

The Amazing Daily Lives Of Foley Artists

Sounds have as important a role in movies as does the image, even though we often forget it. Not all sounds are recorded on site as the movie is being made, because often it is preferable to concentrate on the words that the characters are saying, or in other words, the dialogue. In sound dramaturgy, other important things in addition to the dialogue is the music sung or played by the characters, the background music, the sound environment, or in other words, the background noise, the silence and sound effects, which are the topic of today's task.

Foley-sounds are sound effects recorded after filming. These specialised professionals are quite the magicians! They know how to “act” the sounds that happen in a recorded image. Different rustles, thuds, and steps bring life and realism to a picture. They are not always made using the same means as shown in the picture. For example, the clip-clop of a horse's hooves can be achieved using two halves of a coconut. A walk in the snow is the sound potato starch makes when squeezed, and a thunderstorm is the sound of cardboard being rustled and falling grains of rice. A leather glove emulates a bat, and a wet rag is a fish out of water. More-often-than-not, these 'cheat' sounds fully resemble reality, but sometimes in humorous clips, the sound an opening drawer makes is the noise of a trumpet sounding or the meow of a cat.

Watch at least the beginnings of these movies, where Foley artists create the sounds of the movie: [LINK1](#) and [LINK2](#)

Film 4-6 short films called “my daily life.” They can be 5-10 seconds long, depicting how you brush your teeth, look at a flower or pet a Guinea pig. Combine the videos into one in software for video editing. Take away the original sounds. Find different sounds at home. Try different materials: knock, scratch, stroke, scratch, shake, drop and wave objects around. Try putting say, peas, in a bottle. Find a squeaky door, the loudest shoes or the most hollow part of the wall.

Record new sounds into the video – realistic ones as well as strange ones. Maybe the indoor plant clinks like a bag of coins? Or perhaps the dog creaks like a door?

If the editing software's free version doesn't allow you to record sounds onto it directly, try your phone's or tablet's sound recorder simultaneously, as you record your film. If this is also problematic, try making the sounds at the same time as you film. For example, hit some spoons together under the table at the same time as you film your plate. This may present its own challenges, but with a bit of creativity, you can find a solution.

If you like, add beginning and end credits. The movie should be between 15-60 seconds long. Show your film to somebody and ask them to guess what you used to produce the sounds. Can you guess how the sounds were made in this exercise? [LINK](#)

MEDIA
PERIOD



Photo: Kaisa Lenkkeri

What you need

A phone, tablet or video camera
An editing application or software (for example, iMovie, Splice, Movavi...)
Different kinds of Foley-objects (bicycle pump, rice, paper, leather, a tap, a creaky door, spoons)

Goal

To practice audio-visual storytelling, or in other words, combining picture and sound.
To test what kind of effect sound has on image.
To acquaint yourself with the work of Foley artists.

Background

You do not need huge resources to make Foley sounds. Heikki Kossi makes them in Finland for Hollywood movies.

[LINK](#)

For his work, he needs professional recording and mixing gear, good sound-proofing, a store-room full of all kinds of objects and skill.

Movies have planted in us many kinds of beliefs about what it sounds like, for example, under water or in outer space. Using sounds, you can achieve plenty of things – if the topic interests you, this article by movie director Tapani Lundgren is brilliant: [LINK](#)

