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Shot Sizes in the Main Title Design and Analysis of ‘The Pacific’ Series Main Title Design Shot Sizes

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Abstract

The production of the main titles, which give us an idea of what to watch for in the beginning, is made up of both visual and audio elements. One of the most important among the visual items is the shot sizes. In this study, the shot sizes used in opening titles are specified and the effects and usage purposes are mentioned. As a result of the study ‘*The Pacific*’ TV series, which has an award-winning main title design in many international competitions, it is analysed in-depth over the main title shot sizes and cause–effect relationships by taking into account both the communication design and usage purposes.

Keywords: Main title design, shot sizes, the Pacific, visual communications, graphic design.

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1. What Is the Main Title?

Basically, main titles can be described as opening scenes that are preceded by the names of directors, actors and employees. With the development of cinema, reference to the hints of the filming atmosphere and visual characters narrative of cinema and movie viewing experience have been an important area of the cinema industry (Noyan & Odekan, 2009).

Respectively, what should be shown on the main title is the actors, music, editor, art director, producer, screenwriter and director (Clark & Spohr, 2002)

The main title design is a simple piece made in the early period with small budgets or even budgets made up with a leftover amount of the movie shooting budget. The 'main title', thanks to designs of today's main title designers, who make a difference with their work like Saul Bass, Maurice Binder and Kyle Cooper, has become a sector which is also conceived due to main title designs that add value to films, even more valuable than movies have become a sector in this context.

It would be appropriate to evaluate Saul Bass separately 'The Man With the Golden Arm' (1955), of Otto Preminger, 'Vertigo' (1958) and 'Psycho' (1960) of Alfred Hitchcock and also 'Goodfellas' (1994) of Martin Scorsese, and the leading most important works of *Saul Bass*. The writings and articles (including his own articles) written after these works produced by Bass have caused him to revalue a situation that can be emphasised as Paul Lester's* review of Bass, which reveals the contributions of our understanding of today's graphic design (Hochscherf, 2014, p. 186). Bass combinations as far as possible, produce a very different visual language.



Figure 1. The man with the golden arm

'Miseenscene' (mise-en-scene) means those who are put into the scene in French. It is the sum of elements that affect the visual aesthetic or the feeling of a scene, a plan or a film. The interplay of objects; the colour, characters, depth, the choice of shadow and plan of the composition of the production, the design of the décor and even the raw film type used are some of these elements. When main titles are examined, it can be seen that mise en scene design, which is heavily used, are

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the top-level design products. It is imperative that each aesthetic element listed above is used in accordance with the basic design rules and with concern of the correct understanding of the message the designer wishes to give. This makes the main titles and main title designers special.

The most important share in perception is the sense of sight; our vision senses meet almost all the requirements of our senses alone. In the perception of the outside world the visual perception is in the first place with a ratio of 83% (Yıldız, 2014).

In this case, visuality is the most crucial element of very short main title when compared to films. In spite of other aesthetic elements in the main titles, most important is the usage of video recording, montage, editing and typographic design. 'Opening frame of a movie should point out to the main theme and arise curiosity about where the movie is heading. Mike Nichols' movie 'Working Girl' (1988) opens up with an image of the Statue of Liberty drawn from the sky and it is revealed from the very beginning that the main theme is a woman's independence in New York' (Frederick & Landau, 2012, p. 1).

From here on, sometimes starting with the opening frame, completely dedicated to the special part of the main title is the first part of the communication with the audience and it is expected to be glamorous design products in every detail.

If the desired atmosphere is produced in the main title, the attention and concentration of the audience is intensified on the film and considers itself as a part of the subject (sinematek.org).

Briefly looking at the characteristics of the main title:

- Shows the filming progression and directs the spectator.
- Indicates the type of film.
- Evokes the important moods for the film.
- Fulfills aesthetic and recreational functions.
- Unlike the trailer, it has a stronger and more secure tie to the film it introduces (Clark & Spohr, 2002).

The main title is in the state of integrity with the film and the music typography graphics and moving images that provide this harmony combine to form the main title. The main title will fail if there is an incompatibility with the whole, even in any components of the main title. Beginning in the late 1990s, agencies that designed main titles only started to open. After these developments, main titles are now becoming design products that have professional techniques of style and experts who know exactly how to do them.

2. 'The Pacific' TV Series

Production company: HBO

Executive producer and narrator: Steven Spielberg, Tom Hanks

Directors: Jeremy Podeswa (3 episodes), Timothy Van Patten (3 episodes), David Nutter (2 episodes), Carl Franklin (1 Episode), Tony To (1 Episode), Graham Yost (1 episode)

Music: Hans Zimmer, Blake Neely, Geoff Zanelli

Cinematography: Alan Cody, Marta Evry, Edward A. Warschilka

'The Pacific' was made in 2010 after the production of the same producer company and producers on the European side of the Second World War called 'Band of Brothers' (2001). It describes Japanese islands that did not come up as much as the European frontier in the war.

Producer Steven Spielberg said that after Band of Brothers, the Pacific was shot the same as Band of Brothers in ten episodes as a result of messages from soldiers and their relatives who fought on the Pacific front.

3. Overview of 'The Pacific' Main Title

When examining the main title design in world cinema, although there are various main title examples, generally three main methods in American (Hollywood) style main titles are observed. The main titles in the first group focus on the main character rather than the story and the film, and interpret it according to the designer's intention and the film tone. For example, James Bond movies fall in the second group of main title designers and does not tell the story and show characters directly. The key situation that forms the story of the film, which causes the whole story to happen, instead is to produce a graphical language at a different point of view and dimension. This visual language produced will cause the film tone to be perceived intensely. In the third group of main titles, the designer summarises the story in a symbolic form using a graphic format appropriate for the film tone. They show the important characters directly to the audience and do not hesitate to show important clues (Gul, 2016). The examined series 'The Pacific' takes place in this group.

The use of shot measurements in these three main title styles explained above are the most important elements of design and impacts the visual language of design directly.

The main title design of the series was made by Los Angeles-based main title design firm named *Imaginary Forces*. It seems that it has produced a unique and impressive main title design that matches the company motto 'Forget the film watch the titles'. Tension is formed by slowing down rather than accelerating something (Frederick & Landau, 2012). The main title of 'The Pacific' series from the first sequence is a slow main title. The slow-going main title stage transitions and music keep the viewer constantly concerned and prepares the audience for the highlighted content. 'Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing left to add but when there is nothing left to be removed' (Frederick & Landau, 2012, p. 93).

Since the main title designer wants to give an intense message within a limited time line, he presents his design, which is purified from all unnecessary details (colour, texture, stain, typography) to the viewer's admiration.

4. Detailed Analysis of the Shooting Metrics Used in 'The Pacific'

The distance between the camera and the recorded subject is infinite. However, there are five basic distances that can be defined in practice. These are:

- Close-up shot or extreme close-up shot.
- Medium close-up shot.
- Long shot.
- Very long shot.

Listed as metrics (Arijon, 2005).

Shot metrics are not strictly separated from each other according to a director, while extreme close-up shooting can be close-up according to another director. These are just some guides for directors (Eyikan, 1973). There are three factors that influence the decision of the director of photography on shot scales: composition, the format of the movie, screen and the television display format (Englander & Petzold, 1976).

Shot sizes, when they are examined, prepare the infrastructure for the use of visual items and the other design elements.

4.1. Close-Up and Extreme Close-Up Shot

It shows the character (or object) in detail, especially the nose and eyes. It makes the sub-text, irony or fraud visible (Frederick & Landau, 2012). It is also the angle of the camera used to show the small pieces of a whole, guides the spectator and guides the spectator to the attention of the object. Details that we cannot fully capture for the attention of the spectator in more distant scenes are made clear by this shot scale, so attention is drawn to the desired spot. Besides the human face, close plans of hands and other used objects are also shot. The most important feature of 'The Pacific' is observed as close-up shots. The line used in close-up shots and the image of shredded coal fragments are the unifying elements of all the main title stories. The image mentioned earlier has begun to come to different meanings, since it merges with the actual images and drawing it connects. When a close-up shot is made to an object or a human limb, it gives a dramatic effect to the subject in whatever context (Englander & Petzold, 1979). This rhetoric is actually a technique that has been solidified with the film birth of a nation more than a century ago. At the beginning of his career, Griffith realised that transferring a scene from one point to another with a still camera restricted the narration of the story. He found out that the best way to transfer the thought and feelings of the characters is to zoom in on the character and focus on the face. The discovery, instead of recording and transmitting, has given cinema an artistic dimension (Kucukerdogan, 2010). One of the most effective close-up shooting sequences on the history of cinema is the film *'The Insider'* that Michael Mann directed as the director of photography. Mann is successful in producing disturbances while watching the movie. Everyone has used the technique of a character walking through a corridor followed by a camera but in the *'The Insider'* Mann had almost placed the camera at the back of Russell Crowe's neck. Entering the player's personal space he made the viewer suddenly feel vulnerable just like the character. You are very nervous while watching Crowe walking around the house at night, you do not know why and yes there is music, but the tension is produced mostly by the camera usage and, yes, there is music (Goodridge & Grierson, 2014).

The visual sensation that gathers information about external reality brings the information to the visual centre of the brain. The incoming information is compared and resolved with the image information contained in the brain's password banks. Image information about external phenomena emerges. This is the naked reality that stands against human existence (Yıldız, 2014). Thanks to close-up shooting and established connections, the viewer is more affected when compared to images combined with ordinary shooting. One of the factors that increased this effect was the in situ use of a three-way rule. Placing an object or player in the middle of the frame forms a static image that generally does not attract attention, but if the framing is divided into three sections, both horizontally and vertically, a rough guide is obtained for an effective settlement. The most effective location for placing the main objects will be above or near an intersection point in the exposed area (Frederick & Landau, 2012). The arrangement to be made in the light of these points while composing composition in cinematography allows the interest of the spectator to be more concentrated on the frame (Yıldız, 2014). It is not possible for the viewer to be unaffected by such a framing and shooting plan because the viewer feels very close to it and the interest stays alive with a three-way rule; the viewer is also psychologically affected by the intelligent connections established.



Figure 2. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)



Figure 3. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)

Close-up (*extreme close-up*) shots offer an impressive visual flavour when main titles are analysed in shot plans usage and in form. Especially, the coarse layer and black sediment left on paper of the coal layer, showing the broken and blowing pieces with the *super slow motion* that shifts this layer and in the foreground produces a visual impression of almost surrealism, thanks to the close-up shots as well as the conceptual explanations of the thrust of the coal layer and the sediment. Horizontal lines are visible both in this sequence and in the input sequence of the main title. Horizontal lines awaken the feelings of comfortable peacefulness calmness stability and stagnation. Vertical lines give the feelings of excitement motion dynamism mobility and vitality (Yıldız, 2014).

4.2. Big Close-Up

This shows the character above the head. Usually, it is used to show a part of an intimate dialogue or reveal the details of the character's face. The tie and the collar need to be shown with men. The upper body starting from the chest level needs to be shown with men and women. Details of listening, punctuations and mimics could be included in big close-ups (Frederick & Landau, 2012).



Figure 4. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)

Big close-ups could get the spectator closer to the character as it covers a big space similar to a photograph or television frame. The one who gives the message would be more emphasised. The cuts of the right and left sides which need attention for TV broadcasts in big close-ups used to be more important due to the 4 × 3 television format; however, now thanks to TVs with 16 × 9 format high definition, standard filming format could be shown just like the original both on television and screen (Englander & Petzold, 1976). In this part of the credits, the filming angle is used as big close-up by

designing the use of typography and other visual elements. In this way, typography is placed in the space that the face is supposed to look at.

4.3. Medium Close-Up

This shows the character above the shoulders or chest. It is used for more intimate dialogues (Frederick & Landau, 2012). It could be taken as the next levels of the big close-up. Complete shoulders and their connection spots with arms are framed. It is a measure that starts from the chest level to the headspace. It is used when the big close-up surpasses the frame. It makes the details in the frame and background to be taken inside the frame.



Figure 5. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)

Although the shoulder plan is not used widely, it could be said that it is considered as an option for story board sketches. Depending on the moving in the sequence, there could be a swift from the big close-up to shoulder plan or vice versa (Reisz & Millar, 1978). In the scene that is designed (Figure. 6), shoulder plan is set to be used as it has a soldier image that aims with his gun. When the direction of the gun and the soldier's figure come together with the shoulder plan angle, it creates a dramatic perspective that gets deeper all the way from the gun barrel. Therefore, it creates a useful space on the left side of the scene for the designer to place the relevant typographic item.



Figure 6. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 23:00)

4.4. Medium Shot

It should be considered as the next level of *medium long shot*. It frames the complete chest and headspace. It cuts right above the waist. (http://www.kamera_arkasi.org/kompozisyon/cekim_teknikleri/in_san/cekimolcekleri/gogusplan.html)

This shows the character above the waist, mainly used for filming two or three people talking to each other (Frederick & Landau, 2012). It could be considered as the continuation of *medium close-up*. It is a measure between the right below or above the belt level of waist and headspace. It is usually a frame that equals to half of the body measure, which is why it is also called $\frac{1}{2}$ shot. Factors on the background and frame need to be placed inside the frame as in a composition in the case of medium

shot or bigger scales. There is a chance to place an image that is related to the topic on the right or left blank area of the frame. Therefore, it is one of the most efficient shots ever used for announcements and presentations.

Another important point is that there shouldn't be a swift between the shots that are too close to each other. For instance, since the difference between the *medium close-up* and the chest shot is imperceptible, the small measure difference between the two would be perceived as insufficient or indecent by the audience. Instead, a swift from the medium close-up to the medium shot or to close-up would make the film more persistent (Reisz & Millar, 1978).



Figure 7. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)

It is the right measure for situations like the height or any size of plan is too big and the facial expressions of the orator are too small. In the medium shot one could move easily and leave the frame.

4.5. Medium Long Shot

This is also called $\frac{3}{4}$ filming measure or the American shot. It is the frame that goes up to the headspace, starting from the right below the knee. *Medium long shot* is used for not seeing the shoes or the ground and preventing the extra information to pass into the frame from left and right sides or when the *long shot* is too big (<http://www.kameraarkasi.org/kompozisyon/cekimteknikleri/insan/cekimolcekleri/amerikanplan.html>).



Figure 8. (Source www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 21:00)

4.6. Long Shot

Long shot could be defined as a middle shot as it is in between the *very long shot* and close-up. Actors are within sight of the camera from head to foot. When the couple of actor are grouped in a *long shot* the camera would be close enough to catch the hand gestures and facial expressions for these people. Because it places the spectator right in the middle, it is perfect for delivering the events. Since it has multiple expressive use, in a *long shot* many could be filmed (Mascelli, 2002).



Figure 9. (Source: www.artoftitles.com 02.01.2017, 23:00)

At the end of some research, the optimal view is obtained when the headspace of the frame is to be determined as 2 units and the bottom space is determined as 1 unit; however regarding the moving and flowing scenes, this ratio may be 1:1 or 1:2. The case of headspace and bottom space is not given as it causes the image of people who are squeezed and stuck in a narrow space.

In such filming, the scene gives the spectator a general perspective while also passing the topmost information on to them. The picture above shows a *long shot* scene. Big close-up is the perfect camera angle to show the audience the extend of danger that the soldier is in while running the in the middle of explosions.

4.7. Very Long Shot

This is looking at the subject or the object from afar. It is used in scenes where the audience is able to see the events completely and process them. 'A horseman is running at full gallop in the desert, it starts dawning' (Eyikan, 1973, p. 19).



Figure 10. (Source: <https://blog.omerfarukciftci.com.tr/tr/afis-yolu-ile-propagandanin-donum-noktasi-joseph-goebbels/> 02.01.2017, 23:00)

For example, in war movies very long shot is used to show the number of soldiers in the army. It also gives information about the environment of the opening scene.

Composition is one of the most important factors in very long *shot*, just like it is in every other shot size. One of the most important principles in composition is simplicity. The subject is driven forward and a suitable background is chosen for the subject. But the main subject is emphasised by cleaning up the objects that fail to support its exposition (Yıldız, 2014). This understanding could be also observed in the main title's very long shot. The background is cleaned up from the unneeded details and a useful relationship is created for the spectator to focus on the subject by means of colour and stain. Swift to the very long *shot* takes place in the close-up shot towards to the sprinkling direction of the coal particles while the lead pencil is getting sharpened. While the swift from the extreme close-up shot to the very long shot creates a perceptual contrast; reasoning occurs from the particles sprinkling and a transition to the general image of the characters in the show is carried out, in a way. This scene shows the audience a slight motorised troop that moves towards the horizon.

5. Conclusion

It is estimated at the end of this research that as the shooting size decreases (gets closer) the spectator gets more tempted to form an emotional bond with the subject and as the size increases (gets further) the spectator moves away from the emotions and starts getting more rational information on the subject.

'Some methods focus more on the technical side of the work but knowing about the frame sizes and lenses is not as important as to have the talent of story telling' (Goodridge & Grierson, 2014, p. 104).

'Shooting sizes are not distinguished from one another with certain lines. One shooting could be an extreme close-up for a director could be close-up to another director. These terms are directive for the directors in a way' (Eyikan, 1973, p. 19).

It is observed that in the Pacific's main title, all shooting sizes are used except for the chest shot. It is also discovered that the factor for choosing the shooting size is in parallel with the information and emotions that are intended to be given.

After examining a work where the shooting sizes and other design items are used in such a successful way and comparing The Pacific or other similar works with many main titles of TV series in our country; it could be said that the majority of these TV shows are not able to form a bond as organic and emotional as in The Pacific. Moreover, it is observed that there are many examples where the main titles of a foreign TV show is used for a popular TV show in Turkey. It is expected that as the high-quality works such as *The Pacific's* main title sequence comes up more often, it will affect the lower quality works and carry their qualities above the threshold; at least the producers would take the responsibility to maintain a unique approach to their main titles by knowing if they adapt them from acknowledged ones, they would face the negative reaction risk coming from the audience.

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