

Videography

Shot Designer Mini Project

Introduction

The cinematographer's art often seems as much black magic as technique, taking a few actors milling around a set and turning it into something cinematic, evocative and occasionally iconic. Amidst all the voodoo and mystery, however, there is concrete science behind those money shots so we've identified thirty of the most important camera shots to help you distinguish your dolly zooms from your Dutch tilts.

Source: [Empire](#)

Directions

1. Download Shot Designer, either on your laptop or your mobile device.
2. Watch the Quick Start video.
3. Click on Open Scenes --> Factory Templates --> Demo Scenes.
4. "Play" both the Simple Scene and the Prison Scene.
5. What do you notice/observe about the movement of the characters and the cameras?
6. How do you think this scene plays out in real time?

Your Turn

1. Think of a simple or complex scene that you have seen in a television show or movie. Perhaps it is the attorney and defendant entering the conference room on *Law & Order* or David and Jennifer watching TV in the family living room in *Pleasantville*.
2. Write a short indoor scene. Be sure to include where the scene takes place (i.e., classroom, office, store, etc). Note: Your characters and your cameras must move. No static shots.
3. Set up your scene in Shot Designer. You may use a template if you wish.
4. Place your characters and cameras and create your scene.
5. Think about what shots you want and what shots you need. You only get one scene to tell a reasonably compelling story. Note: The shot list on the right will help you visualize your shots.
6. Share your scene with me.

Then (for fun)

1. You will continue your story in an outdoor scene to be filmed at Paramount.
2. Go to the Paramount Studios [NY Backlot Virtual Tour](#).
3. If you pan around, you will see a lot of familiar TV and movie locations. Can you find the Rizzoli & Isles house (also used for an NYU Medical commercial)? The office building from Mission: Impossible? The high school from Glee? The cafe that appears in a million scenes?
4. Write a short outdoor scene. Think about where you want your scene to take place and what happens in the scene. Even though this is the NY Backlot, the lot can double as any scene anywhere.

5. Unfortunately, you cannot edit the virtual space. Describe, in words, how you could use the Paramount Backlot to film your scene. You may also wish to screen capture different shots to tell or describe your scene.