

# SAMSUNG: *LAUNCHING PEOPLE*

TREATMENT BY SANTIAGO BURIN DES ROZIERS

## INTRODUCTION

I love this concept and am thrilled to be pitching for the campaign. It's a really powerful, poignant idea, and one which I feel has the scope to create something truly memorable. Combining stylised commercial film with documentary is a format which I find increasingly rewarding and effective; as a director, one of my greatest passions is striving to unearth those surprising, exceptional people and moments that bring cinema to life. I have a lot of experience with brand documentary and real life stories, and feel I have an intuitive skill and flare for discovering and expressing real human stories, especially the kind of empowering, uplifting and inspiring narratives that we need to be presenting in these films.

What's important to this campaign is creating something with which the viewer connects intellectually and more importantly emotionally. Plenty of big brands have created films that are aesthetically beautiful, showcasing familiar, well-used concepts using bold, cinematic visuals. But this idea has the scope to communicate something greater; more significant, more innately human. Stunning imagery catches the eye, but commercials with a heart and soul, which really tell a story, are the ones we remember.

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## MY APPROACH

The key is uniting these elements; a really strong, captivating visual narrative with gorgeous cinematic visuals and aspirational beauty, but which merely serve as a platform from which we launch the stuff that really matters - rich, varied, vibrant, unique, extra-ordinary human life. This is why using real people is so integral to the films; showing real people with real stories and real emotion will add an incredible electricity to the films that you cannot get from actors and scripts. The epic grandeur and scale of the visuals will move the audience, but the films' realism will make them genuinely powerful and stand out. It's about marrying all these elements together, and when they come together right, that's when we achieve one of those rare moments of true cinematic magic.

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## TONE & FEEL

Whilst the Launch films are about mesmerising the viewer with an anthemic, highly emotive, visually-led mission statement of Samsung's Launching People concept, the documentaries will provide a more intimate look at how it works in practise. They will take us from the sublime to the localised and personal. These films, however, will still fall somewhere between documentary and stylised commercial, centred by real characters and naturalistic performances but still displaying a beauty and cinematic quality that we wouldn't normally expect from a documentary so that they are as exciting, dynamic and captivating as the Launch films. Ultimately, the Launch films and these separate personal narratives, though doing slightly different things, should feel like parts of the same body; a unified series of films which express one powerful idea, just using different approaches. The films will feel beautifully cohesive; the cinematography (which I will discuss further in the cinematography section of this treatment) will be a powerful stylistic through-line between all the films, bringing them into note-perfect alignment in terms of visuals. And tonally too; the expressive, uplifting, aspirational mood will suffuse all of the films - a shared warmth and authenticity, high emotional impact, honesty and guts.

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The effect of this intense emotional resonance is that it will create pieces of film that engage the viewer actively. So much television and advertising today allows for entirely passive viewers, for whom the viewing experience is simply an observational one, and this is when you end up with advertising campaigns which are visually effective but somehow don't speak to people. These films need to engage the viewer emotionally; inspiring feelings of ambition, allowing the viewer to feel that 'I want to be like that'; connecting them intimately with the characters on screen that remind them of themselves, their family members, their friends; affirming their sense of belief in themselves – so that the resounding feeling is one of positivity and trust, of 'I can do what I want to do, be who I want to be'. This is where the grounding in real stories is vital; it's aspirational, life-changing stuff, yet it must feel realistic and achievable to each and every viewer.

In its essence this initial part of the campaign is a kind of psychological call-to-action for the viewer. The sense of scale that will come from the epic visuals and high production values, apart from reflecting the stature of Samsung as a brand, will engender a feeling of inclusion in something much bigger; that these are just a handful of stories cherry-picked from hundreds of thousands happening across the globe right now. We want every viewer to have an innate understanding that there are infinite more stories out there to be told, and that their own story has the significance and the potential to be one of those. This is what will encourage people to become actively involved in future stages of the campaign, to tell their own stories, to launch themselves.

## PERFORMANCES & CASTING

What will set these films aside from every other glossy commercial will be the fact that we are seeing real people in real life situations. When working with real people rather than actors I find the most important thing is creating an atmosphere and environment in which they can really be themselves. We are aiming for a truly naturalistic, but also confident and charismatic performance full of spontaneity, energy and expression. The key to this is to at once encourage them to be themselves from the start and also to find out exactly what element of their story it is that makes them light up with excitement so that we ask the right kind of questions, and get the right kind of responses. We need to show people being people, giving real reactions, expressing themselves honestly – and this way the performance will not fail to be engaging. Of course, there can be an element of scripting and pre-planning; after all, each story should have its own narrative shape before the character has even been filmed. But even if working with a very loose script structure, I always ensure – whether working with actors or non-actors - that the approach to filming depends on the characters' total freedom to be themselves and make these moments their own. The unexpected and unique always makes for the most interesting viewing, so let's embrace every facet of our characters' personalities so that their performance can have real depth and dimension. I want to give our audience someone whose on-screen personality is not a consequence of who they are pretending to be, but rather, it is who they are.

It is vital that we seek out not only captivating stories, but ones which are also surprising and may be unusual. We all know that smart devices are used to record video and play sounds, but for me it is about uncovering those people who have used their technology to do something innovative and unique, something which most people could not even have imagined doing. But crucially, these are still just normal people like you or me, and that needs to come through. People that viewers will at once identify with, and be inspired by. These kinds of stories, combined with naturally charismatic personalities and open, engaging performances, will make memorable and dynamic documentaries.

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## CASTING & PRODUCTION APPROACH

Finding such characters may involve looking beyond the usual avenues for casting. A great deal of my work is about trying to uncover hidden poetry in everyday communities and people, and it is something for which I have developed a natural ability and instinct. There certainly isn't a magic formula to finding great stories, but you need to know how and where to look for them - this is a process I know intimately. Beyond that, you need to know when you've found the right one. My years of experience directing projects with documentary formats has enabled me to hone a very specific ability to find brilliant stories, and know which ones will truly capture peoples hearts and imaginations. I am very confident that I would be the ideal director to seek out these stories and pin-point the very best ones.

In terms of logistics, the way I think we should approach these shoots is by finding our main characters for the documentary films first, and once we have them in the bag and know where they are located, we can start planning where we can shoot the rest of the scenes. Ideally, we would find 2-5 cities that can offer us a range of locations, studios, landscapes, cityscapes and multiple ethnicities to make the campaign feel as global and integrating as possible. Whilst shooting the documentary material in the home cities of the featured characters, we would shoot as many other scenes for the Launch films as possible. After that we would broaden our search to find locations that would provide us with everything else we need.

This kind of production is very familiar ground for me; having shot all over the world with a huge variety of people from all walks of life, and speaking 5 languages myself, I feel I am in incredibly good stead for shooting a worldwide campaign such as this.

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## THE PEOPLE

As I have been writing the treatment I've started to think about to which people we could bring on board to tell their stories and let us into their world.

One group of people that strikes me is the Superscript Collective who create ambitious installations on a large scale, such as their most successful to date *Modular Ship*. Their exhibitions not only give people a terrific spectacle but give the audience a chance to interact and shape the experience their own way.

Another option could be someone like Felix Thorn who creates machines for live music or theatre performances, window displays and exhibitions. He takes a selection of eclectic real life objects and produces something new and entirely unusual.

We may also explore the idea of approaching a person like Lim Ding Wen, who when he was nine years old, wrote a virtual painting app for his younger sisters to enjoy. The app, called *Doodle Kids* uses several simple gestures to mimic how kids learn to draw.

These are just a few first thoughts of the type of people I'd want to use in the film. Whilst it may not be possible to involve these specific people; the kind of work they are doing is just the tone we're after. Ordinary people going the extra mile to achieve their full potential.

PLEASE CLICK ON THE IMAGES FOR A LINK TO MORE INFO ON EACH PERSON





## CINEMATOGRAPHY

For the documentary element of the films to work, the cinematography must adopt an observational and honest manner that allows us to believe that what we are seeing is real. However, this will not be at the expense of beauty and style; naturally the making of the Launch films will have more of an emphasis on striking visuals but in the documentary films, too, the imagery will be carefully crafted and quietly stunning at all times. As I've mentioned, this is about perfectly balancing the realism and energy of a documentary with the beauty and style of a well-composed commercial; when the two merge organically you can achieve a very special kind of film with a particularly mesmeric quality.

Often the association people have with documentary-style film is dry shots and frenetic camerawork. This need not be the case; the content will be shot stylishly, with striking and filmic compositions that give a strong sense of narrative verve whilst staying secondary to the performances themselves. What we do not want is over-styled shots with self-conscious framing; there ought to be a looseness that really makes the viewer feel that he is amid the scene, watching them happen here and now.

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Camera movement, similarly, will be kept naturalistic and free. This approach will really help sell the realism and authenticity that will give the films emotional weight. Gentle, largely handheld moves will enable us to subtly draw focus on details of our choice (whilst also providing a quick and flexible shooting style - hugely beneficial on multi-location shoots). Over-choreographed camera moves would undermine our subjects; instead I would like to keep things fluid, and give the camera the freedom to roam the scene and capture the action from a variety of angles. We will mix this handheld approach with a static camera and tracking shots to bring extra depth to the film and add touches of extra gloss and power where needed.

I plan to use variety of daytime/nighttime light conditions - dawn, dusk, midday sun, moonlit night - to give variety and a sense of global and temporal magnitude. Where possible I will also use backlighting; I find that this brings a filmic quality and a sense of magic and grandeur that really captures the eye. I will also use shallow depth of field to add a feeling of intimate honesty to the film; when combine with subtle, floaty camera movement and epic lights conditions this depth of field really adds emotional power.

We will shoot on Arri Alexa cameras with film lenses to give us a rich, cinematic patina, full of contrast and texture, ensuring our visuals have the texture associated with feature films - whilst still affording us the smooth digital workflow.



## PRODUCTION STYLING

Over the years, I have developed a style in both my commercials and documentaries that involves capturing real life characters in their environments but in a very considered, thought-through way. It looks and feels emotionally truthful, but with a strong edge of cinematic beauty in the imagery. To achieve this I try, where possible, to art direct and tweak spaces that are actually lived in and used for the purpose we see them on film. So that if we are to find the perfect character with the perfect story, but who's environment is not visually pleasing, we can adapt the same space so that it enhances the story visually, but also allow its essence to come through naturally. I then choose frames that are photographically interesting and art direct them to create beautiful textures, colours and shapes - this might involve shooting past foreground objects, working the colour palette around a particular key object and so on. Alternatively, if a space is really not work-able and a little more artistic license is required, I would find a location which could serve instead; I have a great eye for finding such locations – seeking out that place which not only would work well on screen but also perfectly reflects the character and lifestyle of the person we are filming. The result is a shot that is aesthetically pleasing to look at, but which feels true to life.

## CONCLUSION

Once again thank you for asking me to pitch on this campaign. We will give our audience a set of films which are pure atmosphere, aspirational beauty and human emotion; cinematic, powerful visuals, grounded by captivating and personal portraits that give the films a warmth and natural authenticity that we rarely see in commercials. This is a wonderful concept, and for me it is vital that the human elements remain absolutely at the fore, with stunningly epic imagery from across the globe serving as a beautiful and thrilling backdrop on which to showcase the heart of this campaign – its people.

I hope this has given you a good feel for my thoughts on this script. I have only had a short time to put this together and have lots more ideas which I look forward to discussing further with you soon.

Best,

*SANTI*