

INTRODUCTION

The thing that grabs me straight away is the campaign's charming, comic feel. The scripts are very well thought out and feature some keenly observed moments of humour. The series is classy and aspirational, taking the viewer back to the days of classic cinema. I want to tap into this and enhance the classy characteristics of the spots to bring out the surprise and excitement of the campaign. This will work because much of the humour comes from understanding the comic formula; once you know something is going to happen, you look out for it. In the party scene, for example, at first the woman doesn't know what treat to choose, but then goes for both. The humour comes from the audience's expectations of the gag and the surprise of the outcome. In this way we can build an amusing series of spots that both delight and entertain.

APPROACH

We'll use large projection screens, casting their footage far back from the action to give us a softer, deeper image. This will give the images a classy, filmic quality, which pays homage to classic 1950s cinema. Having said that, this reference won't be too specific, we're simply hinting at the nostalgic characteristics of the time. The references are there for people to find but otherwise, ours is very much an approach that will appeal to audiences now. The audience I have in mind is one that is allowing itself a moment in front of the telly where they can put their feet up and indulge in a small fantasy about luxuriating in the pleasures of a more exotic life. And this is all done in a playful, tongue in cheek manner.

The depth of the projection adds intrigue to the spots, transforming plain projections into something stylised and interesting to look at, almost magical. It also avoids flat, ugly projections that look cheap and cheesy. The projections create a humorous intimacy with the audience and they also bring an aesthetic continuity to the whole series.

If we want to give a little nod to nostalgia, it may be an idea to let the film run out of the frame so we see the perforations at each side of the filmstrip. Another old-school trick could be to add 'editor's marks,' and/or little scratches that appear momentarily and then vanish. Another possible addition could involve 'scene missing' cards from the silent era, although this may be a step too far! - We can discuss these ideas and decide what seems both authentic and the most fun.

There's an inherent theatricality to these spots in the way the fantasies' being imagined by the couple are produced in spontaneous and makeshift ways. So throughout each spot, it would be funny to hint at the crude machinery that helps create the worlds we are seeing. An off-screen wind machine may create a nice breeze, even though it isn't in shot, its humorous effects can be seen on screen.

The scripts will work best when the interface between the projection and the props is fully realised. It is essential to bring the props to the forefront and use the same methods in Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* because the scripts allow us to create an effect with this kind of impact. I think it's important that the main props are real so the films have some grounding in reality, allowing the audience to grasp the concept firmly. In other words, the open topped car in front of the autumnal road projection is real and so are the brown leaves blowing past them as they drive along.

DESIGN

The spots are fun but beautiful, we can use this to our advantage when it comes to putting them together. What's nice about the mix is the contrast of aspirational fantasies with a homemade look. The lo-fi quality is delightful - because it feels homely and endearing, like it's not trying too hard. The self awareness of these spots enforces the artificiality of the scenarios they depict - i.e. the scripts mention that the snow looks fake in one spot and when the lady takes her hand from the ski rope in another, it stays stiff in mid-air.

I don't want to be too contrived with these elements - they are funny in and of themselves and do not require any hamming up. We should use rear projection in the same way it was originally employed - we will make the scenarios look beautiful with gorgeous lighting and we'll let the inherent artificiality of rear projection shine through - in other words, we don't need to underline it, the fun of it is already there for people to see.

PHOTOGRAPHY

One way we can ensure the films come across with class is to shoot them with style. We will construct our scenes with a classical array of shots; using close ups for food and props, mid shots for the actors and dialogue and wide shots to capture the whole scene. Some motion in the shots would also be an asset; the smallest movement like a subtle track back on each shot would convey to the viewer that we are constantly pulling out and revealing more and more of the world we are depicting. As the series goes on we get to explore more of the world and see how these projected backgrounds look as interiors, exteriors etc. The camera move will be the glue that holds the visual language of the series together.

There also needs to be an opulent quality to the colours of the spots, a feature of classic Technicolor. Think of Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* or Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*; the luscious, tinted colours in these films distinguish the time period vividly and cut the audience's attention straight to the mood of the piece. The styling needs to be utterly contemporary to give the audience some relevance but also to somehow harmonise with the slight 50's sensibility that is being created in the idea.

SOUND

We should be using sound design to flesh out each of these worlds, letting our audience enjoy and understand how different each one is to another. The close-up noises, clicks and clunks, the background noise/conversation all place our viewer right in the scene.

Juxtaposing these sounds with each other will help us make all these scenes really hang together as we see the next part in the series. Creating soundscapes like this can communicate a lot about the feel of a location, allowing us to keep the visual storytelling as nimble as possible. We don't have a lot of time to establish the setting so it's important the sound is instantly recognizable, it should be something emphatic like the crisp sound of waves or the general hubbub of a restaurant to really give the viewer a taste of the location. It's what they'd be hearing if they were standing there themselves.

CASTING

As there also isn't time to explore the depth of our characters it's really important to cast good actors who look pleasant, likeable and have an inherent comic physicality. Their presence needs to be subtle but instantly recognisable and memorable to give them some longevity.

Their appeal needs to be to normal people, potentially parents, who have come home after a hard day's work and would dream of being whisked away on a fantasy of indulgence and luxury. They need to look normal, but with a hint of effortless elegance. Of course we can help enhance the sense of celebrity by cleverly using the props such as the hat and the iconic sunglasses to elevate their status.

CONCLUSION

It's exciting to read a script that makes you think this much about the craft and composition of the filmmaking, but has such potential for comically observed moments. With a carefully struck balance between detailed preparation, and a really open minded approach to aspects like props and design, we can create a film that rings true for our audience, and is a joy to watch. It takes them on a journey through people's fantasies, but ties them all together with the consistency of the production, feeling as though each episode is another chapter in the story.

It's a great project, and I'm looking forward to discussing it all in more detail.

John Hardwick.