Insert a mood-picture

HEBRIDEAN LIGHT

Give your project a title

In pitching, getting a feeling for something is often more important than understanding everything.
Give your project a claim (one-liner)

Teaser Web-Link
PW
Show us! Create a pilot (2-5 Minutes) demonstrating the look and feel of your project. Done well a visual sample will always say more than any amount of text. Unfortunately, a badly done pilot will do just the same. On balance, it is better to show something. Don't try telling the whole story. Make us want to know more. Videos are usually password-protected on a Vimeo account or similar.

Creative documentary for cinema, festival and tv (90´, 52´, 2x45´), German-Gaelic
Technical data, i.e. fiction / non-fiction, length, language, platform (Web, TV, cinema etc.)

Written by ..., directed by ...
Rights Holder Name (*person or company*), (C) 2018
State who wrote, directs and makes the film, followed by a simple copyright note.

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Synopsis
A synopsis should always give an overview into what is happening in the film, the action. Don't write stuff we cannot see. Whatever media you are going to make, there will be always some activity (see: Aristotle, DOING SOMETHING). Try focusing on the peculiar aspects of your story, then consider the things that are important for our understanding of the story, then balance the highlights and the essential stuff in your summary.
Ideally, you will have a short synopsis of three lines, max five, to a maximum of half a page.
The more in depth text will be the treatment, later on.

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Director`s Statement
Introduce yourself, what you like and why you want to make this film.
Reflect, if you like, on your current status to make it easier for us to understand where you are coming from not just artistically, but also career-wise.

Production & Exploitation
Status of finance, projected goals (funds, partners, tv-sales or other income)
Production facility (company, organisation)
Targets for exploitation (platforms, channels, cinema, outreach)
Targets for festivals.

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Budget
A table of sums, structured according to overall effort:
- Development
- Rights (including script, archival, music)
- Production (all fees relating to production and postproduction crew)
- Directing (all fees relating to directing, camera, editing crew)
- Filming (the actual cost of the shoot including cast, props, staging, catering)
- Postproduction
- Travel & Expenses (hotels, cars, tickets, per diems)
- Miscellanea (can be quite substantial, like office rent, telephones)
- Production Overheads (usually 7.5% in Germany)
- Legal fees (always applicable with public funds as they audit your accounts)
- Grand Total

Try to be accurate, be brief but show some figures. Ask friends for help if you are unsure.

Finance
Include a table of moneys and sources.
Where will the money come from? Explain where the film should, ideally, end up and what platforms you would like to reach (festival, cinema, tv, cable, online providers, online video platforms, museums, bookshops, wherever…)

Treatment
A treatment ought to give the reader an idea of how the story will be told. This includes the tone, the look and feel and an overall sense of what to expect.
For Fiction*: Include a script excerpt (no more than 5 pages); give an overview of the story by writing a more detailed description of what will happen in the film (max 2 pages). Again, the focus is on the action and what happens, who does what and when (not: <u>why</u>) and from the development of content through action your approach, intention and ability will be judged. This applies regardless of genre or artistic intent, i.e. a no-action film will have a no-action description of action. The aim is not to please the imaginary reader. The aim is to be precise, then let the reader decide what she or he likes.*
For Documentary*: The description of action in a documentary treatment must balance fact and fiction. As the actual events that constitute the time-line of the story are usually future events at the time of writing (with financing and development yet to happen), it is important to describe key protagonists and their situation, what they want and do, now. What they will do and have done follows next, but this is much weaker compared to action in the present. From this we should understand why the protagonists should matter to us and the answer is always: because they do interesting things. Use this chance to demonstrate your understanding of what matters and what not. The latter section of the treatment should give us an overview of where we are and why, i.e. the bigger picture that puts the action of the protagonists in a contextual framework. Don't worry about the actual film you will make being quite different to what you describe in the exposé (some are, most aren't).*
From your exposé, the reader will get an idea of how you view your content and how you tell stories and this is all they need to know in their decision-making on becoming a partner in your project.

NOTES:
- Pieces of paper like the one that your are about to make can sell a million dollar film. So, yes, they are important. At the same time they are only pieces of paper, they cannot already be the film. So do not try to put everything in it, you will only succeed in overloading the reader. Instead, try generating an interest for the film. That is the purpose of an expose.
- For our exercise in the Seminar, don't overdo it. Try doing everything but if you do one thing, bring a teaser; if you do two things, a teaser and a synopsis; and if you do three, add a rough budget. Always have a clear idea where the material will be shown.
- In the US and UK it is common practice to reference other films, in Europe this is rarely done. The advantage of making a reference to existing films is obvious and so are the draw-backs: the reader or listener may know or may not know the film, thus potentially awkward situations ahead. If you pick a film you are sure everybody knows, this too may backfire as the reader may secretly wonder why your film should be like a Spielberg, Haneke, Wong Kar-Wai…
- Layout: preferably upright, A4, clean and easy to use. Try to avoid being over the top creative with dark backgrounds and white lettering (unprintable) or horizontal layout (tiresome to read, impracticable to store). Do spend some time on design, but rather on reduction than on over/production.
- Keep it simple, keep it tight.
- Good luck!

Further Reading:
ARISTOTLE'S TOOLBOX for using or abusing Western traditions of story-telling

ARISTOTLE'S TOOLBOX

In the POETICS, Aristotle describes basic tools for enhancing or with-holding immersive experience for any audience. This can be used to distance or overwhelm, depending on what you want.
This dramaturgical TOOLBOX works in a strictly hierarchical order, weighing every aspect of your media in relation to relevance for story: **Realness** rules through **action** of **protagonists** that are in **dialogue** over **intentions** and **meanings**, **staged** in **sound** and **image**. Good luck!

REALITY AFFECT (this is my addition, i.e. you will find no discussion of realness in the POETICS)
- Action of protagonists / characters
- Witnessing, i.e. others who confirm events
- Documents in sound and image, i.e. found footage
- Witness 2nd degree, i.e. people who know others who were there
- Documents, like certificates, fotos, reels

ACTION
- A story in the present (beginning, middle, end)
- Re-narration, often under some premise (voice-over) or as a flash-back
- Re-enactment
- Re-citation, in verbal form (often voice-over)
- Text, i.e. the "based on a true story" plaque

PROTAGONISTS / CHARACTERS
- Main protagonists are those who undergo change and conflict in action
- Main protagonists are those who tell the story through their actions
- Side-protagonists support the story-telling of the main protagonists

DIALOGUE, NARRATOR
- People speaking on-screen
- On-screen narrator, usually in fake or real documentaries
- Interviews, usually seated
- Off-narrator, usually all knowing and invisible

THOUGHT [basket term for mental map and moral of each character and the story as a whole]
- Theme, topic, or moral of a story
- Correlation of action and "thought"
- Correlation of action, character and "thought"
- Causality and plausibility

STAGING
- Camerawork, lighting, staging – here roughness usually enhances realness
- Larger than life exaggeration is used to overwhelm us aesthetically
- Suitability for topic and protagonists, i.e SLUM DOG MILLIONAIRE
- Originality

SOUND DESIGN / MUSIC
- On
- Off