

JAMES COUSINS COMPANY

WITHIN HER EYES

CONSTITUENT FEATURES

Within Her Eyes is about two peoples friendship growing out of a grief stricken situation and the journey of them becoming closer and falling in love over time. However all the while they're unable to give into those feelings due to the awareness of their past which they don't feel they can betray.

The constituent features all interlink to help convey the development of this narrative and the passing of time in the relationship.

SETTING

- Collaborated with the director, James Alexandrou, and Director of Photography, David Foulkes
- Creative process began two months ahead of filming, in meetings discussing the intention of the work.
- James and David went on a recce to the Brecon Beacons to scout locations three weeks before filming. They shared images of the various locations with James and together they decided on the locations to use.

"I wanted the film to reflect the very tense and delicate mood and atmosphere that the stage show evokes and to also highlight the emotional journey of the characters and give the sense of them being isolated and in their own world, so we looked for landscapes that felt bare, open and vast.

Another desire for the locations was that they would help reflect and develop the relationship of the characters so we started in a very open and isolated locations moving into more intimate locations like the forest, where they're surrounded by trees, and into the field where the grass is all around them. The locations really reflect the progression of the relationship becoming more and more intimate."

- James Cousins

LIGHTING

- No lighting designer as the film uses natural light.
- James and the director came up with the idea of the film progressively getting darker throughout in their initial meeting.
- Filming had to be scheduled to ensure light levels were right for each scene.
- Filmed in summer so days were long, giving the crew lots of time to shoot.

"When shooting Within Her Eyes only used natural light so we were very reliant on the Welsh weather and what it was giving us that weekend. Luckily for us the majority of the weekend it was quite grey, which did make filming a bit miserable, but it was perfect in terms of the atmosphere that we wanted to create for the film. In postproduction we helped it further giving it a slightly dark undertone, keeping it natural, but aiding the sombre mood of the piece."

- James Cousins

COSTUME

- Collaborated with stylist Katie McGoldrick
- The costumes were a variation on the costumes by Collin Falconer for the original stage production of the work.
- Creative process began two weeks ahead of filming. Katie sourced costumes from shops and together with James tried different combinations on the dancers to see what worked best and facilitated their movement.

“The costumes were selected for a number of reasons. The first was to reflect the character, for example Lisa’s character is very vulnerable, fragile and conservative, so we were looked for a shirt that was very thin and delicate which we buttoned up to the top to make it more conservative.

The second element was to make sure the costumes fitted within the setting so made sure we had a colour pallet that fitted the environment.

Thirdly we wanted to reflect the relationship; him being the strong support always underneath and her being supported by him. So his colours were dark and earthy whereas hers were much lighter, linking her to the heavens.”

- James Cousins

ACCOMPANIMENT

- Collaborated with composer, Seymour Milton.
- Creative process took place during the creation of the original stage production in 2012.

“I wanted the accompaniment to help with atmosphere and dark mood of the piece, for it to help create tension, but also for it be very delicate for it to reflect the relationship. So I talked to my composer Seymour about how we could do this and we decided on a sound score that would use both strings and piano.

The strings are very emotive and moving whereas the piano has a much more fragile and delicate quality, so combining these two elements, with electronic sound as well, we created a score that for me really fits the emotion of the work.

The accompaniment and choreography were created side by side. Seymour and I spoke about the sound world and I gave him some sample tracks as well to help describe the atmosphere that I wanted to create. We then worked independently, with me creating material in the studio, and him creating sound in his studio, which we’d share through me sending him videos and him sending me over sound clips. I’d then work on working the choreography to the music, sending him feedback, him then tweaking things, until we arrived at this point where both were working together and became completely interlinked.”

- James Cousins

USE OF CAMERA

- Collaborated with the director, James Alexandrou, and Director of Photography, David Foulkes
- Creative process began two months ahead of filming, in meetings discussing the intention of the work.

- Several ideas were discussed for how the work would be filmed, but eventually a method was settled on that would be manageable for the small crew and also serve the portrayal of the narrative.

“The camera starts far away from the dancers and gradually gets closer to them, moving from long shots to the point where half way through we have the first close up of them. This helps emphasis the shift in the relationship as they look at each other for the first time.

From here, she gradually realises that she can’t allow herself to love him and from that point completely breaks down. The camera reflects this by becoming handheld, to add to the feeling of instability.

I think my favourite shot in the film is the final shot of the choreography when he’s lowering her down towards the floor. I love how we’re left not knowing if she is ever going to touch the floor and what would unfold if he were to do so.”

- James Cousins