



Uncovering Planimetric Composition in Film: Wes Anderson's Dramatic Approaches as a Case Study

AUTHORS

PROF. DR. PALLAVI MESHAM

PH.D., M.F.A., B. F. A.,

Associate Professor, Applied Art Department,
Bharati Vidyapeeth's College of Fine Arts, Pune - 46

AKSHATA KETKAR

B.F.A. APPLIED ART, FINAL YEAR 2022-2023

BHARATI VIDYAPEETH'S COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, PUNE 411 043

Abstract:

Good movies are made when acting, directing, screenplay, cinematography, and overall production quality all work together to create a compelling and impactful tale.

Wes Anderson's visuals and aesthetics are iconic, defining his filmography. This study will analyze Wes Anderson's films and product advertising to better understand his methodologies, approaches, thought processes, planning, and idea implementation. It will use a qualitative research approach. Wes Anderson's creative approach is examined through his use of planimetric composition, meticulous planning, and colour symbolism.

The study will attempt to apply planimetric compositions to conventional mediums of visual communication and visualize the visual impact of this composition if used in other movies.

1.1 Introduction - About Wes Anderson



1.2.1 Wes Anderson

Wes Anderson's creative journey began in Houston, where he found solace in writing plays and making Super-8 movies. His inspiration for *Moonrise Kingdom* came from his own experiences in school. At the University of Texas in Austin, he met his longtime collaborator Owen Wilson, and they began making short films. Anderson's approach to filmmaking emphasizes creating a joyful experience for his actors and crew, and his films are widely recognized for their distinctive visual styles. This study aims to analyze Anderson's films to better understand his creative process, including his use of planimetric composition, distinctive editing style, and the role of color in his films.

1.3 Planimetric Composition

Planimetric composition is the arrangement of components in a two-dimensional space, such as people, objects, and backdrops, using symmetry, balance, and other compositional strategies to make an effect visually.



1.3.1 Planimetric Compositions seen in Wes Anderson movies.

1.3.1 Evolution of Planimetric Composition

Planimetric composition is a technique of visual composition that entails placing elements like characters and objects on a two-dimensional plane. It was used in the early days of film for newsreel and documentary material but has since become a standard method for fabricating visually arresting sequences. Wes Anderson has used planimetric composition in his movies, such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, and *The Royal Tenenbaums*.



1.3.1.1 Katzelmacher (1969)



1.3.1.2 The Suspended Step of the Stork (1991)



1.3.1.3 Linda Linda Linda (2005)

1.3.2 Rules of Planimetric Composition

Planimetric composition is a technique that utilizes various elements to create a visually appealing and engaging arrangement of items in a frame. This includes the Rule of Thirds, Symmetry, Balance, Leading Lines, Diagonal Lines, Background and Foreground, and Positive and Negative Space. The main object or elements are placed on the lines or at the intersections after dividing the frame in half vertically and horizontally. Symmetry creates mirror-like symmetry, Balance considers size, weight, and color, Leading Lines draws attention to the main topic,

Diagonal Lines creates movement or dynamic tension, Background and Foreground adds depth, and Positive and Negative Space balances the visual impact.

Understanding the Wes Anderson Style

Wes Anderson's Aesthetics and Techniques: A Comprehensive Study of the Filmmaker's Distinctive Style

2.1 Story writing

Wes Anderson's movies have a distinctive tone, with a focus on the experiences and viewpoints of young adults. His protagonists often struggle with the complexities of their interpersonal connections, social status, and sense of identity. The distinction between childhood and maturity is hazy in many of Anderson's movies, as youngsters behave like adults and vice versa. Anderson's narrative is characterized by a profound empathy and comprehension of the human condition, especially as it relates to young adults. His characters are flawed and nuanced, and their struggles are both humorous and extraordinarily moving. Anderson has captured the essence of the human experience in all its complexities through his own approach to storytelling, creating a cinematic universe that is both whimsical and intensely relatable.



2.1.1 Moonrise Kingdom



2.1.2 The Royal Tenenbaums



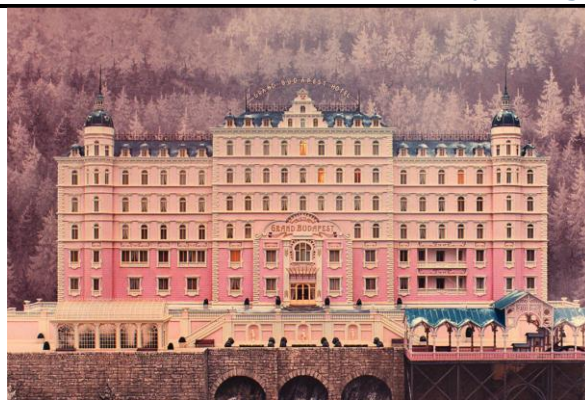
2.1.3 Rushmore

2.2 Production Design

Wes Anderson's visual style heavily relies on production design, which is a key component of the process. His costumes and set designs are the most noticeable parts of his productions, but there are other elements as well. The sets in Anderson's films provide the impression of being in a hyper-real world where everything is perfectly arranged, giving the setting an almost fantastical feel. His sets often resemble scenes from a storybook, taking the spectator to an original setting that is both wonderful and real. He also employs wardrobe design in "The Royal Tenenbaums" to highlight the personalities and backgrounds of the individuals.

Anderson's set design for "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou" is particularly impressive. He carefully depicts the design, character, and defects of the boat Belafonte, which helps to establish the tone and mood of the movie. The arrangement of objects on the walls and other seemingly unimportant details help to create the world that is shown in the movie. The visual aspects of the story are just as crucial to the narrative as the plot and characters themselves.

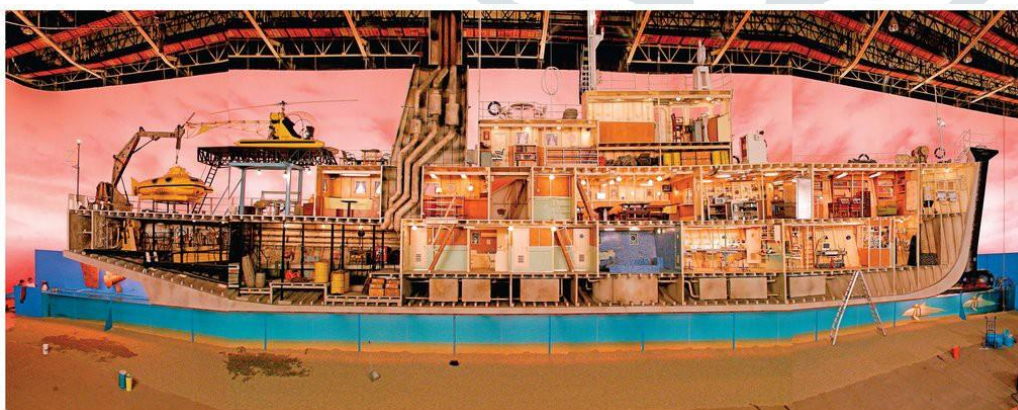




2.2.1 Miniature set of The Grand Budapest Hotel



2.2.2 The Siblings from The Royal Tenenbaums



2.2.3 Belafonte

2.3 Colour Palettes



2.3.1 The Royal Tenenbaums
(Muted blue, blush pink, and
scarlet red)



2.3.2 The Grand Budapest
Hotel (Brick red and violet)



2.3.3 The Life Aquatic with
Steve Zissou (Lush greens and
golden brown)



2.3.4 The Darjeeling Limited

(Ocean blues, rich browns, forest green)



2.3.5 Moonrise Kingdom (Mint,

pale pink, and gold)



2.3.6 Hotel Chevalier (Sunny

yellow, mocha, dark brown)





2.3.7 The French Dispatch

(Warm browns and limestone

green)



Wes Anderson is a director renowned for his distinctive visual aesthetic, and one of his films' most defining characteristics is the use of colour. His use of colour accomplishes a variety of tasks, such as supporting the films' themes, highlighting the peculiarities and personalities of the characters, and adding to the overall visual style of the picture. His use of colour in "The Royal Tenenbaums" evokes a feeling of melancholy and nostalgia, while "Moonrise Kingdom" contributes to the unique ambiance of the movie, while "The Grand Budapest Hotel" captures the fanciful and fantastical ambiance of the movie's fictitious Eastern European setting. The distinct characteristics of Anderson's characters are also reflected in his use of colour, such as the young lead character Suzy wearing a pink outfit that sticks out sharply in contrast to the earthy tones of the landscape. Wes Anderson's use of colour is a key component of his directing approach, as it conveys themes and character attributes as well as colour schemes that have been carefully chosen to create an original and immersive environment for viewers to explore.

In "The Grand Budapest Hotel," the hotel's shifting colour scheme serves as a metaphor for the business's shifting fortunes, conveying the state of the hotel over time. Anderson's use of colour is a key component of his directing approach, as it conveys themes and character attributes as well as colour schemes that have been carefully chosen to contribute to the creation of an original and immersive environment for viewers to explore. This results in aesthetically stunning and engrossing movies.



2.3.8 Hotel exterior 1932



2.3.9 Hotel exterior 1968



2.3.10 Hotel reception 1932

2.3.11 Hotel reception 1968



2.3.12 Hotel main entrance 1932

2.3.13 Hotel main entrance 1968

2.4 Cinematography

Wes Anderson's visual aesthetic is distinguished by symmetrical framing and careful attention to mise-en-scene.



2.4.1 Dining area wide shot



2.4.2 Medium shot



2.4.3 Menu card

The opening sequence of "The Grand Budapest Hotel" is one of Anderson's best uses of mise-en-scene and composition, with a wide shot of the hotel's dining hall and a painting of a boy holding an apple on it. The key characters are introduced as the camera moves on, and they are sitting at a long table in a symmetrical arrangement. Each shot's usage of a particular aspect ratio adds to the overall visual aesthetic of the movie while also evoking the appropriate era. Anderson captures the characters' feelings and behaviors in "The Royal Tenenbaums" using prolonged, motionless shots.



2.4.4 present-day bracketing sequence, shot at 1.85:1



2.4.5 the 1985 sequence, also shot at 1.85:1



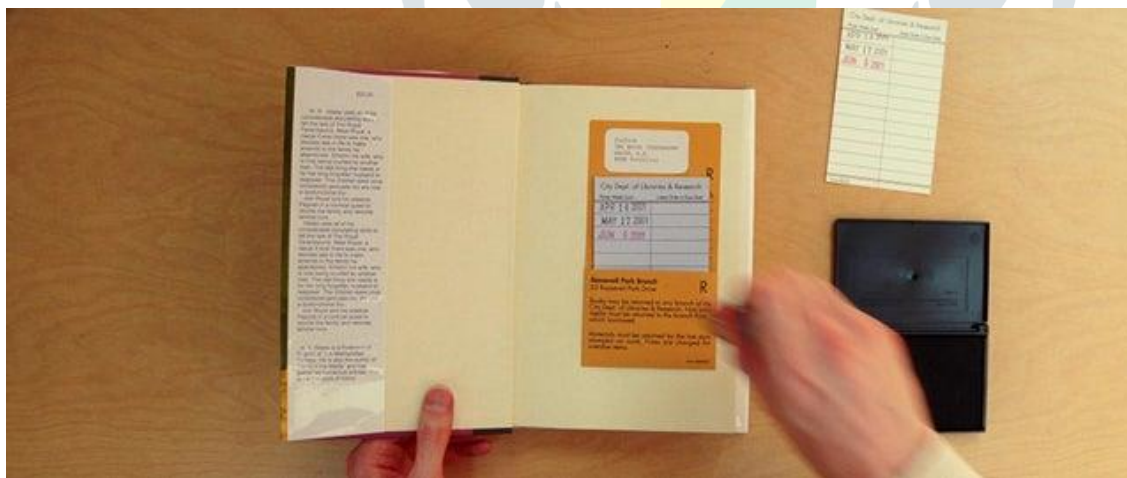
2.4.6 1968 sequences, shot at 2.40:1



2.4.7 1932
section of the
movie, shot at
1.37:1

Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel" is a masterclass in cinematic storytelling due to its use of composition, blocking, and camera movement. The camera is fixed on a close-up of "The Big Book of Jewish Sports Heroes" in the opening frame before gradually pulling out to reveal the character reading it. This shot establishes the mood of the movie by emphasizing the character's quirkiness and the damaged connections within the family.

Anderson also uses long shots and symmetrical framing to highlight the teenage characters' loneliness and the beauty of their surroundings. He also carefully choreographs the camera motions to convey a sense of motion and intensity. The end effect is a cinematic experience that is both visually spectacular and emotionally impactful, serving as proof of the importance of mise-en-scene in contemporary film.



2.4.8 Close-up book shot



2.4.8 Moonrise Kingdom

2.5 Editing



2.5.1 Scene from The Darjeeling Limited

Wes Anderson is renowned for his distinctive editing, which includes long takes, static views, and little cutting. His use of extended takes creates a sense of intimacy and immersion for the viewer, allowing performances to be more lifelike and placing more emphasis on character growth. He also uses cuts purposefully and carefully when they are required to produce a certain impression, such as when a character dies unexpectedly in "The Darjeeling Limited". Anderson's approach to editing is a key component of what makes his movies distinctive and unforgettable.

2.6 Sound Design

Wes Anderson's approach to sound design is straightforward and inconspicuous, but he also uses deliberate and planned ways to emphasize certain moments or make a statement. He also employs background noise and ambient noise to create a feeling of place and ambience, such as the sound of the train in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. This simplicity and restraint of his approach helps the viewer focus on the characters and plot and adds to the overall mood and atmosphere of the movie.

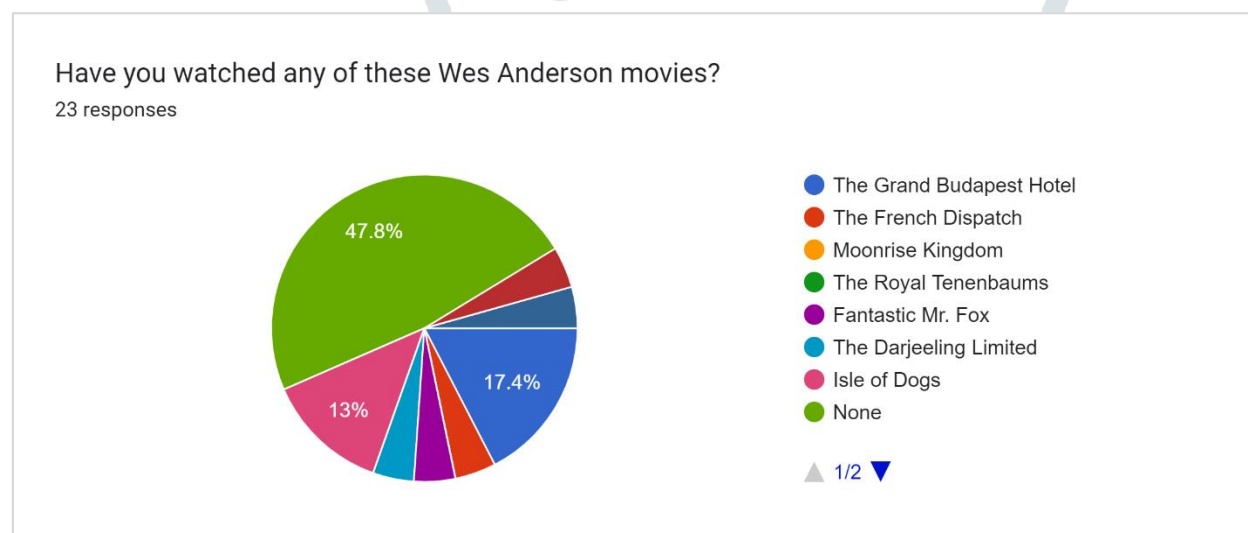
2.7 Music

Wes Anderson's films are renowned for their fusion of folk and Euro rock music. His use of music has a variety of functions, such as establishing the mood and atmosphere, heightening the characters' emotions, and bolstering the film's overarching ideas. He often uses whimsical, nostalgic music that evokes feelings of longing and melancholy, and his use of classical music and well-known songs to portray the two main characters' disparate personalities.

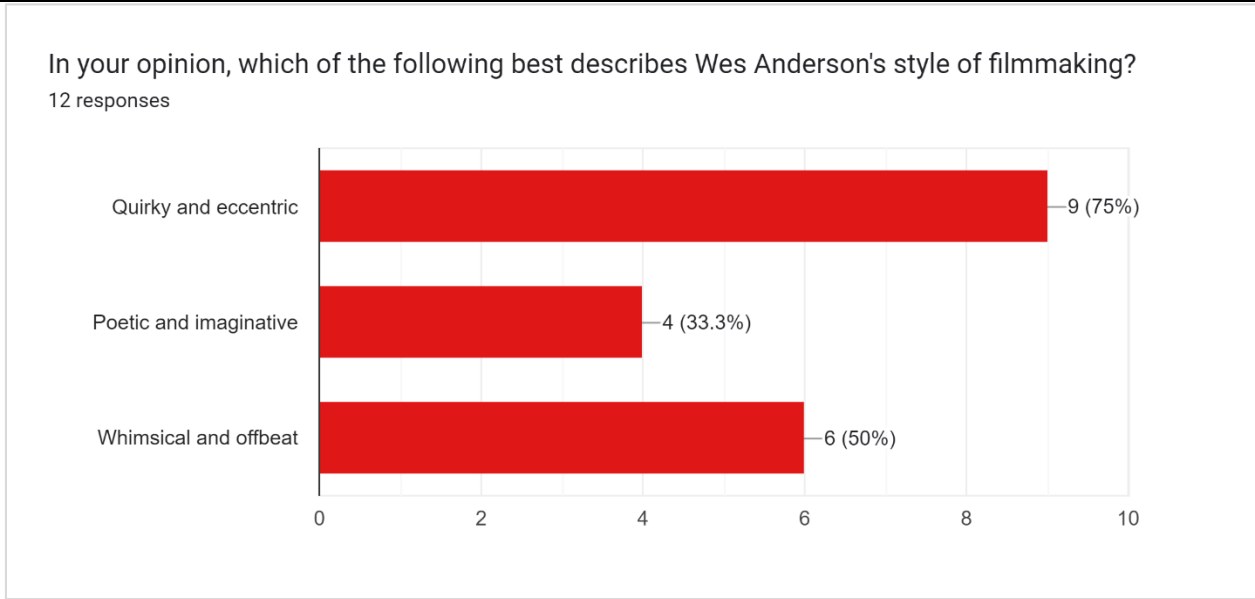
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Studying the filmmaking of Wes Anderson using methodological techniques

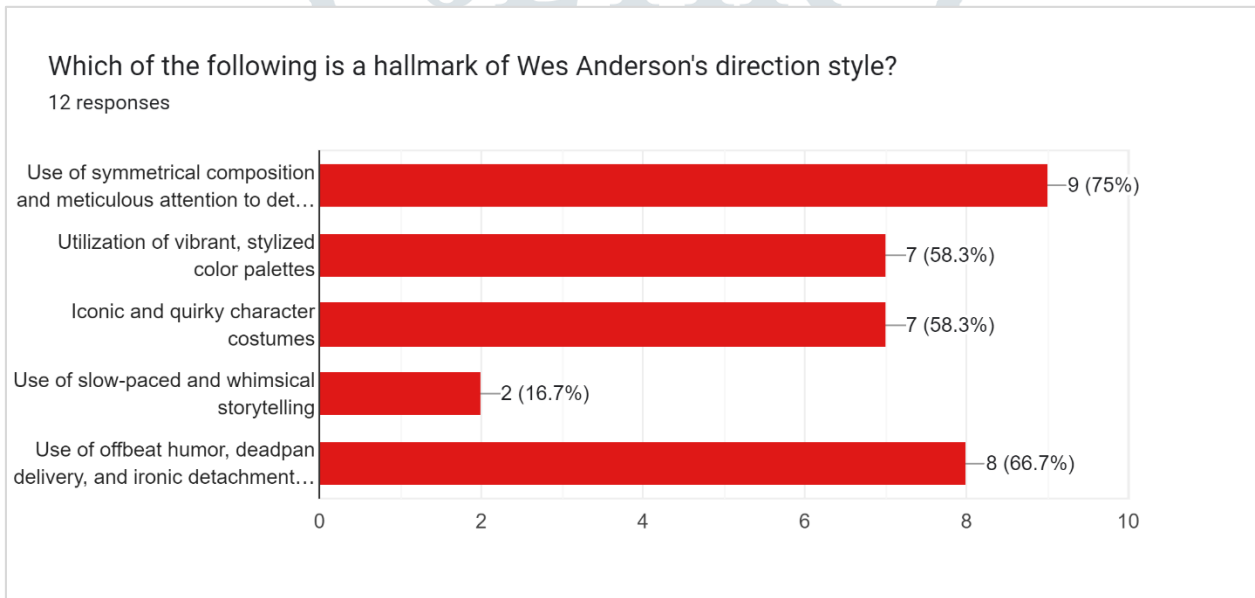
This research is based on a poll that attempted to learn more about how people perceived and valued Wes Anderson's filmography. Google Forms was used to conduct the poll, and Instagram was used as a social media outlet for sharing the survey link. There were 23 total responses to the survey, and the data was examined using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.



(3.1.4.1) Favorite Film: "The Grand Budapest Hotel," which 17.4% of the participants chose as their favorite Wes Anderson picture, was the most watched movie, followed by Isle of Dogs at 13%, by the participants.



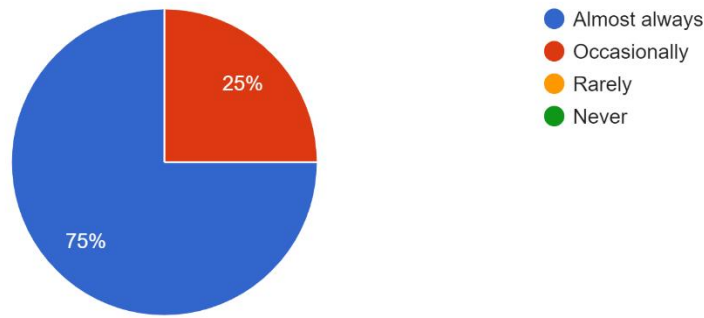
(3.1.4.2) Filmmaking Style: Most respondents (75%) to the survey described Wes Anderson's filmmaking as quirky and eccentric, while 50% said it was whimsical and offbeat.



(3.1.4.3) Hallmark of the style: According to a survey, 75% of respondents say that the hallmarks of Wes Anderson's movies are their symmetrical composition and meticulous attention to detail.

How often do you notice symmetry in Wes Anderson's shots?

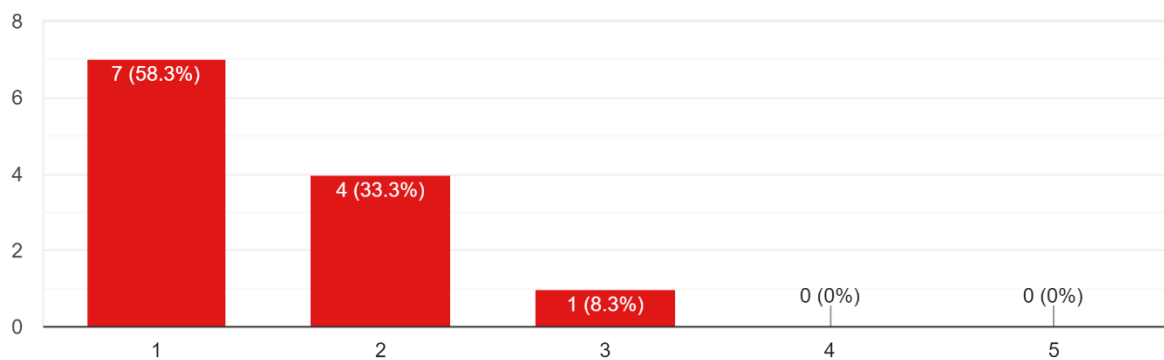
12 responses



(3.1.4.4) Symmetrical Shots: 75% of participants in the survey say they can identify symmetrical shots in movies.

How important do you think the color palette is in Wes Anderson's films?

12 responses



Can you recall a specific scene in a Wes Anderson film that used a unique color palette? If yes, which one is it?

5 responses

In the grandbudapest hotel.. costumes of hotel servants and background colour like red, yellow etc

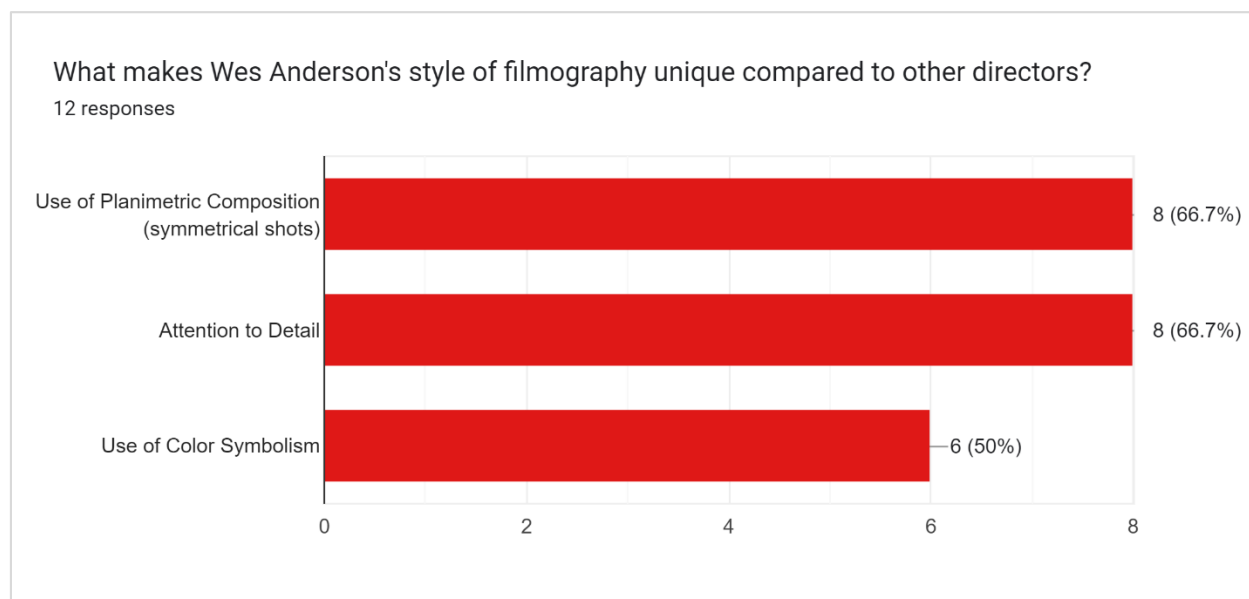
Sauna scene in grand budapest

That scene where Zero and Agatha are surrounded by Mendl's packaging boxes. Loved the whole Pink and purple(ish) color palette in that.

The color palette of The Grand Budapest hotel

Grand budapest hotel colour scheme violet and orange

(3.1.4.5, 3.1.4.6) Colour Palette: According to a survey, 58.3% of respondents believe that the film's colour scheme is extremely essential. Most participants remember memorable scenes from the Grand Budapest Hotel that have powerful and brilliant colour schemes.



(3.1.4.7) Distinct style of Wes Anderson: Usage of Planimetric Composition (symmetrical shots), according to 66.7% of participants, is what distinguishes Wes Anderson's filmography from that of other filmmakers.

3.2 Interview

Arjun Mhatre is a 35-year-old director with a Bachelor of Mass Media degree. He started his career at 17 and is inspired by the many people in the entertainment industry. His working style is simple, fun, and collaborative, as he enjoys working as part of a team.

Question 1: What sets Wes Anderson's directing approach apart from other directors?

Response: Wes Anderson's directing style emphasizes production design and visual storytelling, using inanimate objects to create mood and emotion.

Question 2: What recurrent themes and strategies can be found in Wes Anderson's movies?

Response: Wes films often explore the dichotomy of birth and death, as well as friendship and social life. He uses an ensemble of characters to show the variety of individuals in the same setting.

Question 3: How does Wes Anderson's directing contribute to the mood and atmosphere of his films?

Response: Wes Anderson sets the mood and atmosphere of a room with clear triggers and visual cues to make the audience feel the same emotion.

Question 4: Can you name specific moments in Wes Anderson's movies that impressed you and why?

Response: Satyajit Ray's music was used in 'The Darjeeling Limited' to capture India's culture, heritage, and different realms.

Question 5: How does Wes Anderson's use of color, symmetry, and composition enhance the visual appeal of his films?

Response: Wes Anderson films use colour as an intentional device to shape the narrative, creating a visual harmony and creating a sense of satiation.

Laxmi Keluskar is a 38-year-old production designer from Kankavli, Maharashtra, who studied at FTII and found the film industry to be welcoming. She believes that the script should be the driving force behind her creative process.

Question 1: What sets Wes Anderson's set design apart from other directors?

Response: Mise-en-scene involves changing cards, dialogues, and colour selection to create a cohesive and visually pleasing final product.

Question 2: Are there any recurring methods or styles that Wes Anderson employs in his set designs?

Response: Symmetry and colour selection are essential for creating a visually pleasing scene.

Question 3: How do the sets contribute to the mood and tone of Wes Anderson's movies?

Response: The best films focus on conveying emotions through colour, positioning, and lighting, which can keep the audience engaged throughout the film.

Question 4: Can you name specific Wes Anderson settings that impressed you and explain why?

Response: The Grand Budapest Hotel has several standout scenes, such as the conversation between Zero and the author, the red-purple lift scene, the dining room, and when the villain appears.

Question 5: How does Wes Anderson use color, symmetry, and composition in his set designs?

Response: Wes Anderson's use of color, symmetry, and composition in his films creates a sense of balance and harmony, making them visually captivating and memorable.

Conclusion

Wes Anderson's method of filmmaking is a monument to the strength of meticulous attention to detail and a profound grasp of the human experience. His films stand out for their distinctive and immersive visual language, empathy for flawed and complex characters, restraint and subtlety in editing and sound design, and deliberate song selection. His tales capture the core of the human experience in all its complexity. Anderson has gained a devoted following and high praise from critics due to his attention to detail, empathy for imperfect characters, and unique visual language.

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