

Relative Motion

Shots that capture relative motion express speed and intensity. One way to capture relative motion is to have the aircraft and filmed object move towards each other. The hardest thing about executing these shots is that the pilot has to accurately estimate the distance between the aircraft and the object they're filming while their drone and the object are speeding towards each other. Airflow also needs to be taken into account, especially if you're moving towards a car or truck.

Capturing Speed

DJI drones are fast, but it can be hard to film cars travelling quickly. As such, cars often need to slow down so the drone can keep up. So how do you make a car look like it's speeding by? There are two general solutions to this problem:

1. Fly Close to the Ground

This will enhance the sense of speed because the foreground will be rushing by.

2. Use Medium and Long Lenses

The Zenmuse X5 and X5S support long Micro 4/3 lenses. Compression of space from such lenses will make the foreground appear to be moving even faster than it is.

Shot Scale

Fly fast when filming buildings or mountains that are far away. In these shots, there is no conspicuous foreground, and it is hard to give the shot energy when flying slowly. Fly slowly when filming shots framed like the one above. You won't need to move too quickly here, because the camera's angled straight downwards and it's at a relatively low altitude.

Also, if you've got a prominent object in the foreground, like in the GIF

below, keep in mind that it may be difficult to keep the object in the center of the shot if the aircraft's flying too quickly. Though with the Inspire's dual

operator control, it's easier to do so. Normally, a skilled pilot will approach an object then slow down as the aircraft approaches the object so they don't lose track of it. The audience will hardly sense the slowdown. When the aircraft is close to the object and there's lots of space behind the object, relative movement between the object and the aircraft is significant.

Backlight

Backlight can really make a shot powerful. At sunset, tuck the aircraft behind the objects or scenery you want to shoot, and you can get a nice silhouetted shot like the one above. Obviously, you can also get the same effect at dawn. The best time to shoot is about 30 minutes before sunrise or sunset.

Think About Your Editor!

Whether you're filming for a big production or just for fun, you'll almost certainly be doing some editing. To make sure you can get the most use out of your footage, make sure each shot has a beginning and end by hovering for a few seconds at the beginning and end of each shot. Start recording, chill for a few seconds, then start flying. Make sure your movements are as smooth as possible, and the end of the shot, stop and hover again before you stop recording. Your editor will thank you (or you can thank yourself)!

Manoeuvrability is your friend.

Obviously, the huge advantage of a drone is that it can move unimpeded through the air. You can use this to your advantage in several ways.

Firstly, make use of both axes of movement, don't just take shots with flat movements. Fly your drone in your chosen direction and make it go up or down depending on the shot you want to get. This a simple technique but it can make your shots look much more cinematic. Secondly, you can fly your drone in a circle around your focus to get footage. This is particularly easy if you use DJI's Point of Interests mode, just select your point of interest and then set the radius, altitude, and speed of the orbit then tap apply. Finally, you can do a "Reveal Shot" to create a sense of suspense. All you need to do is position your drone facing the view you wish reveal then fly towards it with your camera facing down until you slowly begin tilting the camera up to reveal the big picture.

Lights, Camera, Action

Unsurprisingly the camera's settings also play a large role in getting great footage, but again it's nothing too complicated. Firstly, you're going to want to set the shutter speed to be twice the frame rate this helps you to get smooth footage. It is worth noting though that if you are taking some close ground shots then a lower shutter speed is better to reduce strobing. Also if

you want better control over your post processing then you'll want to use D-LOG mode. As it can provide a higher dynamic range and more details in shadow areas, which offers more color editing freedom. If you don't plan on doing any post processing then it's best to keep it set to auto.