<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>El gris perfecto (the perfect grey)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Ho, Edwin Chang Yong; Ang, Felicia Miao Fang; Thia, Grace Hui Min; Yap, Trixie Sher Li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citation</strong></td>
<td>Ho, E. C. Y., Ang, F. M. F., Thia, G. H. M., &amp; Yap, T. S. L. (2012). El gris perfecto (the perfect grey). Final year project report, Nanyang Technological University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10220/9409">http://hdl.handle.net/10220/9409</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scene 1B/6B/9B

1. WS - Juan enters the bar

2. MCU - Bartender's POV of Juan with reference

3. MCU - Juan's POV of Bartender with reference

4. CU - Juan places 5 euro bill and photo on the bar counter
Scene 2

1. WS - Panoramic view of Barcelona.
2. MS - Juan looking out of the taxi window.
3. MS - Reflection of La Sagrada Familia on taxi window.
4. CU - Taxi driver peeping at Juan through front.
5. CU - Photo of beach.
6. WS - Cutaway of scenery.
1. Sunset & birds above La Sagrada Familia
2. WS - Taxi stops in front of a building
3. MS - Jose & Isabel talking in the kitchen
4. MCU - Juan walking up the stairs (face only)
5. CU - Jose making a cup of coffee (hands only)
6. MCU - Juan walking up the stairs (hands and shoulders only)
13. MCU - Hand gestures of Jose & Isabel

14. MS - Backview of Juan knocking the door; Jose opens the door

15. MS - Jose's POV of Juan (Shot-reverse-shot conversation)

16. MS - Camera tracks behind Juan & Jose as they walk through the corridor

17. MS - Juan is introduced to Isabel

18. MCU - Juan stretches out his hand but Isabel leans in to kiss him instead
19. MS - Conversation continues

20. MS - Camera tracks behind Juan & Jose as they walk down the corridor

21. MS - Juan closes the door of Christina's room.

22. MS - Camera follows Juan as he walks around the room and sits on the bed.

23. MS - Juan looks up at the ceiling then turns to the bedside drawer

24. MS - Juan rummages in the bedside drawer
25. CU - Over-the-shoulder shot of condom.

26. CU - Juan falls asleep, then gets up.

27. MS - Camera follows behind Juan as he gets shirt out from backpack and changes his top.
Scene 3

1. Camera follows behind Juan & Jose as they walk down the corridor into the living room...

2. MS - Jose introduces Juan (mobile camera as conversation continues)

3. MCU - Juan mentions that his mother passed away

4. CU - Cheering to fiesta

5. Surrealistic - People dancing
6. Surrealistic - People jumping (hands)

7. Surrealistic - Carlos & Paula kissing

8. MCU - Juan sitting at the sofa staring at Jose & Isabel (track in)

9. Surrealistic - Jose & Isabel dancing (CU)
   (Various angles - head, torso, back)

10. MS - Juan continues to stare, Jose & Isabel join him at the sofa

11. Surrealistic - 3 of them dancing (CU)
Scene 4

1. WS - 3 of them lying on the sofa

2. Track in to MLS (mobile camera) (MASTER)

2. MCU - Juan says he wants to go to the Plaza
Scene 5

1. MS - Three of them walking on the Plaza; Juan walks off (camera follows) (MASTER)

2. WS - Juan walks away from them.

3. MLS - Juan’s phone conversation

4. MCU - Juan’s phone conversation

5. Cutaway of Plaza

6. Cutaway of blue skies & palm trees
7. MS - Juan joins Jose & Isabel again; conversation continues

8. WS - 3 of them running around plaza

9. M/S - Jose arranges his hair

10. M/S - Isabel putting on lipstick

11. M/S - Juan putting on his leather jacket

12. LS - Three of them walking down a street
13. MS - Three of them returning from the bar.

14. MS - Over-the-shoulder shot (shot-reverse-shot)

15. MCU - Jose speaks to Juan.

16. MS - Juan replies Jose (shot-reverse-shot)
Scene 6

1. LS - Juan & Jose are having breakfast when Isabel enters

2. NICU - Jose's reaction; Isabel & Jose leave the table

3. MCU - Juan continues eating; looks up when he hears door slamming and gets up

4. WS - Isabel and Jose are heading towards the front door

5. MS - Juan approaches Isabel & Jose

6. MS - Isabel replies to Juan (shot-reverse-shot)
1. LS - Isabel leaves
2. LS - Juan & Jose return to the dining table
3. MCU - Jose asks Juan what he wants to do
4. MCU - Juan replies Jose (shot-reverse-shot)
5. WS -> LS - Carmen follows Juan & Jose as they walk towards the seaside
6. MCU - Juan's conversation
13. M/S - Jose's conversation (shot - reverse-shot)

14. W/S - Juan & Jose run into the sea.
Scene 7

1. MS - Juan and Jose sitting on the couch.
   (Master)

2. MCU - Juan's conversation

3. MCU - Jose's conversation
   (shot-reverse-shot)

4. MS - Isabel runs in and hugs Jose; Juan contacts her
   too and goes out to take wine

5. MS - Juan returns to see Jose and Isabel kissing

6. MCU - flashes of menage a trois
7 MS - Juan wakes up in the morning.

8 MS - Juan goes to the bathroom to wash his face.
Scene 8

1. **WIDE SHOT** - Juan and Elisha sitting at the bench (Master)

2. **MEDIUM FRAME** - Elisha's conversation

3. **MEDIUM FRAME** - Juan's conversation

4. **MEDIUM SHORT** - Juan's conversation

5. **MEDIUM SHORT** - Juan's conversation

6. **MEDIUM SHORT** - Juan knocks on Jose's bedroom door
7. MCU - Juan's conversation
6. MS - Jose's conversation (shot-reverse-shot)
9. CU - Juan passes Jose the note
8. MS - Jose watches Juan leave
10. MCU - Jose hugs Juan (shot-reverse-shot)
11. CU - Note
Scene 9

1. MS - Juan walking in the midst of a crowded street
2. WS - Juan returns to the beach
3. CU - Juan looks out at the ocean
“El Gris Perfecto”
A Visual Treatment by Edwin Ho
I want to create a moving visual poetry about self-discovery and life. Since we have no control over a lot of things in life, I want to bring this quality of spontaneity into the film. Things happen and sometimes you just need to let them go while living in the moment. People and their stories come and go. Eventually, your experiences fill your life.

At times we are never clear with life. It is not always right or wrong; sometimes things fall into a grey area. This is another quality that I would like to portray in the film. We get confused and might not know what is black or white. As humans with feelings and emotions, it is perfectly fine to be uncertain. In the film, I want to highlight the small moments in life; such as the simple joys of walking down the streets, flinging your hair, or smiling at people. These are moments that we rarely realize but they make up a big part of our everyday life. This brings forward a sense of reality that audiences can connect with.

Set in a different country, elements of the Spanish culture will be portrayed through the film’s music, set design and scene culture. There are certain references of iconic Spanish traditions, especially in relation to Barcelona. The film is also inspired by Pedro Almodovar’s “All About My Mother”. There is a reversal of roles in the mother-son relationship and features similar settings from the film, such as Placa Del Duc De Medinaeli. You will also see the cultural influence of Singapore through the Singaporean character of Jose in the film.
A Singaporean-Spanish boy goes on a journey to Barcelona to discover more about his mother after her death. Along the way, he meets different people and finds a deeper meaning in life.

El Gris Perfecto
The Film.

“Sometimes life does not need to be black or white, grey can be perfect too.”
Juan is devastated after the untimely death of his mother, Marie, whom he is very close to. He decides to take a break away from Singapore.

He does not know anything about his father, except that his mother met him in Barcelona. Having always felt an intrinsic connection with the city, and inspired by the colourful backdrop of Barcelona in the film “All About Your Mother” by Pedro Almodovar, he decides that Barcelona should be his first destination.
In Barcelona, Juan meets his friend’s brother, Jose, whom he will be staying with. He also meets Jose’s flatmate, Isabel. Juan experiences cultural shocks when he finds condoms in the room he is sleeping in, and with the Spanish way of greeting by kissing each other’s cheeks. He then takes a nap.

There is a party in Juan’s apartment. Everyone is talking about a bet that Isabel has lost. Her forfeit is to sleep with a girl. Isabel declares that she would rather sleep with Juan, which draws teasing from the rest.

Isabel asks Juan about his plans and the reason for his trip. Juan explains how he fell in love with Almodovar’s film. When asked about his family, Juan looks away and tells them about his mother’s death. This is followed by an awkward silence, which is broken by Isabel. She says that everyday is a fiesta, no matter what happens. Everyone laughs and cheers.
As people around him dance, smoke, drink and make out, Juan sits alone on a sofa, feeling lost. His gaze is fixated on Jose and Isabel, who are dancing intimately. They realize that Juan is sitting alone and drag him to dance with them.
The three of them fall asleep on the sofa in the living room after the party. The next morning, Jose asks Juan about his plans for the day, and they decide to go to Placa del Duc De Medinaeli, a place that Juan always wanted to visit.

The three of them walk around the square, which is lined with palm trees and gothic architecture. This is one of the key settings in "All About My Mother". Juan’s mobile phone rings. It is Aunty Ling, who starts questioning him about his whereabouts. Juan reassures her and explains his current situation. Aunty Ling understands.

Jose voices his plans to bring them to Juan’s Bar later in the night. They continue having fun on the streets and other places around Barcelona in the Gotico area, before making their way to Juan’s Bar at night.
The next morning, Isabel enters the living room, distraught. Her grandmother is hospitalized and she has to go home. After Isabel leaves, Jose suggests going to the beach.

At the beach, Juan starts telling Jose his childhood memories about his mother bringing him to the beach, making it his favourite place to go to. He then tells Jose about his father.

Jose asks Juan if he came to Barcelona for his father. Juan shakes his head, saying “I never needed to know who he is. I just needed to know who my mother was.”

Jose then proposes a crazy idea – going into the water despite the chilly weather. Juan hesitates for a moment but follows suit. They start taking off their clothes and head for the sea.
Back in the apartment, Juan and Jose are drinking wine in the living room. Juan asks Jose about his ambiguous relationship with Isabel. Jose replies, “Sometimes life doesn’t have to be black or white. Grey can be perfect too.”

Isabel suddenly walks in, crying. She has missed the train and was unable to secure a flight. Her grandmother’s condition has also worsened.

Juan comforts Isabel, telling her what she had said previously about everyday being a fiesta. She picks up one of the wine glasses and signals the both of them to drink up.

Juan then goes to the kitchen to take more wine. When he returns, he sees Isabel and Jose kissing. Isabel turns to him and starts kissing him too. They then move into Jose’s room and go on to make love.
The next morning, Juan wakes up with a hangover. He turns to look at Jose and Isabel, who are still sleeping in an embrace. He then leaves.

Jose heads to Placa Del Duc De Medinaeli. He is writing in his journal when a man walks over and sits next to him. They introduce themselves and start a conversation about their purpose in Barcelona. The stranger is an Israeli named Elisha. He was previously a successful businessman. After the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, he decided to sell off his businesses and relocate to Barcelona.

Juan then tells Elisha his story. Elisha replies that he is part of a big world and home is where his heart feels best in. He then bids Juan farewell, wishing him bon voyage. His words make an impact on Juan.
Juan goes back to the apartment. Isabel has left. He tells Jose that he will be leaving as well, to Madrid. After packing, he passes Jose a farewell note, saying that he thinks he finally understood the meaning of “grey can be perfect too”.

Juan heads to Juan’s Bar for a drink. The bartender introduces himself as Juan Rodriguez, the bar owner. He asks for Juan’s name but Juan remains silent and asks him if he remembers a Singaporean lady named Marie. The bartender said no. Juan finishes his beer and walks out of the bar. The bartender stares after him.

Juan then heads to the beach that Jose had previously brought him to. He muses, “I think I finally understood what you meant by truly living life, Mum. I don’t know where I will head to and I don’t know who I will meet along the way, but I know I’m part of this big world. It doesn't matter where home is. It is where the heart feels right.”
Almost one year has passed.

*BLACK SCREEN*

Auntie Ling’s phone rings. It is Juan. He leaves her a voicemail telling her he is in Argentina but is going back to Barcelona now. He will return to Singapore soon to settle his mother’s affairs, before deciding if he will stay on or leave for somewhere else again.
Characters & Background.

Juan Rodriguez Cheng

Juan is 21 years old. He is in his first year of studies in the university, majoring in film because he loves cinema. His mother met with a car accident on his 21st birthday while rushing home to celebrate the occasion. After the death of his mother, he decides to leave Singapore and take a year’s break from school. He wanted to discover what life is about outside of Singapore and most importantly, to understand his mother in the process. He decides to fly to Barcelona – the one place he had always wanted to go. He fell in love with the colourful backdrop of Barcelona after watching “All About Your Mother” by Pedro Almodovar and felt a connection to the city.

He is of mixed descent. His mother is Singaporean-Chinese while his father is Spanish. Throughout his 21 years of life, his mother has brought him up single-handedly and he never knew who his father is. He only knew that his mother went to Barcelona when she was younger and had a relationship with a Spanish man who owns a bar there. She left Barcelona and came back to Singapore to conceive him. Somehow he never had the urge to find out about his roots or his father. He has always been contented to have only his mother around as she is always there for him both as a mother and a father. He sees himself as a Singaporean instead of a Spanish, since he has been in Singapore all his life without having stepped foot into Spain. Growing up in the Singaporean environment, he is a typical Singaporean — getting good grades, going into top schools and blending in well into the Singapore society. This, however, is not who his mother hopes he will become.

Marie Cheng – Juan’s Mother

She has a free-spirited attitude towards life, which she always talks to Juan about. She hopes that he does not become someone who conforms to societal norms. She has a very close relationship with Juan despite being a successful and busy career woman who owns a few art galleries around the world and travels often for business.

In her younger days, she was in Barcelona for a couple of days while travelling and met a Spanish owner of a bar there. She had an affair with him while she was in Barcelona and she did not know that she would be pregnant with Juan. She never once tried to look him up or regret what she had done. She always told Juan that she does not regret being a single mother and having him. Hence, there isn’t a point for her to look for his father because some things just happen and such is life.
Jose Garcia Gonzalez

Jose is the brother of Juan’s friend, who lives in Barcelona. Juan initially looked his friend up for accommodation in Barcelona. He is, however, not around. Thus, he asks Jose to put Juan up at his place.

Jose is 20 years old and studies Art History in Universidad de Barcelona. He lives in an apartment with two other flat-mates, Isabel and Cristina. He is an open-minded and humourous guy who likes to joke around. He brings life to gatherings when he is with his friends. Whenever he is around Juan, he seems to be a little more reserved. He is into art culture like cinema, photography and literature. Due to Juan’s unique character, he is drawn to Juan in an intriguing manner and is eager to show him around the city. He has mixed feelings towards Isabel and doesn’t know if is he sees her as a friend or more than a friend.

Isabel Christina Sin

Isabel is Jose’s schoolmate and flat mate. She is from Asturias but she came to Barcelona to fulfil her studies in Universidad de Barcelona. She has a carefree attitude. Like a typical Spanish, she is very open-minded and loves to party. She is very obviously in love with Jose and the both of them behave in an intimate way, suggesting that they are more than just platonic friends. She is not shy to show her affection towards Jose in front of people. She is unsure about how Jose feels about her but she is fine with this ambiguous friendship. She does not feel a commitment as she sleeps with other guys as well.
Elisha Shoval

He is an Israeli man in his mid forties, who is living in Barcelona now. He left Israel after the 2006 war broke out between Israel and Lebanon. Prior to the war, he was a successful businessman who owned a few nightclubs. After the war, he decided to sell off his businesses. With the money, he left Israel for Barcelona. He fell in love with the place and decided to relocate his life to Barcelona, starting everything from scratch.

Juan Rodriguez – Juan’s Father

He met Marie while she was travelling in Europe. He owns a bar which is a popular hunt for the locals in Barcelona. He is still single and single-handedly runs the bar full time. He never knew he had a son with Marie.

Aunty Ling

She is Marie’s sister and they were very close. Aunty Ling co-owns the art gallery business. She treats Juan like her own son. After the death of her sister, she takes care of both the business and Juan. Juan’s mother left behind an inheritance for Juan. She has no idea of Juan’s plans to leave and has been frantically searching for him. After discovering his whereabouts, she wants him to come back to Singapore so that he can settle the legal issues for his remaining inheritance. She is also very worried for him as it is the first time he is away for so long and so physically far apart from his family, while carrying the emotional baggage of his mother’s death.
Theme.

There are a few themes running through the film. To sum it up, it primarily revolves around the theme of coming-of-age.

**COMING-OF-AGE:** the attainment of prominence, respectability, recognition, or maturity.

Being the most prominent theme visible in the film, it is reflected through the main character, Juan. He gets to know more about himself and reaches a state of maturity, getting an idea of what life is about through his journey to discover more about his mother.

Another theme is GREY. Why did I use a colour as a theme? You get grey when you mix black and white together. In today’s society, we often only look at what is right or wrong. We use the colours black and white to express that. Often at times in human relationships and feelings, we simply cannot categorise them into black or white. At times, it is hard to differentiate what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, in the plot, the characters are constantly in this grey area of life when it comes to their relationships with each other.

There are other underlying themes such as family and kinship, which mainly revolves around the main character, Juan; his mother and his aunt; Isabel and her grandmother.

The film will have an European art cinematic style. The film’s pace goes relatively slow and brings the audience gradually from the beginning to the end. Audiences can see the plot’s turning points as it progresses slowly, instead of a sudden event change. There will also be some surrealistic elements in the film, i.e. the dance scene and the bedroom scene.

I want to create a moving visual poetry, hence I intend to use tracking, dollying and all other camera movements to create these desired visuals. I plan to make use of movement shots to achieve the effect of moving poetry in the film and at some point, use static shots to highlight a point.

For the overall look of the film, it will have a filmic photographic texture although it will be shot digitally. The colours will be slightly desaturated, with a soft and colourful pastel tone. We are intending to use the Arri Alexa to achieve our desired cinematography of multiple movement and Steadicam shots.

The surrealistic scenes will be a little experimental with the usage of white strobe lights in the bedroom scene, as well as changing colour lights in the dance scene. This creates a vision that is artificial yet seemingly real at the same time. Imagine yourself in a disco, feeling high with strobe lights casting onto your vision - this is the kind of feeling that I am trying to recreate in these visuals.

*Video Reference 1: Fenech Soler “Demon” MTV
Video Reference 2: Rihanna “Te Amor” MTV
Video Reference 3: The Do “Slippery Slopes” MTV
Video Reference 4: Scene from “Les Amores Imaginaries”
I intend to shoot the film with an Arri Alexa to create the texture and soft colours. As I mentioned previously in my foreword, I would like to highlight the small moments in life such as walking down the streets, flinging your hair or smiling at strangers. This will be done in slow motion close-up shots. With the red one camera, I will shoot it at high speed and subsequently slowing it down in post-production to avoid losing details.

I will use some real-time transitions to show the change in tempo in some scenes, such as a tracking shot past a wall that represents a temporal change in the characters’ locations.

*Video Reference 5: Les Amours Imaginaries Trailer
Video Reference 6: Scene from In the Mood for Love
Casting.

The film looks at youth with very strong characters and taste, in terms of their lifestyle and interest. They are indie and very into the arts, fashion and design. They are part of the new age generation who are into the whole scene and they have a certain style that carry through their dressing and music taste. They express themselves in many different ways. Think the main characters from The Dreamers, but a contemporary version.

Casting will be done primarily in Spain. I would like to cast new faces or even actors who do not have prior experiences, but possess some qualities of the film’s characters, in order to create a very raw and natural feeling for the acting performance. The Spanish actors have to be able to speak good but not perfect English and use some Spanish mixed with English while talking so that it feels authentic and real.

Even though the character of Juan is a Singaporean-Spanish, he can pretty Spanish-looking with Pan-Asian features.
Featured Friends
Music.

As the film shows the clash between different cultures, it will be the same for the music tracks used in the film. The music genres that I intend to use in the film will be Spanish guitar flamenco music and electronic pop/alternative indie music. Spanish music would reflect the culture which the story is set in and the electronic music would bring out the characters of these youth. They are very indie, into the whole underground art scene - think music from Royksopp, Ladytron, Fever Ray or The Knives. These music will set the tone for the scenes as well. For example, the dance scene in the living room will have a more upbeat rhythm before it progresses to the bedroom scene where it will have a darker tone.

REFERENCES:

Spanish Guitar:
1. El Porompompero
2. Once Upon a Time in Mexico OST

Music Reference 1 & 2

Fever Ray:
1. Keep The Streets Empty for me

Music Reference 5

LADYTRON:
1. Beauty*2
2. International Dateline
3. Cracked LCD

Music Reference 3 & 4

The Knives:
1. Pass this on

Music Reference 6
Locations.

Barcelona is a beautiful and magical city where things are always going on. Being the capital of the Catalonia region, it is in a very unique position of being infused with the different Catalanian, Spanish, Mediterranean and European cultures. Therefore the main locations set in the film primarily identifies itself with the Spanish cultural areas such as La Sagrada Familia, the Gotico or Barceloneta area, an apartment that is of Spanish character, a bar and the beach. The key location – Plaza Del Duc de Medinaeli is a reference to one of Spain’s most famous contemporary film by Pedro Almodovar, “All About My Mother”.
A typical and classic Barcelona apartment (mosaic floors, wooden window panes and doors, wooden beams on the ceiling) with a touch of contemporary décor (art posters, books, etc.) is reflective of the youths’ character in the film.
Beach

Barcelona is renowned for her beaches. Being a city right next to mountains and beautiful beaches, many tourists go there for this reason and its sunny weather. I would like to shoot the beach scene on a beach that is a little more tranquil but retains the beauty of the Barcelona beaches.
In the final scene, before Juan leaves Barcelona, he goes to Juan’s Bar with a possibility of meeting his real father. This bar needs to have a Spanish flavor while retaining its own character. It should look vintage and timelessly classic, a place where people come and then take away stories while leaving some behind. One example of such a bar is Bar Pastis which has been around since 1946.
Last Words.

Thank you for reading through this treatment. We have seen a lot of local films about finding our identity in the Singapore society. Let’s look at Singapore – it is such a cosmopolitan and international country that is linked to so many other countries in one way or another. Out of 5 million people in our population, 1.3 million are foreigners. The inflow of foreigners being in the country and creating more competition has always been a big issue debated by Singaporeans. As Singaporeans, we never really see the exchange of culture that flows into the country. On the other hand, we are always being protected and sheltered in this city-state. Therefore, Singaporeans are just being Singaporeans and do not get the sense of being international on this small island. Being the director and the writer, I feel that it is interesting to put a Singaporean character out of this comfort zone and being vulnerable in a foreign land out there in this world. Putting oneself in another world that you are not protected from is also one of the best experiences and a way to get to know your true self. I’ve been out of Singapore and I lived in Sweden for 6 months. Afterwards, I backpacked around Europe for another 3 months last year, and have done my internship in Barcelona for 7 months. I understand what it really feels like to get out of your comfort zone and doing things independently. It is definitely not something most Singaporeans are used to, compared to people from Europe and America, where they would just go out of their city to live on their own once they start university. When you are out of this shelter that you have been in all your life, you will then understand and look at things differently. I find this an interesting and unique piece to explore, I hope it an interesting one for you too.