

FELLOWS HALL

Written by
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Draft 6 (FINAL)
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THE CONCEPT

A b/w still-photos-based sci-fi short film / homage to *La Jetée* (<https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~felluga/pop/jetee2.html>)

RESTRICTIONS / RULES:

1. Filmed in b&w; mostly still photography, only bits of movement here and there
2. No dialogue; no audio; only third-person narration and music are allowed
3. Only featuring non-professional actors
4. Length between 3-14 mins
5. Shot exclusively in the grounds of Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, mainly on the Fellows Hall balcony and in Fellows Hall
6. Incorporate 20 terms/concepts presented at the 2023 Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change:
 - 'a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens' (Margaret Mead)
 - 'civic imagination' (Sangita Shresthova)
 - 'civic distance' (Paul Mihailidis)
 - 'fugitive space' (Chris Harris)
 - 'poetics of care' (Pablo Martinez-Zarate)
 - 'horizons of possibility' (Pablo Martinez-Zarate)
 - 'systematic patterns of deviation' (Anthony Ioannidis)
 - 'conspire towards joy' (Chris Harris)
 - 'scavenge' (SAC programme)
 - 'shame' (Roman Gerodimos)
 - 'imagined alternative futures' (Karen Fowler-Watt)
 - 'the marginalised' (Jad Melki)
 - 'crisis' (Stephen Reese)
 - 'institutional' (Stephen Reese)
 - 'avoidance' (Len Apcar)
 - 'aesthetics' (James Cohen)
 - 'a new life rhythm' (PMZ?)
 - 'rupture' (PMZ?)
 - 'presence' (Andrea Vilhena)
 - 'stable, valued, recurrent patterns of behaviour' (Stephen Reese)
7. Scripted, filmed and edited in five days

PLOT SUMMARY

It's 2023. A series of catastrophic events are taking place throughout Earth. Our setting - a Baroque palace in the outskirts of a European city - is the only known haven; it is also a portal. Six people are at a balcony of the palace. They have travelled here from 2073. Their mission is to change the course of history and save humanity.

FADE IN:

EXT. MEIERHOF TERRACE - DAY

Bartok's Music for Percussion, Strings and Celesta (L. Bernstein 1960) or Liszt's Trübe Wolken.

A gloomy day with dark clouds. Very slow pan and zoom out to reveal the Untersberg (background) and the lake (foreground) from the Schloss.

NARRATOR

This is the story of a small group
of thoughtful, committed citizens.

ANGULAR SHOT

The balcony of Fellows Hall.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They were travellers: nomads of
space and time.
They were visionaries: they could
imagine the past.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ZOOMING OUT

The eye of the chair/portal. Crossfade with ECU of CAMERON's eye.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But, mainly, they were chosen
because they were human - and only
humans could carry out this task.

FADE TO BLACK.

OPENING CREDITS

FADE TO WHITE

FADE IN:

EXT. MEIERHOF TERRACE - DAY

Static shots of the moss-covered statues next to the lake, then the bronze animals outside the Schloss entrance. Going from close ups to wider shots. The pace slowly picks up.

NARRATOR

Fifty years ago, in 2023, a series of catastrophic events started to take place throughout the planet.

EXT/INT. SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON - DAY

Details of statues, stones and tiles - weeds taking over. Shadows and details of the chairs/portals. Corridors. Staircases. The shadow of a body (or is it a doll) hanging from the ceiling. Marble battered by time and humans.

NARRATOR

The forests burned, the ice melted, and the oceans boiled. Deserts flooded, cities got deserted. Wars broke out, mushroom clouds sprouted everywhere. Millions fled, others died of radiation poisoning, starvation or thirst.

Survivors started to scavenge for food and shelter.

I/E. MEIERHOF TERRACE - DAY

Disturbingly idyllic, empty, angular establishing shots of the Meierhof terrace/garden and the view of the lake/mountain. Then the Schloss itself.

NARRATOR

In the outskirts of Salzburg, an old palace somehow still stood, although the wounds could be seen everywhere.

It became a haven for refugees and the marginalised.

INT. SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON - DAY

Details of weathered floors and surfaces. Claustrophobic shots of shut windows and staircases.

NARRATOR

This is where the Reconstruction
would have to begin.

INT. SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON - DAY

An old black telephone with a rotary dial

NARRATOR

This is where the trajectory of
history would have to be altered.

EXT. FELLOWS HALL BALCONY - DAY

Close ups of the chairs/portals - pace picks up - crossfade
with ANTONIA's dress. From this point on, most of the shots
feature THE TRAVELLERS who occupy the space of the balcony as
if it's their home - as if it's been their home for a while.

EXTREME CLOSE UPS AND CLOSE UPS OF DETAILS OF THE TRAVELLERS'
HANDS, BODIES, CLOTHES, FOCUSING ON FABRICS, SURFACES AND
TOUCH.

NARRATOR

The Travellers arrive and are given
a room. No one asks how they got
here. No one wonders how it is
possible that their clothes would
be so intact; that their skin would
be so perfect; that their faces
would be so radiant.

WIDER SHOT REVEALING, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEIR FACES

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

No one is surprised by the fact
that they are so familiar with the
space.

No one really cares.

INT. FELLOWS HALL - DAY

Establishing shot of the room followed by tighter shots of
particular features: microphones, desks, chairs, carpets,
pens.

Music switching to the Bach/Marcello BWV974 Adagio; its steady rhythm acting as a tone or heartbeat for the rest of the film.

NARRATOR

This is where the Travellers will have to operate. Their whole world is a room called Fellows Hall - a relic of the age of conferences and summer schools.

We move to the far end of the room, POV inside, behind the shut window, looking out to the balcony and the chairs/portals.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The room has a balcony that looks out to the lakes and the mountains.

We move outside to the balcony.

EXT. FELLOWS HALL BALCONY - DAY

Master shots of the balcony. We finally get a proper look at the set-up and the chairs/portals.

NARRATOR

No one really ever understood why, but throughout this whole story, throughout the 50 years that followed, to this day, that room and the balcony have always been safe:
a fugitive space allowing the slimmest glimpse of a horizon of possibility.

Focusing on the balcony railing and fence. Inside looking out.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It is here that they will have to come up with a plan; a plan to save humanity from itself.

SHREENATH squatting behind the chair/portal, extending his hand, almost like engaging in some kind of energy transfer.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They will have to mingle with the citizens of 2023, blend with them, befriend them, get to know them, listen to them, and persuade them that they can collectively change the course of history; that they can kickstart the stalled civic imagination, and alter the terminal decline of institutions.

MEREDITH dancing.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The travellers will have to soothe the pain and dissipate the shame of failure, the avoidance of reality; they will have to imagine an alternative future that bridges the civic distance; they will have to conspire towards joy and create a poetics of care, a new aesthetics of equality, a new life rhythm that ruptures the spiral of darkness, the rigid, systematic patterns of deviation.

CAMERON, DAVID sitting still, pensive.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They will have to establish presence; and restore stable, valued, recurrent patterns of behaviour.

The TRAVELLERS gather as a group and form a circle. They look up. They touch and hold each other.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But first - before they go out to face the burning world, they have to make peace with each other. They have to negotiate, and create, and iterate - until they are ready.

We see the TRAVELLERS solo again, isolated, vulnerable, facing their fears.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And even before they can do that - before anything else - they have to make peace with their own self. And that is the most dangerous part of their mission.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Their wounds stop them from seeing others, and stop others from seeing them for what they really are.

The travellers carry with them evidence of things not seen; they remember the things we forgot.

(Beat)

INT. FELLOWS HALL - DAY

Extreme close up of CAMERON's eye followed by close ups of arms and hands.

NARRATOR

They look each other in the eyes, and their eyes become mirrors; in the eyes of others they see their own body.

EXT. FELLOWS HALL BALCONY - DAY

LOW SHOT LOOKING UP

The TRAVELLERS have formed a circle and are looking each other in the eyes.

NARRATOR

The time has come.

(Beat)

I/E. FELLOWS HALL - DAY

One continuous shot as we walk through an empty Fellows Hall, slowly reach the balcony door...

NARRATOR

The travellers will never know if they succeeded in their mission. What they know is that, if they do succeed to alter the course of history, they will cancel their own existence. For the future to change, they will have to erase themselves.

...then walk out to an empty balcony. The TRAVELLERS are gone.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
They will never be born. They will
be forever trapped in our dreams.

EXT. FELLOWS HALL BALCONY - DAY

The TRAVELLERS lined up against the railing turn and stare us
in the eyes.

FADE TO WHITE

FADE TO BLACK.

END CREDITS