

SCRIPTWRITING DEVELOPMENT SESSION 5

LMF

5TH DECEMBER - 5:45-7:45PM
BLUECOAT ART CENTRE - L13BX
£3 - BOOK ON OUR WEBSITE



GENRE

TROPES IN WRITING
AND HOW TO USE THEM.

Welcome and Session Overview

Exploring Genre in Filmmaking

Learn about genre tropes, subversion, and blending to elevate your storytelling.

- What we'll cover today:

- Understanding Genre
- Genre Tropes and Their Usage
- Subverting Genre Expectations
- Practical Exercises to Develop Genre-Based Scenes

Our goal today is to dive deeply into what makes genres powerful tools for filmmakers and how we can innovate within these frameworks.

What is Genre?

Definition: "A category or classification of a narrative defined by shared conventions, themes, and stylistic elements."

- Examples: Horror, Comedy, Romance, Thriller, Science Fiction.
- Genre as a Storytelling Tool: Genres help shape audience expectations and provide frameworks for emotional engagement.
- Highlight the evolving nature of genres: Genres evolve with societal trends—think of horror transitioning from Gothic castles to psychological and social fears.

Exploring Genre Tropes

Tropes are the building blocks of genres. They provide the audience with cues for understanding the story.

- **Common Tropes:**

- **Horror:** Haunted houses, final girl, jump scares.
- **Romance:** Meet-cute, love triangle, grand gesture.
- **Thriller:** Red herrings, unreliable narrators, ticking clocks.

- **Group Activity:** Identify tropes in well-known films and discuss their narrative functions.

- **Reflection:** How could these tropes be used in different ways? E.g., setting a haunted house in a modern high-rise apartment.

Subverting Expectations

Subverting a trope means altering familiar elements to challenge audience expectations.

Examples:

- **Damsel in Distress** turned into the hero of the story.
- **'Get Out'**: It starts as a psychological thriller and evolves into profound social commentary.
- **Why Subversion Works**: It keeps audiences engaged by defying predictability and adding layers of meaning.
- **Exercise**: Think of a familiar trope and twist it—how could a romantic comedy end with an existential crisis?

Genre Blending

Combining genres can create unique storytelling opportunities.

Examples:

- **'Shaun of the Dead'**: Blends horror and comedy.
- **'Her'**: Combines romance and science fiction.
- **Benefits**: Genre blending can broaden narrative appeal by touching different emotional registers.
- **Partner Activity**: Brainstorm a scene that blends two genres—what would a Romantic Thriller or Horror Musical look like?

Practical Scene Creation

Task: Craft a brief scene outline using a genre trope, with a twist or genre blend.

•Considerations:

- How can a familiar trope be reframed to offer new meaning?
- Could character motivations or the setting shift in unexpected ways?

•Purpose: The goal is to experiment and push creative boundaries—creativity often arises from risk-taking.

Examples of Genre Subversion in Popular Films

- **'Get Out'**: Social commentary within horror.
- **'The Truman Show'**: Begins as comedy, becomes a critique on media and personal autonomy.
- **Key Learning**: Balancing the familiar with the unexpected creates resonance and keeps audiences intellectually engaged.
- Aim for a balance between familiarity and provocation to make your work both accessible and unique.

Developing Your Own Genre Style

Understand what captivates and frustrates you about a genre.

- **Infuse Personal Voice:** Draw from your own experiences to enrich a genre—e.g., adding vulnerability to thrillers.
- **Historical Context:** Genres often reflect socio-cultural needs—understand these roots to innovate effectively.
- **Reflection Activity:** Write about how your personal experiences could help reinvent a genre.

Wrap-Up and Q&A

Genres provide a familiar structure, but mastery comes from learning when and how to deviate creatively.

- **Discussion:** What inspired you today? Are there genres or tropes you now feel more excited to work with or challenge?
- **Encouragement:** Learn the rules, then creatively break them. The limitation is only the scope of your imagination.