

Sweet Salt by Katerina Athanasopoulou

TREATMENT

A love story of obsession and sharp teeth between a woman left behind in a fairy tale gone wrong and a merman trapped in a reality that drowns him.

The **structure** and shape follows the tragic pattern of a love story:

1. Beginning: She lives by herself in a garden like kitchen in a constant state of hunger, he spends his life immersed in the privacy of his bath.
2. Middle: Circumstances force them to meet as he sets out in a quest for water.
3. End: She desires him and therefore wants to eat him; if she does there'll be nothing left. If she stops crying then he'll die, as he needs that moisture to survive.

The **rhythm** is linked to each character's psyche. The woman moves in hard, erratic ways. Her scenes are brutal, fast and devouring. That roughness is reflected in the technique, her animation is raw and dark with sharp edges and fast movement. On the other hand, the man moves in gentle ways, his animation flows like water, his scenes are slower and softer, the layers that form them melting gently into each other. An exception to that will be his nightmares, where we get introduced to his own fears and obsessions as well as get a glimpse of what will happen when they meet. An example of that is in an animation test in my support tape, entitled "A Merman's Dream" where a quivering fish is dying amongst flowers.

At the beginning there's a clear juxtaposition between the two characters: She's hedonistic and he's ascetic; She moves fast while he flows; She's full of hard edges while his own edges are almost transparent at times. (Indicated in the animation test "The Merman's Legs" in the support tape) When the two characters meet we see a beautiful yet painful merging of the two processes.

The **pace** of the film is dreamlike, starting slow and moving to a faster rhythm of conflict: Teeth biting into water and water enveloping sharp corners, in an embrace where their two worlds collide.

The **visuals** will be relying on sensitive yet intense image manipulation, in a process that resembles alchemy: I start with the raw material of live action shots and stills and then enter their core through superimposing and layering. An example of that is the animation test "Water from Stone" included in the support tape, where I took a still image of a planet, rotated and superimposed it on itself several times until it becomes shiny dark flowing water. It's an exciting and adventurous process, examples of which you can see in my previous work in the supporting tape. The great difference that animate! would make, is that it would support me in reaching higher animation goals of subtlety and evolution. In my previous work, due to time and budget restrictions, I've had to rush my experiments that ended up lacking a certain finesse.

The **sound** of the film won't rely on dialogue but on distinctive sounds that the merman and the woman make: He sounds like the sea, like deep dark waters and the sea breeze while she makes slurping and weeping sounds, culminating to loud cries of pain and frustration. The music will be composed as a response to the initial preproduction tests, and the needs of the pacing and emotional tension of the film. The **atmosphere** will be heavy with anticipation, carrying the character's longings and speaking for their part.

Technique: My main tool is After Effects but this will in no way be sleek compositing using special effects. Instead, it's a method of printmaking, painting and collage, where the layers are merging and playing with each other and live action shot on a blue screen will be combined with real models. There's a special sense of depth and space, which I have found in the richness of the environment that Suzie Templeton is able to create with her set design. Other mediums will also be cutouts, pixilation, photography and eclectic rotoscoping.

I'm specifically not submitting a full **script** as the very process, guided by the character's motivations, will dictate the final detail of the form. A script would hinder the experimental process in this particular case. However, during the pre production and production stage there will be a continuous practice of storyboarding and further writing. My previous work has relied on my own view of memories and fleeting moments in time. Whereas Sweet Salt is about the worlds of two people and their meeting. This time I'll be entering a new form of well constructed experimental narrative, while still printing with time.

Sweet Salt will engage the **audience** through its seductive visuals and intricate story but also in a deep emotional level, as it is based on the intertwining routes of fairy tales which form a kind of artistic collective unconscious. And who amongst us hasn't experienced a love affair gone painfully wrong?

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