



## **PRODUCTION DESIGN: THE ATMOSPHERE AND AESTHETICS OF *PAN'S LABYRINTH* APPLIED TO A PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES *OUR WORLD***

*Jezabel Guerrero Ledesma, Digital Arts student,  
University of Guanajuato, Mexico*

*Natalia Gurieva, Ph.D., professor of the Department of Art,  
University of Guanajuato, Mexico*

Our work is aimed to divide space and time of the movie into intervals in order to delimit the particular atmosphere of a story that makes the work connect with the viewers. They can identify themselves with heroes of the movie regardless of the part of the world they are situated and appreciate the piece like universal work for its ability to impact. Art direction is important to create this visual universe language and propose unique aesthetics to narrate the story visually. It is important to learn from Mexican artists (in this case from Eugenio Caballero) who have managed to put their ideas in this universal visual language. Caballero proposes a visual universe based on a color journey during the visual piece, this implies that each color is narrating and meaning something specific for the scene. In addition to elements such as aesthetics and atmosphere: the objects, textures, the location and the characters, are thought in a discursive sense. Our photography series arises from a previous analysis proposed from examining the technical, morphological, compositional parameters and representation spaces proposed in the book *The analysis of the photographic image* by Javier Marzal Felici in 2005. And the basic parameters of art design described by Eugenio Caballero in the interview with TV UNAM of the year 2019. However, we will pay specific attention to the application of this analysis in our planning process and final art pieces.

The **aim** of the following investigation is to apply results of semantic analysis of some scenes of *Pan's Labyrinth* in a photography series: in a stage of pre-production, production, and post-production. To obtain as a result 3 photographs that will be digitally intervened appealing to the narrative sense. The visual universe is of the fantastic genre based on the real world and ends with supernatural world of magic and dreams. We found in the series a fantasy universe where the aesthetic and setting elements connect us with reality. So, we will narrate the story with mythological beings from Mexican culture with the aim of making these elements visible and combining them with the aesthetics of *Pan's Labyrinth* in this way, placing them back in the present to achieve a universal understanding. This project is based on 9 scenes chosen from the movie, they were selected according to *The structure of an idea* by Mónica Forero Díaz 2007, where it shows the narrative structure of the three acts, in each act were selected 3 key scenes. The people who observe the work can question themselves about what each scene means and in that journey of interpretation they can question themselves, leaving aside the interpretation of the work itself and seek their own answers. Our photography series is trying to reach the same goal.

### **Photography series *OUR WORLD***

The work seeks the approach of identity from the purest sense, that is why that identification is planned from the title. *Our* is a possessive pronoun with which you



identify something that belongs to you, coupled with something as universal as *WORLD* it can connote whatever meaning the viewer endows it with. Considering that "the reuse of universal formulas to convey a political fable whose validity is current" (Mandolessi & Poppe, 2011, p. 31), therefore we use particular premises that at the point of reflection are extrapolated to a meaning universal and of belonging, hence, we fulfill the objective of the work and in the most basic search of the human being - find an identity.

Now, our general premise that will govern the series as a whole, "Even the flapping of the hummingbird's wings can change the history of our world" (Ramos, Romero, Cabrales & Cruz, 2009, p. 5) which is based on an Aztec Proverb, step to the individual premises that direct each of the photographs. We have a woman as the main character, being women capable of creating life, it is metaphorical to understand her as a woman who creates her identity considering that Ofelia is our point of reference and in the same way "... the fundamental challenge that Ofelia faces consists of precisely in discovering their own identity, in order to overcome this undifferentiated relationship with the mother" (Mandolessi & Poppe, 2011, p. 29) here we propose a common point that our protagonist will have with respect to the film. And well, from the perspective of the film itself, the feminine has something disruptive as a consequence, since, as Mandolessi & Poppe (2011) state, the essence of *Pan's Labyrinth*, which has been described by Guillermo del Toro as "a fable in favor of disobedience" In this sense and breaking stigmas, an act of rebellion would be the search for our identity, based on the purest and most natural, which is why our locations are in natural places. It was chosen to wear a huipil because it is the oldest garment used by women since pre-Hispanic times, because history will be linear, continuity is sought and also the white color means purification.

Photography I, entitled *SEARCH*. Following the narrative structure, this would be act one, that is, the beginning of the photographic series. As a central element we have our main character, a young, native Mexican woman as a symbol of creation. As we stated before, the co-protagonist character corresponds to a chaneque, this being a mythological being who is attributed with caring for and protecting nature, following this line it appears as a stone sculpture that is present in his search, serving as protection. So, our first photograph has the following premise: "They say that a long, long time ago a woman was looking for her identity, her freedom and her harmony in nature". It was decided to take the original frame, the *Close-up* focuses attention on our character since it is a narrative shot, it emphasizes the important elements and internalizes the character. This helps us frame the feeling of fear and the sense of searching. The representation of blood in a metaphorical sense is in our piece set in the color of the flower crown that is on her head, in a more abstract representation, but in meaning it represents the same thing, we approach the meaning of the colors, the red-blue chord represent bodily and spiritual forces. The photograph was revealed in Raw Camera and intervened in Photoshop 2022 as we can see in fig. 1.



Figure 1 – Search

Now let's see, photography II, addressing the narrative structure, this would be act two, that is, the development of the photographic series. The premise of the photograph is the following "The encounter with the possibility of the realization of your desire is not a coincidence" we will title this photography as *A WINGED BEING*. In this photography the co-protagonist character is the hummingbird, this bird has a Aztec legend " Huitzilin Huitzil is the Nahuatl name of the hummingbird, and it was a sacred animal for the ancient Aztecs, who considered it a twin, in another case the son of Huitzilopochtli, or their own god of war..." (Ramos, Romero, Cabrales & Cruz, 2009. In Regarding color, the yellow color is predominant "Yellow radiates, smiles, it is the main color of kindness" (Heller, 2004, p. 153) this connects with the reverence that the main character makes towards the hummingbird and the color blue, as distant and infinite, since perspective produces an illusion of space. The photography was revealed in Raw Camera and intervened in Photoshop 2022 as we can see in fig. 2.



Figure 2 – A winged being

To conclude, we have the third act, this being the closing of the photography series. It has as a premise "The encounter with your identity, will give you the promised freedom" and the title of this photography is *THE LIBERATED LAND*. As a co-star character we will have the quetzal, which, for the Mayans and Aztecs, the



quetzal was the god of the air. We find in the legend of the quetzal that tells that "... the bird stopped singing after the Spanish conquest, but will do it again when the land is liberated" remembering the history and about the Spanish conquest many of the cultures forcibly lost their identity, this carries its culture and customs, that is why our protagonist in her search for identity finds the quetzal at the end of her journey, both complement each other and seek the same thing.

As for color, yellow is predominant because it is the color of light and illumination, since it is "The color of light is, figuratively speaking, the color of mental illumination. In many languages, "clarity" is synonymous of "intelligence" (Heller, 2004, p. 154) The photograph was revealed in Raw Camera and intervened in Photoshop 2021 as we can see in figure 3.

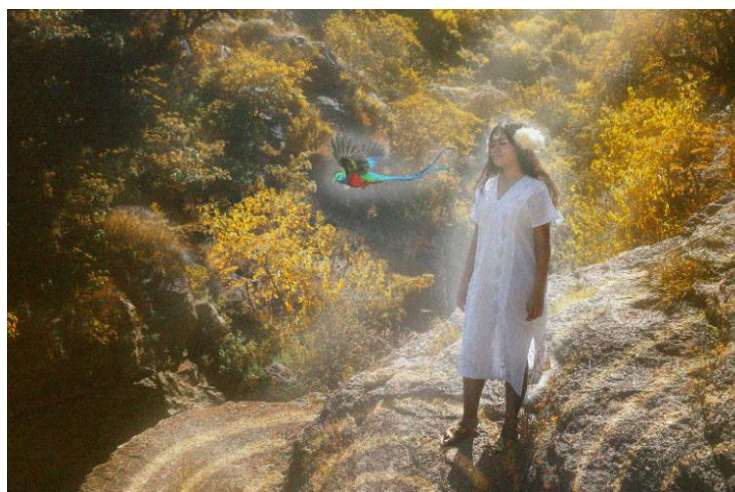


Figure 3 – The liberated land

**Conclusions.** This research work was inspired by the art direction of Eugenio Caballero. This topic interested us because of the precariousness that exists in terms of cinematographic practice in Mexico. There are few internationally recognized art directors, and this area of cinema is short-lived and is booming in advertising areas, however, it arises from the cinema and expands to many areas of digital art. That is why it is important to analyze the process of creating impressive atmospheres in movies and capture it and recreate in a photographic series. As a result, we can see that the visual narrative elements have a new context and interpretation but using the baggage of digital tools a perpetuity of universal ideas can be achieved.

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