MESSAGES IN MOTION

A TOOLKIT FOR MAKING YOUR OWN MEDIA!

Your voice is important. Your voice is necessary to a healthy, democratic society!

WE MUST DOCUMENT WHERE WE ARE, SO WE CAN ARTICULATE WHERE WE WANT TO BE, AND BEGIN TO IMAGINE HOW WE WILL GET THERE.

Media can help us stay informed, educate others, inspire, motivate and bring about positive social change. Unfortunately almost 100% of what we see, hear and read comes from corporate media, the dominant communication system in the US, where the focus is on making money. Corporate media does not reflect the interests of people or our daily experiences. Media can be independent, community driven, and representative of diverse voices, perspectives and styles that reflect our uniqueness as individuals and speak to our needs as communities.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO MAKE A 1-5 MINUTE VIDEO POSTCARD THAT
TELLS A PERSONAL OR COMMUNITY STORY ABOUT AN ISSUE THAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU!

STEP ONE. PRE-PRODUCTION: GENERATING IDEAS AND PLANNING!

Media, can take many forms or genres, like action, drama, animation or experimental. MIM is going to focus on the documentary genre because your reality is unique and interesting, and unlike anything we see on TV. You are the main character and director of your story. This allows you to have control over how you want to present yourself, your ideas and your thoughts to the world. IF YOU DON'T SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, SOMEONE ELSE MAY SPEAK FOR YOU.

Imagine you are sending a video Postcard to someone. This video will document your environment, and express what you are thinking at this moment in time.

MIM believes that it is important to situate our issues and stories in a larger context. By documenting where we are, both physically as well as emotionally, we can begin to analyze our situation and work toward alternatives. For that reason MIM is focusing on 2 types of short form documentary, personal story and community story.

1. PERSONAL

IN THIS VIDEO, YOU WILL SPEAK FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE. TAKE A MOMENT TO THINK/WRITE ABOUT:
What issues are important to me?

What do I want people to know about me?

What story am I trying to tell?

What has impacted me most growing up in my neighborhood?

How has a bigger social issue effected me?

Remember to think about audience: Who is my message directed to?

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?
HERE ARE SOME IDEAS:
1. ANECDOTE (sequence of actions/events) which should lead the reader to ask questions and feel a particular emotion.
2. MOMENTS OF REFLECTION
(here is why you are watching/listening; Try to connect the story to a larger social issue)

These questions will help you create your audio track.

2. COMMUNITY STORY

TELL A COMMUNITY STORY THROUGH A PARTICULAR EVENT OR ACTIVITY.
This is one approach to citizen journalism which can be defined as "the collection, analysis, and dissemination of publicly relevant information."
PREPARE YOURSELF BY CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING:
Where and when is this event taking place?

What story do I want to tell?

TRY TO FOCUS ON ONE ASPECT OF THE 'EVENT;' THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO HAVE CLARITY AND DETAILS!
Why am I writing this, and why do I think the viewer should watch?

THIS IS YOUR MESSAGE.
Your message is the significant point or central theme, it may have political, social, or moral importance
Who do I want to interview and what perspective will they bring to the story?

Consider interviewing yourself-- you, too, can be an expert!
How does this story affect the viewer? If it doesn't impact the viewer, maybe it shouldn't be a community story, and you should try a personal approach first.
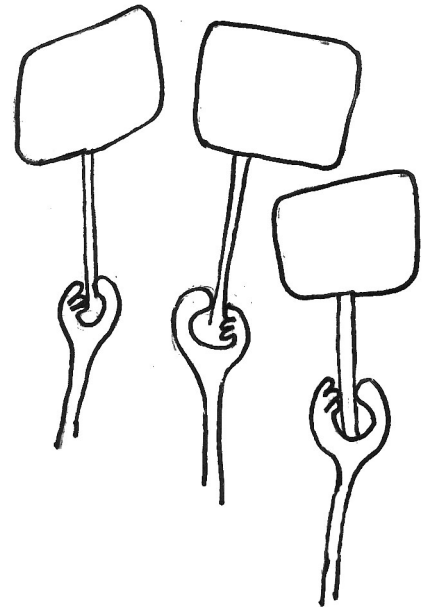
It is important to express your MESSAGE and ideas, but try to conclude with an action that you want the viewer to take. Turn your MESSAGES into an ACTION by concluding with action-oriented words (THINK, CONSIDER, ACT, DO, SHARE). Include ways to get more information on your topic (for example a website).

Your immediate environment may have everything you need for your movie. Creativity arises from our ability to see things from different angles and perspectives. Observe your surroundings for images and ideas.

STEP TWO. PRODUCTION: RECORDING AUDIO AND VISUAL MATERIAL

Before you begin shooting, use the postcard template to prepare.
Use the postcard template to answer pre-production questions which will form the basis of your audio track, aka VOICEOVER.
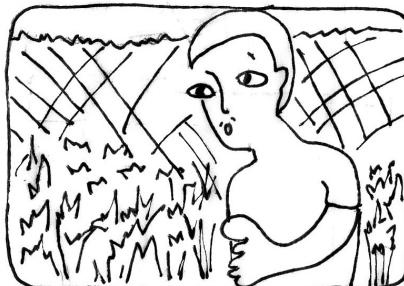A VOICEOVER is dialogue heard over your movie, the speaker is not shown.

Use the Video Storyboard to brainstorm images and shot ideas.

WHEN RECORDING SOUND, FIND A QUIET ENVIRONMENT AND USE THE MIC ON THE FRONT OF THE CAMERA

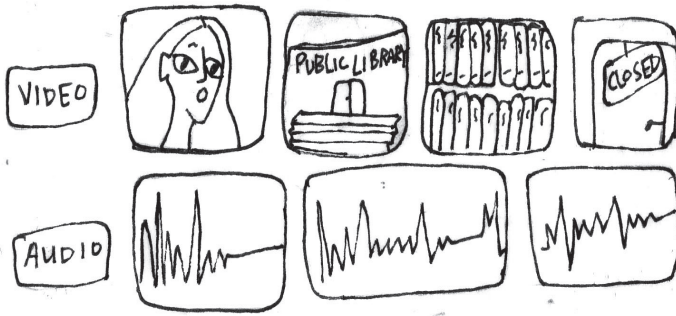THE IMAGES WILL BE A SERIES OF SINGLE SHOTS WHICH TOGETHER FORM A SEQUENCE.

close up

medium shot

long shot

Try to vary your shot type, angle, and composition. Remember to hold your shot for at least 10 seconds, as if you are taking a photo.
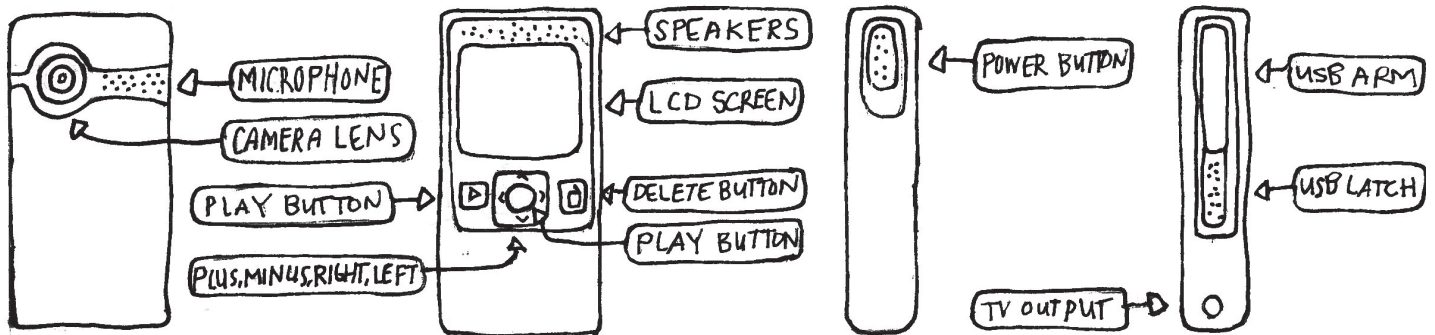Be creative, show new perspectives, and focus on details as well as the bigger picture.

VIDEO

AUDIO

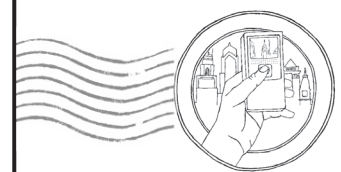**GOLDEN GUIDELINES OF THE FLIP CAMERA:**
1. Don't zoom, go closer
2. Find a steady surface- or use a tripod if you have one
3. Let the action create movement, not your hand
4. Frame first, then record
5. Hold each shot for about than 10 seconds

THINK OF EACH SHOT AS A BUILDING BLOCK FOR YOUR STORY

LIGHT IS GOOD. SUNLIGHT IS BEST, IT SHOULD COME FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF THE CAMERA WHEN POSSIBLE

MICROPHONE

CAMERA LENS

PLAY BUTTON

PLUS, MINUS, RIGHT, LEFT

SPEAKERS

LCD SCREEN

DELETE BUTTON

PLAY BUTTON

POWER BUTTON

TV OUTPUT

USB ARM

USB LATCH

From:

VIDEO POSTCARD

STEP THREE. POST-PRODUCTION: MAKING IT COME TOGETHER!

Think back to what makes a good story. What is your MESSAGE and what kind of emotions do you want people to feel after watching your video. How is that emotion connected to the action you want them to take?

Now that you finished shooting and recording your narration, it's time to take your video footage and your audio and put them together to tell a story. This is called editing. Most editing programs rely on the concept of a timeline with an audio and video track.

The magic of editing allows us to put any VIDEO IMAGE over any AUDIO or Soundtrack

There are several programs to edit with:

Moviemaker (free with PC); imovie (free with Mac) are two examples; The Flip camera comes with its own editing software called Flipshare. Once you plug in the camera to a computer, it will start up! MPEG streamclip is a free program you can download to convert your files if necessary.
DON'T FORGET TO ADD A TITLE!

STEP FOUR. DISTRIBUTION: MAKE AN IMPACT!

Research your local community access television stations.
Visit the Alliance for Community Media: www.alliancecm.org
Send a DVD and consider starting your own show! In Philly, call: 267-640-7848 or visit phillycam.org
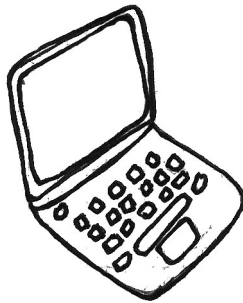
You want to export your final video as an mpeg4 so that you can upload it to the web. Create a Free Video hosting account. YouTube, Blip.tv, Vimeo are common hosts. We suggest Blip.tv because it allows YOU to maintain control of the content of your video, and determine how it will be shared with others.

Public Screening: Make a DVD of your finished video and share it with your neighbors, at your community center or at a local event.

Visit www.messagesinmotion.com for examples and more resources! MIM is a project of the Termite TV Collective (termite.org)

DRAW YOUR VIDEO STORYBOARD