

STORY, AUDIENCE, MESSAGE, STYLE (SAMS)

When watching media, it helps to have a shared language that you can use to understand and critique the work. This “SAMS” (Story, Audience, Message, Style) sheet can help you discuss key points about the media with each other.

STORY

What is the story?

The story is about a conversation between two buffalo about whether or not there is a log or an alligator in front of them.

What has changed from the beginning of the story?

We realize that it is an alligator, and that the first wildebeest, who insisted that it was an alligator has likely already seen a previous wildebeest get eaten by the alligator.

AUDIENCE

Who is the audience for this piece?

The audience is a general one, with a general message about the nature of people or listening to people with unfounded opinions.

What in the piece tells you that it was created for this audience?

There is a definite moral to the piece whether or not we identify with the wildebeest, or attribute it to other people.

MESSAGE

What is the message of this piece? Is there more than one message? If so, what are the additional messages?

There can be a couple of messages in this piece: people can get you to disbelieve your own eyes; if someone insists that you take a risk do not simply take their word for it; or even: some people (animals) will be more influenced by others than their own experience.

STYLE

Comment on the style of this piece. How would you describe this piece? Is it fiction or non-fiction? Is it poetic? Is it a personal story?

This is a fictional piece, that imagines the conversation between wildebeests, but is allegorical. It is highly effective despite only consisting of grunts.

What are the techniques the artists used to convey their message? Did they use interviews, text, performance, music etc.?

The similarity between the wildebeests, the circularity of the discussion and the "reveal" of the episode is very effective. This piece could not have been as powerful without the cartoon form, which distills its message with the simplicity of the representation.

How is the quality of the audio and/or visuals? Are they clear? Is the sound at a good volume? Are there objects or sounds that are distracting?

The quality of the audio and visuals is perfect in my mind, the sound is appropriate and effective in capturing the atmosphere, including the herd of wildebeest.

How do the audio and/or visuals contribute to the message and the story?

The audio and visuals work together, contributing to the blunt stupidity of the characters.