MILA MILLER

**ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTIONS & AIMS**

***SEQUENCE 1:***

**SIGHT:**

This sequence opens the animation, so I really imagine it to be intense, but also as clear as possible.

I saw the first shot as being a high angle shot, with the boat being very small, lost in the middle of a very dark sea. I imagine the sea and the waves to be very dark blue, but I don’t think the sea should be too violent.

The aim is to concentrate the eye on the boat, not the sea. The sea should certainly be moving, but I don’t imagine a storm or anything.

I see the sky as nearly black, with no stars, just the moon. The inflatable boat, that way, would stand out, bright red. It would be very small, with some of the material ripped, a broken rope hanging over it.

The refugees, all squeezed in the boat, would all be wearing orange lifejackets. The mother is holding the motor and steers it, she looks determined although her eyebags suggest she is tired. The father is beside her, staring ahead at the sea, looking lost and empty. Ada and her brother are opposite them, but all their feet touch as they are squeezed together. There is nothing in the boat except two empty plastic bottles.

Ada has her arms wrapped around her younger brother, trying to warm him. Her hair is wet, she looks tired, her brother’s head is resting on her shoulder. She is looking peacefully at her brother sleeping, but then turns her head to look at the sea behind her, following her father’s gaze. It would be important here to have a close up on her and her brother, to really show Ada’s love for him. When Ada turns her head, her face turns from love and comfort to fear, she realizes they are arriving in a new dangerous country and doesn’t know if she’ll manage to protect her brother. Her eyes open wide as she looks at the sea.

**SOUND:**

As I’d really want to focus the ‘audience’ on the boat, I think the dominant sound should be the one of the motor of the boat. Less loudly should be heard the sound of the sea, of the waves. I imagine sort of a tense atmosphere, with no music, just the sound of the sea and boat.

**AIM:**

The aim in this sequence is to bring tension, to create curiosity for the person watching. Why are these people immigrating, and why do they look terrified? It really has to be clear that the family is emigrating, which is why the small boat in bad condition and the lifejackets are crucial.

By showing the fear in Ada and her father’s face, and the fatigue in her mother and brother’s, it should spark curiosity.

This is the opening sequence, so it introduces Ada for the first time. I think what is very important here is to manage to show her deep love for her brother, how much she wants to protect him. She is barely thinking about herself in this moment, she is worrying for her brother. She’s almost a second mother to him. This introduces the kind person she is, and hopefully will in part make the audience feel pity for her. Ideally this personality, innocent, kind and brave would make the public want to fight for her, and stop these future emigration wars from arriving. Therefore, especially with the documentary that follows, make them want to act against global warming.

*EDITING IDEAS:*

To show the time ellipsis between sequence 1 and 2, maybe we could use a classic black panel of a few seconds?

***SEQUENCE 2:***

**SIGHT:**

This sequence is set in a really poor land. I imagine the ground being completely crackly and arid, light brown.

I see the sky as bright blue, and the sun as huge, beaming and white, in the sky. I imagine some sort of rocky mountains far in the background.

Ada’s brother is standing side-on in the middle ground, and I thought nothing should be in front of him. That way, that leaves space for the elephants Ada is painting on the canvas which would be right in front of her brother, and also leaves space for the real elephants that will appear in the last sequence. However, behind him, I imagine a dead milicia excelsa. This is a typical tree from Uganda, as this story takes place there.

I thought the canvas should be held up simply on a wooden easel. For the painting itself, I imagine it as simple as possible, so that the ‘audience’ has enough time to understand what Ada is painting. Simplified lines, simple colors and big contrasts between them. Of course, the painting on the canvas is a mirror of what Ada sees, only more beautiful. The environment she is painting is exactly the same as the one I will describe in the last sequence, except that in this painting, her brother is touching the trunk of an elephant, standing right in front of him.

**SOUND:**

I think in sequence 2, there should be sort of a great silence. That way, there would be sort of a shock for the ‘audience’ when passing from sequence 1 (with the sea and waves sound) to plains in Uganda. This audio shock is important for me because this documentary is all about contrasts, between the way we live now, and the way we should be living to limit these environmental crises.

Playing with the sound also simply makes the animation richer. Of course, I still imagine an atmosphere sound, an “outside” sound.

I think the dominant sound in this sequence should be the one of Ada’s paintbrush on the canvas, to help the ‘audience’ focus on the scene she is painting.

**AIM:**

The aim for this sequence is to bring a first sentiment of guilt to the ‘audience’. Normally, they would have made the link between the first and second sequence, as they would recognize Ada and her brother.

This sequence might bring confusion, because the animation plays with time, and we are back in the past. This is why it is really important for me to see how simply happy Ada and her brother seem in Uganda, to bring some sort of nostalgia.

It’s important to see how innocent they are, and that this emigration was necessary. The beauty, innocence and kindness of their characters contrasts with the dry barren plains, and their hopeless futures in this country.

I hope to bring a feeling of pity from the scene, with these children that lived a happy and simple life in Uganda, but have to move because they lack of food and water.

***SEQUENCE 3:***

**SIGHT:**

This sequence is for me set in a sort of sinister environment. I imagine the sky to be grey, with grey clouds (to again create contrast with the plains of Uganda), and not necessarily a sun. I saw the ground as sort of sandy-grey.

To show we are on the border of France/Italy, maybe there could be a French flag on the side of the border with the military. There could also be a small title in the edit saying ‘Border of France/Italy’.

The barbed wire would go up very high, and would be shaped in sort of diamond forms. The immigrants would be on the Italian side, on the left, and the French military on the right of the wire wall.

I imagine a huge number of immigrants, so many that we couldn’t see on screen how many there are. The ones in front would be banging on the wall, children, adults and elderly, their hands bloody and hurt. Some immigrants could be crying, there could even be a few dead bodies amongst the crowd.

The more we get further away from the barbed wire, the more space there is between the immigrants. Ada and her family are quite far behind, so there isn’t too much violence where they are standing. They don’t really want to force their way through, they just want to find a safe place in the less dangerous way possible.

On the military side, there are about 10 military with their guns low, but they are all shouting to stay back (in French). The military woman is the only one who feels empathy and tries to make an effort towards them.

The elderly immigrant in this sequence, I imagined would almost look mad. His anger towards his feeling of injustice would have blinded him. In this moment, all he wants is to get across the border, he has a deep hate for the French military, and Europe as a whole. He is also very tired, has huge eyebags and almost red eyes from the lack of sleep. He is putting all his last bits of energy into creating a hole in the wire. I’d really like to try to convey that he thinks this is his last hope of a life, he has blocked his ears and is just trying to get across.

**SOUND:**

This sequence would probably be the noisiest and richest sound-wise. It would start of with the sound of all the immigrants shouting, the children crying, and the military screaming in French. There would also be the noise of the fists hitting the wire.

Then, the noise of the elderly immigrant would take over, trying to open through a hole, before the military man comes in.

Then, I imagined the music coming in, that would lead into the documentary. It would start off on a close up on Ada, right after the Elderly immigrant says: “How dare you, how dare you pretend you know what it’s like to leave your home behind!”. At this moment, Ada starts tearing up, and the scene shows her emotional. She was trying to stay brave and protect her brother, but she relates to what the elderly immigrant is saying and brakes her shell. The music could help convey her emotion. I imagined a music without any lyrics, that would intensify, start off slowly and rise as the dialogue gets more and more intense. Then, it would lead into the opening of the documentary. It would therefore last about 1min30 I guess.

**AIM:**

This sequence is sort of a breakthrough in the animation. Ada sheds a tear, and the short speech from the immigrant says a lot about the ideas in the documentary that is about to begin. His words are very harsh, and will probably create a sense of guilt for some people watching, but also question them about what will happen.

This sequence is the sort of climax of the animation.

I also really want the military to be speaking French, to show that they’re not trying to understand the immigrants and speak their language. They sort of created a distance between them, and don’t feel pity for them.

Again, the aim through this is to show the huge gap between the rich societies and the poorer, how ‘we’ don’t really try to care or understand the populations living through the consequences of our actions. Almost as if we don’t see them as humans as well, which is what the elderly immigrant reproaches the French.

***LAST SEQUENCE:***

**SIGHT:**

In this sequence, I imagined the shots would be the same as in the first, to really create a parallel. Except, this time, there would be light green and yellow grass, the milicia excelsa would be alive and green, and there would be a group of elephants in the background.

Ada’s brother, however, isn’t actually touching an elephant, as that wouldn’t be very realistic. He is just looking at the elephants behind him.

The painting that Ada is painting though, is exactly the same as in the 1st sequence. The sky is still as blue, but there are a few clouds, and the sun is shining.

**SOUND:**

The sound here would be the same as in the first sequence, (still with the paintbrush as dominant sound) except that there would be a few birds chirping to make the scene more alive.

**AIM:**

Of course, this sequence ends the documentary. It shows what could happen if ‘we’d’ acted now, if we’d managed to limit the consequences of global warming by applying some of the solutions suggested in the documentary. Ada and her family could be happily living in Uganda if we act now.

Of course it’s sort of simplified, if not childish for an end. But in this case, I think it’s important to end on a good note, a hopeful one, after such heavy information. People have to want to act, to have a reason that strives them towards action. When they finish the documentary, I hope they’d feel motivated to change their mentalities. I don’t want them to feel depressed of eco-anxious like some documentaries made me feel, but to have a real reason to go forward, a brighter future to look up to that they know they could pilot.

***ANIMATION GLOBAL AIM:***

*It’s for me important that the ‘audience’ gets attached to the characters straight on, so that they don’t just see emigration wars from a faraway perspective but from the inside, and also realize the role they can play to limit them from happening. If they’d almost want to fight for Ada, who for now doesn’t even exist, then I’d have reached my goal.*

*It is also important for me to put forward women in my documentary, which is why in this animation, Ada, her mother and the military woman look most determined. The term of eco-feminism is coming up, and is fairly interesting for me. I think more and more women feel entitled to speak about these issues and act on them, which doesn’t of course mean men shouldn’t. I simply find it new and different to include and give power to women through my documentary.*

*Finally, the animation would begin by forwarding a sentiment of culpability and guilt, but after the documentary, which ends talking about solutions, the last sequence of the animation would take over. This one leaves behind the guilt, and leaves place for hope and action.*

*I find it really interesting to mix animation with film, and I hope this will help to hook the ‘audience’ on. It also helps bring emotions and a storyline to a documentary with a subject that remains very scientific and difficult to make entertaining. I’m doing my best to keep the documentary vivid and dynamic so it doesn’t become one big bloc of heavy information to process, but raises awareness and makes people want to act.*