

Sound design: reflection

My soundtrack tells the story of cooking ramen. It opens on a rainy street with people walking and chatting, and reaches a resolution when a young boy sees the ramen and is excited to eat it. The sound of the crowd, the ding of the bell, the “thank you” in Japanese, and the excitement of boy are all elements allowing the viewer to understand that the ramen was cooked in a restaurant on the streets, even without needing to see the video. The “thank you” in Japanese shows where the story takes place and makes it more realistic (corelating with the ramen and the anime genre).

I used 2 different anime clips and selected specific parts to put together. I chose to create the sounds to an existing video to challenge myself with accuracy and timing, using over 20 found footages and 4 audios I recorded. I simply used the microphone on my Samsung A8 smartphone to record, always around 15-20 cm away from the sound source. If it were closer than that, it would enhance the sounds too much and make them peak. I noticed that, despite my cellphone not being a professional device, it captures sounds clearly enough and without too much noise.

I aimed to represent at least one sound for every visual shown on screen (and sometimes other boiling/sizzling noises in the background) in order to bring the scene to life. I tried to find or record sounds that could express the visuals as accurately as possible, most of the time using found footages of the actual element (e.g. the tomato cutting noises come from actual videos of people cutting tomatoes) or replacing the actual element with something similar (e.g. the crispy thing’s noises are actually rice and cereal). I also tried my best to match every sound to the exact movie frame timing (especially the cutting/chopping), because I want it to feel realistic and satisfying to the viewer’s eyes and ears. Even though the visual depiction is fiction, I wanted the auditive experience to feel as if the viewer was present in the scene.

To continue, I want the viewer to feel a sense of relaxation and satisfaction while watching and listening to the piece. I want to express the beauty and details of cooking that we usually do not notice when we are rushing to cook with the loud kitchen fan on. There are so many noises that food makes without us realizing, almost as if it were alive (well, it once was). I think we take for granted the beauty of food and its different distinct sounds, since we often only focus on the final taste. Through my piece, I hope to convey the complexity of the meticulous process, and end at the excitement of the final reveal, so that the actual tasting is left to the imagination of the viewer. It would be nice if I could inspire my audience to cook more and to pay more attention during the process. Experienced cooks would say that you can tell if food is cooking properly simply by listening to the sizzling sounds...