

Analysis of Short Film from the Perspective of Filmmakers and Audiences

Lu Jia^{1,a,*}

¹Visual Arts-Media, Sixth college-UC San Diego, San Diego, California, USA, 92093-0021

a. jllulu1999@163.com

*corresponding author

Abstract: With the rapid expansion of the Internet and media in the present era, an increasing number of individuals like to relax by viewing a movie in their leisure time. People prefer to watch short videos rather than long movies, thanks to the rapid increase of short videos and self-media. This study investigates the motivators that drive short filmmakers to create each short film, as well as the real reasons why directors choose to make short films. Exploring the stories behind short films is critical for the future of short films. As they move forward, filmmakers should discover the core of existence from the past, rather than filming for the sake of shooting. In addition to exploring filmmakers, this paper conducts some audience research while viewing short films in order to explore the impact of audience behavior on the development of the entire short film business.

Keywords: Short films, Short videos, Filmmakers, Film industry, the future of the short film

1. Introduction

With the rapid expansion of the Internet and media in the present era, an increasing number of individuals like to unwind by viewing a movie in their leisure time. People prefer to watch short videos rather than long movies, thanks to the rapid increase of short videos and self-media. For example, short videos from TIK TOK, YouTube, and other video platforms are so popular. In his book *The Art of Short Form Content*, Bryan Cook stated that "if you think about all of the video content with a run time of less than five minutes that you consume in a typical day - commercials on TV, viral videos in your Facebook timeline, trailers advertising upcoming movies, promos advertising TV shows, music videos, content on digital billboards, and other out-of-home video displays, etc. - you can see how prevalent this type of content really is" [1]. As a result, the video's diversity or content is abundant, which can readily increase people's desire to watch and captivate the audience's attention. Furthermore, because the development and post-production of short movies takes less time, creators have more time to create. The majority of the short films updated more quickly, and the content was output more regularly. People are approaching a new era of knowledge input, which has been dubbed the "fragmented information age." Short video content distribution not only meets the needs of the public who require strong stimulation and attraction in the "fragmented era" when their attention is readily distracted. Short-length films, like short videos, are becoming increasingly popular. People can complete watching a short video during a meal or while using the restroom. In addition, short films are generally better made than short videos. For example, the actors and directors are more professional, the props and settings are more complex, the story topics are more acutely chosen, and

the plot lines are more plentiful. So, why not take a break and watch a short film in our leisure time to broaden our horizons?

Most people in the field of short film research are preoccupied with creating an earth-shattering short film. If you take the effort to look for short films, you may come across several advertisements for short film projects. Bryan's book, as it indicated, does not employ a lot of film theory, but his purpose is to help short film artists understand how short films function. Every short film maker appears to be missing some critical thought on how to move forward and adapt to the tastes of the audience. For example, why do short films make movies, or what does the term "short film" mean?

2. The Development of Short Films

It might as well to consider the meaning of the short story before delving into the meaning of the short film. Nobody has ever questioned the existence of short stories or the rationale for short films. Short films predate the entire history of filmmaking. There were no films that could exceed thirty minutes in the early days of film history, according to the definition of short film duration, which is less than thirty minutes, due to technological concerns. "A short film is defined as an original motion picture with a running duration of 40 minutes or less, including all credits," according to the 91st Academy Awards Special Rules for the Short Film Awards [2]. *Roundhay Garden Scene* is recognized as the world's first film, lasting only 1.66 seconds and 20 frames. The constraint of cinema technology in the early twentieth century was a critical reason why directors shot short films. But, with today's cutting-edge technology, why are filmmakers still making short films? The solutions are evident and vary when analyzed from the perspectives of the filmmaker or director and the audience. The most popular explanations given by filmmakers include minimal cost, short production cycle, easy script substance, and so on.

3. Analysis From the Perspective of Filmmakers and Directors

Many filmmakers confront budgetary limits early in the filmmaking process; the budget here comprises funding for filming equipment, shooting locations, actors, and so on. Filmmakers, especially young filmmakers, strain their wits to make low- or no-budget films. Without a doubt, all new filmmakers have made short films. Because new filmmakers do not have enough funds, time, performers, and so on, they must take a low-budget picture. At the same time, ensuring the quality of the film created is tough. As a result, the directors hope to create a strong feature film through short films. Many filmmakers later turn their short films into feature blockbusters.

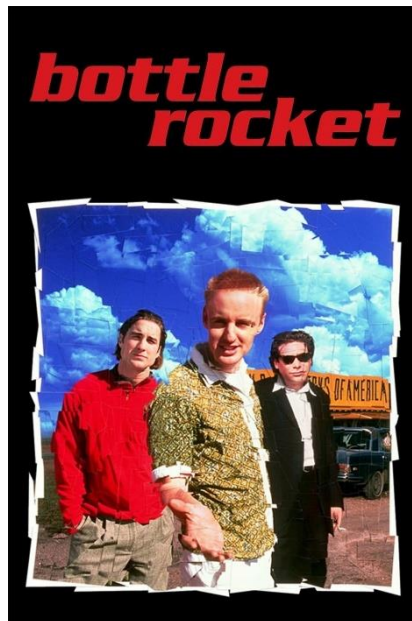


Figure 2: *BottleRocket*, 1996 [4]

Wes Anderson, the director of the *Grand Budapest Hotel*, directed the eleven-minute short film *Bottle Rocket* (1996, right photo). *Bottle Rocket* was acquired by producer James L. Brooks in 1994, who paid Wes Anderson and another director to make a feature-length film based on the story (1h31m, the left picture). Some directors undoubtedly shoot short films in preparation for feature-length features. Most directors, however, make short films in order to discover "truths" in them, such as their own film style or audience preferences. While still in college, Christopher Nolan shot the three-minute short film *Doodlebug* on a shoestring budget. He is the director, photographer, and author of the film. In *Doodlebug*, the protagonist is going to shoot the "bug" on the ground with his shoes when a big human face emerges on top of his head and grabs a shoe. This enormous man and "bug" have the same face and actions as the protagonist. So, when the protagonist killed the "bug," the large guy, that is the protagonist, killed the "bug" in his eyes. He depicts multidimensional space and surrealism in this three-minute short clip. "I believe, like films are ideally geared towards exploring contradiction, recursiveness, and worlds-within-worlds," he commented after the success of *Interstellar* [5]. By making short films, the directors discover their style and experiment with different genres. A short film is similar to a risky investment, where you test it with a little percentage of your capital because you're not sure if the stock has the potential to rise in value. The outcomes will reflect both the investor's skill and the stock's potential.

4. Analysis from the Perspective of Audiences

Because 80% of TikTok users prefer to watch short movies, this paper will use TikTok's data report as a particular instance for relevant research. "At the start of 2022, the number of social media users in the United States was equivalent to 80.9 percent of the overall population." According to Figure 3 from ByteDance's advertising materials, TikTok had 131.0 million users aged 18 and up in the United States in early 2022" [7]. According to a two-year-old user count projection, "the US will be TikTok's largest market in 2020, with 65.9 million monthly users, after factoring out false, duplicate, business, and nonhuman accounts" [8]. In 2022, the number of TikTok users will more than double compared to 2020. The audience for short videos is continually expanding; how can this not be beneficial to short films? Short films are also gaining popularity on this social media platform that is dominated

by short videos. Why do short videos and short films appeal to the audience? The first reason was noted earlier: both short videos and short films have one thing in common: they are both short. In a short amount of time, people can experience a visual feast. Various people have different ideas of time, and for some, a 20-minute short film is a long time. It also takes 20 minutes. The audience may be willing to watch seven or eight three-minute videos to pass the time, but not a short film. The majority of short films follow the narrative direction of the narrative film: beginning-development-climax-end. The most appealing reason for short videos is that the climax is positioned right at the start. Conflict or dramatic plots usually captivate audiences. So, what are the benefits of short films? If short videos are fast food and long films are three Michelin stars, then short films are more like a relaxing afternoon tea. Short film production is becoming increasingly advanced. Short films demand greater financial and material resources, from the output effects on the screen, such as the script, actors, and shooting scenes, to the production process behind the films, such as camera equipment, recording equipment, and music special effects. The most potent weapon of short films, however, is thought provoking. If you've seen more than five short films, you'll notice that some of the sharp concepts in these flicks shoot right through your heart. Would you be aware of the malformed education in current society in *Mindenki* (2016), directed and written by Kristóf Deák, and *Alternative Math* (2017), directed and written by David Maddox? Would you be aware of the gravity of the racial discrimination problem in *Guy Nattiv's Skin* (2018) and Aneil Karia's *The Long Goodbye* (2022)? In less than half an hour, the Oscar-winning short films examine one strong social topic issue after another. Even if it isn't an Oscar-winning short film, a short film can teach you to think.

5. Discussion

Finally, what chances do short films have? As stated in the text, the short film will only improve. One reason is that generations of new directors rely on short films to hone their shooting techniques and develop their own film style; another reason is that the audience's aesthetic ability for contemporary films has increased, and the requirements for short films will become increasingly stringent. In any case, short films have a lot of potential. Will short videos be able to catch up to the production level of short films in five years? Does the fact that the production level of short videos and short films has reached a high level, implying that they have become the same product? All of these are questions that filmmakers and audiences must consider and address.

6. Conclusion

This paper examines the motivators for short films from the perspectives of both filmmakers and audiences. The goal of this paper is not to teach filmmakers how to make a "perfect" short film, but rather to prompt every filmmaker to consider what it means to make a short film. The majority of those who took part in the study on "whether to use TikTok to view short films" were college students over the age of 18. College students over the age of 18 are an essential force in every era's Internet wave. Data may contain a lot of subjectivity when it comes to understanding the Internet. We will conduct more precise extraction surveys in future related studies. It will also broaden the survey base and enhance the variables of the survey to seek the accuracy of the research, such as employing different age groups, genders, users from different countries, and so on as variable conditions of the research.

References

- [1] Cook, B. *The art of short form content: From concept to color correction*. Focal Press. 2016.
- [2] *Short Films Rules*, 2020. https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/91aa_short_films.pdf
- [3] *Bottle Rocket*, 1996, - Posters — *The Movie Database (TMDB)*, . <https://www.blr-ray.com/Bottle-Rocket/864150/>
- [4] *.Bottle Rocket*, 1994. <https://www.themoviedb.org/t/p/original/fF4oQckYattORY7UXW192I4gbX2.jpg>

- [5] *Christopher Nolan Uncut: On 'Interstellar,' Ben Affleck's Batman, and the Future of Mankind*, 2019. www.thedailybeast.com
- [6] *Doodlebug*, 1997, directed by Christopher Nolan, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0411302/news>.
- [7] ByteDance's advertising resources, 2022. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-united-states-of-america>
- [8] ByteDance's Market in the U.S. 2020. <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/tiktok-users-around-world-2020>