



CIFF

FILMSLAM 2019

**43RD CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
STUDY GUIDE**

FilmSlam

FILMSLAM IS PRESENTED BY

Bruening Foundation
The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation
Cuyahoga Community College
Kiwanis Foundation of Cleveland
Louise H. and David S. Ingalls Foundation
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
Ohio Arts Council
Rakuten OverDrive
Tom Piraino and Barbara McWilliams
Third Federal Foundation

SPANISH SHORTS PROGRAM

THE CLEANING SERVICE

Spain, 2018, 14 minutes
Juieta Alcaide

STARDUST

Mexico, 2018, 14 minutes
Aldo Sotelo Laro

MARIPOSAS

USA, 2018, 3 minutes
Adrian Carey

CURRICULUM LINKS

Social Studies, Global Studies, Spanish Language, English Language Arts, Art, Media Studies

CURRICULUM GOALS

- Improve media literacy
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Engage in interdisciplinary learning
- Hone oral and written communication skills
- Foster global awareness and social justice

FILMSLAM VIEWING GUIDE

The Art of Filmmaking

Filmmakers of both narrative and documentary films (of either short or feature length) make numerous artistic decisions throughout the filmmaking process, beginning with the conception of the film, through filming, and finally during distribution and marketing. Understanding film terms and the production process helps viewers to identify and interpret these artistic choices.

Crew: The people who are involved with the production of a film and who do not appear in the film. The following are a few of the numerous people that make up a film crew:

- **Producer:** The person who oversees the entire filmmaking process. The producer finds the script, hires a director, finds financing to make and distribute the film, and markets the film.
- **Director:** The person who supervises the creative aspects of a film and instructs the actors and crew.
- **Screenwriter:** The person who creates the story, action, and dialogue.
- **Cinematographer:** The person who is responsible for the camerawork and lighting.
- **Editor:** The person who selects what he/she considers are the best shots and pieces them together to produce scenes, then larger sequences, and ultimately the film.

Development/Pre-Production: The process of preparing the film concept, assembling the crew, and determining a budget and shooting schedule. The following are terms often associated with this phase of the filmmaking process:

- **Synopsis:** A short description of the film.
- **Screenplay:** A detailed written account of the dialogue and action of a film, often including basic camera directions.
- **Literary Elements:** Films share numerous elements with literature, including plot, characters, setting, point of view, mood, and theme.
- **Genre:** A type or classification of films with identifiable similarities. Comedies, westerns, musicals, horror films, and science fiction films are popular genres.
- **Storyboard:** A series of drawings showing the scenes, shot by shot, and transitions for a film. The storyboard gives a director a clear idea of how the film will look.

Photography: The process of capturing visual images with a camera. The director and cinematographer make artistic choices about the following aspects:

- **Frame:** A single photograph of the larger film strip.
- **Shot:** A unit of film or series of frames over which the camera does not stop filming.
- **Take:** The length (in terms of time) of a single shot.
- **Focus:** The variable degree (from **hard** to **soft**) to which the image is clear and sharp.
- **Camera Angle:** The placement of the camera relative to the subject. When a camera is placed above (looking down upon) the subject, the camera is at a **high angle**. When the camera is placed below (looking upwards at) the subject, the camera is at a **low angle**.
- **Range:** The apparent distance between the camera and the subject, differentiated as **close-up shots** (framing the head from the neck up), **medium shots** (framing the body from the waist up), and **long shots** (framing the entire body).
- **Composition:** The organization of subjects or objects within the frame of the film.
- **Lighting:** The use of natural or artificial illumination and shadows for the purpose of visual clarity and/or mood.
- **Camera Movement:** There are number of common types of camera movements, including **panning** (in which the camera pivots from right to left, or vice versa), **tilting** (in which the

camera pivots upwards or downwards), and **tracking** (in which the entire camera moves forwards, backwards, or sideways).

Sound Design: The process, completed during or after filming, of capturing, creating, and interweaving dialogue, sound effects, and music. The following are terms associated with this process:

- **Soundtrack:** The recorded sound of a film, including dialogue, sound effects, and music.
- **Voiceover:** A voice of a narrator, generally not seen but heard on the soundtrack of a film.

Post-Production/Editing: The process, typically after filming has concluded, of combining shots, scenes, and sequences with the soundtrack. The following are terms associated with this phase:

- **Cut:** The distinct, abrupt transition from one frame to another.
- **Fade Out/Fade In:** A technique in which a shot gradually darkens until a new one emerges from the darkness.
- **Dissolve:** A technique in which one image gradually transitions into another image in such a way that the viewer can temporarily see both images at the same time.
- **Flashback:** A sequence of a film that shows events that happened prior to those already shown.
- **Title Sequence:** Written material at the beginning of a film, usually including the names of the people involved in the production of the film (the director, producer, screenwriter, cinematographer, featured actors, etc.) and sometimes called the opening credits or titles.
- **Intertitles:** Text displayed on the screen in between photographed shots or superimposed over a photographed image.

Distribution/Marketing: The process of selling and supplying films to exhibitors, including mainstream theaters, art house theaters, film festivals, television networks, and websites.

A Short History of Filmmaking: Short Films

The earliest films, usually consisting of a single shot, were undoubtedly short, rarely lasting more than a minute. While films gradually increased in length at the turn of the twentieth century, only “prestige” films—including biblical epics and films showcasing boxing matches—exceeded an hour. In the 1910s, the feature-length film grew in popularity, but short films of multiple genres (comedy, melodrama, educational, animation, etc.) remained part of mainstream exhibition programs for several decades. Screened before feature films, short films offered major Hollywood producers an arena to evaluate new talent, try out new technologies, and attract diverse audiences. During the 1950s, the screening of short films in mainstream theaters rapidly declined, but the concurrent rise of international film festivals and the popularization of television provided new exhibition venues. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences®—who annually recognize the Best Documentary Short, Best Live Action Short, and Best Animated Short—a short film does not exceed 40 minutes. Today, the Internet has facilitated the resurgence of short films, and young and established filmmakers continue to refine their craft through abbreviated fare.

Sources and Suggestions for Further Reading: Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010); David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010); Donald Crafton, *The Talkies: American Cinema's Transition to Sound, 1926-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Harper Cossar, “Bobby Jones, Warner Bros., and the Short Instructional Film,” in *Convergence Media History*, edited by Janet Staiger and Sabine Hake (New York: Routledge, 2009); Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen, 1950-1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Barbara Klinger, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY

Assess the students' experiences viewing short films. Which short films, if any, have the students seen? Discuss, for example, SNL Digital Shorts, Comedy Central Short Form, or other shorts they may have watched on YouTube, Vimeo, or Facebook. Watch one short film as a class. Identify the various artistic choices the filmmaker made. Encourage students to consider how these choices affect their interpretation of the film and its message.

MAKING THE MOST OF POST-SCREENING Q&As

FilmSlam offers a unique opportunity for teachers and students to interact with filmmakers and/or local experts on the subject of the films screened. While teachers and students should feel comfortable asking any question inspired by their viewing of the films, the following questions (and many others) may help viewers understand the production process, how the subject of the film is important to their local community, and/or how they can get involved in local organizations.

What inspired the filmmaker to make a film on this subject?

What does the filmmaker hope audiences will take away from the film? (After the Q&A, consider if the filmmaker's answer aligns with or differs from your reaction to the film.)

How did the filmmaker get funding for the film?

How did the filmmaker assemble the production team? How big was the production team?

How long did the film take to produce?

Where else has or will this film be screened?

How or why is the subject of this film important to the students' local community?

How can students get involved?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES/PROMPTS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION*

The Cleaning Service (Julieta Alcaide, 2018)

Using **voiceover**, the filmmaker tells the story of THE CLEANING SERVICE through Maria's perspective. Consider how the story would differ told through the perspective of Maria's daughter, Alex. Write a short story or screenplay of the same events told from Alex's point of view.

How do Alex's clothes help to develop her character? How do they later become significant?

What obstacles get in the way of Maria's plan? How do Maria and Alex overcome these obstacles?

Considering the ending of the film, what do you think the future holds for Maria and Alex?

Discuss the significance of the film's title.

Discuss the film's opening **shots**. How does the filmmaker's use of framing convey Maria's focus?

Describe how **sound design** helps build suspense in the film.

Stardust (Aldo Sotelo Laro, 2018)

While Adan says very little in the film, his expressions and actions convey a lot. Write an internal monologue from his perspective. What motivates his actions? How does he respond to the actions of the other characters? How has he changed by the end of the film?

Use repurposed materials to create something that inspires you. Share what you make with the class.

The school custodian, Don Emilio, says that Adan will be just like his father. Do you think Adan is like his father? Why or why not?

How does Adan find inspiration in other people's trash? What does the film suggest about the things we throw away?

Discuss the significance of the film's title.

How has the father changed by the end of the film?

Describe the world that Adan inhabits, and consider the filmmaker's symbolic use of color and **lighting**.

Mariposas (Adrian Carey, 2018)

Write a short story or screenplay that reveals how the schoolchildren transformed into butterflies.

Describe the interaction between the two fathers. Prior to the first butterfly's arrival, do you like or dislike the chatty dad? Why do you think Hector's dad doesn't speak until the end of the film?

What does the chatty dad's killing of the butterfly imply about him?

How did you react to the ending of the film?

Does the chatty dad deserve his fate?

Discuss the symbolism of the butterflies.

How does the filmmaker use **composition**, **camera movement**, and **editing** to convey that the butterflies represent the children?

*Definitions for terms in **bold** can be found in the FilmSlam Viewing Guide.

SPANISH LANGUAGE SHORT PROGRAM

72 minutes

Some films selected to screen in FilmSlam may contain strong language, unusual humor, and/or challenging topics and themes.

Marshmallows

Directed by Salvador Plancarte Hernández

MEXICO, 2017

7 minutes

Giyi has grown up surrounded by marshmallows her entire life: she steals them, collects them, comforts them and smells them, but never buys them!, until her destiny escapes in a marshmallow.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Compatible

Directed by Pau Bacardit

SPAIN, 2018

15 minutes

In the immediate future, where technology increasingly invades human existence, the Renewed® Company offers personality and interest updates to live connected to the rest of the society. *In Spanish with English subtitles.*

The Cleaning Service

Directed by Julieta Alcaide

SPAIN, 2018

13 minutes

Maria is a single mother who works as a cleaning service employee for a large enterprise. Overwhelmed by her precarious life, Maria decides to set up a plan and set it into motion. *In Spanish with English subtitles.*

#Superinlove

Directed by Curro Bernabéu

SPAIN, 2018

10 minutes

Marc and Marta are celebrating their "monthiversary" with a romantic dinner. Things start to take an awkward turn when the subject of social media comes up.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

The Robbery

Directed by Alfonso Díaz

SPAIN, 2018

10 minutes

What's going to happen when times get tough and there are more robbers than bars?

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Stardust

Directed by Aldo Sotelo Lara

MEXICO, 2018

14 minutes

Adan lives day-to-day helping his father, Hilario, to collect garbage. An unexpected visit to the school will reconfigure Adan's whole universe. *In Spanish with English subtitles.*

Mariposas

Directed by Adrian Carey

USA, 2018

3 minutes

Set in a universe of magical realism, a boastful father prattles on superficially about his daughter to another parent in the school pick up line, but is unable to perceive her when it matters most.

In Spanish with English subtitles.

Fears

Directed by Germán Sancho

SPAIN, 2018

8 minutes

The most terrifying fears creep into a little girl in her room when the lights turn off, just before she goes to sleep. Her father tries patiently to calm her; however, the darkness and the unknown are much more powerful and voracious. There's something even worse there, that hides a frightening reality.

In Spanish with English subtitles.