

Process Book

“Zipper” - music video

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Concept

The concept for this particular project was given to me by the artist himself, who is also my friend, when we met up for wine night at my apartment. He stated he was looking for somebody to help him promote his music and, coincidentally, he needed a director. I immediately became interested in the prospect of being that for him, especially since I had been in the process of searching for a musician for Christina's music video class by that point. We sat down and he played me his demo. He said he had some ideas in mind already, but his main one was creating a narrative music video where the main focus is on the alienation of the protagonist. He also made it clear that he intended for the project to be inspired by Katy Perry's "Last Friday Night", as well as Lady Gaga's "Just Dance". From that point on, the basic framework of the music video had already begun to form gradually.

The plot and objective

The video starts off with Maciek, the protagonist, hesitantly entering the party. He becomes painfully aware of how out of place he feels when people begin to eye him up and down, avoid his company and ignore him. He desperately tries to appeal to them, but he feels overwhelmed by how everyone perceives him. He even stumbles upon an old colleague, but throughout the entirety of their conversation, he can't seem to remember her name, which makes him feel even more ridiculous. It also doesn't help that he's under the influence of alcohol. The entire time due to the psychological toll this takes on the main character, he convinces himself that his zipper is down and everyone is not only judging him, but are somewhat freaked out by him. After some time, he meets a boy at the party and starts talking to him. They even have a brief romantic interaction. Unfortunately, Maciek catches him flirting with a girl not long after that. As the party unravels, Maciek's walls fall a bit; he starts speaking with everyone and opens up more and more. He notices a piñata and takes on the task of destroying it. Simultaneously, a scene of him and his potential love interest appears as they're playing Uno and Maciek finishes the game with an Uno reverse card, which becomes a metaphor for giving the boy a taste of his own medicine; it is now Maciek who has moved on and isn't interested anymore. As he lets go of his feelings for the boy, he also challenges his social boundaries by revealing his true self and inviting aura to people, which is represented by the fallen piñata.

Planning process

The crew

The people participating in the project were Maciek and two other girls from my course, who I can proudly call my biggest helpers, as well as additional contributors. We split the roles between each of us like it's stated below:

- Maciek - protagonist, artist
- Lotte Lünskens- cinematographer, gaffer, DOP, assistant director
- Ariana Garcia - set designer, assistant director
- Alyana Liepach - location manager
- Neda Parczewska (myself) - director, writer

Shot list

As we dove deeper into the planning process, we organised a Zoom call to discuss further action. While the meeting was taking place, I asked everyone to brainstorm ideas, with special interest directed towards Maciek, as I really cared about his personal preferences ranging all the way from the plot to the main character to the equipment and props. After writing down as many ideas as I could, I curated a shot list, which is how we constructed a stable and reliable narrative.

Shot	Type of shot/where it is in particular shot	Equipment
1st	the director starts off with a zipper unzipping and chewing a cigarette	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
2nd	close-up on Maciek's shoes walking up the stairs	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
3rd	zoom in onto Maciek's face exhaling in anxiety	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
4th	introduction shot: the camera enters the room from beyond the door which opens, revealing all the party goers	neutral light, canon camera, wide lens, gimbal/handheld
5th	wide shot, people laughing and dancing	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
6th	camera focuses on two guests having a lively, drunk-en conversation	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
7th	zoom in onto their mouths as they're talking	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
8th	close-up on people pouring punch/vodka/ol into cups	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
9th	detail on Maciek's hand knocking on the door	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
10th	a guest dressed in a zesty shirt and sunglasses opens the door and gives a nonchalant head nod to Maciek	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
11th	the guest turns his head and walks away quickly while talking to someone and leaves the door wide open, the shot is taken with the guest's back turned to the camera and Maciek standing in the door frame alone for a few seconds	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
12th	pan from head to toe of Maciek's outfit, showcasing that he's holding a cup in a different color than everyone else's	semi-colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
13th	wide shot of the hallway, Maciek standing far away and closing the door while there's a swarm of people coming into the frame from both directions	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
14th	hand-held shot, Maciek begins to lip-synch the first verse while entering the party and the DOP walks backwards, leading the protagonist into the hallway	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
15th	Maciek stops next to the kitchen	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
16th	a girl with red lip-stick and revealing clothes stares at him (Thor's daughter reference)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
17th	Maciek waves his hand to greet her	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
18th	Thor's daughter rolls her eyes	colorful, but colder light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
19th	there are see the alternative version of the shot where she waves back, the reality of what happened	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
20th	Maciek shows up in the door where most guests are dancing, he still looks distressed	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
21st	every one stops what they're doing and turn their heads towards Maciek	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
22nd	the camera pans onto a group of people (preferably both boys and girls) with their faces twisted in disgust	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
23rd	we see two people whooping	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
24th	Maciek looks down, horrified	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
25th	close-up on a zipper zipping up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
26th	a group of guys burst out laughing	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
27th	a girl in the corner shaking her head and grabbing her nose bridge	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
28th	Maciek looks around anxiously	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
29th	a close-up of someone adjusting the volume on the speaker as we hear the beat build-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
30th	a detail on Maciek mouthing "anyway?" and smiling (we could add a bit more glimmer in post production, very 20s)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
31st	ascend from above of Maciek laying down on the floor which is covered with paints of different vibrant colors, he's lip-synching	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
32nd	ascend of Maciek speaking with a girl enthusiastically	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
33rd	Maciek looking lost, trying to remember her name (we could add a "drinking class" animation like they do in certain comics)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
34th	ascend of Maciek approaching two groups of people and trying to start a conversation but failing miserably, the camera pans from one group on the left to another on the right	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
35th	Maciek understanding he's being ignored and pulling out an ElBar which doesn't work, he tries shaking it but it still won't activate, medium shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
36th	he leans through the crowd onto a balcony and stands next to a guy who's smoking a vape	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
37th	close-up on the guy smoking while blowing out smoke	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
38th	close-up on the vape being passed from his hand to Maciek	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
39th	medium shot (wider shot of them talking a conversation, the camera films them from the back and the DOP slowly pans out into the crowd	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
40th	start of the second verse, we see Maciek rubbing his eyes, close-up onto his face	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
41st	he heavily tumbles into bed, the camera pans down and the shot ends when it reaches the bed frame, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
42nd	we see the camera panning up into a medium close-up of Maciek laying drunk on the couch while other guests ignore him and talk amongst themselves	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
43rd	a "dream like" close-up shot of two hands breaking on the balcony railing	dreamy, colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
44th	another "dream" medium close-up shot in which Maciek and the guy intertwine hands and drink from each other's cups (symbolic meaning since Maciek's cup is a different color than anyone else's)	dreamy, colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
45th	a shot from below of two drunk girls staring at Maciek as he sleeps	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
46th	a shot from above of Maciek opening his eyes, blinking as he sees the girl's and rolling out of the frame	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
47th	Maciek gets up and we can see that he's dizzy, he grabs his temple, close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
48th	wide shot of two couples sitting on both sides of the frame flirting, while Maciek stands in the middle of the frame and looks around	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
49th	a group of people pass by Maciek and one of them puts a Hawaiian flower necklace on him, the other one hands him a beer, medium shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
50th	Maciek sighs and accepts his fate, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
51st	he walks into the kitchen as if to search for someone and we only see him once he enters the door frame, static, medium-wide shot	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
52nd	another shoulder shot from inside the kitchen of the guy Maciek was flirting with smoking a vape and drinking Rose with a different dude	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
53rd	Maciek looks distressed and sad as someone runs into the frame from behind him and nudges him into the door frame	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
54th	the drunk runner releases confetti from the confetti machine and starts laughing, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
55th	close-up, slowed down shot of the confetti being released as the beat drops	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
56th	Maciek lip-synching "do you think that they can't tell I... " as he stands in the doorway and a crowd of people enter the kitchen from behind him, almost as if he's invisible	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
57th	a shot from above (the DOP can use a chair and/or gimbal) of Maciek looking into the camera and singing "I don't belong here" as the camera gradually zooms out a bit and the crowd of people keeps passing Maciek by	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld, chair
58th	close-up shot of the balcony guy laughing and having fun, overlaid with the above shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
59th	as he takes steps for awhile, we see Maciek running into the bathroom and throwing up into the sink, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
60th	a shot from above showing the sink but instead of throw-up, there's a bunch of colorful feathers	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
61st	ahand-held shot of Maciek returning to the party from his POV, low shutter speed to showcase his drunkiness	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
62nd	a detail of people riding dms, slowed down	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
63rd	an medium shot of a group of people playing the game as Maciek puts something on the table and walks off	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
64th	a detail shot of a flower with some of its petals removed (the "he wants me, he wants me not" game)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
65th	everyone at the table looks at each other in confusion and dis-aim, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
66th	one of the group's members shakes their head, picks up a cup with a small camera attached and they take a sip	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
67th	the short transitions into Maciek drinking from his cup and putting it down	colorful light, Nikon 360 camera, tape
68th	close-up to Maciek saying "pass me the vape", we can clearly see he's drunk	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
69th	wide shot of people dancing and laughing with one another, they're having a lot of fun	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
70th	close-up shot of someone grabbing snacks	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
71st	close-up onto Maciek's eyes shifting to the left	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod

72nd	a guy taking shots and multiple people cheering, medium shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
73rd	close-up onto Maciek's eyes shifting to the right	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
74th	a guy trying to juggle a bunch of oranges and dropping them while laughing with his girlfriend, medium-wide shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
75th	detail on an orange riding its way to Maciek's feet	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
76th	beat drop, Maciek stands in the middle of the party and lip syncs the bridge, he's in the spotlight (the colorful lights are very faint if they're even there) and the shot is static	spotlight, colorful lights (dimmed), canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
77th	a close-up on Maciek's face sitting at the table and looking straight forward	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
78th	he pulls out an uno reverse card from the card deck, he sorts through them, close-up shot	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
79th	another close-up of this bald guy sweetheart looking at him with a smug smirk	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
80th	Maciek slides the card across the table, slowed down close-up	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
81st	the guy looks down slowly, close-up onto his face	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
82nd	Maciek looks up with a cold face expression and gets up from the couch	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
83rd	Maciek grabs his cup and exits the frame as the bald guy stays in front of the table and sits there like an idiot, medium shot from a profile perspective	neutral light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
84th	the colorful lights return and the party is ongoing, we see Maciek approaching a group of three people, all of which have cups of different colors as opposed to the majority of the party-goers, medium shot	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
85th	Maciek strikes up a conversation with them, we see all of them nodding and interacting, medium close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
86th	the group seems to notice something and the members gesture Maciek to join	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
87th	an extreme close-up of someone tying up a string	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
88th	someone stands up tying a knot and we see a Pilatus dangling on a string while everyone's watching, wide shot	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
89th	a close-up on someone grabbing a baseball bat/a stick	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
90th	the camera pans up and we see maciek holding a bat/stick	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
91st	a shot of the little Nikon camera being attached to the swinging bat	colorful light, Nikon 960 camera, vape
92nd	everyone next to him and the Pilatus moves away, making room for him, everything is filmed from behind and Maciek is in the centre of the composition, medium shot	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
93rd	we see Maciek closing his eyes, extreme close-up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
94th	he begins hitting the Pilatus, two cameras are needed here (medium close-up and wide shot/medium close-up and close-up)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, wide lens, tripod/gimbal/handheld
95th	we see him lip syncing again with his hands underneath his chin with the camera on the ground, as he's laying on the floor amongst drunk party guests, he's alot more sassy and confident this time	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, the floor/gimbal/handheld
96th	a close-up on multi-colored zippers falling out of the Pilatus (we can just drop a bunch of them from our hands in case filming it as it's happening might not be possible)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, the floor/gimbal/handheld
97th	another snippet of Maciek lip syncing	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, the floor/gimbal/handheld
98th	a wide shot of people gathering appears from the ground as Maciek stands in the middle	colorful light, canon camera, wide lens, tripod
99th	a close-up, slowed down shot of Maciek blowing on the bat as if it's a gun (Western moment)	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, tripod
100th	an above shot, medium close-up where Maciek lies down in the zippers and hits his vape as a subtle, glittery effects placed on the clip	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld
101st	the video ends just like that with another overlay of a zipper coming up	colorful light, canon camera, zoom lens, gimbal/handheld (continued shot number 100)
102nd	credits roll	

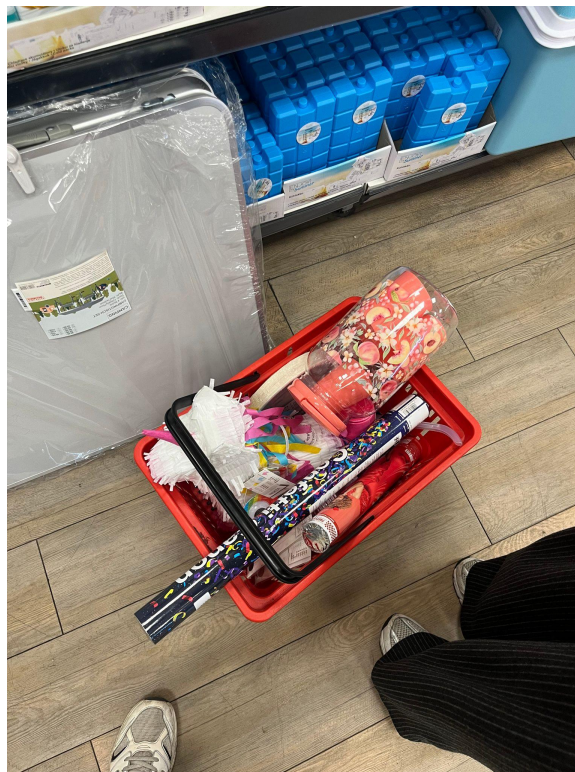
Equipment

The other important aspect of the project was related to the equipment. In order to get a decent variety of shots, I opted for two camera kits, one with a wide 35 mm lens and a zoom lens. Additionally, I struggled to find LED lights at the arsenal, since none of the ones they offered would've given me the desired result. Fortunately, though, Maciek himself had a friend who provided us with those. I rented a gimbal as well, since I intended to experiment with it a little bit, but none of us could quite figure out how it worked and the camera wouldn't synchronise with it, so we just used a stabilizer and achieved a satisfactory result with handheld shots. We had two cutscenes as well, both of which required mics, so I used my portable ones and recorded the sound on my phone. Other than that, we just needed tripods for the camera and that was it.

Props

After I completed the shot list, it became apparent that we would need several props to complete the planning process. Our most important one was the piñata, since it not only served as a major plot filler, it also added onto the campy and colorful atmosphere we strived to create. The second prop was two confetti machines, because we needed to record scenes of the confetti falling, as it fit perfectly into the theme. We purchased two just in case, which turned out to be a great decision, since one of them had been ripped open while we were carrying it upstairs. In order to skillfully showcase Maciek's alienation, we also gave the party crowd identical pink cups and instructed Maciek himself to walk around with a completely different cup. The last major prop was a bubble gun, which one of my extras brought with her. Even though it wasn't initially planned, it added glamour and pizzazz to some of the major shots. We also had other props such as wigs, shoes, dirty dishes and cigarettes.





Production

Unreliable extras

One of the first steps during the planning process was gathering the people I knew in a WhatsApp group chat and informing them about the details related to the timing and the location of the shoot. Initially, it was supposed to be divided into 2 days on the 25th and 26th of May. However, as the day of the shoot came, it soon became apparent that most of my extras were only planning to join during the second day of filming. They informed us about their absence on the day of, which honestly seemed very disrespectful to not only myself, but to my crew as well. This became a huge challenge, since we had just a few people on set, but thankfully, we were able to gather some of Maciek's friends and other wonderful people who were available. As more people joined, we ultimately decided to dedicate one day to this shoot and, though it wasn't easy, we managed to make it work thanks to everyone's active involvement and determination.

Set design

The other thing we needed to take under consideration was the set design. Multiple shots relied on how everything was placed, mostly because it was meant to represent Maciek as an outcast and we needed to manipulate the way the shots were managed in order to achieve this. For instance, the shot of Maciek trying to talk to a group of people and standing behind them required rigid communication between the actors and myself, since I told everyone where exactly to stand and what to do. Similarly, the shot of Maciek laying down on the table was planned in a way which assured his mobility. It also deemed him the focal point of the scene, since my set designer, Ariana, worked hard to create a visible, yet not distracting setup. Additionally, since we mostly shot during the day and the party in the music video takes place during the evening, we needed to cover every window, which pushed us to cover the sources of natural lighting using blankets, towels and tape. The last major aspect of set design was to adjust the LEDs to our liking, and for that we used pink, blue and purple semi-transparent cloths.

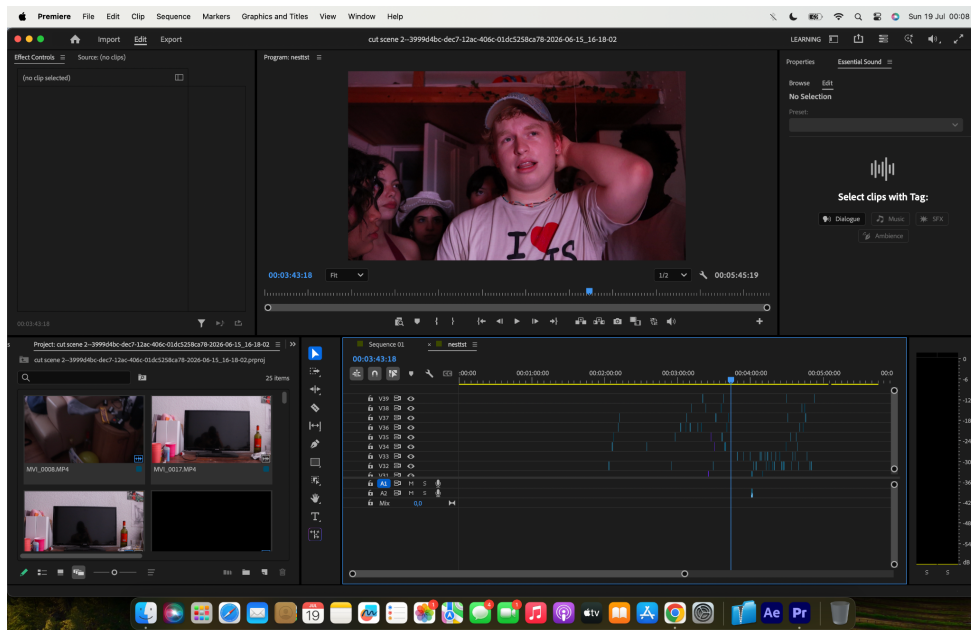
Timing

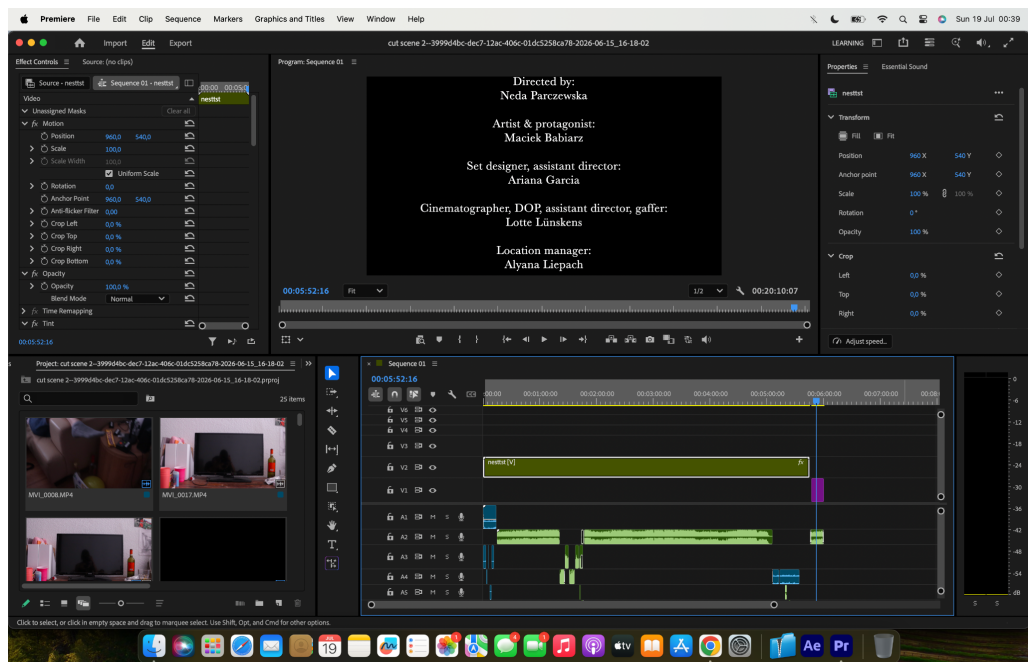
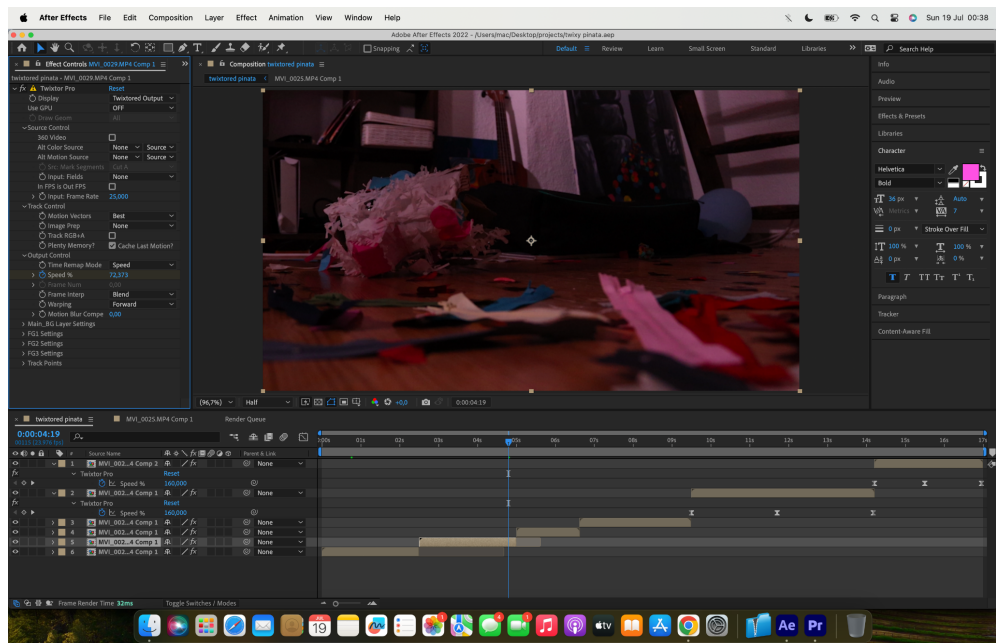
The last learning curve related to the production process was the timing. Since we spontaneously decided to get everything done in one day, it was 12 full hours of sweat and hard work. The shot list proved to be very useful in relation to the content of the scenes, because it allowed us to cross out certain shots once they were done. However, in the context of its chronological order, we did not follow a specific pattern and recorded the footage instinctively. Looking back, this method caused us a lot of time-related stress, but simultaneously, once we decided which shot in particular was next and ballparked how much it should take us, the process was quick and efficient. Due to the nature of a long and exhausting shoot, we took food, dance and smoke breaks to not tire ourselves out entirely.

Post-production

Softwares and the individual editing process

Once we were done with filming, it was time for us to start editing. I transferred all of the footage to my main crew, Ariana and Lotte, and that's when we established that each of us would come up with our individual version of the project. For my softwares, I picked After Effects and Premiere Pro. Firstly, I transferred all of the footage to Premiere and began the long journey of cropping and adjusting each clip. In order to do that, I had to operate on 78 different tracks (39 video and 39 audio tracks). This was certainly a challenge, especially when Maciek's lipsyncing had to be synced perfectly with the music. Another difficulty was layering the cutscenes over the main audio track, cleaning up the background noise, adding ambient sounds and making sure everything was leveled. I had to hop off Premiere at some point and move onto After Effects, but I only used it for slowing down my clips with a plug-in called "Twixtor". Once I had all of the footage in the timeline, I added the "Warp Stabilizer" effect to the clips which were too shaky for my liking. At last came adding the text, credits, adjusting the lighting in specific clips that were either too dark or too bright and, finally, colorgrading, which I decided to implement by applying a simple pink tint, subtle grain and a slight glow.





Clip deficit and undesired cutoffs

I had two major issues in regards to the post-production and one of them arose due to a lack of clips. My project partners didn't seem affected by this problem and made the best of all our clips, which is what I ultimately achieved to do as well, but it wasn't easy. I avoided repetitiveness at all costs, which provided me with an adequate result, but also took up way more time than I expected. As the director, I haven't been prepared for this turn of events, since we had over 180 shots, yet it still somehow didn't seem like enough. If I were to organise a reshoot or direct another music video, I'm certain that after this experience, capturing more than enough footage is something that I wouldn't gloss over. Secondly, I also faced hardships because the clips were often cut short. After watching all of the scenes we gathered, I realised that some of the B-rolls could've been longer and we should have let the camera roll for an additional few seconds. This problem was communicated to us by Christina as well. Even though the clips came together in the end, their sudden cutoffs were irritating and made the workflow quite difficult for me.

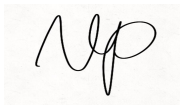
Conclusion

This project was my first opportunity to put my concrete directorial skills to use and I am very glad that it happened thanks to the music video course. I had my reservations at first, since it was a new and unfamiliar setting I had to explore, but I actually ended up finding it more enjoyable than working on my previous tasks. Even though my crew and I faced several challenges, both during and after filming, my friends and I can proudly say we did a great job. Maciek was truly a gem to have around and he kept everyone's spirits up. There are certainly specific things I would alter, like improving my approach to establishing a chronological strategy while managing the set or polishing my skills as a camera operator, but I can notice a huge change in my standpoint regarding teamwork and open communication, which weren't remotely as present within me before as they are now, after this experience. The music video also helped me regain my patience and remember why I study film in the first place; to transform a seemingly unobtrusive notion into a visual medium which has the power to captivate.

Declaration of originality

I hereby confirm that I produced the work assigned to me independently and that I have not ever submitted it in any other course.

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NP', is centered within a light beige rectangular box.

Date: _____19/07/2026_____