What do we see in them? What kinds of shots are they?**
Shots of instruments follow (guitar, accordion...). Close-up of a guitar, close-up of an accordion, detail shot of a guitar, detail shot of a double bass, close-up of a trumpet.
3. **What editing transition connects these opening shots?**
A cut.
4. **What is the rhythm of the opening scene like and how is it achieved?**
A fast rhythm, achieved by alternating short shots and non-diegetic music.
5. **After the opening shots of the musicians playing, which shot is used and why?**
A wide shot of a dead-end street where the viewer sees the musicians and a green container shaking.
6. **How is the viewer's focus directed toward the green container?**
With a sudden zoom toward the container.
7. **Who is inside the container?**
A shaking chihuahua.
8. **Which camera movement directs the viewer's gaze toward the sky and the title of the film?**
A fast pan.
9. **What do we call the scenes from the film's world that appear before the opening credits?**
The pre-title sequence.
10. **While the film title appears, what do we observe in the background?**
A nocturnal view of Paris (suggested by the Eiffel Tower), and fireworks begin as the title appears.
11. **Why is the plot set in Paris?**
Because Paris is a city of art, beauty and culture.
12. **With which camera movement do the authors return us from the sky to the ground?**
With a pan, but slower this time.

13. Where does the pan bring us?

To a colourful Parisian street filled with people, balloons, flowers and lights.

14. What kind of shot is the street and why? What colours dominate and why?

A wide shot of a street intersection to give an overview of the setting. Warm colours dominate to create an impression of liveliness and joy.

15. Who is Johnny?

A dog, a dachshund, a painter, a Parisian star.

16. Besides the sound (the line that Johnny is the best painter), how do we know from costume and set design that Johnny is a painter?

He wears a red French beret like painters used to wear. He enters his studio whose walls are covered with dog portraits, and people wait in line outside.

17. Describe the scene of Johnny painting portraits.

Dogs alternate on Johnny's table, and he successfully paints each of them. Non-diegetic "Hollywood" music is heard, along with the sound of coins and a cash register.

18. Whose arrival in the studio disrupts Johnny's world?

A shaking chihuahua enters the studio, and Johnny cannot paint its portrait because it is blurred from the shaking.

19. Did you notice a subjective shot?

Yes, when Johnny looks at the blurred portrait of the chihuahua through his glasses (the viewer sees what Johnny sees).

20. What happens when Johnny tries to paint a new portrait?

The second portrait is also blurred.

21. How are Johnny's anger and frustration shown visually and through sound?

The non-diegetic music suddenly stops, the chandelier and paintings shake, Johnny slowly and angrily turns from the canvas toward the chihuahua, the studio darkens, thunder is heard, and Johnny frowns and leans toward the chihuahua.

22. When does the studio light up again and Johnny become sad?

When he remembers Gianni and his statement that all pets must be painted. A subjective shot shows a photo of Johnny and Gianni on the wall, which Johnny now looks at with admiration. Gentle, nostalgic non-diegetic music plays, and a slow zoom focuses on the quote under the photo ("All pets must be painted").

23. After Johnny closes the studio, which weather phenomenon underlines the change in tone?

Rain, umbrellas and the sound of rainfall in a wide shot of the street intersection.

24. Johnny repeatedly tries to find a way to paint the chihuahua. What are the consequences for him?

An empty cash register and eventually eviction from the studio.

25. What forms the central part of the film?

The musicians' song about the chihuahua, suggesting the genre of a musical.

26. How does Johnny finally manage to paint a clear portrait of the chihuahua? What changes because of it?

To the rhythm of the musicians' song, Johnny begins shaking himself and succeeds in painting the shaking chihuahua. This suggests finding a new approach to a problem and the synergy of art. Johnny becomes a successful painter again, but soon must part from the chihuahua when its owner finds it.

27. What stylistic figure are the animal characters based on?

Personification, because the animals have human traits (creating art, feeling anger, fear and sadness).

28. To which film type does this film belong?

Animated film.

EVALUATION

- monitoring student activities while watching the film
- checking the understanding of the film by asking guided questions
- teaching sheet (quiz)

THE TEACHING SHEET (QUIZ) is available on the Film EDUcation website.