PRODUCTION DESIGN TOOLS IN 360-DEGREE MUSIC VIDEO AS A MODEL FOR THE NEED FOR A MORE IMMERSIVE AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCT

HERRAMIENTAS PARA EL DISEÑO DE PRODUCCIÓN EN VIDEOCLIP 360 COMO MODELO ANTE LA NECESIDAD DE UN PRODUCTO AUDIOVISUAL MÁS INMERSIVO

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ABSTRACT

The 2020 health crisis and all mobility restrictions imposed by all territorial's authorities to control the spread of SARS-COVID-19 have created a general situation of self-isolation around the world. These situations have generated the need for a new experiencing way, more immersive and participative over cultural products. Thus, users' interaction has increased in certain kinds of online platforms and products which allow to satisfying this kind of needs, like 360-degree or spherical music videos. Although this kind of spherical video already gained experience since 2015 on platforms like Youtube, its popularity was not enough to standardize its production. This does not only affect professionals but also non-professional users (better known as *prosumers*) which are the true causative agents of most new types and transformations in music videos. This research's goal is to study the different production design tools used in a real case: *Efímera* (Love of lesbian, 2015), to shed

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light on the particularities of this kind of production, as well as offer the different tools used to create it.

KEYWORDS: music video – 360 music video – production design – storyboard – concept art – 360 video – spherical video – youtube

RESUMEN

La crisis sanitaria de 2020 y las restricciones de movilidad impuestas en cada territorio para frenar la propagación del SARS-COVID-19 han generado situaciones de aislamiento para un amplio sector de la población. Estas situaciones han creado la necesidad de experimentar de otra forma, más inmersiva y participativa, los distintos productos culturales a disposición del público. De esta forma, la interacción de los usuarios con ciertas plataformas ha aumentado, así como con determinados tipos de formato más proclives a satisfacer tales necesidades, como el videoclip esférico o 360. Aunque esta modalidad de vídeo esférico ya disfrutaba de cierto recorrido desde 2015 en plataformas como Youtube, su popularidad no había sido la suficiente como para estandarizar su producción, no solo para profesionales del audiovisual, sino también para usuarios no profesionales o *prosumers*, siendo estos últimos los verdaderos responsables de la multitud de nuevas variables y tipologías dentro formato. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo estudiar las distintas herramientas de diseño de producción empleadas en un caso real: *Efímera,* de la banda española Love of Lesbian (2015), para arrojar luz sobre las particularidades de este tipo de producción, así como ofrecer las distintas herramientas concebidas para abordarlo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: videoclip – videoclip 360 – diseño de producción – storyboard – concept art – video 360 – video esférico – youtube

FERRAMENTAS PARA PROJETO DE PRODUÇÃO NO VIDEOCLIP 360 COMO MODELO NA NECESSIDADE DE UM PRODUTO AUDIOVISUAL MAIS IMERSIVO.

RESUMO

A crise de saúde de 2020 e as restrições de mobilidade impostas em cada território para impedir a disseminação da SARS-COVID-19 têm gerado situações de isolamento para grande parte da população. Estas situações criaram a necessidade de vivenciar de outra forma, mais envolvente e participativa, os diferentes produtos culturais à disposição do público. Desta forma, aumentou a interação dos usuários com determinadas plataformas, bem como com certos tipos de formatos mais inclinados a atender a essas necessidades, como o esférico ou o videoclipe 360º. Embora esta modalidade de vídeo esférico já tenha desfrutado de uma certa trajetória desde 2015 em plataformas como o YouTube, sua popularidade não tem sido suficiente para padronizar sua produção, não só para profissionais do audiovisual, mas também para usuários não profissionais ou prossumidores, sendo estes últimos aqueles que são realmente responsáveis pela infinidade de novas variáveis e tipologias dentro do formato. Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo estudar as diferentes ferramentas de

design de produção utilizadas em um caso real: Efímera, da banda espanhola Love of Lesbian (2015), para lançar luz sobre as particularidades deste tipo de produção, bem como oferecer as diferentes ferramentas destinadas a fazê-lo.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: videoclipe - videoclipe 360 - design de produção - storyboard - arte conceitual - vídeo 360 - video esférico - youtube

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since it was immersed in the breeding ground that is the internet, the music video has undergone an incessant series of changes that have led to the rethinking of its own theoretical foundations. Authors such as Carol Vernallis (2013, p.127) affirm that since its insertion online, the music video has entered a second phase, a period of change, aroused in large part by certain platforms such as YouTube. Although the author even lists certain aesthetic characteristics common to the new productions that are distributed on this platform, it is not until 2015 when an undeniable change occurs not only in appearance but also in shape and consumption, with the creation of the spherical music video or 360-degree music video.

In 2015, YouTube enabled this format, spherical or 360 videos, designed for viewing mainly on mobile devices, but also on a computer using the mouse and new buttons on the screen (Gallardo-Camacho and De las Heras, 2015, p. 469). However, at first, its proliferation did not seem to be up to all the changes it could bring about. Since its implementation, and although there were few attempts by the music video to adopt it, the spherical video seemed to have been blocked by a kind of barrier in the consumption habits of the users themselves: "the passive role of the traditional television viewer does not translate to the consumption of spherical videos as it does in the case of traditional online videos" (ibid., p. 476). However, Jiménez, Solera Delgado, and Toril Genovés (2020, p.1) list a certain boom in the production of 360 videos during 2019 as one of the key factors that have also led to an increase in the consumption of live/streaming videos. In turn, this increase seems to be due to the "boom in the broadcasting of sporting and cultural events, video surveillance, and teleconferencing for meetings and distance learning. Additionally, the advance and the cheapening of video cameras" (Jiménez, Solera Delgado, and Toril Genovés, 2020, p.1).

However, in this period, a new factor with a more forceful impact than these upward trends or, rather, an enhancer of most of them, such as the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19), appears on the scene. This new affluent generates a new point of view on how to evaluate these types of audiovisual pieces and their potential or benefits as a more immersive and participatory experience. Some authors are beginning to consider 360 videos as a worthy opponent for situations of isolation, stress, and anxiety caused by the restrictions imposed to control the pandemic. Thus,

from the perspective of tourism, and more specifically of tele-tourism, as a solution to the impossibility of carrying out this type of activities in person during periods of these characteristics, Yang, Lai, Fan, and Mo (2021, p.8) conclude that 360 videos as virtual tours manage to generate a face-to-face sensation with a greater direct impact on user satisfaction than other alternatives[2]. Furthermore, they propose this type of 360 productions not only to reduce the stress of people forced into home confinement but also for people with reduced mobility or who for any other reason cannot access the place in question. These authors also argue that they should be promoted by the governments of territories with a tourist boom as a method of taking care of both issues: health and tourism (ibid., p.9). [3]

Although these reasons mainly point to institutions that serve them for the proliferation of spherical videos, we must point out that other types of entities seem to have perceived the echo of these benefits. For example, in May 2020 the Gucci firm published "No Space, Just A Place. Eterotopia"[4], a 360 video where they show for free an exhibition of 10 artists at the Daelim Museum in Seoul, under the hashtags #athome #withme as a fight against isolation. Linking with the audiovisual entertainment in use, we also find the exhibition of the Brooklin Museum in collaboration with Netflix, "The Queen and the Crown"[5], an exhibition also free on its online platform where it shows the most noteworthy pieces of clothing from the fourth season of The Crown (Peter Morgan, 2020) and Queen's Gambit (Scott Frank, 2020). This exhibition also adds extra content to the display such as information, related images... etc. It should be mentioned that the point of view and sophistication go a step beyond the spherical YouTube video, but without a doubt, the bases of the experience are the same.

However, not only these types of giants begin to participate more in the format in a supportive and inclusive way. Average users, fans, or *prosumers* have also increased the production of spherical videos, as shown by the increase in consumption of 360 cameras as well as platforms capable of reproducing this new modality (Shimamura et al. 2020, p. 2117). In this way, we find 360 videos that show visits to exhibitions[6] where users try to convey their own experience to others or there are even those that simulate bucolic and pleasant environments as visual support for ASMR[7] with 4K playback options, designed to help other people get rid of stress or just relax.

Faced with this unprecedented situation, we find that a format such as the music

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[2] "The results of this study suggest the interesting finding that a sense of presence has the greatest direct effect on satisfaction with a 360◦ virtual tour experience" (trad.a.).

[3] "A 360◦ virtual tour helps people to reduce stress when they are staying at home during the pandemic. It also provides a tourist experience for people who have mobility issues, for instance, older people who are not able to take a long-distance trip. Therefore, the government of territories where there are tourist destinations should support the development of 360◦ virtual tours not only to promote the image of the destinations but also to promote citizens' well-being" (trad.a).

[4] Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_KCXtd8XEg

[5] Video link: https://www.thequeenandthecrown.com/

[6] Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rl0aGAbkTM

[7] Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9U4ce7xgGUk

video with a certain path in this type of productions since 2015, should proliferate in the 360-mode and find as common these types of strengths that other cultural industries seem to have begun to take advantage of. Furthermore, as stated by Perez Rufí (2017), the music video since its insertion on the internet "has not lost its status as a format created for the promotion and consumption of a cultural product, but it has lent itself to new functions for which its producers do not have to contemplate a commercial purpose" (p. 582). In other words, a music video today could be supported by these aims of a more solidary nature, of inclusion or participation, by using the 360-format to be more than a dissemination tool. Furthermore, Bjerregaard Pedersen and Nordahl (2021, p.86) find it crucial that the emotional relationship between the artist and its audience must be strengthened so that the affiliation of one towards the other is not lost among the mass of online content, and they confirm the presence effect and closeness that 360 videos provide as good means for this (ibid., p. 89).

On the other hand, and if we focus on the users themselves, "the new forms of online communication have procured a kind of new agents of a potentially massive and universal communication for which professionalism is no longer necessary" (ibid., P. 582), an idea that agrees with the exponential growth during the pandemic of other platforms such as TikTok, which Sachs, Wise, and Karell (2021) point to, where users produce their own content thanks to their mobile device and a wide series of filters, audio clips, texts, and songs (p. 4). These authors also use the term "flowering chambers" to refer to the communication of a truer, introspective, and almost therapeutic self by users, fostered by the ability to choose their audience and content, avoiding stigmatization and criticism, so they show more and more every-day and true environments such as a bedroom, home, workplace... etc, without fear of what they can show (ibid., p. 5). In this sense, the users themselves could transfer these types of habits to platforms such as YouTube, taking a step further in viewing options with the use of 360 videos, or 360 videos could even become one more option on platforms such as TikTok in the future.

Therefore, not only is the 360-music video in a favorable situation for its consolidation but also, due to its own inertia, it contemplates a greater spectrum for participation: from professionals with commercial or artistic purposes who can find new more supportive, and participatory vehicles for their productions thanks to spherical videos, to the most common users who want to make use of these attributes for whatever reason. In any case, it is important to be able to currently have enough tools to be able to tackle a 360-video production where the maximum level of control over creation can be an option, and that is where this research sets its interest.

2. OBJECTIVES

This article proposes to study the production design tools used for the case of the Spanish band Love of Lesbian and their 360-music video *Efímera* launched in 2015 and directed by Carlos Zorrilla, to help address future productions of this type from both a theoretical and practical point of view, at a time when the relevance of the 360-music video as one of the spherical video variants is greater than it has been since its implementation.

To do this, in the first place, it is intended to find out what changes have occurred in each of these production design tools, contrasting the documents used for *Efímera* with the standard known for each one of them. In addition, it will try to observe how the production of the 360-music video interacts with the rest of the productions within the same promotional campaign, to the point of observing which codes are maintained and how they are translated into a format that differs so much in its consumption from the traditional one. Besides identifying them, it will be crucial to analyze to what end these changes have occurred: what were the reasons, and in what way are they linked to the idiosyncrasies of the 360-music video.

Finally, it will reflect on the use of these documents for the planning of other 360 video productions other than music videos and for different levels of professionalization within the wide spectrum of users that it comprises.

It should be clarified that it is not the intention of this article to rethink, based on the differences found, the essential and ultimate definitions of the tools of audiovisual production design. Rather, this research proposes to help describe the changes that may be falling on them as one more stage in their evolution before 360 video productions, so that it serves as a valid precedent to take into account when addressing conceptual and practical models for future productions of this type.

3. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the proposed objectives, this research proposes to carry out a content analysis in its qualitative version on which it is intended to shed light through a study of visual documents, in this case, the production design documents obtained directly from the production of *Efímera* (Carlos Zorrilla, 2015) of the Spanish band Love of Lesbian. But what can the study of production design tools contribute beyond studying the final result itself?

360-music videos are conceived to increase the interaction of the public with the audiovisual product as mentioned above, and in fact, the production design affects not only the planning of the production in its strictest sense but also in designing this interaction. On the one hand, to speak of production design in its most classical aspect is to take for granted the existence of a conceptual and disciplinary barrier between what is produced on stage and the ideas that are expected to appear on it. In this way, the figure of the production designer, the central axis of the work, is understood as "the person responsible for the visual concept [...] through design"

(Rizzo, 2007, p. 3). This task is not only carried out for "the visual" as such but ultimately to what will be experienced thanks to this dimension, since another aspect that this discipline contemplates is "designing for the experience of another person" (Van der Lelie, 2005, p.159), an objective that is affected by new forms of consumption if, in this regard, criteria such as that of León (2012), Saavedra, Rodríguez, & Barón (2015) and collected by Montemayor Ruiz and Ortiz Sobrino (2016, p.43), who ensure that audiences are increasingly participatory and immersive (engagement) due to the last period of socio-cultural and technological changes, are taken into account. Thus, these alterations in the final product must also have an impact on this previous process and vice versa.

This production also has certain characteristics for which its study is ideal to achieve the proposed objectives. In the first place, *Efímera* forms a whole promotional campaign created by the Catalan band in collaboration with the Redbull brand in 2015, the objective of which was to create an experience with the song itself through various audiovisual pieces, including the 360-music video. In this sense, the documents obtained not only allow studying the planning of a 360 production, but also its influence with other promotional pieces of the same campaign, a fairly representative situation if we take into account that:

> Although the music video has found an optimal route for its distribution on the Internet, we must consider that the will of the creators continues to be to apply multiplatform strategies for the production and dissemination of their content, so that the conception of the music video is not done in exclusive terms of creation for the network (Perez Rufí, 2017, p. 75).

On the other hand, *Efímera* is not only a pioneering case of the 360-music video but it's even previous to the YouTube 360-music video. At the time of its creation, spherical videos could not be consumed except for certain special devices[8], since it would not be until a little later when the platform enabled the 360-degree playback mode. Therefore, this case is not only ideal to help in future planning of a 360-music video for YouTube, but it also has to its credit considerations more focused on the user's own experience, without attending to the trends/particularities that could arise from planning exclusively for one or another platform. In this sense, it does not bias the interest of other videos that are also playable in particular installations, such as a performance or video art.

These production design documents on which the analysis will fall have been provided by the production company Vrain Studio, in charge of the project, being used to understand the concepts devised from the production design to the rest of the professionals involved in the production. Rizzo (2007, p.43) lists and develops some of the most used tools in a large production, being documentation, storyboards, animatics, conceptual illustration, virtual models, real models, drawings, and sketches. This categorization is what has been used to

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[8] *Efímera* was conceived, in fact, to be exhibited in Barcelona, Madrid, and Murcia for a few days, through a special installation (whose design was submitted to competition among fans) that allowed to emulate the 360 experience that would later be easily reproducible through the mobile phone.

identify them. Subsequently, each of them has been subjected to an analysis where their new peculiarities have been contrasted with the characteristics that are their own by definition, ultimately, to define the produced changes. It should be clarified that the added difficulty of this study is precisely the nature of the production design itself, being a discipline made up of documents that are not regularly exhibited together with the final audiovisual product.

Finally, and with these first conclusions as a result of the above, an in-depth interview will be carried out with the director and producer of the music video, Carlos Zorrilla, to refute the conclusions or clarify some of its aspects. The interview consists of 11 items extracted from the ideas that are shelled with each of the sections that make up the results of the research.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Documentation – visual concept

The documentation phase is the one that allows the production design to provide visual coherence to the entire production and is manifested through the collection of images of different kinds to be able to communicate the visual essence of the project to the rest of the department and the production team (Rizzo, 2007, p.43).

This coherence or visual style is as heterogeneous in its conformation as, paradoxically, recognizable in audiovisual production, so finding out what are the aspects that make it up is a difficult, as well as valuable, task. Judith Colell (2009, p.132) raises whether the production of a prestigious director could be easily identifiable if we are left only with certain aspects of the visual and stylistic dimension, dispensing with other cornerstones such as the script or the dialogues. In her approach, this author describes Dogma 95[9] as a conclusion and example of an aesthetic list whose resources are sufficient to identify an author, group of authors, style, or reference. These elements are: locations, shots and camera movements, sound treatment, and the look of the film (sets, costumes, lighting, and color).

Considering this enumeration, in the documentation phase of *Efímera* we find that not only the visual guidelines for the music video are collected, but also allusion is made to the visual style of both the music video and the making of, appealing to the coherence between both as a common thread of the promotional campaign. This *making-of*, for its part, is not recorded in 360, but it must have the same style as the music video in question. For this reason, this documentation phase allows us to see how the elements and references that are taken for a two-dimensional production can be translated into a 360 one.

In this way, the visual concept included in the description of the production plan speaks above all experiences, memories, sensitivity, and sensations. For this,

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[9] This movement includes among its followers, directors such as Lars von Trier, Thomas Vinterberg, Kristian Levring, or Lone Scherfig.

according to the document, the union with the referents is subject to aesthetic conditions such as backlighting or poorly lit backgrounds, as well as those that concern the shot itself; that is to say, to the filming. Therefore, we speak of detailed shots and close-ups to capture sensations, showing a highly analytical, almost clinical treatment of human emotional functioning. In this sense, the making of production is very well applied with these same means. But, how have these codes, based on frames, been translated into a 360 system?

The documentation in this case focuses on the beginning of the video as a way to put the viewer in the situation. The first and almost fundamental thing the document tells us about is opening the video with a close-up of one eye, for which a very clear reference image is taken. In the making of, the shot is met with a high referential level. However, in the music video, this iconic image is transferred to its filming through graphics in a simulated 360 environment.
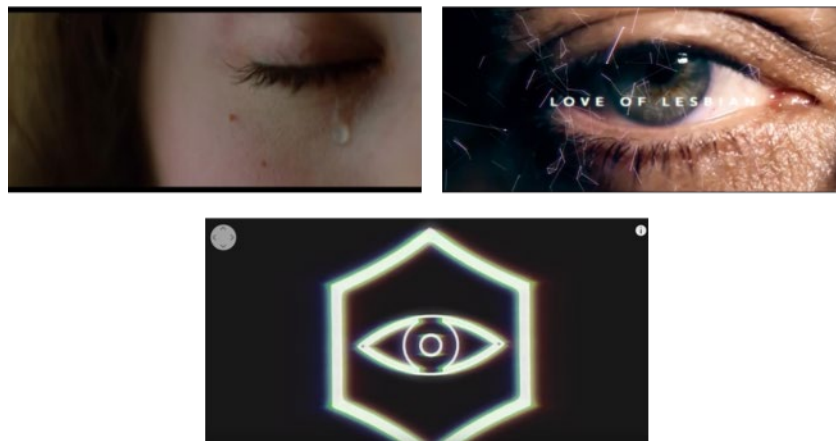
Image 1: (Above) detail shot in the documentation, making of, and (below) the 360 music video

Source: Self-made

In this way, the 360-music video can be allowed to start with a somewhat traditional or two-dimensional shot, without the possibility of the viewer being distracted from it. If it turns the point of view up or down, left or right, it will only find absolute darkness, so in a logical sense, it will reposition itself in the desired frame.
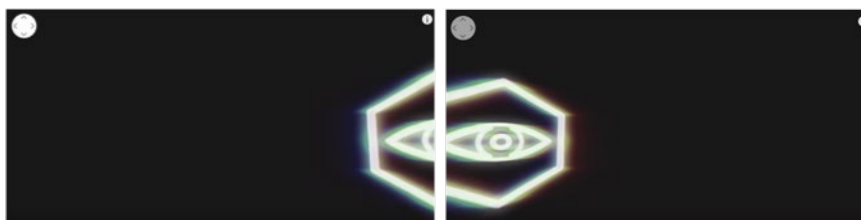
Image 2: Spherical movement at the beginning of the 360-music video

Source: Self-made

Image 3: Opening scenes from (from left to right) En esta no (Sin Bandera, 2016), Mountain at my gates (Foals, 2015), and Waiting for love (Avicii, 2015)

Source: Self-made

Following this shot, the document specifies that another key moment for the music video will be created employing a close-up of the band's vocalist. Contrast is also referenced to make the scene more dramatic, even darkening the background.


Image 4: (Above) reference images for scene 2 and (below) scene 2 in the making of

Source: Self-made

As can be seen, the references are highly fulfilled in the *making of*. However, again a question arises: how do you translate a type of two-dimensional shot into a 360 production when we are no longer at the beginning of the video to have some control? In this case, it is done again in a somewhat peculiar way. This close-up

scene of the vocalist reflected in the *making of* is replaced by the second 360 scene in a polygonal room, on which walls we find this close-up of the vocalist as a projection. There are also those of the other members, but this is the one that appears in the same frame that the eye leaves in the previous shot.
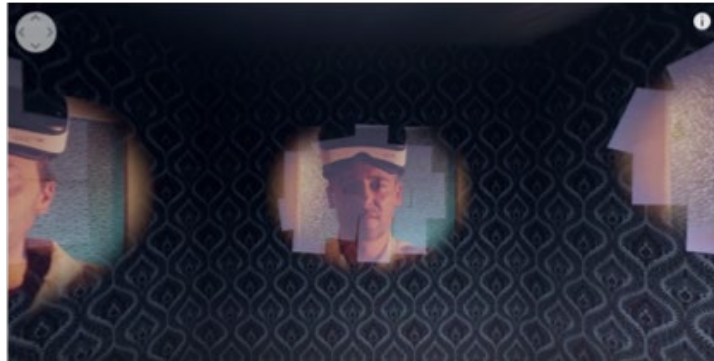
Image 5: Scene 2 in the music video

Source: Self-made

In this way, the previous shot is taken advantage of and it becomes the precedent of the suggested framing for the next scene, the type of shot being recreated again as a visual resource within the 360-universe. On the other hand, the contrast and color treatment of which the documentation speaks about and that it is also fulfilled in the *making of*, is perfectly taken care of in the music video as it does not have more difficulty than that of taking care of the lighting and the color adjustments in editing.

This resource of including 2D screens within the spherical video is given in other examples such as the case of *Saturnz Barz* (Jamie Hewlett, 2017) for the Gorillaz band, where the entire beginning of the music video consists of a tablet reproducing images within a 360 environment that is, in this case, a train car. Again, an attraction towards this same point can be experienced, a magnetism that returns the user to the same point regardless of the angle towards which the point of view has turned. Crucial, again, so it can get into the right frame before the scene changes.

Therefore, it can be seen that the documentation for 360-music videos can be based on other traditional 2D production audiovisual sources. The way of translating lighting or shape references (props, costumes) can come from photography, sculpture, historical records, and art in general, but its implementation in 360-production will not be different from the one already seen in the rest of the productions. However, when the connecting link lies more in the used directional style or type of framing, translating it into 2D images that are included in the video seems to be a good way to comply with the guidelines that they propose.
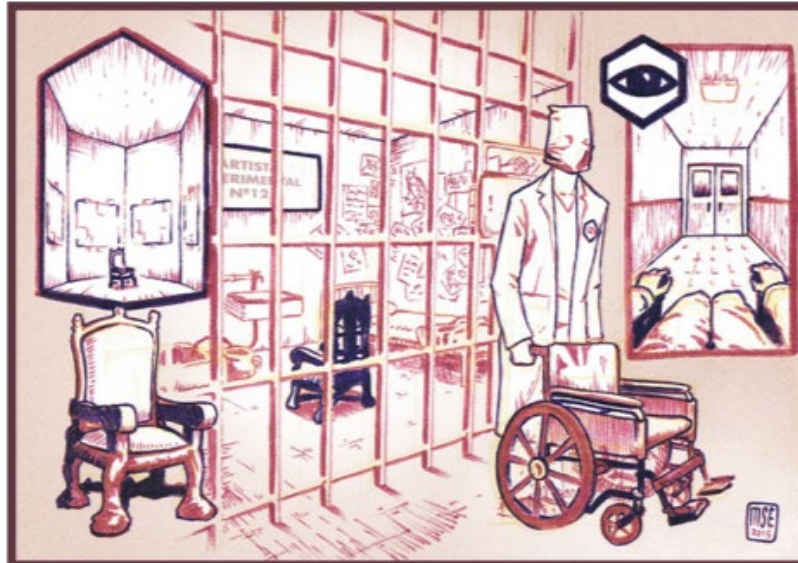
4.2 Conceptual illustration

Conceptual illustration, *concept art*:

> seeks to create an idea of the product through a quick representation that also serves as a guide for its development, encompassing first sketches, illustrations of characters, objects, and scenarios that will be taken as a reference to reach the final visual aspect (Hernández González, 2016, p.9).

As we see in this definition, the *concept art* seeks to create a preview of the various elements that will make up the final scene. However, and as previously seen in Rizzo's classification described in the theoretical framework of this article, some authors distinguish conceptual illustration as different elements from the use of other elements such as sketches, drawings, and even 3D models. For Rizzo (2007) "a conceptual illustration can be a single scene taken from a continuous *storyboard* or it can represent the visual concept of a set, a scene, or an entire movie" (p.63). The difference between the two definitions lies in the scene. For the first author, conceptual design involves developing the different elements of a scene, even if they are not formed as such in one. That is, the conceptual illustration can be relegated to individual elements with greater or lesser detail, and even be made up of several techniques at the same time. As Hernández González (2016) reflects: "Currently all these available techniques are used with total freedom, some more than others, by some and by others. The selection of the medium is mainly anchored to the artist's taste for the work method and the result" (p. 18), referring with the latter that, besides the same image, the different techniques can represent a progression up to a final finish.

For the second, however, recreating a typical scene, more or less far from any of the frames that we see on the screen, is the distinction that honors *concept art* as an independent tool, an idea that is most commonly associated with large film productions.

In Efímera, and as has already been seen in the previous section, the trend of this type of production is to move away from the camera frame, so the scene represented not only moves away from a real set but also tries to recreate, to a certain extent, the points of view that make up the 360-prism, almost like a collage.

Image 6: Conceptual illustration I

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for *Efímera*

In the first concept (Image 6) we are shown the initial polygonal room from a point of view other than that of the 360-camera. Additionally, the scenes of the cage and the hallway are shown, and the chair is detailed (repeated with enlargement) and the wheelchair to be used. Another detail is the campaign logo, also isolated over its actual placement on the doctor's gown.

In the second illustration (Image 7) we can see the point of view from the 360-camera of the protagonist's hands, as well as the doctors (members of the band) looking at him. All this, in turn, is within the same scenario where the protagonist is shown again from another point of view, as well as the members themselves.

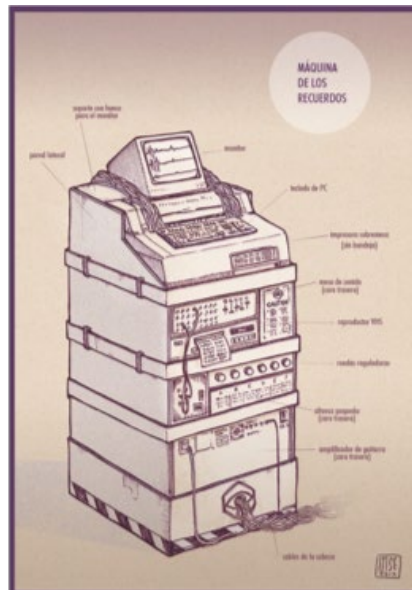

Image 7: Conceptual illustration II

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for *Efímera*

These elements have been created as others would have been in any production, but they do not end either being isolated, as can happen in costume or props designs, nor belonging to a logical scene as occurs in large productions. They simply try to illustrate the elements that will be essential for the story to be told or rather understood. Elements that, to a certain extent, the viewer will be expected to see within the crowding of a spherical stage. In this way, the polygonal room, the cage with the experimental artist sign, the assistant who takes the chair, and the path of the corridor are interrelated from left to right. That is, the essential elements of the first 4 scenes.

On the other hand, in both illustrations, you can see an illustration style that does not evoke the detail of textures but rather focuses on explaining or almost identifying the shapes of the elements in a simple way. Why does so much importance fall on these elements and with this style of drawing? Gallardo Camacho and De las Heras (2015) reflect on the phenomenon of recognition in the 360-music video, concluding that "we are faced with content that is really subject to the form (...) it starts from the basis that the viewer wants to enjoy from the experience of being able to choose the point of view from top to bottom and from left to right" (p.475) and, therefore, identifies at all times the content that marks the logical meaning of interactivity.

In short, an attempt has been made to bet on the importance and recognition of the elements in a video full of them where the viewer can easily get lost. These *concepts* are intended to preview the sensation of finding so many elements interacting in spaces that were unfamiliar to the viewer up to now.

Besides these illustrations more related to the nature of the 360-video, we also find others more intended for the manufacture of the props, such as the "memory machine", where all the parts that will make up the final piece are specified. In this case, the machine is shown in isolation, but the drawing style is still maintained compared to the other parts in this stage of pre-production.

Image 8: *Conceptual illustration III*

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for *Efímera*

4.3 *Storyboards*
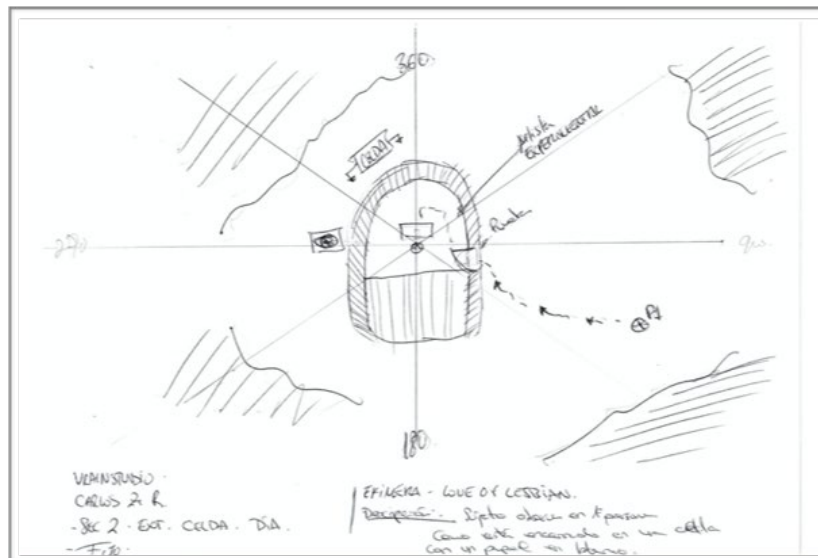
Storyboards are:

> Illustrations shown in sequence to preview an animated or live-action movie. It is essentially a great comic of the film or a section of the film produced in advance to [...] visualize the scenes and find possible problems before they occur" (Van der Lelie, 2006, p.159).

As can be seen, this definition emphasizes the functionality of the storyboard as a prevention tool to find possible problems. However, we also find other definitions such as that of Simon (2007) where the tool is described as "an illustrated view, like a comic, of how the producer or director imagines the final edited version of a production will look" (p .3), thus, giving importance to transmitting the vision of the head of the production to the rest of the team.

Therefore, and despite the possible nuances that can be found regarding the tool, it seems that there is a fairly clear term regarding its form, and that is the comic. Above all, this tool is presented as a succession of vignettes where each one emulates a camera frame at a moment in the footage. However, how do you create and preview these frames in a production where the camera can create as many points of view as degrees encompass a turn?

In *Efímera* we find a fairly accentuated reinvention of the resource. The *storyboard* is presented as an aerial representation of the scene in question, where you can see a shot of the stage in which the different representative elements (those

that were collected in the conceptual illustration) that will appear in the scene are distributed, besides the place where the 360-camera will be located.

Image 9: Storyboard I

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for Efímera

Besides these issues, other quite revealing characteristics of its use can be appreciated. In the first place, guidelines are drawn that converge in the center (where the camera is) which point to each of the frames in which the user may stop in a rotational movement. In each of these frames, elements that are fully or partially visible by the camera are located, trying to create a focus of attention. Secondly, an attempt is also made to reflect the movement of one of the extras from the outside to the inside of the cage. Thus, the frames centered on the left side are covered by attention centers such as the eye sign, those centered on the front side will see the "experimental subject" sign, those on the right side will see a door and those that cover the rear of the camera will be redirected to those on the right due to the movement of the subject that from the back begins its journey to the door. Finally, and alien to the visual representation, you can also see a box at the bottom of the document with a brief description of what will happen in the scene.

Image 9: Storyboard I (Notes)

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for *Efímera*

In this way, the main points of view are covered with some representative element or, failing that, by some movement that always redirects them to the desired area. Thus, the visualization of the elements of great semantic load for the story is ensured in a large percentage.

In the following *storyboard*, the same circumstances reappear, but with some adaptations. In this case, the camera is not still in the scene but is moving through a corridor. The purpose of the tool in this case is to help visualize what the user will see on its path at each of its points in the event of a rotation.
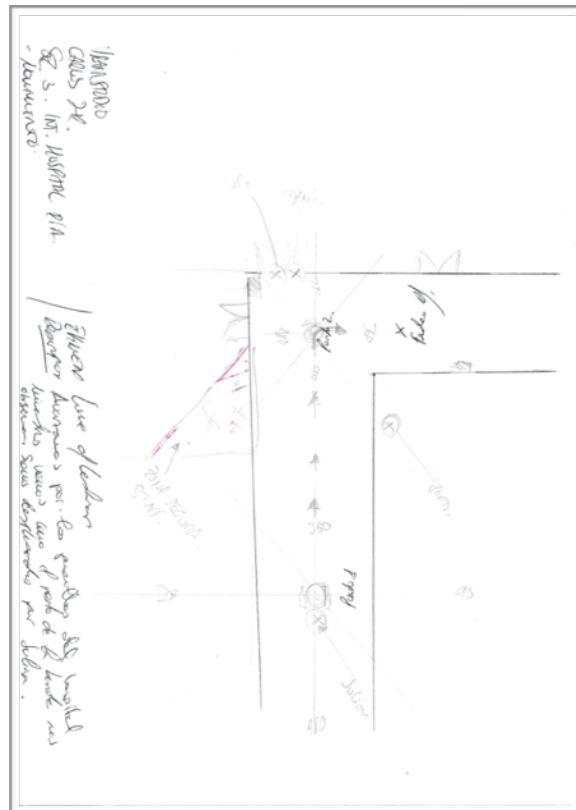
Image 10: Storyboard II

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for *Efímera*

Again, you can see the emphasis placed on the different members of the band or extras (indicated with names) that will appear in each of the doors that are open along the corridor. An attempt is also made to foresee the two moments of the route with the greatest probability that the user will rotate the camera, corresponding with the beginning of the scene and with the crossing that occurs with the other corridor. Finally, you can see again annotations on the description of the scene.
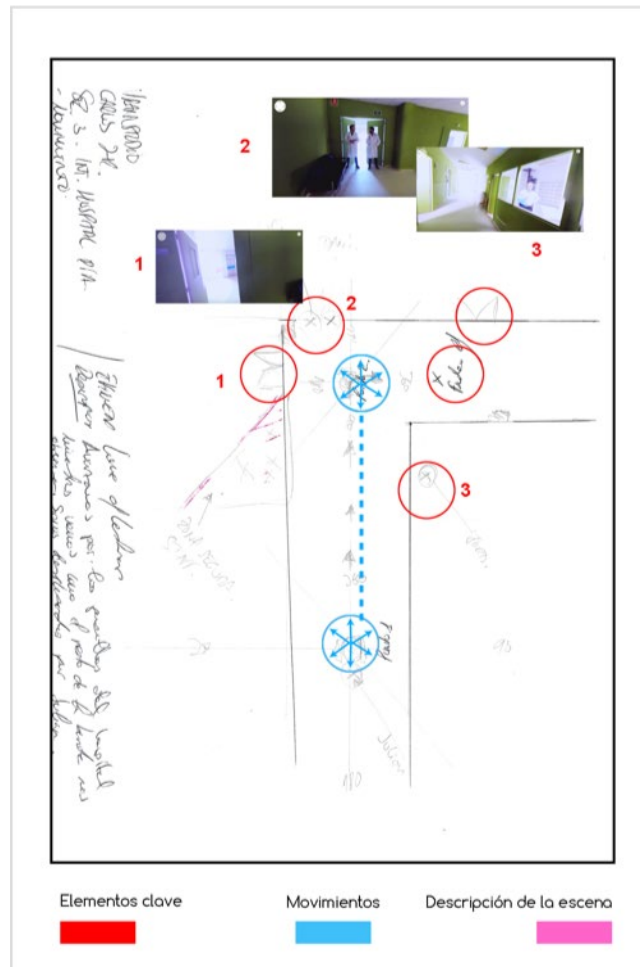
Image 11: *Storyboard II (Notes)*

Source: Vrain Studio's production plan for Efímera

In both cases, a more than notable concern about controlled user interaction through spherical video can be appreciated. In this regard and on the behavior of the user in front of the spherical video, Gallardo-Camacho and De las Heras (2015) develop that "for this relationship to be successful, two technical requirements are needed: one that allows interaction and the other that the monitoring of the point of view enables user immersion" (p. 470).

At this point, it would also be worth reflecting on whether this type of tool would not be in some way distancing itself greatly from the *storyboard* conceptualized as such. Although it is not the intention of this study to delve into the deeper interpretation of the term, it should be noted that a priori, the tool continues to try to preview what will happen in the scene to orchestrate the work of the production besides trying to anticipate the possible complications in the course of filming, as described in the definitions seen above. Furthermore, some professionals in the sector such as the Canarian director Elio Quiroga and collected by Vegas Molina (2018), affirm that *storyboards* "help the entire team to understand what the director wants to visually tell, what is especially important, and what each department has to

contribute", an assessment of the tool that, through some visual codes or others, undoubtedly corresponds to its use in *Efímera*.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Interview

The following is the interview with Carlos Zorrilla Rodríguez, *Production manager* of Vrain Studio and director of *Efímera*, with the intention described above.

1. In the treatment, an initial detail shot of an eye is specified, and some references are shown. These are perfectly adapted in the making of, but more peculiarly in the 360 -video. The human eye is shown to us as a graphic, bringing together the leading role in a completely dark space. If the user turns to one side or the other with the camera, they will not see anything, so they will have to inevitably return to the initial framing of the eye. Has this resource been used to maintain the essence of a close-up in a 360-video? And if so, why is it so important?

   – Yes, that was the intention. At first, what we tried to achieve with the resource of the eye was to establish that element as central to the whole story. It is the main element and identifier for everything, both the music video and the advertising campaign in general. Within the music video itself, our objective was to mark a point of reference, a central axis that is the one that will be repeated in each scene, connecting them. Something like marking a main point of view: whenever the viewer looks at that angle, it knows that it will find an important element for the story since what we needed is for the viewer to adopt a point of reference and not get lost. Besides, we add attached elements to enrich the scenic space and let the user play with deviating from the central axis and see these elements, but always having the central point of view well identified. Once the idea was established, we just had to shape it, and using the eye for it, a symbol so loaded with meaning for the campaign, was the perfect thing.

2. In other productions such as *En esta No* (Sin Bandera, 2016), *Mountain at my gates* (Foals, 2015), or *Waiting for love* (Avicii, 2015) the same resource is used at the beginning of the video. Do you think it is done with the same intention?

   – Yes, there is a large amount of content that these productions have tried to adapt to the 360-format, and at the moment there is no other dynamic. Inserting a 2D image in a 360 environment is the easiest since it is still loaded with the meaning conferred by the language of traditional production, something easily understood.

3. In the next scene we see how the close-up of the band member, described in the treatment and carried out in the *making of*, is repeated within the walls of the hexagonal room. Was using it in this way to reference that marked pattern?

– Yes, in fact, the band considered that particular resource and the images that were integrated with it of great importance. They were also photos of the childhood of each of the members. If you pay attention, you can see how after a few seconds each of these shots becomes memories and personal images of the musicians themselves. It was an express request on their part with which we did not agree very much at first, but they insisted. Also, all those attentive glances at the central point, which is where the camera is located and, therefore, the viewer, referred to the concept of big brother and what we automatically know it represents in those who are suffering from it, an idea that we wanted to add to the narration.

4. Regarding the conceptual illustration, it has been found that the simple style in ink and the arrangement of the elements, almost like a collage, have attempted to create an overview of the elements that intervene in the scene, emphasizing their form and recognition. Would you agree with this statement?

– Yes, using illustration was our way of visualizing and presenting to the client what we wanted to record and there weren't many other ways to reflect or preview the setting we wanted to achieve. For this reason, we considered that the important thing was to focus on creating a clear image of what was going to happen in the music video and of the elements that were to make up each scene. It was also a way of communicating with the client since they were an active part of the entire creative process and they also had to understand what we were going to do or rather what the feeling we wanted to convey with all those elements was going to be. In this sense, it also helped us to correct things. For example, at first, the protagonist was going to be a girl, but then when they saw her in the illustrated scene, they decided to change to something totally different. It seemed to them that the idea of the girl was something too typical in a music video and they finally tried to use a male protagonist and give him a more neutral treatment. Therefore, the conceptual illustration was a good tool for predicting and solving problems.

5. As for the *storyboard*, you can see a totally new adaptation of the tool. Each document presents all the movements in 360 that the user can make during the camera's tour of the scene. Why is it so important to know what the user will see at all times?

– Not only the importance of what the user will see at all times but also of how the filming and the members of the production are going to be developed without being seen. You have to imagine that there cannot be anyone on the scene, neither in production nor any helper… etc, because it is filmed in 360. We have to monitor the shooting by hiding ourselves, and for that, we must see where to locate ourselves and synchronize all the elements. It is similar to a sequence shot in the sense of planning a certainly long time, but here the camera does not allow any dead angle. The storyboard for this was very important, and we went around it a lot until we found everything we needed. In fact, the final result ended up being a cross between a storyboard and what could be the planning of a theater scene.

6. Would it have been helpful to create this same *storyboard* but in a 3D mockup?

– This question is curious because I have already been asked this on several occasions. Actually, there is an important nuance that we must consider: a 3D environment is one thing and a 360-environment is another. When you generate a 3D set, at the end you generate a video game where you can move freely, change the angle, examine dimensions... however, in a 3D music video you can only turn the camera on its axis: it is a false illusion of freedom. The tool could be used to preview the scene in 3D and simulate the camera path with a 3D camera, but it would still be unpredictable: in the end, we cannot preview all the user's points of view from their own point of view. That is why we used the storyboard: from a bird's eye view, we abstracted from the user's vision and could control the scene and the production. Another thing would be, for example, using the 3D model to understand the dimensions of the room, which could help.

7. Some authors think that the audience, inherited from television, has a passive role in the face of the audiovisual format that makes it lose itself in a 360-video today. Is that why it was taken into account how to guide the user at all times of the production?

– Sincerely, if you want to make the video more accessible to more people, yes. The new generations do not have too many problems consuming this type of format, but obviously, the rest of the age groups have more difficulties doing so, so we must create a guide and an orientation. Some time ago, in fact, we made a short film for Oscar Mayer where we even had to give initial instructions to users on how they should use 360-videos, and even so, we even found comments from scared people. Therefore, for now, it is necessary to facilitate consumption.

8. However, this use in itself brings 360-video closer to the traditional music video than to its own nature. To what extent do you think that this form of consumption is not exploiting the very resources that this new format offers?

– Honestly, I think that the 360-video is limited by nature to what it is intended to show, it is not, for example, like the space of infinite possibilities of a video game. In a classic music video, you are limited to the shot you want to show, and in a 360-video you are limited to a number of shots you want to show, but in the end, they are finite and controllable, so they are not two tangentially different formats. Perhaps because of its novelty, it is currently a form of communication that is considered different and with multiple possibilities, and possibly it has them, but they would not really cease to be in a single plane. We play with the illusion of giving total freedom, but it is not real.

9. Do you think that the possibilities that this format offers will be exploited more in the future? How do you imagine it?

— Yes in regards to new technical advances, such as integrating 3D elements into video with *motion tracking*, for example, but in terms of use as such, I foresee that it will be something similar.

10. Regardless of the user's understanding of the discourse, we could come to imagine that a 360-production financed through *product placement* techniques, for example, would encounter future problems in letting the user's point of view out of control, since its ultimate goal would be to ensure that brands and products are viewed by it. How do you imagine that this clash between the financial interests of the production and the very nature of spherical video could be dealt with?

— When you want to give visibility to a certain product, as in fact was this case with Redbull and the shot of the members toasting with cans, you have to bear in mind that the brand does not want it to look too cheeky. The "trick", so to speak, is to completely cancel the attention on external elements: a bait is created and the viewer is intended to follow it, passing "casually" through the area where the product in question is. In the case of 360-videos, it has been shown that this technique can be implemented through what has already been commented about the central axis. It is also true that the brand may not be seen, because just at that moment the user is pointing the camera in another direction despite the scenic guidelines, but it is not different from how in a traditional music video the viewer can look away to do something else at the best moment, no matter how attractive the image is. It is not infallible.

11. Finally, what do you think could continue stopping the proliferation of spherical video today?

The impediment is, in the first place, the fact that it is not a format that any producer or director knows how to work with. What makes 360-video special, and the sad thing, on the other hand, is that so far it has not been studied much. When you study audiovisual communication, for example, you do not usually learn to shoot in 360. This format is, therefore, in a situation where the solution to approach it is to be self-taught and solve problems as they occur, which is an impediment for many producers. Secondly, the adapters to view 360-video are increasing, such as televisions that can reproduce 360 and that with the help of the remote control allow the camera to be redirected, but it is not yet totally immersive, and that is the key in my opinion. The consumption of this type of video is highly conditioned by new uses that are incorporated into devices that until now had been conceived with a totally different mission: to abstract, not participate in anything, or do any activity. To squeeze this medium, a greater use of 3D glasses or similar technological advances that were more typical of the format, but also less comfortable to consume, would be necessary, and that supposes a great impediment. Third and last, and as we have already mentioned, the issue of dealing with technology so different between generations in the current era is another great impediment for the consolidation of the consumption of this type of format.

5.2 Analysis and conclusions

The production of a 360-music video creates new problems in terms of planning or controlling both the scene and the narrative and interaction. The production design tools used in *Efímera* highlight the need to control these variables through certain changes in the form of the documents themselves.

In the case of documentation or aesthetic treatment, the 360-music video does not necessarily have to dispense with external references belonging to the traditional audiovisual, such as camera frames. It is common, in fact, to try to integrate these 2D planes within the spherical universe that encompasses them. Additionally, the idea that it becomes a strong concern to constantly redirect the attention of the viewer to allow them to interact with the space in some way, but without ceasing to guide them correctly in the understanding of the narrative is consolidated.

These two issues, however, seem to bring the 360-music video very close to the same uses or attributes of the traditional music video, which could indicate that all the new possibilities it presents may not be being properly exploited. In this regard, we find that, from a director's point of view, the 360 format does not really include as many possibilities as might be imagined a priori. Interaction, even the practically nil 2D format, can be a great step away from the traditional format, but it keeps the same direction: create logic for understanding the video, either to capture a concept, message, narrative, immersion, or sense of presence.

In this sense, we even find studies that have evaluated categorizations of the different media or "visual aids" that can be used to guide the viewer. Thus, Bjerregaard and Nordahl (2021, p.86)[10] highlight the importance of guaranteeing user immersion through these visual guides. In this sense, this research concludes that tools such as the storyboard are key. This tool almost completely abandons its traditional form to adopt a completely new one: the comic-like vignettes become a single aerial shot where the set is represented, besides signaling the different elements that intervene in the scene. The aim is to visualize everything that the user will be able to see along the path of the camera, and more importantly, to know all the blind spots and places from which the monitoring of the shoot can be planned without unwanted elements appearing in the scene[11], which relates, in terms of direction, the 360-music video with the sequence shot of traditional cinema. This tool still includes a brief description of what happens on the set and even notes taken from the technical script. In this sense, this study could give rise to new research focused on creating a graphic model for this, standardizing different informational

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[10] The categorization created by Speicher et al. and rescued by the authors, lists different types of visual aids: forced rotation (FR), object to follow (OF), person to follow (PF), manipulation of objects (OM), environmental manipulation (EM), small gestures (SG), and big gestures (BG).

[11] In this regard, it is worth mentioning research works such as that of Shimamura et al. (2020) focused on the development of editing techniques to be able to suppress unwanted elements in spherical videos.

areas, as well as adding different nomenclatures to define the type of visual guide used.

This dynamic on the understanding of narrative and space as factors linked to immersion also brings the 360-music video closer to the traditional music video in terms of its objectives since, although in the spherical format the capacity for immersion is crucial, it has its own fundamental bases in capturing the user's attention by offering constant visual stimuli on stage, something not very different from what happens in the traditional music video, where:

> Through the sudden changes of images, continuous calls of attention to the spectator are made: the objective is that at no moment they are distracted or stop looking. Definition, which is the main responsible for the [...] hypnotic effect that music videos exert (García Gómez, 2009, p. 57).

And it is in this aspect, in the spectacular nature of the visual, where conceptual illustration or *concept art* abandons the approaches aimed at representing a spatially plausible scene and advocates creating a new form of *collage* or *pastiche* where they try to combine all the important elements to understand the story. This tool tries to offer a sensation above all, not so much with colors and styles, but with shapes to be able to correctly transmit the experience that is being developed. It is important to note at this point, that the conceptual illustration is not only aimed at the production team but also at the client (if any).

In general terms, all these tools seek above all to guide user interaction. The concept of narrative understood within the traditional music video seems not to be too far from what is necessary to guarantee the immersion or sensation of presence or telepresence in 360 degrees, a concern that could well transfer the benefits of using these tools to other 360-productions other than music videos, where immersion capacity has become a primary goal. In this regard, the work of Özdem (2021, p.87) on 360-documentary is worth mentioning, where he concludes that the correct functioning of the spherical video must begin to move away from a techno-deterministic approach and begin to focus on the creative aspect capable of presenting pieces equipped with attractive settings in any of their parts that stimulate the immersion of the user; a conclusion that this study supports.

So, while all of these production design tools seem to be designed for professionals, they actually reveal many basic problems that would be found in any 360-production, amateur and professional alike. We must understand, therefore, that the nature of these difficulties about the novelty that 360-video brings is more inferred from our very young relationship with the format than from the technical means available. Correctly addressing this difficulty, shaping the problems and solutions through these types of tools would not only imply a correct approach for any user with spherical video, but also the understanding and universalization of audiovisual practice.

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