

Us

Lim

Honorary Award 2007: Bradcpu's choice

Brad: As a vid that's really a celebration of all things fandom and creative, everyone who watches *Us* seems to feel such a deep, even emotional connection to it. I know I did. That leads me to believe that Lim has tapped into something here that's more or less universal (within fandom), but also deeply personal in how each viewer sees it. And that, in itself, is a great reflection of fandom culture.

Nicky: This vid is amazing in both concept and execution. In terms of concept, it is audacious but at the same time *so right*, because we really should have something that speaks for us this way. In terms of execution, I am in awe of how Lim uses footage from "our shows" to show "our world". It's such a natural leap and, at the same time, something that I can't believe could have been carried off so well and so transparently. It speaks about our fannish life as one of subterfuge, of people in the "real world" not being able to comprehend what we're about. I think a lot of us share the same sentiment.

Brad: Both in terms of symbolism and execution, I adore the opening, which looks almost like animated static, shooting out into nerves and ideas. The language of the editing has liquid-like flow to it, images forming out of nothingness and then sinking back in and morphing into something else, like you're seeing directly into the vidder's mind. But it's less train-of-thought and more a guided tour. Train of thought with a destination? New genre!

The look is sometimes described as "hand-made," and I think that's part of the genius: You can see the seams... see the vid creating itself as it goes along, but in such a beautiful and perfect way. It's like a dream about vidding - the nice kind of dream, not the kind I have when I'm behind on a project. It also goes back to how each viewer seems to get something personal out of it. You can almost see that in the style of presentation - how we see things differently. It's like looking up at the clouds.

Nicky: For me, it's also a very straightforward meditation on the nature of fandom, of transformative art, or vids in particular - the sketching effect is cast over existing clips and transforms them into something that is simultaneously the same and very much different. We as vidders take what's there and try to imbue them with layers of extra meaning: this is *exactly* what Lim has shown here: both her own imbuing clips with meaning, and the fact that the meaning itself is about imbuing clips with meaning. The idea seems incredibly clunky when written down like this, but the execution is anything but. I'm always in awe of how elegantly she managed to get this concept across.

Brad: It's all very insidery, but in a very transparent way. I love how it starts with Kirk/Spock, which was the beginning of slash. We stare, take photographs, have fun. And it's layers upon layers of beauty to explore.

Nicky: And I love how it refers to Boston Legal around 2:36, where William Shatner makes a comeback 20 or 30 years after the glory days of Kirk/Spock and inspires a whole new generation of... I don't even know what. The new male dynamic between Denny Crane and Alan Shore? A new representation of a new kind of slash? I love that the actor has bookended fandom concepts in this way, and I love that Lim calls it in this vid.

Brad: There are such playful, clever new connotations for fandom conventions throughout; like the Matrix scene that opens verse two, which kicks off a whole section on copyright. And I have to admit I geeked out a little when she compares us to Mal and crew at 1:00.

Nicky: I love the copyright symbol at 1:45 that replaces the bat signal. Just. Genius.

Brad: Another wonderfully insightful connection is the "Joker" section at 1:55, which is an unflinching way to represent how we re-imagine someone else's work.

The excellent use of motion and musicality - good enough to be the centerpiece of the visual style - instead just feels like a natural way of the universe in this vid. Things like the on-piano clock tick at :07, the beautiful little bits of winking time toggle like at :27, the bat motion on the violins at 1:41, the glinting teeth in the Joker section - it's perfect and subtle from beginning to end. But it's so perfect and so subtle that you don't really notice why. It just feels right and folds into the flow, and you just watch the vid.

Nicky: By this stage I'm so dazzled - by the range of ideas and subtlety and execution and plain *genius* that is this vid - that I don't think I'm capable of timestamping. I've watched this vid at least a hundred times since it debuted in January 2007, and still I don't think I've grasped even half of its detail. It's incredibly rich and rewarding that way.

Brad: "Rummaging for answers in the pages / and it's contagious" is one of many brilliant lyric connections in that it explores how we explore and why exactly we're doing all of this. I think in the end we see that it's all about the journey - a journey that brings us together.

Nicky: My thoughts exactly, and don't forget the very telling "den of thieves" line.

While I don't know a lot of the clips used and would certainly have missed out on a lot of the fandom-specific allusions, I can completely understand the sentiment behind this vid. I am completely moved by the time that everybody removes their masks at the end, and the girl with the glasses - well, that's every fangirl out there, isn't it? Most of us will have no trouble empathising. An incredibly powerful ending image.

Brad: I also have no real attachment to most of the fandoms in the vid, and I don't think I could justify calling myself a slash-centric vidder. When I saw that girl's face at the end, I wasn't seeing myself. And yet the vid moved me. I was there beside her. I think that says a lot about Us.