PORTFOLIO · AI CONTENT-SYSTEM DESIGN · IMAGE AND VIDEO · OWN PROJECT · 2026

Fifty Shots, One Method

An AI short film made on Higgsfield in August 2026, run as a system rather than a string of lucky takes: the look locked on stills first, every still that drives a shot saved as a named reference, every shot anchored on approved stills (a start, or a start and an end), every keeper logged against its generation id. Afterwards the method was written up as a guide a team can run without me.

50
STORY BEATS, EACH WITH AN APPROVED CLIP

51
CLIP FILES (ONE SHOT SPLIT IN TWO), ALL NATIVE 1080P AT 21:9, CHECKED FILE BY FILE

17
FAILURES LOGGED AS SYMPTOM, CAUSE AND FIX

~7,500
WORDS OF PLAYBOOK: A TEAM GUIDE AND AN ASSISTANT PROTOCOL

HOW ONE SHOT IS MADE



START STILL approved, saved as a reference



END STILL approved, saved as a reference



CLIP at 2.5 s



CLIP at 4.5 s



CLIP at 6.5 s

The king's three heads become one. Two approved stills set where the shot starts and lands; the video model fills the seven seconds between; frames from the clip are judged against the beat before it is kept.

WHAT MAKES AI IMAGE AND VIDEO HARD TO REPEAT

No seed.
The same prompt never gives the same take twice. A good take can be kept, never reproduced exactly; a re-fire is a new take.

Two separate filters.
A still can pass image generation and still be refused as the start of a video.

Settings reset on every fire.
Resolution, audio and the free-video toggle return to defaults; three fires drifted before a per-fire check was added.

Every fire costs.
So the look is tested on cheap stills, and video is spent only on shots whose stills are approved.

THE METHOD, FOUR STEPS

1 · STILLS FIRST
Lock the look
Look tests on stills, then short motion tests, before production; the painterly look was locked on 14 Aug.

→

2 · NAME IT
Saved references
Every still that drives a shot becomes a named reference; name and source id kept together in one roster.

→

3 · DRIVE IT
Start and end stills
Motion through space from a pair; one prompt block carries the text, the fixed character lines and the references.

→

4 · JUDGE AND LOG
Frames, then the log
Frames checked against the beat; each keeper logged with its id, method and length.

Who does what. I approved every keeper and, by the end, fired every generation by hand. The AI assistant drafted prompts, judged frames, checked each saved reference against my pick and kept the logs. Browser automation fired stills for five rounds, then failed twice; hence the rule by the end: I fire by hand, the assistant verifies with read-only access.

Role: director, method design and every approval; the playbook written from the project's own logs. Made for the Higgsfield Global Film Festival, August 2026 (page 3 says why it was not entered).

THE KIT · WHAT A TEAM IS HANDED

Named references, and one prompt taken apart

Two things carry the consistency: a library of saved references, each built from approved stills, and prompts in which a fixed look paragraph and fixed rules repeat from shot to shot.

THE REFERENCE LIBRARY: CHARACTERS, PROPS, PLACES AND EFFECTS



king `950ee47a`



king-crowned `a9b16c00`



heroine-3head `0c3ffe5b`



ascetic `c335b862`



crown `53a83e17`



gada `c9b12c58`



mask `e830805e`



conch `6139aa1a`



fort `bdabf445`



ring-2 `8fe90b26`



temple-real `b1201471`



leviathan-1 `8c414112`

Each label is the reference's name and the 8-character id of its source still. Name and source id are kept together in the roster; that is how a reference pointing at the wrong take is caught before video is spent on it.

ONE PROMPT, TAKEN APART

`START @king-fusion-3head` `END @king-fusion-single`

The fusion, one continuous shot, no cut: the three-headed King hauls himself onto the stone air ledge, bare-headed, the plain crown settling on the rock beside him; and his three heads draw and fall together into one, the two outer faces closing their eyes and settling inward into the central head until a single weathered bearded face remains, the royal strength guttering out of him as he sinks against the rock, spent. The merge is heavy and deliberate, a collapse of three into one, never a smear. Beyond the flooded cave mouth frame-left, the cold green glow holds far off.

Preserve the painterly oil-and-fresco look of the source images; no shift toward photoreal; palette cold, green only from the light, warmth only from lamps. The camera is never static and never flat face-on: baseline buoyant drift on water, motivated micro-motion everywhere, dramatic-but-causal angles with real depth. Everything alive-slow: particulate drifting, foam webbing, spray on the wind. No subtitles. No BGM.

The King begins with exactly three heads clustered on one shared neck and ends with exactly one weathered bearded face. The fusion is a deliberate, weighted collapse of the three into one, the outer two settling inward into the central head; never a smear, never a melt, never a glitch, never a random morph, and never a fourth head. The final single face is clean and steady. The plain crown settles on the stone beside him and is never worn. No conch anywhere. King and ledge frame-right, the cave mouth and green glow frame-left. Cold register, the green glow the only structured light, no flames or lit windows in the water. Painterly, not photoreal.

- **Saved references** — Attached as chips, never typed: the start and end stills. PER SHOT
- **Written for this shot** — The action from first frame to last. The only part written fresh. PER SHOT
- **Constants card** — One paragraph pasted unchanged; the rule book says any rewording shows as a jump in the look. NEVER CHANGES
- **Shot guards** — What must and must not happen, with counts stated exactly. PER SHOT, FROM A LIST
- **Standing rules** — Props, layout, light and bans carried from shot to shot once locked. FIXED ONCE LOCKED

The prompt exactly as the platform recorded it for the keeper on page 1 (generation 0071e76f, read from its record on 13 Oct 2026); the two reference ids are shown by their saved names.

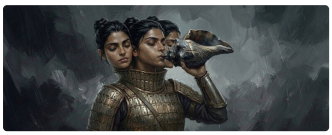
THE SAME KIT FOR A BRAND TEAM

The library becomes the product, model and set references. The written part becomes named slots: pose, lighting, angle. The constants card becomes the brand's look paragraph. Guards and standing rules become the checklist an in-house team runs before every fire.

THE RECORD · WHAT BROKE, AND WHAT HOLDS A CHARACTER

Consistency is a rule set, not a lucky take

One heroine across four scenes. Face, armour and collar hold because each still is built from earlier approved stills and saved references, and the prompts repeat the same character lines word for word.



STORM



MASKED



CAVE



CROWNED

SIX OF THE SEVENTEEN FAILURES, AS THE PLAYBOOK RECORDS THEM

WHAT WENT WRONG	CAUSE	FIX, NOW A RULE
Two of the same character in one shot	An extra full-body reference attached to a start-and-end shot.	Attach only the two anchor stills and non-character support, plus one line: a single figure in the whole frame.
The figure glides like a cardboard cutout	One still and no reason to move, or a whole-body move asked of a held pose.	Pin the figure, put the motion inside the body, move the camera in an arc; or drive it from a far and a near still.
Video refused for safety	The start still itself trips the video filter (faces mid-transformation, frames with many faces).	Make a cleaner start still. A prompt change does not fix it.
Refused as protected content	A crest or branded-looking detail on banners and sails.	Plain cloth, faceless distant crew, no emblems anywhere.
The prompt ran as an edit	Edit verbs ("add", "remove") inside a creation prompt.	Write what happens: "a bird enters frame".
A saved reference pointed at the wrong take	The wrong tile saved from the grid. It happened at least four times.	Check each reference's source id against the pick, in a batch, before video spends on it. The check caught it each time.

WHAT IS HANDED OVER

FOR PEOPLE

Field guide

The five things to understand about the platform, settings that worked, prompt skeletons for stills and video, the full failure table, and a rules card: always, never, verify.

FOR AN AI ASSISTANT

Operator protocol

The same method as steps an assistant follows: what it may and may not do, hard stops, procedures for stills, references and video, check commands and a recovery table.

FOR WHOEVER COMES NEXT

The record

A keeper tracker (one line per approved clip: id, method, length, notes), an asset ledger of saved references (complete to 24 Aug; later ones in the tracker and session log), and a session log with credits spent per session.

FALSIFICATION CHECK: WHAT THIS CARD DOES NOT SHOW

- **The film was not entered.** The finishing chain (score and sound, assembly, end card) never ran for want of an editor before the 3 Sept deadline. The 51 clips and a 5:57 review reel exist; the final cut does not yet.
- **Stylised, not photoreal.** The look is painterly oil and fresco by design. Nothing here proves photographic realism.
- **Usually free, not always.** Video on the prepaid pool should cost no credits; on 28 and 29 Aug about 512 credits were billed under the same rule, cause not found. Checking the button before every fire stays in the method.
- **The constants card is the rule, not a guarantee.** The two 24 Aug prompts checked carry it word for word; one checked from 27 Aug carries a shortened version.
- **Start stills guide, they do not lock.** The clip on page 1 opened on about 1.5 seconds neither still asked for, the ledge with the king barely in frame; it is marked for trimming.

Role: own project; all images generated on my Higgsfield account under my direction, no third-party footage, likeness or marks. Every figure on this card traces to the project's logs and was rechecked on the files on 13 Oct 2026.