



Memories in the Making
Treatment by **DAVE MA**

Introduction

What leaps straight off the page from this script is that it's a journey - not only is this the visual starting point for the whole film, but as we go from item to item we feel like we're seeing "waypoints" on the personal journey of the customers behind the products. Each of the items is a marker to remember an event or memory in the some way, a pin in the map of life. I want to bring this to life by sweeping up the audience and taking them with us on this journey, connecting the viewer with their own personal experiences.

Approach

Each of the chapters in this film has its own linearity, taking our hero items from handcrafted conception to their recipients. This is done by weaving two parts of the story together, the manufacturing and the personal stories behind each object, represented on film by combining sound design and visuals intrinsically together.

Obviously our hero products will dictate and inform what the visuals will be, but the end result of each chapter should be the same - great sentiment and a sense of heartfelt emotion. This intensity is only possible because each item is completely personal. And not only are they unique, we also want the look and feel of each piece to be high-end and premium, separating itself from high-street fare in both the concept and the execution.

I've been going back and forth in my mind about how complicated the visuals should be and I've come to the conclusion that should the imagery be too elaborate it may fight with our sound design. I think simplicity is the key here.

In each section there'll be a master shot that orients the viewer, letting the audio draw them into the events that have been the genesis of the product. I'll also shoot them up close to get across the quality of each item, with macro photography bringing out the details in both materials and the creation process.

A great example is a slow tracking shot from one destination to another on a map which form the designs in the map cufflinks - we're traveling, getting closer and closer to the object but showing it's story at the same time through a sound bed of airport noises, the sound of a seat belt fastening, a plane taking off, the hustle and bustle of a street scape at an exotic destination such as Rio or Roma or Barcelona. Then when we reach the cufflinks this sense of movement continues, pushing in closer to reveal the details of the product itself.



Cufflinks

This product is the perfect opener for the film, setting up the journey in a minimal way with this slow tracking shot moving across a map. I'll shoot with a macro lens and a really fine depth of field so that the texture and contour lines glide seamlessly into view; homing in on a destination that suddenly clarifies all the sounds we've been hearing. In the same way we set up this "question - answer" structure, we'll reveal a glimpse of something as it's polished, then the two cufflinks gently rolling to a rest on top of the map they came from.

I think John O' Groats is a great choice - rich in seaside British sounds. The beauty here is that there's no limit to where we can transport our audience with sound design, so we should also consider something further afield, a destination rich in atmosphere such as Rio de Janeiro. If we choose to stay in the UK, I love the seaside cycling references given in the script, it's a soundscape that's full of potential, from the flap of a sail to the cries of seagulls, it's going to instantly transport the viewer to an environment that says holiday. For something that has a specifically international feel then the chaos of car horns, boat engines, and then samba drumming could really take us somewhere that feels exotic and adventurous.



Framed Illustration

Keeping the format of using three or four shots for each section, we'll start close and textural again - I love the inkblot on coarse paper, it's familiar but at the same time very evocative and mysterious. Our camera follows a long smooth pen stroke, keeping the pen nib perfectly central to the frame until it comes to a stop... and the camera keeps moving. We travel along the page, pulling out to show the finished picture revealing a message that is scene appropriate, showing the "full picture" behind the soundscape we've been hearing.

One thing that's so strong about this product is the versatility it offers. Like our cufflinks we can depict sound and image related to a British adventure in the Lake District, as per the script. I also like the idea of a French countryside scene - a villa atop a hill of grape vines where a stone cottage sits. The sounds of a cork bottle being removed, wine being poured and the chatter of a relaxed cottage getaway in the Rhone Valley. A bicycle in the countryside, a picnic basket, the turn of page in a book being read, giggling as kids run through a field of grass with birds overhead. The details are what make the stories believable, but so many of these sounds will evoke familiar emotions in the viewer from their own memories - and that's exactly what we want to achieve.

Then the pen writes an elusive title: 'Late Summer Dreams...'

Rather than have a stop-motion line drawing the sentence out letter by letter, I like the idea of using VFX to create the title in it's entirety seeping into the paper as if invisible ink has been given definition. The end result of personal hand writing is the same, but it gives us a hint of magic, and the slightly ephemeral sense of memories and how elusive they are... of course this is exactly what these objects are for, to store these memories and give them physical form.



Silver Pendant

This is a great point to introduce the idea of jewellery. We've already established the originality of the products and the bespoke nature of everything offered, so it's intriguing to see how this works with something that's more conventional as a gift. What's the "Not On The High Street" take on this?

Either way it's a sophisticated take where we are emphasising the quality of the product. It also offers a chance to build the sense of emotion - everyone has memories of travel and holidays, but the start of a family is a major landmark in life - a new beginning. The soundscape will take the subtle sounds of a hospital, the fading of the hustle and bustle as the doors close, taking us in closer as we hear some whispered encouragement, then the exclamations of laughter and joy as the baby's first cries really root us in the moment.

I'd like to show the text or imprints appearing gently and magically, echoing the ink in the previous chapter. We'll see this process in extreme macro shots, revelling in the materials and seeing the letter forms sinking into the metal, the shapes of the letters flowing as the camera keeps up, then pulling back to reveal the finished item. An alternative would be to show macro glimpses of the real hands and tools that go into creating the products, shot in camera - the blade etching into the metal, curls of metal shavings dropping away to reveal the marks beneath -- either way there's the potential to create very evocative views of the creative process, drawing attention to the way that each product is a complete one-off.



Bonus Items

These are the items that seem like the best opportunity to me to give us alternate options or additions to release at a later date:

LIKES PRINT

The screen-printed typography gives us a really different atmosphere, it's bold and very contemporary, and I think it could broaden the range in the perception of our audience in a really good way. It's also a chance to create a really dynamic section of the film, with the screen-printing process giving us sweeping movement and great blocks of vivid colour.

It fits perfectly with the overall concept of matching visuals to an evocative soundscape, with the words as they're revealed clarifying the sounds we're hearing, building together to create a picture of a particular moment. We'll keep up with the dynamic camera movements, sweeping along with the motion of the printing process, gliding over surfaces and circling macro pools of coloured inks with the final product drifting up towards the camera and revealing the whole message.

FABRIC GLASSES CASE

This one is also great for the dynamic action. Super macro shots of needles pushing through fabric, thread being drawn and pulled tight, abstract close ups of text. We see a letter that makes up part of the message, then finally glasses sliding into the case - revealing function as well as form and culminating in a framing that lets us see the whole personalised name across the top. 'Chess Queen' or 'Supernan' are great and fit in well with the personal stories we're alluding to. Depending on our final "subject" we'll have detailed sounds like the rolling of dice or the tap of pieces moving on a board - evocative but still not giving us the whole picture. This will be fleshed out by the creak of a rocking chair, the laughter of kids playing, the pouring of a drink - all sounds that emphasise the happy personal connections that are behind all of the products.

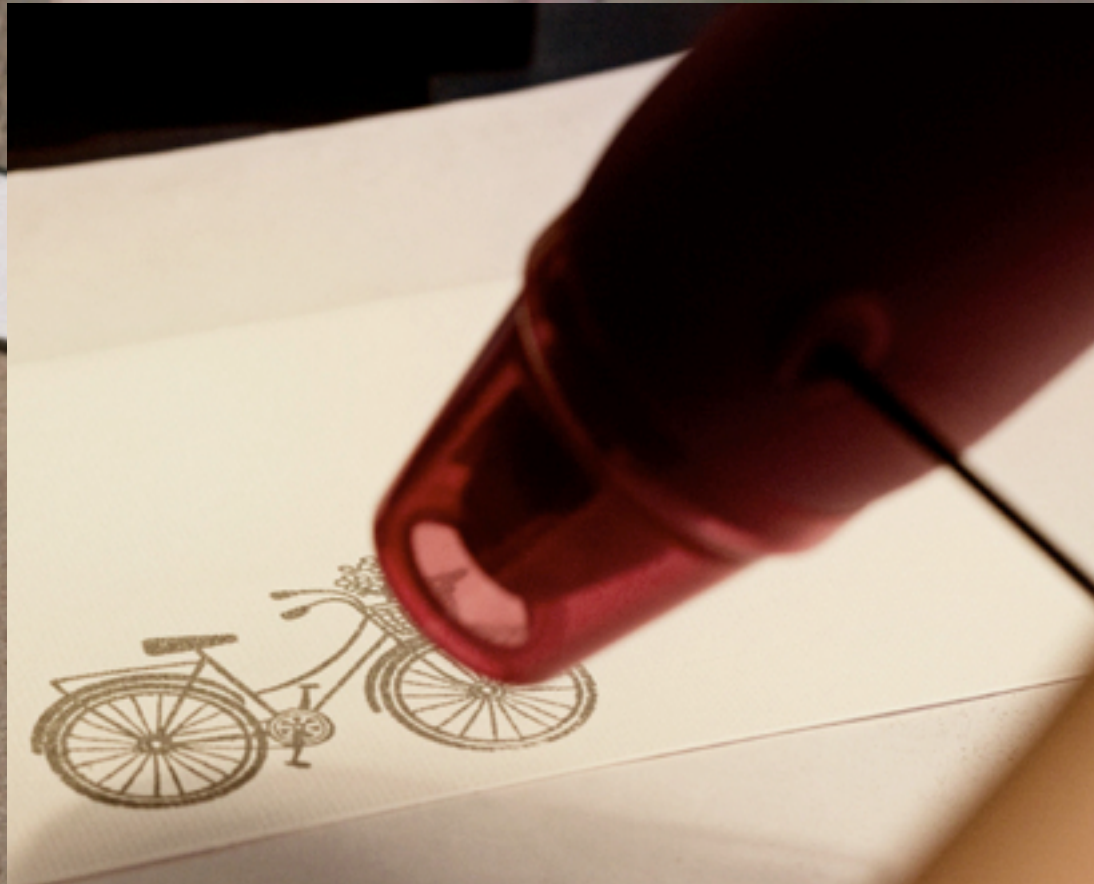
Photography

As I've described the sense of scale and the way we frame each of these items is really important. I want the macro photography to allow us to build up a picture of the items piece-by-piece, before a shot that reveals the whole item in a very natural way - angles and framing giving us great clarity on the item and a point of view that matches the way you'd interact with the product if you had it right in front of you.

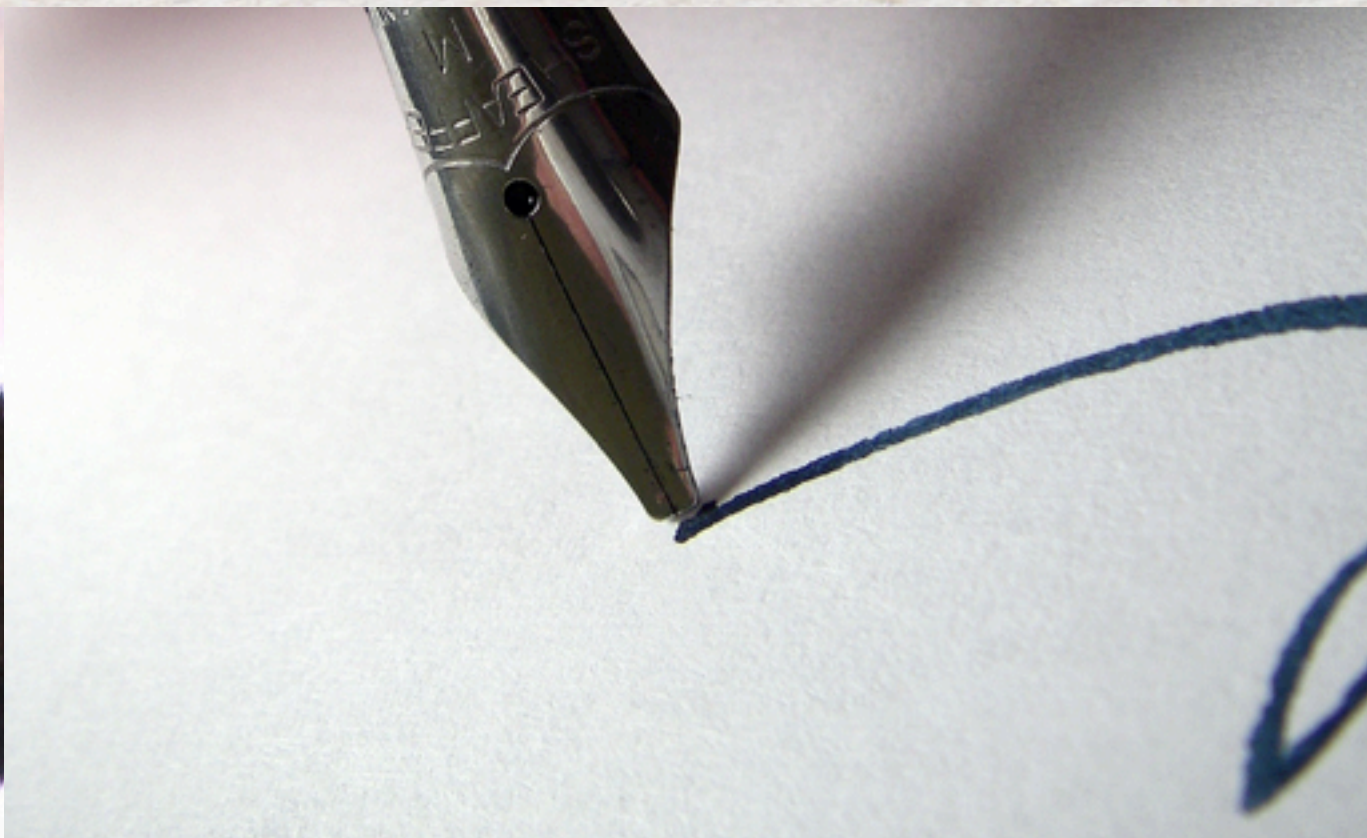
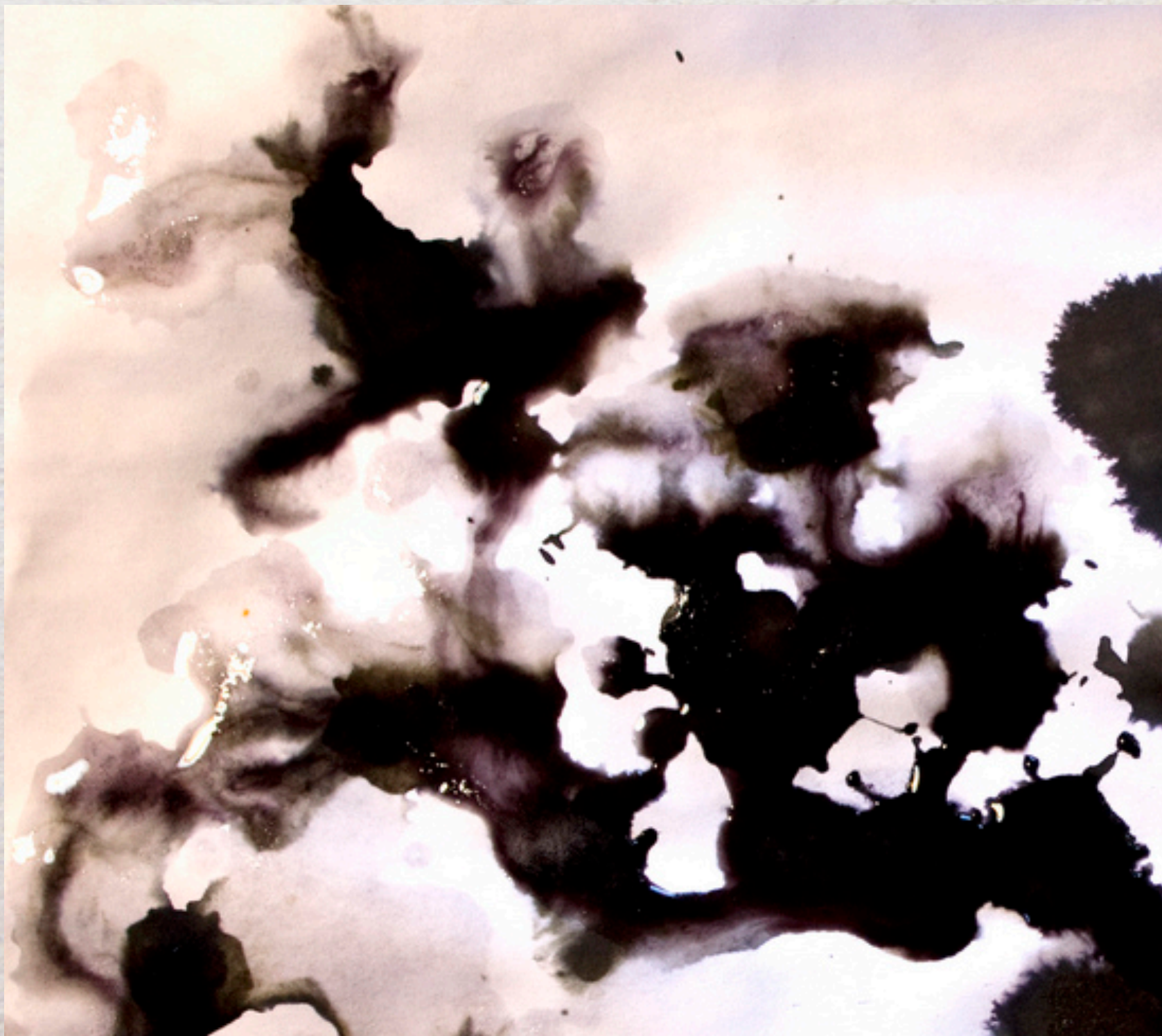
The other main element to concentrate on with the photography is the movement in the film. With the journey we're taking our viewer on we'll keep the camera moving, pushing on forward but then varying, where appropriate, pulling in or out of the objects to give us the "reveal" in each sequence. We can also use subtle speed-ramps and time-lapse to show the creation process where appropriate, but the heart of this approach is one that creates a balance between the sound and visuals - our shots won't overpower the sound, but are subtly designed to work perfectly together.













Sound Design

The sound is such a major party of our narrative here, taking our audience away to different locations and memories, and then allowing our visuals to show the objects that store these memories. I see it as on an equal footing with visuals when it comes to creating the atmosphere we want for these films.

The first part of this process is working out what we want to achieve - what kind of atmosphere do we want to evoke? The specific geographic locations and story details we choose will be ones that allow us to create an instantly involving world with just a few sounds. They'll also be worlds with a universal pull, something that the viewer can relate to, that will take them away not to any beach, but a specific moment that they've experienced, or one that they know would create an emotion in a loved one.

Once we've chosen "what" there comes the "how". Our methodology is really important here. We'll storyboard the sound design as well as our visuals, creating an animatic with sample sounds so that we can get the pace and the amount of information we're communicating pitched just right.

I'd like to then create the soundscape with a combination of live recording on location mixed with some stock sounds. There should be a build in the sound design that matches the visuals - starting with details that create a mosaic in sound, but then, as we dovetail our "soundscape" with the shot that reveals the connection between these two worlds, we'll have a sound that really sums up the moment... for example the sound of seagulls at the beach - something that encapsulates the world in one sound, just as we show the whole product on screen. The end of the journey.

My relationship with the Sound Recordist will be similar to one I'll have with the DOP. We'll work together on the image of the sound, working out how and where we'll get each element and spend a few days on location recording them.

Conclusion

For me the end super is a perfect summing up of the idea as well as an end point for the finished ad. These are more than gifts, and the difference is that they are objects that take on memories and give them a physical form. A series of shots that recap the various products will echo the form we've used in each chapter - if you like we're showing each product to give us a glimpse of the whole range, in the same way we've shown details to then reveal each individual product. It's a way of concluding the story in a way that shows "Notonthehighstreet.com" as the final destination of the journey we've been on... a place where you can package personal memories, ready to pass them on to others.

It's a great project, and I look forward to discussing it further.

DAVE MA