# MAKING SILENT FILMS

## AN AFTERSCHOOL GUIDEBOOK FOR FACILITATORS

INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH
SILENT
FILM
FESTIVAL

# SESSION 1:
# INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL STORYTELLING

## OBJECTIVE

To introduce students to the basics of visual storytelling and the importance of creating a narrative through images.

## ESTIMATED TIME

2 hours (This can take place over multiple sessions)

## MATERIALS

Printing paper and pencils, computer and optional monitor or projector

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ What is visual storytelling?
◊ What are types of visual storytelling?
◊ The importance of creative a narrative through images

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FACILITATOR TIP:

This is the beginning of storytelling for your students. Start with looking at previous student films on the IYSFF website and then discuss the stories that are told with the group. Then give students a chance to brainstorm stories that they might be interested in making silent films or animations around. Who is the protagonist? What are they experiencing? What might the beginning, middle, and end be? These stories correspond to SEL through the exploration of a few key aspects of storytelling. What was the conflict and resolution in the films they watched? What is a conflict that their characters might encounter, and how might the problem be solved or explored? What feelings might these characters experience?

# ACTIVITY 1:

Watch short films that illustrate visual storytelling.
CGI:  https://youtu.be/L5GFm9mMwDE
Stop Motion:  https://youtu.be/MZ-CmPy2zHc
LiveAction:  https://youtu.be/Nt6szlU78Fw
LiveAction:  https://youtu.be/jNdb_NyrP78

# ACTIVITY 2:

Discuss the examples of different types of visual storytelling you have just seen. What were the beginning, middle, and end of each?

Give a brief description of each example's style and history. Point out that anything can happen in a comic, some are realistic and some are fantastic and strange, but they all create a world with something happening in it.

# SESSION 2
# PHOTOGRAPHY

## OBJECTIVE

To teach students the fundamentals of photography and how to use a camera/phone to tell a visual story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

4 hours (This can take place over multiple sessions)

## TOPICS COVERED

◇ Basic camera/phone functions
◇ Composition
◇ Lighting

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FACILITATOR TIP:

This is the section where students will focus on using camera shots and editing to tell their story. Close ups can be used to show specific emotions and reactions, making them an important focus. Far away shots tell us what the scene is about, including how it feels for the protagonist. Are there important shots that help us understand the story and the character better?

## ACTIVITY 1 STEPS:

◇ Learn the basic functions of a camera/phone and how to adjust them
◇ Discuss the principles of composition and lighting in photography
◇ Take photographs that tell a visual story

## ACTIVITY 1 INSTRUCTIONS:

Pull together the technology you plan to use for your silent film making. This may be a cell phone, iPads, tablets, digital cameras, or other technology for taking pictures and videos. Make sure that as a facilitator you are familiar with the technology you are using.

Have students use their mobile phone or give them a camera, iPad, or device for taking pictures. This can be a small group of kids or for each individual, depending on what you have access to. Show them how to turn it on and open any app they need to take pictures.

Ask each individual or group to take photos that tell a very short story. The story should have a beginning, middle, and end in order. It can involve objects, people, or anything else that helps to tell the story. Use the examples of shots below to get ideas.

Use different camera shots. See below for examples:



| Extreme Long Shot | Long Shot | Mid to Long Shot | Mid Shot |
| Mid Close-up | Close-up | Big Close-up | Extreme Close-up |
| Low | Eye Level | High | |
| Worm's Eye | Canted | Bird's Eye | |

Share your photos. Ask each individual or group to share the character or object and tell the story, describing the beginning, middle, conflict, and end.

# SESSION 3
# DRAWING AND SKETCHING

## OBJECTIVE

To teach students how to use drawing and sketching to tell a visual story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

4 hours (This can happen over multiple sessions)

## MATERIALS

Writing utensils and paper or storyboard worksheets

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ Basic drawing techniques
◊ Storyboarding
◊ Character design

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FACILITATOR TIP:

Facilitators can begin this section by introducing the visual language of storytelling. Start this section by asking your students how the story's beginning middle and end, including conflict affect the way the story looks and feels? Do characters show certain emotions with their face and body language? What visual elements will support these feelings? Will costumes, sets, and editing change the way we read the character's experiences and emotions? How can we include visual cues that show us these elements?

## ACTIVITY 1:

Ask the kids what kind of character they would like to create a world for. Ask them to think about what kind of setting they might appear in.

Pass out paper, pencils, erasers, and sharpeners to write and draw these ideas.
Ask them to characterize come of the characters they have seen in the example films, do the characters in them seem young? old? creepy? sweet? Can they fly? Dance? Swim?

Have them brainstorm a character with some characteristics and write down a bit about them, including what they look like, what they care about, and where their story takes place Brainstorm a story for your character with a beginning, middle, and end. Think about the conflict that you saw in the examples. What is your character's story. What happens to them, and what do they do about it? Write these ideas down.

Begin a storyboard. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPrkxj2MyZI

A storyboard is a set of drawings that show the action in your film. Start by drawing a series of boxes on your paper that you can draw each scene inside of. The boxes are like comics, they show each important part of the story and include details that show the world, the characters during the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Show what the camera might see in your drawings. This is just a sketch, don't worry about making clean drawings.
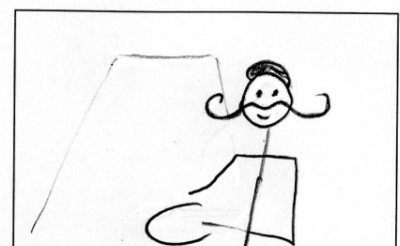
Pass out the storyboard worksheets in your guide. Let them fill in their ideas carefully, refining the shots and details.
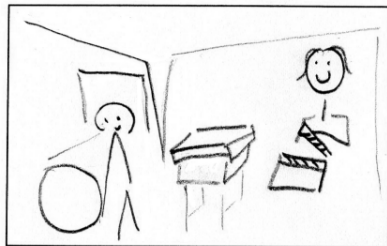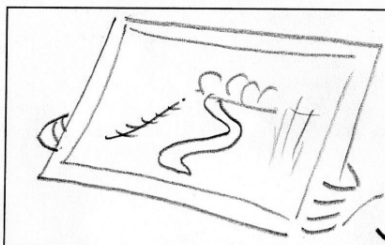


1. Wide shot of both Sarah and Callum illustrating where they are and what the film is about
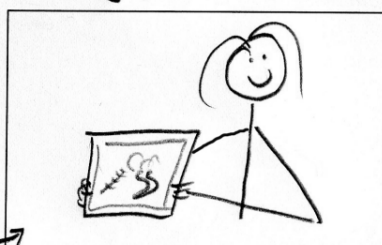Props: Megaphone, Clapper board
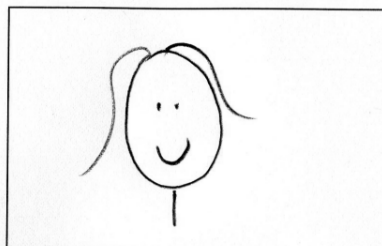
2. Close-up of Sarah speaking directly to camera
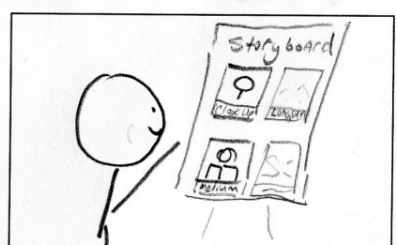
Script: Sarah
'One thing you must remember...'

3. Low angle camera pointing up at Callum
Props: Moustache, Paintbrush
Script: Callum
'Oops! Sarah is right...'

4. Close up of Sarah holding photograph

5. Camera zooms out to a wide shot showing Sarah speaking about using photographs to plan your storyboard.

6. Over shoulder shot of Callum pointing to drawings of different shots that you could try filming.

# SESSION 4
# CREATING YOUR PRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVE

To create the visual language for a video that tells a story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

6 hours (This can happen over multiple sessions)

## MATERIALS

Paint, paintbrushes, glue, tape, scrap fabric, recycled materials such as feathers, foam pieces, plastic containers, etc. Ask students to bring any additional materials they need, such as costume pieces and props.

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ Creating set pieces or creating a visual world
◊ Making costumes
◊ Making props

## ACTIVITY 1:

Pass out student storyboards. Ask them to think about what visual elements are important to the story. How can they use their cameras to create the shots that they need to tell their story? What are the costumes and set pieces that show the feeling and action in their story?

Allow individuals or groups to find an area of your space to work, either on the ground or at a table. Gather materials to use to make props, costumes, and set pieces. Take time to create these items, build and paint them if needed, and practice using them.

## ACTIVITY TIP:

Groups can be broken into roles for this. There can be a person or group in charge of costumes, a person or group in charge of props, and a person or group in charge of sets. Save complete items for shooting films later on.

# SESSION 5
# VIDEO PRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVE

To teach students how to create a video that tells a visual story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

6 hours (This can happen over multiple sessions.)

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ Shooting video
◊ Basic video editing

## ACTIVITY 1 STEPS:

◊ Shoot video footage
◊ Edit the video using basic video editing software

## ACTIVITY 1:

Choose the software your youth will use to film and edit their videos. This may be imovie on ipad or android.

Allow groups or individuals to set up their films by dressing their sets, putting on costumes, preparing props, and referencing your storyboard to create shots.

Practice the shot, looking for the best way to hold the camera. It can rest on a surface, use a tripod, or just be hand held. Be careful that your shot is not too shaky. Students should go through the shot and make sure everyone knows what to do and what the camera will be looking at.

Shoot each scene one at a time, looking back at the footage each shot to make sure it looks right

Make any changes that are needed, this may be the setting, costumes, camera position etc.

Have students share about their day of shooting. What was easy? What was hard? Did they make any big changes?

# SESSION 6
# ANIMATION (OPTIONAL)

## OBJECTIVE

To teach students how to create an animated video that tells a visual story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

8 hours (This can be done during multiple sessions)

## MATERIALS

Stop Motion Studio App, pencils, sticky note pad, objects from home such as toys, small cars and vehicles, clay, string, or any other item

Stop Motion Studio for Windows
https://pcmac.download/app/441651297/stop-motion-studio
Stop Motion Studio for Android
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cateater.stopmotionstudio&hl=en_US
Stop Motion Studio for iPhone
https://apps.apple.com/us/app/stop-motion-studio/id441651297
Stop Motion Studio for Mac
https://stop-motion-studio.en.softonic.com/mac

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ Storyboarding
◊ Character design & Basic animation techniques

## ACTIVITY 1:

We are going to try to make a simple animation with a camera and the Stop Motion Studio App. Each photo will be like a page in your flipbook, with small changes to give the appearance of motion. Choose an object to animate, and decide what motion you want to try. You can make your object dance, drive, fly, cross the frame, or do any other kind of motion. The steps of animation are to take a picture of something, move it, and take another picture.

Have participants set up an object and camera. If it is a phone or ipad, make sure it can stay still on a surface, pointing at the object so that the camera will not shake when you touch it to take your picture. If it is a computer camera, put the object in front of it on a surface, and put a piece of cardboard behind the object if you need to. Then move your object and shoot as many times as you can. The more tiny the movements, the smoother the animation will look in the end.

Save the animation and show it to the group. If working virtually, send the movie to the teacher's email so that they can share it out to the class for you.

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Save the animation and show it to the group. If working virtually, send the movie to the teacher's email so that they can share it out to the class for you.

# SESSION 7
# FINAL PROJECT

## OBJECTIVE

To allow students to create a final project that tells a visual story.

## ESTIMATED TIME

6 hours (This can be done during multiple sessions)

## MATERIALS

Web Site Reference Links
Basic Video Editing Software: https://www.openshot.org/
Basic Animation Techniques: https://www.digitaltrends.com/photography/photography-tips-for-beginners/
iMovie free upload with tutorials: https://www.apple.com/imovie/

## TOPICS COVERED

◊ Students will edit and complete their film
◊ The final project will be presented to the class for feedback and critique

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FACILITATOR TIP:

Finishing up, students should have an opportunity to review all of the elements of the story. Did they choose the characters, shots, costumes, setting, music, and action that best tell the story? Why or why not? What changes might they make in refining their film? What is the overall feeling of their film? How do they feel about their project?

## TEACHER TIP:

◊ Students can decide if they wish to enter the International Youth Silent Film Festival: https://www.makesilentfilm.com/how-to-enter-usa.html

## ACTIVITY 1:

Instructions: Importing Footage into iMovie
Before you learn how to use iMovie, you have to get your individual clips into the program. This process is called Importing, and it is the easiest part of editing. Once you've created a new project, all you have to do is click the import button or press + I. Then select the video and audio clips you want to edit and click Import Selected. This visual demonstration will help get you on the right track.

Instructions: Cutting Video Clips and Editing Your Project in iMovie
Now you get to turn all of your individual clips into something special. This is the fun part, but there's a lot you can do in the editing stage so it may be overwhelming at first. The editing process is where you cut and trim video clips and add any music and titles. It doesn't sound like much, but once you've mastered these three things, you'll be able to do a lot in post-production.

Step 1: Drag a Clip into the Timeline
Step 2: Adjust and Trim Video Clips by Dragging the Edges
Step 3: Repeat with Other Clips
Step 4: Add Audio by Dragging an Audio Clip Underneath the Video in the Timeline
Step 5: Add Titles by Going to the Titles Tab
Step 6: Drag a Title Template into the Timeline above the Video

Instructions: Exporting Your Video:
Now it's time to share your masterpiece with the world! In order to do this, you have to export your finished project. Exporting simply compresses your project into one video file, and iMovie does a great job of doing all the hard work for you.

# ACTIVITY 2:

Share the final videos one at a time as a class. Have each group or individual share their experience building at the end of each session where youth are editing. In the final class, finish with a screening of each film. Take a moment to reflect at the end. Have the whole group share things that they noticed and what they experienced while watching the film.