

Elements of design

Family



Running Head: MISE EN SCENE Wall Street (1987 Greed is good Wall Street (1987 Greed is good The 1987 original film Wall Street was directed by Oliver Stone. The production designer was Stephen Hendrickson and the art directors were John Jay Moore and Hilda Stark. In a movie such as Wall Street, it is the job of the production designer to create an atmosphere through the use of setting. The elements of production design are intended to create “ the relationship between the characters, their story, and the environment” (LoBrutto, 2002, p. 3). Production design is concerned with creating the overall ambiance of the film, the time, place, and thematic setting that affects the nature of the perception of the universe in which the characters play out their story. The art director is concerned with the overall look of the film, the way in which color and design define the nature of the work. In the example of the ‘ Greed is Good’ scene in Wall Street (1987), the production designer is responsible for creating the atmosphere in which the speech will take place. The scene is set within a stockholder meeting, the room filled, a slight haze of cigarette smoke seeming to appear in the beginning of the scene. This slight cloudiness clears as the scene progresses, a seeming clarity that is reflecting the build up of the speech that Gordon Gekko, played by Michael Douglas, gives to the stockholders, reassuring them of the eminent success of the project that is being undertaken. The lighting rises slightly, the scene becoming more clear as Gekko speaks. There is a slight puff of smoke that is seen through which Gekko is filmed. Then, the scene moves to Bud Fox, played by Charlie Sheen, which is a clear shot, the innocence of his belief clearly revealed upon his face as the scene seems to clear of the smoke. The mood of the scene is tentative, unsure of what will be the result of this speech. The way in which the set is designed

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reveals the overwhelming number of people that Gekko will have to convince of his competency on their behalf. The smoke in the room also gives the feeling of something just a little seedy, that the speech that is being given will not hold the purity that the innocence of Bud Fox suggests. The hazed light, even as it lifts through the scene, suggests that the room is not a room of goodness, but that something off is about to happen. Despite the public nature of the meeting, the room is filled with those who embrace the ideal that Gekko is expounding. The setting appears to be a large hotel conference room. The scene has the feeling of the backroom where deals are made, expanded to a larger setting, the elegance of the hotel in contrast to the harshness of the accoutrement of the company. There is something definitively wrong about to happen and the setting contributes to this through the covering of the elegance and beauty of the hotel with the company signs and setting. The contrast of artistic beauty to the realities of corporate America provides the setting with the unsettling nature of the speech that Gekko is giving. In looking at this contrast, there is no real way in which to reconcile what is being said in the atmosphere it is being said. The setting is intended to convey this comparison, the corporation as it overtakes the beautiful, ornate design of the hotel conference room, the tide of greed as it washes away the aesthetically beautiful. The characters are costumed in classic 1980's business wear. The men within the room are dressed in suits with white shirts, their ties the only variation on the theme, the colors of the suits all neutral and relatively consistent. The women have on the skirted suits with the exaggerated shoulder pads, their look as austere as that of the men. Their hair is teased and coifed perfectly, and they exude the 1980's selfish aesthetic as the rise of the corporate structure

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and the use of money as a gambling tool within the stock market is personified within this room. From the point of view of the costume, one of the more interesting shots is down the row of the board of directors in the scene, each one mirroring the next, their suits non-descript in a similar neutral tone that suggests that they are all the same, the symbolism of their similarity reflecting the way in which they are there for a singular purpose - to share in the profits of their greed. The most important costuming choice, the choice that helped to define the character of Gordon Gekko and make him a symbol for corporate greed, is the slicked back hair that he wears. His hair, filled with gel and smoothed back in such a way to give him both a professional, but ominous look, exemplifies the theme of greed. The hair is not simply slicked back, but coifed in such a way to have an expensive look, but no different than a classic Mafioso appearance. Gekko could just as easily be a made man within a criminal syndicate as he could be this corporate shark, this predator who is poised to devour anyone in his way. The hair is a strong component to the overall understanding that the audience comes to about the character. The nature of his hair is mirrored, in a less harsh example, on Bud Fox. Fox is the ingenué, the apprentice to Gordon Gekko, and his hair mirrors that position. The scene is extremely effective, although, a production designer might have taken a very different tactic in creating the scene. The speech is brilliant, a perfect example of the way in which corporate culture was approached during the 1980's. However, the lighting of the scene does not quite appear to highlight the dark nature of the speech. There is no real transition that defines the intention of what is being said, that is to take an element of life that is considered a sin and elevate it to a positive status. In remembering this <https://assignbuster.com/elements-of-design/>

scene, it appears to be very different, but in reviewing it the scene does not have a specific lighting that equates it with the darkness that the speech reveals. The ominous nature of the corporate structure is not compared to the dark, gothic nature of sin in the way that the memory of the scene has put it into a context. The scene is simply one of a stockholder's meeting, and nothing more. However, the speech itself, the way in which it is held in a memory of darkness and gothic lighting, suggests that it was a powerful moment in cinematic history, the speech being enough to convey all of those emotions, simply through the words that were being spoken..." Greed, for lack of a better word, is good, greed is right" (Wall Street, 1987). References LoBrutto, V. (2002). The filmmaker's guide to production design. New York: Allworth Press. Rea, P. W., & Irving, D. K. (2010). Producing and directing the short film and video. Amsterdam: Focal Press. Wall Street. (1987). Dir. Oliver Stone. Perf. Michael Douglas and Charlie Sheen.