

M.I.A. – Galang

Shooting Script

by Ruben Fleischer

This video will feature MIA dancing against a green screen backdrop upon which we will composite a variety of backgrounds, textures, and images. MIA will be the focus of the video, and we will shoot it in 35mm so that she will look amazing. We will not heavily style her in any way, but allow her to be natural, and come across purely as herself. The video will be cut very progressively, taking cues from the beat to inform the edit. At times it will be conventional, holding close up and medium frames, which will allow the viewer to focus on MIA, and get a sense of her and connect with her. At other times, the editing will be far more aggressive, and will be cut along with the beat in a very unsyncopated way. These cuts could potentially be motivated by MIA's dancing as well.

I don't think it would be a good idea to have MIA interact too intentionally with the graphics. For example, I think it would be a bad idea to have her "throw" a grenade in the studio, and then animate in a stencil grenade. It just doesn't feel right. I think the graphics should function as accents to her, and add an overall flavor to the piece. We can do so much around her, that I would like to just have MIA focus on giving an excellent performance. Below are some ideas for potential graphic elements that can either animate during the course of the video, or simply function as backgrounds for her performance.

Graphic Ideas:

- a grenade exploding
- a tiger roaring
- a tiger prowling in the background
- potentially psychedelic purely graphic elements, motivated by the African print MIA configurations (circle and square patterns), or use them more statically and have them be backgrounds
- skull and crossbones
- sticks of dynamite blowing up
- palm trees
- map images of Sri Lanka
- flower petals
- helicopter flying overhead
 - potentially soldiers get out of it
 - potentially parachutes fall from it
- planes could fly over and drop bombs
- writing some things in Sinhalese that have the potential for graphics and for conveying a message
- taking still images of MIA and freezing on them and making a stencil out of them
- female soldiers marching in the background
- tanks rolling through the background
- cyanide capsule necklace

- camouflage backgrounds (has to be super-stylized as camo is a bit overdone and wouldn't necessarily convey what we need it to)
- parrots flying through or sitting in palm trees
- possibly some clips from newspapers that have significance about the Tamil Tigers (maybe we can use them as a background for certain parts)

I really like the idea of taking the texture of the spraypaint and using it for all of our backgrounds. For example, if she is just going to be on a plain orange background, I would like to spraypaint orange onto a surface and photograph that, so that the background has some texture and imperfections – instead of just selecting a computer orange and dialing that in.

I think that one way that we can subvert the music video outlets (who won't show guns or the like) is if we diffuse some of the heavier imagery with other aspects of MIA's artwork. For example, when a grenade goes off, maybe the explosion is made up of the palm tree fronds, so that it doesn't look inherently violent. That way we can still get a grenade in the video, but MTV doesn't feel threatened. I don't want to do anything cheesy, like have a gun and have a flower come out of the barrel – that is not the point. What I want to find is a happy medium between different aspects of MIA's artwork that will allow us to include some more challenging imagery with other aspects that MTV will have less of a problem with.

Another key element to this video is that at the end during Yah Yah Hey bit that we start on a very close up shot of MIA, and then pull out to reveal an army of MIA's behind her. They could be doing a variety of things, from just dancing and singing, to marching or training exercises, to just spazzing out.

Timing:

0:00 – 0:09	Musical Intro
0:09 – 0:19	London Calling
0:19 – 0:38	Slam / Galang
0:39 – 0:47	Blaze a Blaze
0:47 – 1:06	Hounding in BMW
1:06 – 1:22	Blaze a Blaze
1:15 – 1:25	London Calling
1:25 – 1:33	Rivers goin to run through
1:49 – 2:08	Blaze a Blaze
2:08 – 2:30	Instrumental bit
2:30 – 3:27	Yah Yah Hey

Progression:

As far as the overall progression of the video, I see MIA walking up to the camera over the course of the musical intro, somewhat casually, but definitely asserting herself. She will arrive to the camera as the verse starts (in a medium close up), and start singing the song. I think the background should be pretty basic at this point – a simple color, but definitely with some nice texture. As she starts

singing, I think that we can slowly introduce some of our more illustrated elements. A tiger could stroll through the background, helicopters could circle overhead. Nothing major has to happen at this point, as we want there to be a gradual progression, and that it slowly builds and gets more intense over the course of the video. By the second “Blaze a Blaze” (1:06), I think we can start to get pretty heavy with the animation. During the instrumental section (2:08 – 2:30), I think we could have an almost purely animated part if we feel the need to. We could definitely have some different scenes play out, and have MIA come in and out of them. By the “Yah Yah Hey” bit, I feel like the multiple MIA’s will be very visually stunning, and that we will not need as much animation for this part at first, but as it progresses and we get used to seeing multiples of her (though we will move in and out of close shots to wide shots to close shots and so forth).

As far as MIA’s dancing, I think that she can also build to it. During the verses I think we should concentrate on her performance (keeping in mind that she will be rocking throughout), and that it will step up during the choruses. That is when I think MIA can really freak out. As well as the end – she can go crazy at the end. We will also cover the whole song in tighter shots where we will have her be more static, as well as covering the whole song in a wider shot with her dancing throughout.

Ways to cover the video:

- extreme close up of just MIA’s face
- medium close up of MIA (shoulders up) –entire song
- waist up of MIA to include dancing
- full body wide take to include dancing
- push in and out on dolly
- cover at least 15 versions of the end of the song dancing (full body)