
Screening Checklist: Mise-en-Scène

- Be alert to the overall design plan and *mise-en-scène* and to your emotional response to these elements of the film. Are you comforted or made anxious by them? Are your senses overwhelmed or calmed by what you see onscreen?
- Identify the elements of the mise-en-scène that seem to be contributing the most to your emotional response.
- Does the design create the correct times, spaces, and moods? Does it go beyond surfaces and relate to developing themes?
- Make note of the composition within the frame in key shots. Where are *figures* placed? What is the relationship among the figures in the foreground, middle ground, and background?
- Is the framing in key shots *open*, or is it *closed*? How can you tell? What is the effect of this framing on your understanding of the narrative and characters?
- Does the use of light in the film call attention to itself? If so, describe the effect that it has on the composition in any shot you analyze.

- Does the film employ lots of movement? Very little movement? Describe how the use of movement in the film complements or detracts from the development of the narrative.
- Note the type of movement (movement of figures within the frame or movement of the frame itself) in important shots, and describe as accurately as possible the effect that that movement has on the relationships among the figures in the frame.
- Does the film's design have a unified feel? Do the various elements of the design (the sets, props, costumes, makeup, hairstyles, etc.) work together, or do some elements work against others? What is the effect either way?
- Was achieving *verisimilitude* important to the design of this film? If so, have the filmmakers succeeded in making the overall mise-en-scène feel *real*, or *verisimilar*? If verisimilitude doesn't seem to be important in this film or clip, what do you suspect the filmmakers were attempting to accomplish with their design?
- How does the design and mise-en-scène in this film or clip relate to the narrative? Is it appropriate for the story being told? Does it render the narrative secondary or even overwhelm it?