

studentfilmmakers

2012, Vol. 7, No. 5 The #1 Educational Resource for Film and Video Makers US\$5.95



Making Dramas

Damian Horan Wins ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award

Kirby Dick on Casting and the Fundraising Trailer

3 Steps for Building Your Community

• Visual Grammar • Script Analysis • Electrified Performances

Table of Contents

Publisher's Desk	4 10 Tips for Networking Success
Cameras	6 Plan for the Best, Prepare for the Worst
Close-up	12 Documentarian Kirby Dick on Casting and the Fundraising Trailer
ASC Student Heritage Awards	16 "Josephine and the Roach" by Damian Horan 22 "Aaxis" by H.R. McDonald
Directing	24 Casting into the Unknown 29 Shot Notation 30 Visual Grammar and Syntax of Film 32 Script Analysis: Identify Facts
How-To	31 Get Electrified Performances
Production	34 A Chat with Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows 36 Making Dramas: High Concept versus the Low Concept 37 Tight Ship: Shooting with Pro Actors and a Student Crew
Event Video	38 How a Crane Adds to, or Takes Away from, Story
Film Business	40 Launching Your First Crowd Funding Campaign?
Commentary	42 What is Art?
On Campus	44 AFI Conservatory 45 Global Cinematography Institute (GCI)
Tech Focus	46 Canon 5D Mark III with the JuicedLink Riggy-Micro RM333 47 Sony HVR-Z7U on a Custom Slider 48 Product Reviews
On the Cover	Crew on the set of <i>Josephine and the Roach</i> , 2012 ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award winning film: Damon Stea, Stu Hirsch, Lino Stavole, David Agnew, and Christian Hall. Photo by Hudson Handel.





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10 Tips for Networking Success

"Never Stop Networking"



It's a fresh season and we've added to the global Film and Video Makers Networking Community (<http://networking.studentfilmmakers.com/>) additional mailbox storage, unlimited video uploads, and unlimited music uploads, with an increase from 2MB to 8MB per song. You must be friends to send and receive emails from networkers. Part of the "pre-production" footwork in Networking through this site is inviting and accepting

friends requests. To help you, we've put together these Top 10 Tips for Networking Success. Build support for your next video, TV, and web-series projects, or for your next film fundraising or kickstarter campaign. Keep your friends list and Network Profile Page updated and fresh, especially if you're looking for crew and productions to be a part of.

1. Post your production pictures. "A picture is worth a thousand words." Whether taken from the B-T-S photographer on your set, or self-portrait taken from your cellphone, show and share with the Network what you do best by posting your behind-the-scenes stills and photos of you and/or your crew at work.

2. If you need votes for a contest. Invite members of the network to watch and vote for your video contest entry. If you have a video demo reel, post it in the Video Section, so that viewers can see more of your great work beyond your contest video entry. If someone watched your video or demo reel, look for their videos and demo reels posted in the Network also, show your support, and post your encouraging words.

3. Post your kickstarter, indiegogo or rockethub campaigns here in the network and email me the link. With your projects' clocks ticking and count-down calendar numbers changing quickly, help your projects by posting them here in the Network. Who knows - our editorial staff might pick your project for a special news byte or newsletter.

4. Sell your used equipment in the Market Place Section. Tens of thousands of film and video makers here in the Network, plus our Twitter followers, which is approaching 40,000 followers, are looking to buy used equipment and gear. You might have something they've been looking for, and they want it used-not-new to save money, re-sell, or to use-and-swap later. Like

a special zoom lens, monitor, DSLR rig, or ProHD camcorder. With different projects and productions requiring different needs for equipment and gear, and with technologies always changing and upgrading, it's common practice and acceptable to buy and sell used equipment and gear. Many independent production companies have added rental divisions to services they offer and seek used or "like new" gear for their rental divisions.

5. Post your film or video Event listing in the Events Section.

Did you ever host a film or video event and wonder why not so many people showed up? Your topic was cutting-edge, your speaker was an industry leader, and your location was a hot spot, but you didn't get as many people as you expected. Why? With so many news and events competing for attention on the internet, posting your event on one or two websites just isn't enough. You need to post your Event, (and post it early) on our Events Section. Get your Events and event deadlines in front of the right audience - students, indies, and professionals in the film, video, and motion picture industry.

6. Offer your skills, services, and expertise. To successfully get work flowing to your desk and hands, use your Network Profile Page to post your bio, resume, past projects, current projects, and project wish list. For those of you who are composers, or have composer friends in the Network, we have upgraded the Music Section here in the Network. You now have unlimited music uploads, with an increase from 2MB to 8MB per song, and you can have up to 20 songs displaying on your profile.

7. Need crew or talent? There are thousands of active film and video makers, shooters, cinematographers, videographers, editors, composers, directors, lighting crew, producers, VFX specialists, animators, screenwriters, actors and actresses across the United States, as well as in countries and continents outside the U.S. -- plus our Twitter followers, which is approaching 40,000 followers -- who are not only ready, motivated, and excited to be a part of your project or production, but they've surely got the skills and the talent. If you're looking for crew or talent, post your Jobs, Help Wanted, and Calls for Crew on your Networking Profile Page, in the Classifieds Section, and in the Network's Front Wall / Activity Feed.

8. Drive Network members to your Film Premieres and Screenings. Whether your film premiere or screening is at a big festival like Sundance, or you're holding a private screening to get feedback from industry pros, as well as create buzz and get good press from media and publications, post your Film Premiere

and Film Screening news bytes and blurbs on your Network Profile Page and Blog Section, in the Events Section, and Front Wall / Activity Feed. Our editorial staff members are in the Network daily looking for film and video makers to feature and spotlight. Who knows - your story might even make the Cover of *StudentFilmmakers* Magazine. Many members from the Network have been featured in the magazine and even made it to the Front Cover Story. And when you get good media and press in the form of features, articles, and spotlights, always remember to add this goodness to your Resume, CV, your film's official website, your EPK and press packages, and in your Network Profile Page to continue building and growing your network and networking opportunities.

9. Conduct your research beyond the Network. When you find people that you want to work with in the Network, always remember to do your due diligence and research people, organizations, and companies using more than one resource. This is one of the reasons why the more information you post on your Network Profile Page, the better - such as your bio, resume, CV, links to your films' websites, and other networks, like IMDB, facebook, and twitter, etc... You might have been published in film industry newspapers or magazines, or you might have garnered awards ranging from small festival awards to Emmy awards. Networking 101: While you earned the bragging rights, posting your work and accolades isn't bragging, so don't be shy to share it. People who want to network and work with you are looking for key elements such as experience and credibility. They can't read minds, nor can they read a blank Network Profile Page.

10. "Never Stop Networking." If you're not a tech geek, and if working with social networks and the internet comes quite difficult for you, don't despair. Keep positive. Keep practicing. This is free networking. There's no cost to you. Before the World Wide Web was released to the public, and before the Internet was in the mainstream consciousness, do you remember when so many doors, opportunities, and networks seemed closed, if not completely locked with bullet proof chains? Then don't think of internet and digital Networking as a job or a chore. Have fun with it. Again, watch other networkers videos, listen to their music, and read their blog entries. Connect with real people and use the Network as a great way to learn and keep inspired and reminded about your true passion for moviemaking and storytelling.

All the Best,
Kim E. Welch
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

Join the Largest Online Network of Film and Video Makers Today

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212.255.5454 (US and International)

Subscriptions, bulk orders, and collections:
<https://www.studentfilmmakers.com/store/>

1-Year Subscription: US\$24.95. 2-Year Subscription: \$42.84. 3-Year Subscription: \$58.90.

For subscription, mailing address change and distribution inquiries, go to <http://www.studentfilmmakers.com/contact.shtml>

StudentFilmmakers Magazine, established in 2006, is published in New York by StudentFilmmakers.com. Opinions are solely those of the authors. Letters, article queries, photos, movie stills, film submissions, and unsolicited manuscripts welcome, but returned only with SASE. Submissions are subject to editing for style, content, and to exclusive rights provisions in this publication. Advertising: Rate card upon request.

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Printed in the USA. Postmaster: Send address change to
StudentFilmmakers, Magazine
1123 Broadway, Suite # 307, New York, NY 10010.

Plan for the Best, Prepare for the Worst

If It Can Happen, It Will

by David Lent

EQUIPMENT AS A RULE...

Choose your tools wisely. When you're aiming for the highest levels of performance, your tools must be equal to the task. If you can't afford the equipment you want, rent it until you can. Seek out veteran shooters and people who have grown successful equipment rental businesses for recommendations concerning formats, manufacturers, models and support equipment.

Lighten up. Choose support gear that is small and compact, allowing you to pack light and move fast. Keep your equipment clean, well-maintained and ready to go on a moment's notice.

Get to know your camera. Check out all the menu items and experiment with settings to find the look that works for you and/or your clients. Read the manual. Visit online forum discussions about your gear. Get out and shoot.

Pack smart. A collection of small, medium and large runbags allows you to assemble your gear into the lightest and most compact package appropriate to the shoot. The result: more time for creativity on location and a grateful body when the work is done.



Photo by Susan Burgess-Lent.

Everything in its place. Keep your gear *visually organized*. When each piece of equipment has a place of its own in your runbag, light kit or on your shelves, you can get to it easily. And if something were to go missing on a shoot, you're

more likely to notice its absence before leaving the scene. If you're shooting some distance from the equipment staging area, you can send someone back for a piece of gear with the confidence they'll know where to find it.



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Do your chores. Once a month, clean every exposed surface of your camera. Check for tiny screws that have been loosened by the vibrations of air travel. Tighten them before they fall off; they are expensive to replace.

I'm not a large person nor do I enjoy hauling heavy equipment cases to and from a location. I like to work fast, so I've made it a practice to design – and continually re-design – a gear package that is light and compact yet sufficiently versatile for nearly any assignment.

When using someone else's camera and gear, arrive early and get familiar with it. What are the zebra and gain settings? Adjust the viewfinder's diopter for your vision. Record some video and audio and check playback. Go through the light kit, audio package and run bag. Re-pack it your way so you can get to anything fast.

Dress for survival. Always assume that when you're called for an assignment there won't be time to go shopping. So have on hand the clothing and protective gear you'll need for rain, snow, dust storms, hurricanes, freezing cold or blistering heat.

Cart Protocol. Much of our time moving between locations is spent pulling or

pushing a two-wheeled equipment cart. There are times to push and times to pull.

PUSH

- Into the back of an elevator. If it fills with passengers, you won't have to struggle to turn it around and can get out faster.
- Onto a down escalator, limiting your footprint to 2 steps, not 4 or 5.
- Down stairs and curbs. You don't want your lights taking a hit.
- Through a revolving door. Use only the big ones; you'll want your equipment to make it out even if you don't.

PULL

- Onto an up escalator – again, 2 step footprint
- On a sidewalk or street. Prevents injury to someone's feet or shoes.
- Through a crowd. You're a better leader than your cart.
- Up stairs. A good little workout.

On the Road

On an airplane, when traveling without a camera case, cushion the camera with pillows, blankets or a jacket in the overhead bin. If the compartment is otherwise empty, protect the camera

from sliding by positioning it at the rear end on takeoff, the front end on landing.

Be ready to shoot. Have your camera within reach, recording media loaded, battery charged. To guarantee *at least the minimum* of recorded sound in an emergency, make sure one audio channel is dedicated to the camera mic and set to auto gain. Set the filter to current lighting conditions and the camera/bars switch to camera.

Dress comfortably but keep the client and location in mind when packing appropriate and practical clothing.

Carry business cards. You never know when or where you'll meet an opportunity to create a customer, partner or friend.

Before a live shot, remind crewmembers to mute their cell phones, and see to it that the live shot guest has access to a glass of water. I'll never forget the pained expression on a guy who sat patiently for half an hour in front of my camera, unaware that his throat had dried up in the air-conditioned studio. When at last he was called upon to speak to twenty million Australians...you guessed it.

Aerial Shooting. When you're called upon to shoot out the door of a helicopter or airplane:

- If it's not summertime, dress for cold weather and 90mph wind.
- Bring a pair of good ski goggles.
- Make sure you are fully briefed by the pilot or crew chief in emergency escape procedures.
- Streamline the camera by removing the shoulder strap, camera mic, and lens hood.
- Check and double-check that you and your camera are *separately* secured to the aircraft fuselage, in addition to the seat belt.
- Coordinate hand signals with the pilot as a backup for the intercom. With the door open, the noise from a helicopter's engine and rotor can be deafening.
- Explain to your pilot what you want and chances are s/he will accommodate you by flying lower, slower or closer.

A word of caution: Some readers may be offended by the following terms, commonly used within the newsgathering culture, to describe the various stakeout formations. Nevertheless, crude humor is how many of us—men and women alike—often cope with the dark or distasteful edges of our business. For those readers who aspire to a career in news, perhaps what follows will inspire you to change the culture. And for those who simply enjoy knowing, *'What's behind the curtain?'* Walter Cronkite's legendary sign off, *"And that's the way it is,"* applies.

STAKEOUTS

There are at least four categories of stakeout formations, each defined by the nature and importance of a news story. It's a good idea to understand what to anticipate from each.

The Stakeout. A newsmaker may be leaving an office building, restaurant, airport arrival gate, hotel or courthouse. A group of producers, reporters, shooters,

audio recordists and photographers assemble for the newsmaker's appearance. A lot of standing or sitting around and shooting the breeze. We're focused, yet relaxed and cordial. The subject arrives. We get our shots, perhaps a brief statement, and then disperse.

The Scrum. Now we get serious. It's breaking news, attracting many crews and reporters. Our subject, or perhaps his or her lawyer or media rep, may have timely information that will be the lead story on every Live at Five. We're following the newsmaker through a building, down a sidewalk or crossing a street. A little pushing and shoving but civility prevails. The Scrum can, and often does turn ugly, degenerating into...

The Gang Bang. A major story, a reluctant or evasive subject. The stakes are high. Many shooters, photogs, audio folks and reporters jockey for position. Former football, hockey or rugby players have the physical advantage. The rest of us have to be wily coyotes. Egos and reputations are battered. The Gang Bang carries the menacing potential to erupt, at any moment, into...

The Pig F--k (AKA Cluster F--k). Networks and stations throw all their resources into the story, and you're on the front lines. This may be triggered

by the mob mentality waiting to spring from a Gang Bang or out-of-town shooters unaware of the protocols locals observe to maintain civility. People get knocked down and cameras or lenses hit the pavement. Mob pathology rules. The difference between a Gang Bang and a Cluster F--k is that if you fall during a Gang Bang, one of your colleagues might help you back up. In a Cluster F--k you're on your own. You see the dark side of human nature.

AS A RULE...

Arrive early and rehearse. If you're going to be shooting from a tripod, consider what might happen if you need to grab the camera and run. If you're hard-wired to your sound recordist or mic stand, rehearse in your mind how you can quickly unplug and go. Use batteries, not a/c, so you can get away faster. Test the audio. If the light is changing, re-white balance the camera. Make sure you know what your client/reporter/producer wants. Remember, you are here for one and only one purpose: *to get the shot.*

Visualize the outcome. Keep your eyes, ears and brain on "high idle" while waiting for the newsmaker to arrive or depart. Spend a few moments visualizing all the possible ways the situation might

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Photo by Keith DeVinney.

go down. From what direction or door will your subject approach? Which side of the car is s/he likely to exit or enter? Where can you stand? What are your boundaries? Can you push them a little further? Where are your colleagues and which way do you think they'll move? Where is your best shot going to come from? Practice any moves you plan to make and any necessary adjustments to the iris or focus rings. Occasionally, the reporter won't show up and you'll have an opportunity to do an interview. What is the story? Have one or two questions ready.

PHOTO OPS

Get the handshake. At a "photo opportunity," you'll be given a brief few minutes to communicate the essence of the event. Your first task is to survey the room and get a good position. Next, identify the key players. If you haven't seen them before, and photos aren't available, ask someone who is familiar with their faces to tell you what celebrity they most resemble. If you're able to download video or photos of the people you're waiting for, look at the faces over

and over until you've associated them with people who are familiar. If the newsmaker plans to speak to the media, be close to your producer or reporter so the subject is looking in your general direction. Go to a close shot of the key players and hold it for several seconds. Roll on the handshakes. Then shoot cutaways and a wide shot of the other people in the group and, if time permits, a reverse shot of your reporter and/or the group.

PRESS CONFERENCES

Get a good position. Locate and plug into the mult box then do a white balance and audio check. Have a spare battery and recording media near your feet. Ask your reporter/producer what they want and agree on a signal that will let you know when you can break off from your tripod for cutaways and b-roll.

DRIVING SHOTS

Use a wide-angle lens or adaptor. When shooting a residential neighborhood, ask the driver to maintain a speed of 10 to 15 mph. If you're inclined to hang out of the

open door, make sure some part of your body is fastened to the seat belt. Some people you're shooting won't like being on camera. If possible, let them know who you are and what you're doing.

B-ROLL

Roll 8-12 seconds of the shot, more if you anticipate something good is about to happen in your frame. Start with wide shots then zoom in for details. Be unique. Go for shots only *you* can do. Always shoot more b-roll than necessary; an editor rarely has enough options.

MANAGING STRESS

The wisdom of insecurity. Anticipate nail-biting weeks—or even months—without a call for work. A good practice for managing "freelancer anxiety" is to remind yourself: "I may be having a bad week/month, but it's going to be a great year!" During slow periods, set aside a few minutes each week to call at least two potential clients: "Hi, I'm Dave Lent, a freelance shooter in DC. Just calling to let you know I'm still around and would love to work with you." Most clients don't mind if you rattle their cage every month; it's also a good way to keep the relationship growing.

Take care of yourself. The better care you give your body, the longer you'll last in the business and the more you'll enjoy the work. The benefits of exercise, strength training, and good fuel become particularly important for assignments involving travel, long handheld days and heavy lifting.

Stress without distress. Stress and anxiety bring out the best and worst in people, depending on how we choose to respond to the *stressor*. Uncreative responses include over-indulgence in

nicotine, alcohol, junk food, TV or self-pity. Creative responses include nutritious food, exercise, meditation or taking a break. If you choose wisely 51% of the time, consider yourself a success.

Push the pause button. We love what we do, and want long, fulfilling careers. So we have to make choices. Will we allow a situation to crash and burn? Or will we step back, take a deep breath, then step back in with a calm, creative approach to the problem?

When the stakes are high, you'd better be good. For the independent shooter, the stakes are *always* high. When things go wrong, you're going to agonize over what you did or didn't do; this kind of stress comes with the territory and is not a bad thing. Accept it and embrace it. When you no longer put a high value on your performance, it's quitting time.

If there is one thing the Boy Scouts of America got right, it is their motto: *Be Prepared*. This commandment is tailor-made for video production. The sheer number of things that, at any moment, can go wrong is mind-boggling: dead batteries, fragile electronic components crapping out, airplanes and sirens ruining good interviews, bad cables, hostile crowds, nasty weather, long hours, no meal breaks, falling light stands, TSA inspector breakage...the list is endless. And while it's impossible to anticipate every potential glitch or disaster, preparing for all those you can imagine is of the utmost importance.

David Lent's career as a cameraman, producer and product designer spans forty years. His clients include domestic and international networks, local stations, corporations and independent production companies. David's seven documentaries include the critically-acclaimed Life Without, Hotel Macedonia and The 5 Keys to Mastery. He is the author of The Laws of Camerawork and inventor the Steadybag, PicupStix, GelFile and LensEnd – accessories used by video, film and photo professionals worldwide. David lives with his wife Susan Burgess-Lent in Washington, DC where he continues to work as a news, documentary and sports cameraman.

MY GEAR PACKAGE:

- **Camera**
- **Camera support:** Tripod, ShotSpot,
- **Run bag,** containing batteries, discs, audio (shotgun mic, hand mic, Rowie clamp, Belt pack and cube transmitters, receiver, fresh 9 volt batteries, XLR cables of various lengths, splitter and connectors), 7-inch LCD monitor (with sun hood and custom cable to power it from the camera), rain cover, camera manual, back-focus chart.

Light / Audio kit (for a one person interview):

- 1 Lowel Rifa eX 44 with diffusion and honeycomb grid
- 1 Lowel Pro Light, dedicated as a backlight, with a snoot covered by ¼ blue gel
- Spare bulbs – tungsten and fluorescent
- 2 light stands and a clamp with a light post
- Boom arm and gobo
- Lowel GelFile with gels, diffusion, black wrap, clips, pressed powder compacts for light and dark skin
- 2 dimmers
- 2 25-foot medium duty a/c extension cords, 3-way and plug adaptors
- 2 Sonotrim lavalier mics
- 3 25-foot xlr cables
- Headphones
- Soft gloves for handling hot lights
- Gaffer's tape (wrapped around an expired credit or gift card)
- Shotbag
- Lowel hard case
- Kart-a-bag 800 rolling cart.

On hand for backup:

- A third 500w light
- Translucent reflector, holder and stand
- 50-foot heavy-duty a/c cable
- Power strip
- Set of extra cart wheels for heavy loads.

A small belt pouch could contain: tiny hex wrench and screwdriver set; combination pliers/screwdrivers; large screwdriver for tripod plate adjustments; molded earpiece; 9v flashlight; ponytail holder for wrapping cable; toothpicks; spring clip; index cards, Sharpie and ballpoint; stick-on Velcro hook and loop; bank card-sized blade, saw, opener, and 4-position wrench; gaffer's tape wrapped around old credit card (why pack a year's supply?); first-aid kit including moist towelettes and floss; mini plug splitter; bnc barrel connector; earplugs (think aircraft carrier!) and lens cloth.

A Conversation with Documentarian Kirby Dick

Casting and the Fundraising Trailer

by Stephanie Hubbard

The academy award nominated film maker gives his thoughts on: how to choose subjects for your documentary; whether or not to make a Fundraising Trailer; and the “secret” that he thinks is indispensable advice to all documentary filmmakers, especially new ones.

Stephanie Hubbard: *How do you choose your characters for your documentaries?*

Kirby Dick: That is a very good question. Your subject is one of the top two or three most important elements of a documentary. First of all, it’s good if the potential subject likes the camera. It’s good if they play to the camera and if they like to be filmed. Certainly I’ve had situations where someone seems fine, but once you start shooting, they become reluctant in front of the camera. So if you start with someone who is naturally an extrovert that really helps.

Of course it is important to choose a subject that relates to what you want to say. As a filmmaker, you want a character whose story is iconic – that has a story that captures all the permutations of the issue you are exploring.

It’s a good idea to
just shoot anyone
who could be a
main character.

It’s also very important to have someone who is sympathetic as a person – because audiences identify with main character very intensely. Though often you can calibrate this in the edit room. When I started looking at the footage of Tony Comes, the primary subject in “Twist of Faith”, I noticed that he cried a lot. He was very sensitive and he was going through a lot, even so, I was worried that he might be perceived as a cry baby. I addressed this in the film by cutting just before he started crying, so that we could feel the emotion but didn’t see the crying. So when in the film he actually did cry it was much more powerful. It’s almost always effective, if at some point during the film, your main character does break down, but their emotional arc needs to be calibrated otherwise – at least in this case – people might otherwise turn away from him.

SH: *I have a student who is considering several people within the world of her documentary. What is the best way for her to determine who would be best to make her main character?*

Kirby Dick: She should go shoot them all.

It’s a good idea to just shoot anyone who could be a main character because you never know what story is going to develop into something that becomes the spine of the film. For example, you might have one potential subject more charismatic than the other, but the other one’s mother dies, or they break up with their partner. Ultimately these could be things that are going to make them a better character.

So, this is how I would proceed: first of all just go shoot all these people. Shoot them in situations, for a day or a half day. You learn a lot from them by shooting them in a half day. You’ll impress them just by showing up with a camera, and it can even

A WALK TO REMEMBER THE ABYSS ALICE IN WONDERLAND AMERICAN HORROR STORY THE ARTIST
AVATAR THE AVIATOR BABEL BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD BIG LOVE BLACK SWAN
BLOOD DIAMOND BLUE VELVET BOARDWALK EMPIRE BRAVEHEART BREAKING BAD
BRIDESMAIDS BURN NOTICE CARNIVÀLE CATCH ME IF YOU CAN THE CHRONICLES OF
NARNIA: THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER CITY SLICKERS THE CLOSER CLUELESS
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MONEYBALL MONSTER MULLER REPORT/TUCK ONE FALSE MOVE
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be your own little consumer camera. And they'll start to tell you things on camera. And whatever they won't tell you on camera they will tell you immediately afterwards, so you'll learn things about them which will help inform which character to follow.

You might even end up using some of that footage in the film. And then, of course you'll be able to review the footage, and show it to others to get their input and help you make the decision.

If they are out of state, then you get on the phone talk with them, get a feel if they are eager. In the case of Tony, he really wanted to do the film. When I met him he asked me if I paid subjects. I told him no, and he said, "That's good because I don't want anyone to think I did this for financial reasons." So I knew we had the right guy.

SH: *What about approaching the "Villain" or antagonist of the story. Any suggestions?*

Kirby Dick: Don't assume the antagonist won't talk. Even though they might be suspicious or not want to do it, often they will want to talk if they can get their point of view in the film. I've even found that they often don't mind being attacked because it builds their credibility with their own base.

One way to approach them is to let them know you want to tell two sides of the story. Surprisingly people seem more open if you are a student or recently graduated – always try – I've often been surprised at who says yes.

SH: *What is the best way to approach a potential subject?*

Kirby Dick: What works best is to be sincere and very knowledgeable. Be willing to deal with any reticence and be clear that they don't have to answer any questions they don't want to.

SH: *Do you try to let potential subjects know all the hardships of being a subject up front – or do you let them discover that for themselves?*

Don't assume
the antagonist
won't talk.

Go through a screening process in the editing stage.

Kirby Dick: Well, ease into it. Of course don't lie, but the fact is most subjects have no idea what they are getting into –but typically, as an extrovert they enjoy it.

It's very exciting to be the subject of the documentary, being followed around. Suddenly everything they do is of interest. Being the subject of a documentary is a very special experience. Sometimes when it's over, there can be a feeling of "Where's my crew?"

Sometimes, when you encounter a problem with your subject, like exhaustion, it's on you the filmmaker to help them pull through for the film, to let them know, "We only want to make this film as good as possible." Or "We want to get this film into Sundance." (laughs) that works a lot.

Of course, have the release signed before you start shooting. Not after. Otherwise, it can be very awkward.

SH: *Do you have any other suggestions?*

Kirby Dick: Yes. Start shooting before you have money. Don't wait for grants and funding – go out with a friend – get a camera and radio mikes and just start. There are a lot of reasons for this: (1.) You get footage to raise money. (2.) You learn if you actually want to make this film. (3.) You get the story started earlier so you get a longer arc and the film has more drama. That's helpful even if you only get to shoot your subject once every three months, because a lot of very important things can happen to them during that time. And (4.) After you've shot, do some initial editing of the material. This will inform you how to approach future shoots and you'll be better prepared.

Okay, and one other BIG thing: Go through a screening process in the editing stage. So many people just do not do this, and it's so helpful: When you get your film to a second or third rough cut you should start to have screenings. Invite people over, give them snacks. Then they watch the film, and afterwards tell

them you'd like them to respond to any and every element of the film. Begin by letting people speak. If they turn to you and ask your intention, defer that by asking if others in the group share the commentator's opinion. You don't want people's response to your intention – you want their response to what they've seen.

After about 45 minutes, I start asking questions I've prepared in advance – whether they like the music, if they like certain minor characters. Do they understand a specific comment made by someone in the film – and as I go through this list it opens up further discussion.

We did this 14 times with “Twist of Faith” and I just did it 8 times with “Outrage”.

You can use as few as 2 people but it's better to use 5 or more – but generally no more than 15. And I have different people for each screening.

By doing this I can find out if a major character is working. If everyone in a room says they really don't like a particular character I would probably try to remove that character for the next screening and see how the film played. It's possible to save yourself 10's of thousands of dollars on editing time, and make a better film this way. The less experienced you are the more important it is to do it. I do it on every film.

Also, start editing very early in the process, while you're shooting – you'll see how well you are covering the subject matter in your shooting. I always start cutting while I'm shooting.


SH: I see a lot of people making trailers to raise money. What's your opinion on this?

Kirby Dick: In general unless you know how to make a trailer – you should probably just start cutting the film. I usually discourage people from making fund raising trailers. Particularly if they are inexperienced filmmakers they won't get money based on trailer. So that's my last suggestion: Just start cutting your film. Start shooting it, and cutting it. And don't be discouraged. Making documentaries is hard. Don't give up easily.

Since completing her master's in Film and Television Writing and Production, Stephanie Hubbard worked on nearly 50 films or television episodes serving as editor, director, co-producer or writer. Her editing work has been shown on PBS, History Channel, Court TV, and the Discovery Channel. Films she has written have been screened at the Sundance Film Festival and won best in fests around the country.
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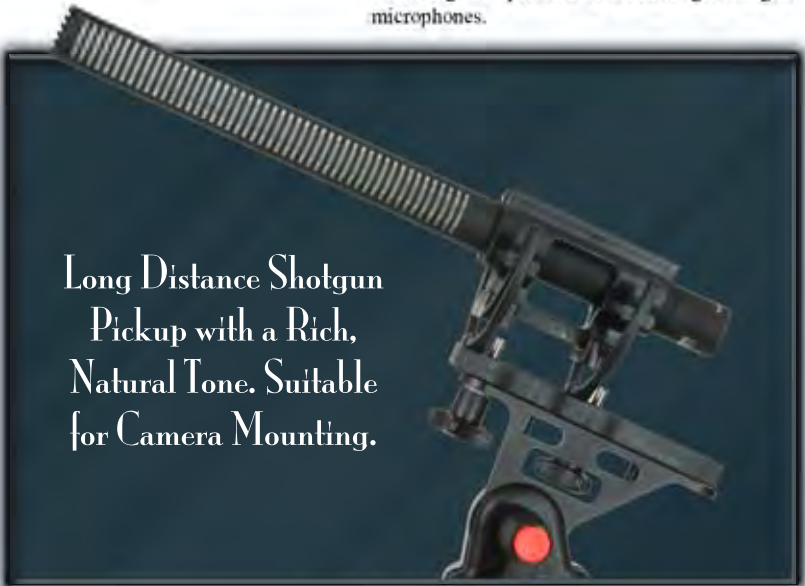
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Josephine and the Roach scene: First duet.

2012 ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award

Graduate Category Winner

Josephine and the Roach by Damian Horan

Creating the Look and Capturing Dramatic and Comedic Scenes

by Jody Michelle Solis

The American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) has chosen Damian Horan as the winner of the 2012 ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award in the graduate category for “Josephine and the Roach,” a surreal, offbeat live-action short film about a cockroach who falls in love with the woman whose apartment he infests. Horan discusses capturing dramatic and comedic shots, lighting, and shooting scenes on the Genesis, Red One, and 7D.

How did you come together with Jonathan Langager for this project, and what were your initial feelings about the story and concept?

Damian Horan: Jon was a good friend of mine at USC, and I had shot a small project for him a while back entitled “Spleen.” It was about a bored young man who decided to get his spleen removed and subsequently dies from the procedure. It was very dark and twisted and bizarre, and then he one upped himself with a love story about a cockroach for “Josephine and the Roach.” I immediately loved the concept for “Josephine.” It was a very simple classic forbidden love story not so different from Romeo and Juliet, but told with a twist: a roach protagonist.

Tell us about the film’s “look,” and key methods and techniques you used to create the “look”.

Damian Horan: I remember one of our first crew meetings, Jon had us all sit down and watch “Delicatessen” together. Jon is a big Jeunet fan, and wanted the look of “Josephine” to be inspired by “Delicatessen” and “Amelie,” (considered by many to be one of the most beautifully shot films in the last decade...a simple request for a student film [smiles]).

We wanted to create a very surrealistic, magical world where one could actually believe a woman could fall in love with a roach, so we had to create a sense of romanticism amidst a dreary backdrop of Josephine’s apartment, where love and hope had been replaced by Blatt’s Beer and mindless television.

We decided to make very strong choices from everything to lens choice to camera movement to color of light. We used a mustard yellow that for some reason created a weird sense of comfort and homeyness for the kitchen, the place where Josephine and the Roach connect for the first time. To show Josephine’s isolation

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and despair, we decided to midnight blue/green look in her bedroom. And then we decided to primarily light the living room, where Josephine's brutish husband primarily lives, with the Television set to further accentuate the isolation Josephine has from anything real in her life.

We had an incredible production designer, Giao-Chau Ly, who together with Jon created an incredible set and world to shoot on. It had such a unique yet old/timeless feel to it. It was pretty hard to not find a pretty shot wherever you pointed the camera.

What cameras and lenses did you shoot with and why?

Damian Horan: The majority of the shoot was shot on Panavision's Genesis with a set of Primo Primes and a Primo Wide Angle Macro Zoom (provided very generously by Mike Dallatorre and the Panavision New Filmmaker Program). I absolutely loved the Primos, such a beautiful look, and we also really enjoyed playing with the Macro Zoom as it really allowed us to get up close in personal with our Roach on a wide angle lens while still maintaining a super shallow depth of field.

We decided to shoot the Roach's miniature apartment set on the Red One because we wanted the extra resolution due to all the VFX work that was going to be required for the Roach. We also wanted to be able to shoot at 48-60fps to add a little weight to the Puppet, to make his movements feel a little more natural.

In addition to the Genesis and Red One, we also shot two commercials ("Blatt's Beer" and "A Science Infomercial") on the 7D with super old Nikon still glass. The "Blatt's Beer" Commercial might be my favorite thing I have ever shot. It's a lot of fun. You can view it on the facebook page for "Josephine": <https://www.facebook.com/JosephineAndTheRoach>

So in short, we definitely ran the gamut on digital cameras with "Josephine".

What were some important benefits and reasons for your camera and lens selections for this project?

Damian Horan: Jon is a really fun director to work with because he is not afraid of making really strong choices. So from Day 1, we decided we didn't want to play anything safe with "Josephine", and we were only going to use extremely wide or extremely long lenses and avoid the standard 25mm and 50mm workhorse lenses that are so often used.

"Josephine" is a silent film for all intensive purposes, no dialogue, so the visuals really had to make a strong statement. They had to be unique and dynamic enough so that the audience would fall into the romanticism of this surreal world where a Roach and Woman could actually fall in love.



Damian Horan on the set.

What was your favorite scene to light and why?

Damian Horan: I think my favorite scene to light was probably the scene where Josephine realizes the Roach has infested her husband's brain. It was a wonderfully romantic scene where Josephine comes out of her bedroom and to find her Roach/Husband playing their song by tapping on Blatt's Beer bottles. The script called for a bustling romantic city outside Josephine's apartment, but obviously since we were shooting on a stage at USC, all we had was blackness outside her window. So with my gaffer Phil Matarrese, we decided to hang bare light bulbs at differing levels and distances from the window with super saturated gels covering them, to try to create a sense of a romantic city outside. Is it super realistic? Probably not, but within the world we created, I think it portrayed the mood and romanticism of the scene pretty well.

Could you describe some of your camera techniques for capturing dramatic and comedic shots, POV, and scenes with camera movement?

Damian Horan: The movement of the camera was an integral part of telling Josephine's story. Again, since there was no dialogue, the camera really had to push the audience into the direction and mood of the story. We lived on a Chapman Super PeeWeeII for the majority of the shoot, occasionally attached a stinger arm to it.

Again, following the Jeunet inspiration, we really utilized a lot of wide angle photography that sort of helped create a bit of a whimsical/humorous feel to many of our shots. I think my favorite shot of the film, is a shot where Josephine wakes up to find a heart-box full of chocolates next to her bedside table. We used the Primo Wide Angle Macro Zoom to place the heart-box in a very tight closeup in the foreground so that it looked pretty big, but as Josephine reaches for the box we boom up and follow the box to her face to reveal that it is a mini "Roach-size" box of chocolates. I really felt like this shot linked our two worlds (the live action and our miniature world) in a very effective/efficient way.

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Jonathan Langager and Jenna Augen. Photo by Hudson Handel.



Damian Horan at the camera

Also since the hero of our story was a 2-inch roach, we needed to find a way to get into his world and show his world. As such we decided to use Innovision Probe Lenses, which allowed us to stick the lens in very tight awkward corners, i.e., places where a roach might live.

Tell us about working with the puppet, working with green screen and the visual effects for the film.

Damian Horan: We had a wonderful puppet team on our shoot. It was headed up by Lino Stavole, who created the puppet using 3D Printing. It was a fantastic puppet, but since a roach has so many legs it actually turned out to be quite a challenge to find a way to light the puppet due to the fact that at times there were up to six puppeteers surrounding the puppet to give animation to all his limbs. (Where do you sneak a light in when there are six grown men surrounding a 2-foot puppet?)

Before you went to film school, were you already familiar with different cameras and production to post production workflows?

Damian Horan: No, I really didn't know much at all about filmmaking prior to attending USC. I had always loved movies, and had always enjoyed trying to make them, but looking back I was pretty clueless on just about every basic fundamental of filmmaking.

Could you tell us a little bit about your educational background, your decision to go to film school, and your reasons and inspiration for studying film production in a traditional university setting?

Damian Horan: To be honest, I was deeply in love with a girl when I was deciding which undergrad institution to go to, and so I decided to follow her to a very conservative liberal arts school in Virginia, "Washington and Lee." There was a wonderful communications department there, but no real opportunity to pursue filmmaking, so I decided to double major in business and communications. Upon graduation, I married the girl I followed there, and we moved back home to Houston, TX, where I began a career as a corporate banker. I worked my way up to Vice

President, but along the way the big "C" word came for a visit and kind of shook me up for a bit, so I decided I would take one last shot at the filmmaking dream and apply to the top three graduate film school programs (or at least how I perceived them at the time). I received rejection letters from NYU and The University of Texas, and the last letter I received was from USC. I think it even came in a small envelope so I just assumed it was another rejection letter and tossed in a pile of mail to be opened at another time.

Would you recommend film school for others?

Damian Horan: Film school is an interesting bag. I definitely learned a lot and met a ton of incredible people, but I also spent a lot of money and many years of my life in doing so. So, no I don't think film school is for everybody. As for me though, I know it was pretty invaluable because I would have had no clue how to break into the business without it. Even after graduating, 90% of my work comes from contacts I met while in film school.

What are you working on next?

Damian Horan: I just wrapped my first feature directed by another wonderful young film school graduate director, Rachel Goldenberg. The film stars Danica McKellar, Dustin Milligan, and Lea Thompson and is entitled "The Children's Table." It should air sometime this November on TV. I also just wrapped an incredibly fun music video for Ben Folds Five starring the Fraggles from Fraggle Rock, which was directed by yet another great USC director, Phil Hodges. You can see the video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEyrFwF3rI>

If you could share some inspirational words or a piece of advice with filmmakers around the world, what would it be?

Damian Horan: I don't have anything original to say, but one of my favorite quotes of all time is: "My father says almost the whole world is asleep; everyone you know; everybody you see. Everybody you talk to. He says that only a few people are awake, and they live in a state of constant total amazement."

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Scene from *Axis*.

2012 ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award Undergraduate Category Winner

Axis by H.R. McDonald

Lighting and Composition Methods for Sci-Fi Thriller

The American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) has chosen H.R. McDonald as the winner of the 2012 ASC Andrew Laszlo Student Heritage Award in the undergraduate category for sci-fi thriller, “Axis.” McDonald discusses cameras, lighting and composition, and his collaboration with director Eric Chang.

In your own words, could you tell us about the “story,” and what kinds of ideas came to your mind while reading the script?

H.R. McDonald: The film is a brief glimpse into the life of a man who seems to be living separate lives. In one life he’s an artist, in another he’s a scientist who is killed for his discoveries. The film goes back and forward in time, and at its most present time, it seems like it’s taking place in the future. I decided that it would be good to shoot the film in a way to make it seem like it came from the future.

Could you tell us a little bit about your collaboration with the director, Eric Chang, during the pre-production, production, and post production stages for “Axis”?

H.R. McDonald: I worked closely with Eric to find the best locations in pre-production. We ended up finding a house that served a majority of our locations. This was a big part of being able to maintain a unified look throughout the film. I liked working with Eric because he gave me a lot of freedom, which I was surprised since he is a photographer himself, but he had enough other problems to worry about; it’s nice when a director puts that much faith in the photographer. I also graded the film.

What were some of your lighting and composition methods for conveying moods for scenes in “Axis” and giving the film the science fiction / thriller feel that it has?

H.R. McDonald: Sharpness was a big part of the look of the film. Not optically but architecturally. It suggests the character is in some kind of fascist environment that is so controlled you question not only its reality but its humanity. I also tried to incorporate a lot of mirrors and reflections into the pictures to suggest the multiplicity of his character. As for lighting, I only used daylight balanced Kino Flo’s. Because the environment was

so sharp, I wanted to force myself to stay away from hard light. The diffused approach really balances out the image nicely; it makes it seem less theatrical and more balanced. My favorite shot happens is a scene where an assassin sneaks into the main character's bedroom at night, smothers him and kidnaps his wife. The whole scene is played out in one shot of the couple sleeping, and we only see the mysterious man in the reflection of the bed's headboard. The shot suggests that because we don't actually see the man (he's only seen in the reflection), is this just happening in the main character's head?

What cameras and lenses did you shoot with, and why?

H.R. McDonald: We shot on the Red MX in 4.5K at 2.40 (cropped). Originally we were going to shoot with anamorphic Lomo lenses but that fell through at the last minute and we ended up shooting on a set of Red Pro prime lenses; in retrospect these were better to shoot with anyway because they have cleaner optics than the Lomos. I usually like to shoot on old zoom lenses with the Red because they soften out the image, but I needed the primes because I was only working with Kino's, and old zooms are better used at higher apertures. I used a 5D-MkII for an underwater shot and another shot with a Lensbaby; the 5D can be cut in with Red footage pretty easily on close ups.

Before you went to film school, were you already familiar with different cameras and production to post production workflows?

H.R. McDonald: Before I went to film school, I worked as a freelance editor and became a photog at a news station, which was a great way to train my eye.

By the way, how long did it take to shoot "Axeis"?

H.R. McDonald: We shot "Axeis" in 3 days. Two days in the house and one day in the basement at my school.

What advice or inspirational words can you share with start-up filmmakers working with limited time and limited crew?

H.R. McDonald: I guess the best piece of advice I could give to starting filmmakers is to recognize failure as a part of the learning process. It also doesn't hurt to become passionate about something other than filmmaking.

What are you working on next?

H.R. McDonald: Right now I'm learning how to play the cello; it's very relaxing.



H.R. McDonald (Cinematographer)
and Eric Chang (Director).



Casting into the Unknown

The Hidden Art

by Sky Crompton

Actors are what bring the screen to life. A landscape can be compellingly photographed but the moment a person steps into it, it has a greater meaning, a human context that we immediately identify with because we are human.

When it comes to choosing the cast for a film, it is much like casting a line when fishing. You know that there are fish out there, but it will take time and skill to land the right one. Just like in *Salmon Fishing in Yemen* (2011), you need to have a process, skill, and a little faith your hard work and patience will be successful.

Finding processes that work is the easiest to acquire, as others have done this before you. One way of ensuring you have every opportunity for this success to happen is in the careful preparation from the very beginning of the production process. This includes when you start casting and then move into rehearsal of your project.

While this statement may seem to be a given assumption it is apparent that at all levels of production from student to studio films that such a process has failed to be followed or considered well enough from the surprisingly inept casting decisions we see time and again. The processes here are based upon research, observation and hard won experience. Hopefully they will save you some confusion and heartache that may come as you bring your project to the screen.

Ground Rules

Before we start there are some *do's* and *don'ts* to remember. The film and television industry is just that – a professional industry. No matter how much we go on about it being creative, it is a business and everyone's time, including yours, is valuable.

Do be prepared when you contact an agent, casting director or actor.

(1.) Background research. Know what they do and what films they and/or their company/clients have done recently and in the past, and importantly, why they might want to do your project.

(2.) Be prepared. Be clear and specific about what you are requesting.

(3.) Be polite and have ready all documents they could request such as cover letters, cast briefing sheets, character breakdowns, synopsis and scripts.

(4.) Be early for every appointment. Actors always are.

Don't act as if everyone in the film industry owes you something, because they don't. Some people will help and others won't, and that's even when you pay them. You will get a lot of rejections; it is the nature of the industry. The road to success is paved with perseverance and preparation.

Don't try to bring on a cast above the production's market or the director's skill level. You could expend a lot of effort to attach such and such name, only to have their agent pull them for the blockbuster that starts shooting the same day your film does. Rather spend your time and effort with a cast of actors who are interested in the project and will make it special by their commitment that is where great performances come from. Many inexperienced directors waste money and skilled actors by lacking the skills to utilize them to their optimum.

Do pay your cast. On shorts or indie features minimis as a rule but at the very least an agreed fee. It shows your professionalism that they are valued. Both the cast and their agents will give you respect and in my experience, you will get a better performance every time.

Finally *don't* treat this article as the last word. It looks at processes to avoid problems relating to how to contact, select and work with actors. It is not a complete resource on acting or directing methods, which is a more in-depth conversation. Treat this as a primer on casting your production.

About Actors

Actors want to please you. They want the job, part, gig. To that end they will generally tell you what they think you want to hear. This could be said of every person applying for a position in any profession but the implications within the context of performance are greater as so much hangs on the actor as a person.

Actors are trained to put on 'the face,' the very nature of their craft lends itself to hiding the real person. But ultimately it is the real person who gives the performance whatever the interface or mask they put on between the real them and you.

Given this understanding of the nature of actors it is important that when you plan to cast that you have strategies in place to see beyond the mask or face to get to the real person. This will really happen immediately at an audition so you need to plan a process where by the tasks you set allow you to see the reality behind the mask. In affect you want to see how to develop and put on the mask as these are the skills you are employing for your film.

The best actors achieve their craft through transcending self to becoming a unique character and allowing that character to change, succeed, fail, grow or vanish, sometimes over a single moment so that the audience feels that characters experience and is transported.

A director's job is to assist the actor finding their way to the performance. This is done by a clear knowledge on the part of the director that the actor needs to feel safe, be given clear goals and the freedom to reveal them as the character.

Casting as a Process

Over and again I see the same mistakes repeated: not enough time given to casting and rehearsal; the general and indiscriminate casting call; confusion and the wrong questions asked when casting. These and other mistakes often lead to the wrong cast being chosen from a large pool of the usual suspects from the shotgun approach to casting. Which works on the assumption that more is better when it comes to choice. Personally I think it is just more and more leads to confusion.

This approach of more choice comes from inexperience in handling the audition process [large or small] and being unclear about what the producer and director are each looking for in the cast [this can be widely different]. Many of these mistakes could be avoided with better planning, communication, and process.

The beauty of a process is that once you have a process down you can amend it for each production, throw it away or fall back on it when all starts to hit the fan. And that is the core benefit of a process; it gives you something to fall back on when all else fails.

Now personally I don't do casting calls. I believe that they have their place in very specific situations such as searching for young talent or when casting large numbers of extras. Otherwise there is a lot of time and heartache spent by all parties in a process that does not always yield the best cast member. Remember, you could just be choosing the best from the worst selection.


There is also the problem of losing your original vision in the melee of voices and characters you meet. But there is another approach worth considering and it is a cornerstone of the process I am outlining.

Don't get me wrong, casting calls have their place and if well managed it can be successful for a production. To avoid the issue of inexperience it is beneficial to adopt a *process* whereby the director and their producer are able to set out exactly who and

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what they are looking for and then to see the most appropriate cast for the role and the market positioning of the production.

Advice and Research

It is important to have a realistic goal for who you want to cast in your film, aim to reach a cast that gives your project the best chance of succeeding through their skill first and profile second. In reality profile while nice is not essential but skill is.

Along with this it is important to know the level of ability that the director has with actor direction [also crew direction]. Try to look for cast that are on a similar level or you could find yourself with actors who despise a director who is not experience enough to follow industry standards of practice.

While most experienced actors will give beginners the benefit of the doubt it can go the other way with ignorance and inexperience creating unbridgeable problems for the production. Better to work with a happy group of inexperienced cast and crew than an unsuccessful balance of pro and learner.

Casting directors exist for a very good reason. They know more about actors than we do. What do I mean by that? It is their job to know what actors are available, suitable and achievable and most importantly who the up and coming and undiscovered talent are.

They go to theatre, hold audition sessions, visit acting schools and studios always on the look out for new talent as well as socializing with those who have 'made it' and finally of course the casting directors know the actors agents and therefore have access to cast that directors and even producers do not.

So first, make a friend of a casting director, get them to mentor you, intern with them at the very least, or find a workshop where one is talking about what they do. What you will learn will be invaluable if only for the contacts you will make, better yet for the advice and potentially the cast they may help bring to your independent production one day.

Secondly, do your research; all potential actors have headshots and CV's that they distribute to film schools or online casting directories. So take your cast list sit down with the producer and discuss what you both want for each role then you can start on your casting briefs.

The Casting Brief and Character Breakdowns

When you or your casting director contact actors agents they will require a casting brief. This is a document outlining information regarding the production and role potential shooting dates and remuneration [payment] terms. They will also require a minim of a character breakdown and preferably a copy of the script. They will also want to know who the producer and director are and their experience; this can be a problem for student and first time indie producers and directors as they feel they have not got any experience.

The best thing to do is to be honest and write a brief cover letter outlining the teams experience and a short CV outlining their production experience even if it is only student films. The idea is that the more professional you are the more professional you will appear to be and thus instil confidence.

Remember that actors' agents are interested in their clients' careers and their fees, therefore you need to be offering an opportunity to advance one or provide the other. This could be as simple as a type of role they have not had before or a minim payment for an actor who has been doing unpaid work for some time.

Cast Selection

Okay, so you think finding actors should not be hard – simply go to your nearest coffee shop or diner and there will be someone wants to act. Or you could use your friends from school, or even better, take on the lead role yourself as well as directing and shooting the film. The really scary thing is that I have seen all these things done and seen them succeed, sometimes, but more often these solutions fail badly producing ugly performance and unwatchable films with people who want to be an actor but to have the skills you need.

It is preferable to do what the industry does and use casting directories. These directories allow you to review headshots, skills and attributes, and experience. More and more have online video reels of past work. Once you have done your research cull your lists down to *two* or *three* potential performers who have the requisite skills and attributes for the part.

Here is where a casting director as a mentor can help by introducing you to the agencies that you want to talk to regarding

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their cast. If you have not found such a mentor then politely calling and requesting who handles the actor you are interested in and that agent's email is the best place to start. You can then send in your casting brief and documents.

When they do get back to you they will have further questions and once you have answered these they hopefully will ask you what your casting process is, this is where you decide what your approach is.

At this point it is good instead of getting them to audition for the part to meet with them in a casual situation. No, that does not mean crashing their party or their cousins wedding. Arrange to have coffee, brunch or lunch in a quiet place where you can discuss you, them and the project. By the way at the same time that you're interviewing them they are most certainly interviewing you, this is something good to remember.

This approach gives all parties the opportunity of first refusal of the project for the price of a meal. What you will also learn is who the person behind the mask is and that is important to seeing if they have the skills you need to achieve your performance goals for the film.

Once you have met with someone you think will work, get them to read for you and record it. This is useful for you to confirm if they are right for the role, as a future reference for others and finally the DVD/BlueRay special features producer will love you for the free footage. All you have to do is decide what the audition will be.

The Audition and the Script

Here is where you need to start making serious decisions. Who are you really interested in? Have you found the right person yet? If not you need to repeat the research and selection process. If this is the case look at your original selection criteria and clearly outline why the people you have seen are not right for the roles. So to be sure about your selections it is a good idea to get the potential selectees to read for the part.

When getting an actor to audition make sure you give them pieces from the script that gives the actor the opportunity to show the full range of what you require and if they are capable of achieving. Another option which I have used more than once is to write a one to two page script encompassing the whole story

and range of emotions, this is both economical and requires real skill to pull off well allowing you to get a feel for what the potential cast member can do.

Once you have gone through the process the director and producer can make their final selection and offer the part to the cast members by formerly contacting their agents and politely inform the agents of the other unsuccessful actors of the part being filled. Try to avoid discussions of why they did not get the part unless asked directly, these conversations are very rarely productive for either party.

Conclusion

With a careful and considerate approach casting can be a productive and low impact experience on all parties even the unsuccessful ones. I mention this, as casting is most difficult on actors as rejection is part and parcel of the process. In line with this I have a few notes from the front line:

If you get to cast profiled actors who you can see their previous work don't bother auditioning them, you should be able to see what they can do. Instead use the dialog or conversation approach previously described. If concerned ask them to do a reading with potential cast to see how the mix of cast works.

Remember actors are the most vulnerable of all the film and TV creative's because of the nature of what they do. Their craft is high impact it is your job to make theirs as easy as possible so you get their best work, so look out for them even the ones you don't end up casting and it will come back to you.

Sky Crompton is a Producer/Director/Writer and film scholar with over a decade of experience teaching film, TV, Animation and interactive media. His feature film, "Citizen Jia Li," has screened internationally. Academically his research includes Asian Screen and transmedia. He has given papers at media conferences in Australia, Europe and Asia. Having developed animation and film courses his students have won numerous short film awards internationally. He can be contacted via twitter at: <http://twitter.com/#!/gunghoscreen>

Shot Notation

by Peter Kiwitt

Plan Your Shots

There are four ways to plan your shots on paper: *Storyboards*, *Diagrams*, *Shot Lists*, and *Lined Scripts*. *Pre-Visualization* (recording your shots in motion) can also be used.

Storyboards are representations of what will appear on screen. Storyboards can be drawn by hand, photographed, or created with software by the director for his/her own use (in which case their artistic merit is unimportant as long as they are legible to the director). A storyboard artist can also create them. This is more commonly done for special effects and action sequences where the vision of the director must be shared with others during preproduction. Storyboards are the best method for graphically showing composition and sharing “the movie in your head.”

- Motion can be shown in storyboard panels by drawing:
- Arrows to indicate camera or subject movement and/or...
- Smaller frames within the panel to signify a move in;
- A larger panel with multiple frames to signify a dolly, crane, pan, or tilt; or
- Multiple panels, numbered in sequence.

Diagrams are drawings of the set, actors, and camera from a bird’s eye view. They allow several camera positions to be shown at once. Diagramming is the best method for graphically showing camera positions and, thereby, for organizing what order to shoot in.

It can also be easier to show actor and camera movement. Lines can be used to show movement from one position to another, and numbers can indicate order.

Shot Lists are written descriptions of what the camera will see and/or do. They can be very simple or detailed. Be warned that complicated notes might be difficult for you to work with on the set where the pressure can be intense. While diagramming can be best in helping to determine shot order, a shot list is best for referring to that order while on the set. When done simply, shot lists are often the best choice.

Lined Scripts are not commonly used by directors. The technique of drawing one line through the script page for each shot is primarily used by script supervisors to create a reference for the editor in post-production. It can also be problematic

for a director if a new draft of the script is issued (which is a common occurrence) after notes are made. That said, it is the best method for graphically showing when each shot begins and ends, and what options might be available for cutting at any given moment.

Pre-Visualization (*pre-viz*) is creating images that can play over time to simulate the finished project. One simple way to do this is to shoot the scene with a camcorder without additional equipment, crew, or even your actors. You can also record hand-drawn storyboards or animate computer-drawn storyboards with or without separately recording dialogue. On larger productions, usually for more complicated scenes, pre-visualization can be extensive, most commonly using 3D animation to mimic the look of the final live-action and visual effects composite.

Abbreviations for Shot Notation:

Not everyone uses the same terms, or defines terms in the same way. But the following will put you in the ballpark.

- (1.) Extreme Wide Shot (EWS)
- (2.) Wide Shot (WS)
- (3.) Medium Wide Shot (MWS or Cowboy)
- (4.) Medium Shot (MS)
- (5.) Medium Close-Up (MCU or 3T)
- (6.) Close-Up (CU or 2T)
- (7.) Extreme Close-up (ECU or 1T)
- (8.) Over-the-Shoulder (OTS)
- (9.) Two-Shot (2S)
- (10.) Three-Shot (3S)
- (11.) Point-of-View (POV)

Peter Kiwitt is an Assistant Professor in the School of Film & Animation at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), and a member of the Directors Guild of America with years of professional film and television industry experience as a director, writer, producer, editor, and executive. <http://peterkiwitt.wordpress.com/bio/>

Visual Grammar & Syntax of Film

by Dean Goldberg

How do we show emotion?

How do we illustrate point of view?

Most people don't really think about the act of reading while engrossed in good story. Reading is something we learn how to do as children, and after those first tentative steps the actual "act" of reading comes pretty easily. Sure, it becomes more complicated when we are asked to conjugate a verb or split an infinitive. But the simple things, the important parts of reading, that magical process of *understanding* a story, comes pretty naturally. For example, we know the sex of a character if we see the word *He* or *She*. We know that using that particular word makes it clear that the narrative is being told from the author's or author's character's point of view, just as we know that quotation marks within dialogue usually mean that the words are being spoken out loud — and adding, *he said*, or *she said*, or, heaven forbid, *he exclaimed* — makes the identity of the speaker even clearer to the reader.

Like written language, film — and by the term "film" I mean any visual narrative medium — has its own rules of grammar and construction. But while we all have to be taught our *ABCs* and work our way through grade school primers before we

can travel through the magical world of *Harry Potter*, or hunker down with the latest issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine, there is really no learning curve when it comes to watching movies. In fact, by the time we are three or four we can follow a simple story on television and by five or six, we are able to understand and enjoy a two hour film filled with many plot points and complicated characters.

But here's the rub.

While we can watch films without any formal training, in order for us to *make* films, that is, to make good, interesting narrative visual stories — or for that matter — to study films, we must first learn how to use the *grammar* of film. For example, just how do we show emotion? How do we illustrate point of view? How do we make something visually funny? Or sad? The answer is both simple and complicated at the same time; the filmmakers tell their story through two or three major functions.

The visual composition (the "frame").

The editing or the juxtaposition of images.

The use of sound, (although D.W. Griffith did pretty well without it).

The Syntax

The actual structure of these functions can best be described as the visual syntax or grammar. And as in all good "writing" this syntax is built upon very simple structures: **The wide shot, the close-up, and the medium shot.**

The wide-shot: Think of it as the filmic equivalent of "Once upon a time..." in a fairy tale. It is usually the establishing shot and is always the frame in which we see environment of our story.

The close-up: Probably the most important tool in narrative filmmaking. It is the frame that puts the character's emotions on display. It works with dialogue and with silence. It illustrates a state of mind or a reaction to something has happened or is happening at the moment.

The medium-shot: If the wide-shot and close-up are narrative and visual exclamations, the medium-shot is the

conjunctive tool; that which binds the two together.

Okay. Is that all there is to this “grammar” that I am going on and on about? Not exactly. There are loads of other film terms like *tracking shot*, *dolly shot*, *two-shot*, *over the shoulder shot*, *cutaway*, and there’s an enormous amount to learn about blocking, continuity, time and space within the frame. But those three basic shots remain the building blocks of a visual language that has kept audiences enthralled for more than a hundred years. If you don’t believe me go to the mall and catch a movie. Watch the audience for a minute or two. Remember the old adage about a picture being worth a thousand words? How about twenty-four of them every second? Or thirty or sixty? And it doesn’t matter one bit if it’s projected digitally or on a 16mm projector shining at an old sheet. The magic still remains. Pretty cool, eh? Pass the Snow Caps.

Dean Goldberg began his professional life working for a well known New York democratic political consultant, David Sawyer. As a film editor, then producer/director, he was involved with more than fifty national campaigns, including races for; Senator Ted Kennedy; Senator John Glenn; Senator Frank Lautenberg; Governor Jim Hunt and Mayor Kevin White. He wrote and directed television episodes for, “Missing Reward,” “Hard Copy,” “A Current Affair” and many other shows featuring dramatic recreations. Dean teaches writing, directing and film studies at Mount Saint Mary College.

Get

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Performances

Actor's Perspective

by Paul Cram

- (1.) **Cast an Actor that Barely Needs to Act.** If an actor’s persona is already 80 percent of the character, you need only to rely on the other 20 percent to be filled by their acting ability. A casting director is invaluable for finding actors that are close to the scripted characters.
- (2.) **Create a Safe Work Space.** Actors thrive in an environment in which you’re the only one talking to them about their performance, directing them, and shielding them from comments, criticism, and suggestions from everyone else.
- (3.) **Direct Characters Not Actors.** Tap into the scripted character’s goals and use those to steer the actor. Verbalize your direction with action verbs in individual scenes.
- (4.) **Repeat Praise.** Even if you’ve told an actor they’re doing well, tell them again. Actors need constant affirmation. This doesn’t mean you have to gush, a simple, “that’s good,” after a take can suffice. Actors are the most insecure artists in the world. When affirming communication is open and often, it eases things for when you have to give negative feedback to adjust an actor’s performance.
- (5.) **Know What You Want.** Know what you want to happen in the hearts and minds of the audience. Know this and you can guide me any day.

Paul Cram’s website is www.paulcramactor.com.

Script Analysis

Identify Facts

by Gleb Osatinski

An important thing that I have learned about directing is always do a script analysis before giving directions to the actors. One of the important techniques of script analysis is identifying facts that are in the script or facts that are not in the script. Here is the example of the script from the “Magnolia” directed by P.T. Andersen (one of my favorite films).

JIM KURRING
I'm sorry, Claudia.

CLAUDIA
What is it? Did you forget something?

JIM KURRING
No, no. I was wondering...man oh man. I think I feel like a bit of a scum-bucket doing this, considering that I came here as an **officer of the law** and the situation and all this but I think I'd be a fool if I didn't do something I really want to do which is to ask you on a date.

CLAUDIA
You wanna go on a **date** with me?

JIM KURRING
Please, yes.

CLAUDIA
Well...is that illegal?

JIM KURRING
No.

CLAUDIA
Then...I'd like to go...What do you want to do?

JIM KURRING
I don't know. I haven't thought about it -- you know what -- that's not true -- I have thought about it. I've thought about going on a date with door.

CLAUDIA
Really?

JIM KURRING
Yeah.

CLAUDIA
I thought a little about you since you opened the-

JIM KURRING
You were flirting with me.

CLAUDIA
Do you wanna go tonight? I mean, are you working?

JIM KURRING
No, **I'm off tonight**. I would lov-like, to go tonight, I can pick you up, I can pick you up here at about what time? What time?

CLAUDIA
Eight o'clock?

JIM KURRING
What about ten o'clock, is that too late? I don't get off and then --

CLAUDIA
Oh sure yes, that's fine, late dinners are good. Should I get dressed up or -- ?

JIM KURRING
No, no, just casual maybe, maybe I thought -- there's a spot I like to go, it's real **nice that overlooks a golf course** and the course is lit up at night --

CLAUDIA
Billingsley's?

JIM KURRING
Yeah, You know it? You know Billingsley's?

CLAUDIA
It's my favorite place -

JIM KURRING
Oh, see? This is great. **Ten o'clock**.

CLAUDIA
Great, bye. Bye.

I selected facts in bold. So, what do we know about Jim and Claudia?

Fact1: Jim is a police officer.

Fact2: It is a date for them.

Fact3: Billingsley's – they both know it and it is a Claudia's fave place.

Fact4: There is a baseball field that is lit at night.

Fact5: The date is at 10 pm.

Fact6: Claudia won't be dressed, it is a casual date.

These are just a few facts that should help us to give an actor an idea about these characters. Jim is an officer who asks Claudia for a late date. Claudia might think that since he is a police officer it is safe for her to meet with him at 10 pm. What we don't know about the scene is whether Claudia and Jim knew each other from before or whether they just met.

Facts or absence of facts may give the director freedom of recreating the situation to directing actors. It is a fact that this is going to be a date, but it is not clear how involved these characters are with each other, and this could be a directorial decision and potential suggestion for the actors.

Facts are an important tool for directors. They help directors come up with various scenarios to help bring actors closer to the characters establishing their own imagery into their play.

Gleb Osatinski is New York-based director and producer originally from Ukraine. In 2010, he left Wall Street to write his first script, "Pisces of an Unconscious Mind," which is currently selected by multiple film festivals and continues to circle around the festival circuit.

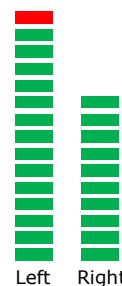


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A Chat with Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows

Writing, producing, and the digital revolution.

by Megan Harr



Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows is an accomplished author, television writer, television producer and television director. As a producer, Barrows has provided creative input and supervision, working closely with other talented individuals including work on two Emmy winning seasons of "A Baby Story." Through maintaining her reputation as a valuable asset to any creative team, Barrows has secured prominent projects to add to her resume. She suggests, "being known for being on time, under budget, and drama free opens a lot of doors."

What is your writing process as it pertains to your work as an author, director, and television producer?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: Honestly, it's almost impossible to understand a writer's process. It's a black art. We don't even know exactly how it happens. I like to sit down and read or watch all the source materials or research and then let it sit for some time before I actually start writing. Once I let it marinate long enough, the ideas just start pouring out. I can sit down and churn out concepts or scripts on the spot if necessary, but I prefer to take my time. The longer I let it sit, the better it tastes.

Being a producer or a director is all about being organized, prepared, being able to adapt to changes quickly without losing your cool, and making a decision and sticking to it until you know for sure that it isn't working. Self doubt doesn't work. I often find myself making choices among equally good options, and I don't let myself get bogged down in the decision making process.

When did you first realize that you had an artistic talent?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: I've always been artistic. I've drawn and written stories as long as I can remember. My mother, Judy Fitzwater, is a novelist with nine books published and my father has multiple degrees and is an avid book collector. My sister and I grew up telling stories to each other. I was always the kid who carried three extra books, just in case. I also have always had this superpower of being able to identify actors in movies and TV. I watched way too much TV as a kid. I majored in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Theatre in college. We made ridiculous terrible indie movies, some of which I wrote. I acted in most of them and usually did wardrobe. It was great practice. I learned to do a lot with nothing.

When I graduated, I thought I wanted to work in film, but I wound up getting a job at a post house working on their National Geographic Television account. I moved from there to a job at National Geographic, then on to TLC, and from there I became a freelance writer and producer. I tried to be smart and amazing at my job in hopes that people would notice. They did.

How closely do you work with others in editing film and discussions about the aesthetic components of what drives a film and helps keep the narrative moving forward?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: As a producer, I supervise every part of the process, from the concept all the way through the sound mix and making sure it ships. I usually hand my editors

a script, have them choose the shots, and then we sit down and fine tune it together. My husband is an editor and we dissect everything we watch from a television commercial to a major motion picture. I love our DVR. We rewind and pause live TV all the time. We are always analyzing what works, or doesn't work, and why. It definitely makes us better at our jobs.

How has the digital revolution either benefited your line of work or caused some shift? Initially was there some resistance towards emerging technologies?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: The digital revolution has made my job so much easier. It used to be that you would have to make a VHS tape of the promo or show you were working on and courier it over to the person who would need to approve it. Now we can email quick-times and get a response back in minutes.

Having access to my email through my smart phone is also crucial so if someone needs something, I'm available. It might sound like that would tie me down, but it actually frees me. If I'm not booked on a job one day, I don't have to sit home on my computer. I can book jobs from anywhere at any time. If I need to, I can work anyplace from a coffee shop to the beach. If I have a wi-fi connection or cell service, I'm in business. I haven't had any trouble with emerging technologies, but I am a huge tech nerd. I've seen other people struggle with it, though.

Are most scripts put together in editing different than what the screenwriter originally calls for? Who decides upon these changes?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: My quick turnaround work, like topical promos, come out pretty close to the original script. I get the script approved before going into edit, so if everything goes well, we shouldn't have major changes in the approval process.

For higher profile work, I like to play with the flow of the piece in post. I make sure my editors have a lot of input on shot choice and music and so he or she may suggest something visually that I hadn't thought of before. Graphics can also impact a piece in unexpected ways. When I'm shooting something scripted, often I tend to make changes on the fly. If a comedy bit isn't working, I'll re-write on set or collaborate with the actors. You can't be afraid to throw out something that doesn't work.

Has traditional film language remained the same, or has the technology become so sophisticated that there's a difference in the way that film-industry workers speak about filmmaking?

Miellyn Fitzwater Barrows: On set terminology hasn't changed so much, but what it's referring to is quite different. We still say "speed" and "rolling" even when it's digital. I think you get into newer terms when working in post. One of my major network clients has gone completely tapeless. They receive shows on drives and "push" files to their uplink facility for air. It's changing all the time. It can be a challenge to keep up with the processes when the networks are still figuring it out.

The mediums of writing for theatre, television and film are different. Yet, they encompass a common denominator. All need a good story. Technological training aside, creative expression becomes the manifestation of the producer, director, and writer's vision – which is propelled by a desire to portray a compelling dialogue. Whether that story be relayed via television, theatre, or film is irrelevant in that to each, plot must prevail.



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Making Dramas

High Concept versus the Low Concept

by Scott Spears

My advice to startup filmmakers with limited resources is to take a look at the films of M. Night Shyamalan. These films could be made for almost no money if you take out the name stars and do a little trimming in the scope of some scenes. Night's filmmaking is very basic with little or no "showy" shots. Heck, in "Unbreakable," most scenes play in one shot.

Let's look at the logistics for each film:

"The Sixth Sense." A guy spends most of the movie taking to a little kid. Locations are houses, schools, an office, a store, etc., to name a few. Small cast: doctor, kid, mom, doc's wife and a few supporting cast. Special effects: a few nasty wounds and puking green pee soup.

"Unbreakable". This film's second scene is a massive train wreck that we don't get to see! What a great cheat. Locations are just a little tougher here, with the train station, football stadium and wrecked train, but with some clever work you could have been imply the scope. Small cast, hero, villain, son, wife and some minor supporting characters. Special effects: stunt fall down stairs, wrecked car, and wrecked train on TV that was low res CGI work.

"Signs." Here again we have an alien invasion that happens off screen. What savings there. Locations: small town,

farm house, a store. Cast: ex-minister, brother, son, daughter and supporting folks. Special Effects: this is the trickiest of the three with the full body alien suit, but hey, you only need one.

I'd say the hardest thing to do with all three of these movies is finding kids who can act.

"The Village." The setup would be a little costly because of the period costumes and setting, but I know near me in Ohio there's several historical villages which could be used. Special Effects: Somebody in a cheesy monster costume.

What I love about Night's movies is that he is basically making dramas and then dropping a high concept on them. Here's a breakdown of the high concept vs. the low concept:

"The Sixth Sense." A kid sees dead people. No, that's not the real story. It's about grief and accepting death.

"Unbreakable." A guy finds out he's a superhero. Nope. It's about realizing that suppressing your abilities to please somebody else will ultimately destroy that relationship and upon re-finding your strength, you become whole again and saves your marriage.

"Signs." A family reacts to an alien invasion. Not really. It's about a minister re-finding his faith.

"The Village." A turn of the century village is threatened by a beast from the woods that surround it. Nah. It's about the price you pay for creating a society based on deception.

I know some people who have felt cheated by "Unbreakable," "Signs," and "The Village," but I think they're missing the real plots. There are internal struggles going on that are, in my opinion, more interesting than the high concept in the foreground.

Be creative. Make your characters living, breathing people. Think of the drama first, not the special effects which you really can't do well on a low budget anyway.

Scott Spears has been working in independent production for over twenty years. He has shot nineteen feature films, numerous short films, commercials and music videos. Scott won an Emmy Award for his photography on the short film, "The Birthmark" which aired nationally on PBS. Recent projects include the 35mm feature "Cold Ones" starring C. Thomas Howell and "Horrors of War".
www.scottspears.net

Tight Ship

Shooting with **Pro Actors** and a **Student Crew**

by Scott Essman

On Saturday April 28, 2012, at the Digital Filmmaking and Video Production school of The Art Institute of California in Orange County, a student crew of mine shot a mock presidential debate in an efficient four hours, covering five scenes over ten script pages.

The crew, largely current students, with a few graduates and members of another school in various positions, utilized six Canon XH-A1 cameras, all calibrated to shoot to tape in HDV 60i in the 1920x1080 format. Frank Garbutt, an Art Institute graduate, served as cinematographer while I wrote the script and directed the actors and studio, which we shot in a green cove area to allow for adding various backgrounds in post. We set up two existing podiums to serve as the main speakers' areas of concentration and devised a master two shot and three isolated singles on the speakers. The fifth camera on the green cove set was roving, so it could pick up various different shots in each of the scenes, and a sixth camera captured the moderator who was offscreen throughout the dialogue portions with the two main actors playing the presidential candidates. This third actor, Sky McDougall, will be carefully and selectively added to the material with the two speakers (Wil Bowers playing incumbent candidate Tom Hinker and Dean Scofield playing challenger Bill Williams) during the editing process.

What made the whole shoot work so smoothly was the addition of support crew: one sound recordist plus two boom operators – one for each presidential speaker – with the two actors also being miked with lavaliers. The moderator was miked with just a lav and was shot against a black curtain that was separately lit from above and the floor by Garbutt and his gaffer and best boy. Additional support crew included six assistant cameramen and women who slated each separate shot carefully. While most of the five scenes were captured in one shot, at least two scenes were broken into separate shots for simplification.

I had rehearsed with the actors at my house a few days before filming, so we all knew the nuances of the script going in. This

allowed us to shoot quite efficiently, doing a maximum of three takes for most of the shots we completed. I usually prefer to shoot a minimum amount of takes when on a tight schedule, so I am used to tweaking a scene on the spot so that the actors are comfortable and can proceed. Sometimes, we do pickups and adjust the scenes after specific takes so that we can move forward in a timely manner. Doing so, all five scenes, with an average of two pages each, were accomplished within an hour. Plus, shooting with so many cameras, even on the lesser takes, we will have surely picked up coverage that we can use nonetheless. As such, in just four hours, we achieved plenty of usable material. As soon as we wrapped, in under 30 minutes, working together, this student crew had all equipment and the entire studio broken down and ready for the next project. All in all, a very successful execution of a student-oriented film.

The crew: Chelton Perry (documentary), Ralph Williams (stills), Miguel Arce (assistant camera), Jessica Wautlet (camera operator), Nicole Miller (camera operator), Jackie Bastawroos (first assistant director), Frank Garbutt (cinematographer), Matt Toscano (boom operator), Paulina Kim (assistant camera), Alexander Clague (camera assistant/second assistant director), Bobby Richard (boom operator), Allison Williams (floor supervisor), Jonathan Switzer (camera operator/best boy), Sarah Deister (camera operator), Jordan Woollen (gaffer/camera six operator), Keisha Ranada (sound recordist), Troy Kallman (camera operator), Jair Millan (assistant camera), Scott Essman (writer/director).

Since the mid-1980s, Scott Essman has been writing and producing projects about motion picture craftsmanship. He has published over 350 articles as a freelancer and has produced over twenty publicity projects for Universal Studios Home Entertainment where he made video documentaries and wrote publicity materials. He published his first book, "Freelance Writing for Hollywood," for Michael Wiese in 2000, and has a new book about Tim Burton.

Crane – Yay or Nay?

How a Crane Adds to, or Takes Away from, Story

by Patrick Moreau

Been thinking about using a jib in company profile videos. What do you see the role of a jib in a storytelling aspect? Feel like I'm doing it just because it's 'cool' and don't necessarily want to go down that path if it doesn't enhance the story.

Whenever we are looking at camera movement, we start with one fundamental idea; how you move your camera is how you move your audience. You can make your audience feel steady and still with a tripod or you make them feel energetic by adding a steadycam and running alongside your characters. So with that, what does a crane or jib add to your story?

When we think of a crane move, most people first think of the vertical rise or fall, which is definitely a strong move and a big part of what a crane can offer, but it can also do so much more. You can keep the camera low to the ground and use it to sweep in. Or you can get even more complicated and use all three axes to bring the camera up/down, in/out, and left/right. All of these options you can do with a crane add up to let you as the storyteller say some pretty powerful things. Here are a couple of the biggest storytelling implications when you use a crane:



Production Value

The giant sweeping moves of a crane or jib add a certain level of production value. What does production value mean? The moves are generally less common on smaller shoots than something like a tripod or dolly, and so adding in super smooth sweeping shots makes the production feel more expensive, produced or higher end.

Now when it comes to story, that can be a good or bad thing depending on what you are trying to say. If you are shooting a commercial for a well known large brand, using a crane can help the look and feel

of the piece match the image or brand of the company. If you are shooting a smaller story of what they are about, a crane might be too grand or too strong for their story and it could pull the viewer out. **As much as we constantly try to make our stories stronger, we need to be careful not to overproduce stories that call and need simplicity.** For our wedding films, as an example, we have very rarely used a crane because the shots have so much weight to them and feel so grand and produced that it can take away from the intimacy of a story. That isn't to say that you can't use a crane at weddings effectively, it is just that



the way we tell our stories, they would take away more than they add. **So the take home here is, a crane can make your story feel more produced. The key is thinking about how produced you want your story to feel.** We've used a crane to add production value in shooting spots for Callaway Golf. In *A Game of Honor*, we rarely used a crane, but on the couple shoots we did, it was used for establishing shots or scenics of West Point and the Naval Academy. Using a jib made the locations feel very grand as they are introduced, something very fitting to the history of the locations and the storyline of the film.

A Unique Perspective

A crane allows you to get much higher perspective than we are used to. It allows the viewer to look in on a scene as if they were looking down from the sky. That perspective can be a great way to show context, or it might be to remove your audience from the scene and have them feel like they are looking down and in on everything. Whether this adds to your story definitely comes down to what your story is about. An

application of the perspective offered is the ability to get direct overheads. Shooting directly down on situations offers a very different point of view and often offers an opportunity for some very interesting compositions through the lines and shapes found when looking down. In the Morgan Pressel piece, part of our series for Callaway Golf, we used a jib to give us a direct overhead of Morgan teeing off. There was a lot to be said about the precision of her swing and we wanted to dissect that through a series of strong compositions from different perspectives. There are other ways to get direct over head shots, but a crane is often the safest and one of the most precise. We've used ladders and monopods before, which offer an incredible speed, but it definitely isn't the sturdiest option and you are making educated guesses on your exact composition.

Changing Perspectives

A very powerful use of a crane is to use it in a way that changes perspectives within the same shot, something

that very few tools can do. Say you are shooting an Olympic commercial with a diver. You want to convey the grandness of the Olympics and the power and tension in the moment right before they stand on the diving board. An easy option would be to shoot them approaching the diving board and then cut to a really wide shot of the entire area, with thousands of fans screaming. The challenge is that something is lost in that cut, we drop the viewer into the intensity, we don't slowly ease them in. If we were looking at this with a crane we could start in close, perhaps over the shoulder. As the diver approaches the diving board, we pull the crane backwards and up in the air to start revealing just how big the space is and how many people are there. In one fluid shot we can completely change perspectives and let the viewer feel that change, slowly revealing it to them.

These are some of the ways you can use a crane to add to your story. As with any tool, remember that there is a big distinction and point to be made about how you use it. A crane can be used to offer static or subtle shots just as much as they offer the epic sweeping moves. How you move the crane and the speed at which you move it all contribute to what it says and what it adds to your story.

Patrick Moreau is one of cinema team leaders at StillMotion (www.stillmotion.ca). Over the years they have shot weddings from Japan to London, as well as work for commercial clients such as Canon and IBM. "A Game of Honor" is StillMotion's three-time Emmy winning documentary for Showtime, including best sports documentary for 2012. Patrick will be on the road as an instructor for KNOW. Visit www.knowbystillmotion.com.

Crowd Funding Campaign

3 Steps for Building Your Community

by Klaudia Kovacs

By now, it has become obvious to many, that crowd funding can be a great venue for financial backing, however, it does require much more than just putting your project on a site and hitting up your friends and family. Indeed, if you want to raise \$500-\$1000, it can be quite easy, but if you want to fund a larger project and you need significant amount of money, crowd funding becomes a whole different ball game.

A successful crowd funding campaign takes serious preparation. The name of the process gives it away; for you to raise a nice chunk of money, you actually need a crowd who is willing to donate. If you do not have a crowd, you need to create it first.

For the most part, whatever business you are in, building a crowd will be the most important tool for your success. Andrew Carnegie, who at one point was the richest man in the world, said: "Take away my factories, but leave my people, and soon we will have a new and better factory."

Building your group can happen several ways. Here are three steps to help you get started.

(1.) Create an Email / Mailing List

Make sure to add anyone and everyone you know. Most people know more people than they think they know. Here are some examples whom you can add to your list: family members, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, people from your phone and Facebook, neighborhood members, companies whose services

you use, non-profits you donate to, non-profits with similar causes, churches, societies, local libraries, art organizations, consulates, embassies, various organizations, publications you read, websites you visit, online communities, travel agencies, etc.

(2.) Create a Business Card Book.

Having a physical piece of paper in hand helps many people to remember a friend better. And remembering each person clearly does become a challenge when your list starts growing.

(3.) Start an Intense PR/Marketing/Advertisement Campaign

The so-called "Rule of Seven" means that your people need to be reached seven times before they get involved actively. Part of your campaign could be: creating a website and social media sites, publishing a newsletter or blog, writing press releases, get listed on other people's sites, shooting a video, taking photos of your progress, etc. Generally speaking, the more you do the better results you can expect. Do not feel bad if all this sounds overwhelming. Most people do need some assistance to put an effective campaign together. Fundraising is a forte, a specialized skill and knowledge.

I suggest for you to give it a try on your own first. However, if you do not see the results you want within a few months, turn to an expert.

Klaudia Kovács created, directed, and produced the multi-award-winning, feature-length documentary, "Torn from the Flag." She has garnered several awards as an actress and acted in the film "In-Between," which was selected for the 53rd Cannes Film Festival's Univers Elle 2000 program. As a writer she is a co-author of "Hungarian America" (2002) and "Portrait Gallery of Hungarian Americans" (2003). Kovacs is in high demand as a consultant for independent film projects. www.MySuccessConsultant.com, www.TornFromTheFlag.com



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What is Art?

Musings on Art and Film

by David Worth

Is there an absolute set of aesthetic criteria that have been handed down for centuries and generations, or in the final analysis, is “Beauty” and “Art” simply in the eye of the beholder?

Can Art be defined and categorized? Or is what makes an Artist or a piece of Art simply too illusive, mercurial, confusing, incomprehensible, unfathomable, impenetrable, baffling, perplexing, mystifying, mysterious, and sometimes revolutionary or even disgusting to be categorized or explained?

If we do insist on endless critiques and analysis, do we by our persistent probing, somehow extinguish that spark of the extraordinary that drew us to the Art or Artist in the first place? I guess, that for a piece of “Art” to survive that, it is called “standing the test of time.”

Art is easy:

It is easily the most unobtainable, difficult, ineffable and impossible goal that you can ever attempt to grasp or achieve unless you happen to be born a Mozart or a Mamet.

Art is fast:

It can happen in a flash of inspiration over night or during a period of total despair after a lifetime of preparation, like a Ginsberg or a Kerouac.

Art is cheap:

It can be found and cost you absolutely nothing or it can take your entire

existence, your mind your heart your soul, your being and your life, like an Ansell Adams Photograph or a Novel by Bukowski.

Art can be recognized:

In music, the human form, children, the macrocosm and microcosm of nature, a hummingbird, a mountain range, a microbe, a redwood tree, a seashells, a sunset or the endless billions of patterns and colors in the unfathomable galaxies of the universe.

Art cannot be found:

In many expensive galleries, most television and movie studios, religious dogma, tv evangelists, on wall street, the stock exchange, insurance companies, corporate headquarters, lobbyists, congress, the pentagon, war, intolerance, racism, ignorance or any repressive, corrupt form of government.

Art can:

Make something ordinary seem profound and it can make something everyday seem timeless.

Art can:

Be frustrating, horrific, complex, tiresome and finally if we are fortunate enough, it can lead our humanity to an epiphany or even enlightenment.

The Art of Film:

Filmmaking is barely 100 years old, still it has been recognized as the great

Modern Art of the last century. Today, with all the, recycled, remakes and Super Hero CGI laden dreck being churned out by Hollywood, as well as the endless hours on hundreds of channels of absolutely unwatchable television; I'm afraid that we will have to wait to see if that same assessment will be made by the end of our present century.

From the very beginning of Filmmaking there have always been great independent Film Artists and we will mention some of them, but what excites me today is the New Technology that has totally democratized filmmaking and has made it possible for independent filmmakers of all cultures on the planet to thrive and make films...

There were several astounding Silent Film Masterpieces made early in the last century. One of the first Artistic and Cinematic achievements in the history of Filmmaking was made in 1916 by D.W. Griffith with his film, INTOLERANCE.

Can you imagine the staggering achievement back in the infancy of the film medium, of telling four (4) separate stories, from four (4) different epochs of time in one feature film:

1. The Fall of Babylon (650 BC)
2. The Crucifixion of Christ (32 AD)
3. The Slaughtering of the French Protestants by The French Catholics (1600's).

4. A Modern Story of a man about to be hung for a crime he did not commit. (1915).

As well as Hand Tinting each story a Different Color to help the audience of the early 1900's to follow along.

Mr. Griffith also used the shot of a woman rocking a cradle, when cutting between each story as a linking device and to symbolically make the statement that, with each new birth, humanity was given the chance to change from "intolerance" to tolerance.

In the final act of the film when all four stories were coming to a conclusion, Mr. Griffith often did not use the shot of the woman rocking the cradle, but was instead **Cross Cutting directly between four epochs of time!!!** A Cinematic achievement that has never been duplicated and was only attempted nearly half a century later by the French New Wave Director: Alain Resnais in his brilliant anti atomic bomb feature: HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR.

Since Mr. Resnais's film was only cutting between two epochs of time: Modern Day Japan (1950's) and the bombing of Hiroshima (1945) or Modern Day Japan (1950's) World War II France (1945) what Mr. Griffith had done nearly half a century earlier was essentially, HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR squared!

Another early Cinematic Artist was the French Filmmaker, Abel Gance with his 1927 feature: NAPOLEON. Mr. Gance could be called the "Tony Scott" of the 1920's because of how astoundingly experimental he was with the medium of Film.

He may well have been the first Filmmaker to use the Hand Held camera, which he used in NAPOLEON. He also mounted the camera on horseback and swung it from a pendulum. Mr. Gance was far ahead of his time by using 2 and 4 and 6 frame cuts, fast cutting as well

as multiple superimpositions long before these techniques would become popular with the advent of MTV and Music Videos in the 1970's.

For the climax of his epic film he actually placed three (3) cameras side by side to capture the conclusion of his film and projected the images onto three screens to create the worlds first Wide Screen extravaganza which he called "Polyvision". Nearly thirty years later, in the late 1950's, the movie studios introduced "Cinerama" using exactly the same technique in an attempt to lure Television viewers out of their living rooms and back to the movie theaters.

Nearly ten years after Mr. Gance's revolutionary techniques, by the mid 1930's both Sound and Color had been introduced to Filmmaking and by the early 1940's Filmmaking had the Artistic Cinematic achievements of both Orson Welles with CITIZEN KANE and Walt Disney with FANTASIA...

Cinematic Art continued in the late 1940's with the Italian Neo Realists, and Vittorio DeSica's BICYCLE THEIF, in Japan in 1950 with Akira Kurosawa's RASHOMON, in France in the 1950's with Alain Resnais, HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR and Jean-Luc Godard's BREATHLESS, in Sweden in the 1960's with Ingmar Bergman's PERSONA, in the USA in the 1970's with John Cassavetes' FACES, in the 1980's with Spike Lee's SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT.

Finally after a host of Independent Filmmakers that are too abundant to name, in 1999 Filmmaking achieved, the Totally Outside The Box, Totally New Paradigm of Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez's THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT. A production that unleashed, both the Internet as a marketing tool and the specter of "Reality Television".

Now well into the new millennium non-linear editing and DSLR HD capture have become second nature and behold, Hollywood was just introduced

to the new Cannon C300 by no less a Filmmaking Icon than Martin Scorsese. This is a totally professional camera can shoot at a once unthought-of 20,000 ASA (or ISO) and costs around \$18,000.

However, for the young independents of the world, we also have the latest DSLR's from Nikon and Canon, both of which can shoot at over 100,000 ASA (or ISO).

Now young "student" filmmakers, kindly come to the realization that all you need is your imagination a DSLR and Final Cut Pro or a similar non-linear editing system and suddenly you will become your own studio. Don't even quit your day job. just get your team together, kind of like the "garage bands" of the 1990's only now it's "garage filmmaking"! Then while your mastering the equipment, write a compelling script, get your cast and crew into Natural Locations using Available or Practical Light and make a movie!

Celluloid Film is dead, but Art is not dead, the tools to form your own studio can be purchased for under \$5000 and Beauty is still in the eye of the beholder. There are a lot of stories to tell, a lot of Artists yet to be born and more just waiting to be discovered...

Make Movies...

David Worth has a resume of over thirty five feature films as a Director of Photography and Director and has worked with talents like Clint Eastwood, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Shelly Winters, Roy Scheider, Dennis Hopper, Sondra Locke and Bruce Campbell. He has taught filmmaking at Chapman University, USC and at Chapman Singapore where he also lectured at the NYU Tisch Asia campus. He is presently a part time professor at UCLA and The Academy of Art University in San Francisco. His first textbook: The Citizen Kane Crash Course In Cinematography... was published in 2008 and is available at www.amazon.com. Website: www.davidworthfilm.com.

AFI Conservatory

Announces New Rolling Admissions Program

Advanced Hands-On Creative Experience in Six Disciplines — Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Screenwriting, and Production Design.

AFI Conservatory Admissions Manager Karin T. Tucker talks with StudentFilmmakers.com and *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* about AFI's new rolling admissions programs and shares tips for creating a successful application.

What sets AFI Conservatory apart from other film schools?

Karin T. Tucker: AFI follows the Conservatory model where Fellows learn by doing. During the course of the two years, Fellows team with classmates to write, produce, design, direct, shoot and edit four to ten films - adding up to 120 short narratives produced at AFI each year. Classroom training and seminars supplement the hands-on production experience. Small class size ensure that every AFI Fellow receives one-on-one instruction from a faculty of professional filmmakers with decades of experience guiding projects from script to screen. A steady stream of guest lecturers means an opportunity to learn the ropes from Masters like Jon Favreau, Werner Herzog and Steven Soderbergh.

When did AFI Conservatory begin to offer rolling admissions, and how does rolling admissions work?

Karin T. Tucker: We just implemented rolling admissions this year. December 1, 2012, is a priority deadline for all disciplines except for Directing, which is not subject to rolling admissions and maintains its December 1 deadline.

AFI Conservatory invites Cinematographers, Directors, Editors, Producers, Screenwriters, and Production Designers to attend their next Open House this season, which will take place at the Mark Goodson Screening Room, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, CA, 90027, on Thursday, October 11, 2012, 6:30pm.

Open House highlights include "Faculty & Alumni Panel" and cocktail reception. RSVP by Tuesday, October 9 at www.afi.edu.

December 1, 2012 is our priority deadline (meaning, these applications will be reviewed and interviewed first). However, completed applications and all supporting materials will continue to be accepted on a continual basis until the class is full.

What inspired AFI Conservatory's rolling admissions?

Karin T. Tucker: As we are a graduate film program that focuses on making films, our applicants are often already working in the industry. Rolling admissions gives these applicants an opportunity to apply on their time instead of having to make a decision about graduate school in a small time window.

What are the benefits of rolling admissions for graduate students, and how can graduate students best use rolling admissions to their advantage?

Karin T. Tucker: Applicants that choose to take more time can have more time to compose an application, and, applicants who choose to submit earlier can be reviewed on a first come, first serve basis. We would suggest to submit an application early on as the disciplines may fill sooner.

What kind of tips could you give students for creating a successful application?

Karin T. Tucker: The most important part of your application is the sample(s) of your work. Our Admissions committee wants to see your point of view as an artist. The Narrative Statement is also a great opportunity for you to tell us why you are choosing your particular discipline, why you are choosing AFI, what your point of view as an artist is and what you would like to accomplish in film. Please keep in mind that we teach narrative filmmaking when you are choosing your supporting material samples.

Is there a contact person and link on the AFI Conservatory website for students to get more information from?

Karin T. Tucker: Please contact Admissions at admissions@AFI.com or 323.856.7740. Please feel free to contact us with any questions!

Global Cinematography Institute (GCI)

Yuri Neyman, ASC Talks GCI, New Courses and Philosophy

Experienced cinematographers and directors are coming to the Global Cinematography Institute (GCI) to upgrade their artistic and technological potential, to learn about new cinematographer's technologies and to be more competitive on the worldwide cinematographers market. Yuri Neyman, ASC talks briefly with StudentFilmmakers.com and *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* about what's new at Global Cinematography Institute, new courses, and shares a few lighting tips.

Yuri Neyman, ASC: We finished the Second Course of our "Expanded Cinematography" classes and last week we started a new First Course, and another First Course will start on November 17th, 2012.

Based on our experience and feedback from students and teachers, new courses were added to the "Expanded Cinematography" curriculum. Also we increased screening programs and we watch now more films for such classes as "Advanced Cinematography for Feature Films," "History of Cinematography," and "Foundation of Lighting and Composition."

What are some of the key learning goals and objectives for the new courses?

Yuri Neyman, ASC: We are devoted to preparing filmmakers to take advantage of on-going advances in digital and virtual cinematography technologies. Cinematography is a global language, which uses light and darkness, composition, camera movement, colors, focus, contrast and other elements of visual grammar to bring stories to life. The Institute will provide a forum where new and experienced filmmakers from all sectors of the industry can learn about the past, present and future of the art and craft of cinematography, including digital and virtual cameras and lighting.

Describe your teaching style? What's your philosophy? What is important?

Yuri Neyman, ASC: Our main educational principle is expressed very eloquently by Oscar Wilde: "Be yourself, everyone else is already taken." And what is the most important for us is the student individual development. We formulated our teaching style as a concept of attention of all teachers to TAISA™ principles developed by GCI.

T - Talent, its recognition and nurturing.

A - Ambitions development - reasonability and practicality of ambitions in movie world.

I - Imagination and its development and application to practical needs.

S - Skill.

A- Attitude - psychological preparations to deal with so many "different" people and how to not let them destroy you.



Ron Fisher teaches students about the camera technology behind virtual cinematography.

Could you share with us three lighting tips as it relates to visual storytelling and story?

Yuri Neyman, ASC: Number One – Light must be visible. The light is the main tool of the cinematographer and if lighting is "invisible," flat and non-expressive – then the cinematographer most likely is showing to us an "unfinished" job.

Number Two – Light must be thoughtful. Audience must "understand" and accept consciously or subliminally that chosen by cinematographer lighting style helps the story and is right for the story.

Number Three – Light must "fit" the media. Not all lighting techniques developed for film production suit digital production, and some lighting technologies which are "natural" for digital cinematography, often impossible to mimic in film.

For more information visit www.globalcinematography.com

Product Review: Canon 5D Mark III

with the JuicedLink Riggy-Micro RM333

by Patrick Reis



In the digital age, the video department and the audio department often find themselves tethered together, literally. Most professional video cameras have built in XLR inputs, a simple mixer and a headphone output. Recording everything in one place is called recording in sync. In the age of the large sensor, productions are choosing to shoot with the DSLR but they've given up the ability to shoot in sync with XLR microphones.

If you've shot video with a DSLR you've found a workflow to get audio and video in sync but usually that will involve more work or more crew. The 5D Mark III comes to us with some significant audio upgrades and helped give video people some much needed control over the audio functions. Returning audio features are a built in mic, a mini jack input and manual control over the sound levels. What's new is that those sound levels are now visible on screen while recording. Even better, those levels can be adjusted without going back into the camera menu system. And even better, those levels can be adjusted, silently, while recording. Did I get your attention? None of those features does you any good unless you can hear it and now you can because the Mark III has a headphone output with volume control. The only thing missing is some XLR inputs but I don't think you'll ever see those on a DSLR. Still photographers don't want XLR inputs on the camera body and this camera is really for them, not us video people.

"Users have this misconception that they need to use an external audio recorder because they cannot get good signal-to-noise performance recording directly to the camera. This is not correct. Using a JuicedLink low-noise preamplifier, you can achieve excellence signal-to-noise in the camera. Plus, recording directly to the camera is a much better production flow. You will not need to sync in post. There's only one place that you need to hit record (in the camera) say you can't forget to record your audio. Plus, the preamp has an instantaneous boom time, see you won't miss a recording when you're eventing."
~Robert Rozak, JuicedLink

So the question remains, how do I shoot in sync with XLR microphones? The answer is a small, but powerful, device call the Riggy-Micro RM333 by JuicedLink. This little box gives you three XLR inputs (the left channel can handle two inputs but they are married onto the left channel), level control for each input, mic or line level for each input and phantom power (12v or 48v). The shape and size of the box is quite small making it easier to maintain the small footprint of the DSLR body and still have access the camera battery. Like previous models it can attach to the bottom of the camera body but if you pair the unit with the Riggy Bracket RB200 you can mount onto the camera shoe and actually gain two shoes on the top and side of the RM333. With the Riggy Bracket RB401 the unit rests on the bottom of the camera but the bracket gives you a vertical support column of cold shoes for receiver placement. Or a camera light. Or an external monitor. Or all three!

What you won't find on the RM333 are level meters or headphone output because this device is designed for the newer generation of DSLRs that have meters on screen and a built in headphone jack. The pre amps in the JuicedLink have a noticeably quieter signal to noise ratio so you'll want to set the DSLR levels to their lowest mark and boost the levels on the RM333. If you haven't done this you'll hear a room hiss in your headphones. If you have followed these steps and you still hear that room hiss it's most likely your microphone.

Another feature worth mentioning is Audio Output Bracketing. If you have a situation where you only have one mic and the levels could clip, this feature gives you a second channel but set lower (-16 dB) so if the main channel clips, the second lower channel is safe.

The 5D Mark III with a RM333 by JuicedLink is the missing link to getting your audio and video in sync again.

Student Perspective

Filming with the Sony HVR-Z7U and a Custom Slider

by David Daudelin

One of my film professors told me that it's easy to tell what's wrong in a film. It's a lot harder to tell what's right. My constant goal as a student indie filmmaker is to find out how things are being done right and imitate them. In this article, I share a couple products I've found that make a huge difference in the quality of my films.

When I started filming my first serious, live-action short film, I wanted to find a video camera for around \$5,000 that would give me professional results. At the time, I was unaware of the new DSLR movement so I only looked for regular video cameras. I now think it may be better that I didn't know about DSLRs as I'll explain later. From my research, I found an overwhelming consensus that the Sony HVR-Z7U was the best choice. Some key features about the HVR-Z7U are its interchangeable lens, digital recording unit (which allows you to record simultaneously to a mini-DV tape and a CF card), and its 3 ClearVID CMOS sensors which give it better picture quality. The lens which comes by default is very good and when I went on a shoot with a professional videographer at AOL headquarters, she kept raving about the movie quality feel of the footage. The digital recorder which attaches to the back of the unit is also a great feature. Each time you start and stop recording, it automatically creates individual AVCHD video files (with a .m2t extension) which can be directly imported into editing software like Sony Vegas or Pinnacle Studio. Alternatively, since my main editing software (Avid Studio) has a problem with these clips, I can connect it to my computer with a FireWire cable and record the footage from the mini-DV tape.

When my videographer friend got a DSLR, I asked her whether she thought I should move over to that. She said that although she liked the quality she was getting from it, the problem was achieving nice motion. One of the best features of having a larger, heavier video camera is the fact that it's larger and heavier. Its physical characteristics, combined with the image stabilization feature on the camera and the 24p shooting mode make it automatically look more professional than the small Canon Vixia HG20 camcorder I used before. I love the controlled motion it gives me while shooting freehand without the bumps and sharp movements that come with a lighter camera.

The next significant piece of equipment I bought was a slider kit. Rather than purchase a thousand dollar pre-assembled one, I found a great tutorial online which described how to build a slider from two tripods, a DryLin W16-A Linear Motion system, and an extra fluid motion tripod head (along with a few screws and bolts). The DryLin system comes with a 3 foot track and a carriage which smoothly glides across it. You put the track on the two tripods (which can be adjusted to level the track), attach the fluid tripod head to the carriage, slide the carriage onto the track, and then attach the camera to the head. This gives you beautifully smooth horizontal trucking motion combined with pan and tilt. When I first used it in a short film, I was amazed at the beautifully professional feel it gave a few simple scenes and as a result, the production value it added to the whole project.

It's small things like a subtle, but perfectly smooth horizontal motion from a slider or the controlled free-hand motion and high-quality footage from a professional camera that are hard to pick out but which make an enormous impact on the quality of a video. Sometimes it's tempting to just give up and say it must take hundreds of thousands of dollars to make high quality productions. But through some relatively inexpensive and high quality devices like the Sony HVR-Z7U and the DryLin Linear Motion system, I've found that I can come a lot closer to professional movie quality with a much lower budget.



BeachTek Announces New Audio Solutions for HDSLR Filmmakers, Videographers and Crew

DXA-SLR PRO and DXA-SLR MINI updates; and introducing the new DXA-SLR PURE and DXA-BMD.

StudentFilmmakers.com and *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* talks with designer of audio adapters for camcorders and DSLR cameras, and President at BeachTek, Inc., Harry Kaufmann, about his new HDSLR adapters announced this season. BeachTek audio adapters are utilized heavily by crew, staff, and visitors and attendees at the StudentFilmmakers.com Workshops held in Manhattan, New York, and *StudentFilmmakers* exhibit booths at industry tradeshow around the world.

BeachTek (www.beachtek.com), located in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, has announced several new HDSLR adapters. Shipping now, the DXA-SLR PRO, which is BeachTek's most sophisticated adapter, has improved features and now with 20dB gain. The DXA-SLR MINI is ideal for mics and wireless with mini-plug connectors and ships in October 2012.



The DXA-SLR PURE is a super clean, passive adapter to replace the DXA-5Da. DXA-SLR PUR is ideal as an interface for XLR wireless mics or a mixing board. The DXA-BMD is a custom audio adapter for the new Blackmagic Cinema Camera. Both the DXA-SLR PUR and DXA-BMD are shipping in December 2012.

What inspired the design of the new BeachTek DXA-SLR MINI adapter for DSLR cameras?



Harry Kaufmann: Many of our customers have told us they only use wireless mics with their DSLR cameras and do not need all the features of the DXA-SLR PRO. This is why we developed the DXA-SLR MINI. It has mini-jack inputs that can be connected to most receivers and we have eliminated the need for phantom power to reduce costs for a simpler and more affordable adapter. It is also ideal for camera mounted mics, such as the popular Rode VideoMic and VideoMic Pro. In addition, there is a stereo mini-jack input so you can now directly connect stereo mics such as the Rode Stereo VideoMic and Stereo VideoMic Pro.

Who came up with the design and concept for the BeachTek DXA-SLR MINI adapter, and how did the idea for a MINI version come about?

Harry Kaufmann: As with all of our devices, our customers are always the inspiration for our designs. Quite simply, they tell us what they want and we build it! Even with wireless gear and mics with mini-plugs that can be connected to the camera directly, there is still a need for individual channel audio level controls, clean preamplification, level meters and headphone monitoring – features missing on most of today's DSLR cameras. We incorporated all of these features and more into the DXA-SLR MINI.

In addition to the DXA-SLR PRO and DXA-SLR MINI updates, and announcements of the new DXA-SLR PURE and DXA-BMD, what are some other exciting news and happenings at BeachTek?

Harry Kaufmann: In addition, we are working on the highest capacity reachable 9 volt battery in the world. It will have the latest Lithium Polymer technology with up to three times the capacity of the best alkaline type battery and will be able to power our DXA-SLR PRO for over ten hours. Each battery will replace about 1,000 alkaline batteries saving thousands of dollars in replacement battery costs.

We are also excited about our new indestructible MultiMount with a removable top handle and super quiet microphone shock mount that neatly fits inside.

If you could share a tip or piece of advice to DSLR shooters around the globe what would it be?

Harry Kaufmann: Learn the proper use of mics and audio techniques from many of the excellent seminars available – including those through StudentFilmmakers.com. We also have lots of good information on our website and Facebook pages. www.beachtek.com

IBC2012, DV Expo 2012, and StudentFilmmakers.com Workshops Highlights

TechBytes Roundup

StudentFilmmakers.com and *StudentFilmmakers Magazine* recently wraps up a successful summer season exhibiting at industry tradeshows from Los Angeles, California, to Amsterdam, Netherlands, and hosting various cinematography, directing, and camera workshops at its Manhattan, New York City headquarters. The crew launches into the autumn season exhibiting and featuring *StudentFilmmakers Magazine's* new print and digital editions at industry tradeshows from Pasadena, CA, to New York, NY, to Washington, DC, while consistently hosting at *StudentFilmmakers NYC* headquarters new film and video workshops and networking events with upgraded curriculums to best present new techniques, best practices, and technologies. If you were unable to attend recent industry tradeshows, here's a TechBytes Roundup.



Panasonic Presents New Camera Technology and Announces Release of HD Integrated Cameras

The AW-HE60S, AW-HE60H and AW-HE2, and the AK-HC3800; and the LU40 enabled AJ-HPX600 P2 camcorder.

Panasonic presents new camera technology at IBC2012 and announces it will be releasing the HD integrated cameras, AW-HE60S, AW-HE60H and AW-HE2, and the AK-HC3800 studio EFP camera and exclusive studio system options in December 2012. Additionally, the highly innovative LU40-enabled AJ-HPX600 is scheduled for release at the end of September 2012. All devices were presented at IBC2012, in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The AW-HE60S and AW-HE60H are the first cameras to be capable of IP image monitoring. This industry first IP image output function allows IP images to be transmitted to up to 14 terminals per camera. Both models are equipped with a 1/3 type Full-HD MOS sensor and 18x optical zoom lens. The cameras can also output multiple HD/SD format signals. They incorporate the dynamic range stretch (DRS) function to minimize saturation in highlights and blocking in dark areas and the hybrid digital noise reduction (Hybrid

DNR) function suppresses afterimages even in dimly lit environment. Both cameras are also equipped with an infrared "Night mode" for shooting at night or in dark places. They also have mechanisms to allow the panning of ± 175 degrees and tilting between 90 and -30 degrees. Up to 100 AW-HE60S and HE60H cameras can also be remotely controlled in serial mode from the specially designed remote control panel (AW-RP50).

Alternatively, the other option that will be available on the market in December 2012 is the AW-HE2, which is a low-cost HD integrated model that incorporates a 1/2.33 type, 14-megapixel MOS sensor and ultra-high resolution technology to achieve approximately 2x "iA" zoom". Image cropping functions on the camera enable electronic pan/tilt/zoom controls. The camera can be remotely operated from a special remote control panel (AW-RP50), features HDMI terminals and can output multiple HD/SD format signals supporting the Full-HD progressive output (1080p).

The AK-HC3800 studio EFP camera exhibits outstanding cost effectiveness in terms of both operability and controllability. This camera ensure high-quality images are produced, with a high-sensitivity 2/3 type 2.2-mega pixel IT 3CCD and a newly developed 38 bit DSP (internal video processing circuit) with 16 bit A/D converter. It incorporates various image quality adjustment functions, such as a chromatic aberration compensation (CAC), scene file settings and a dynamic range stretch (DRS). With the camera control unit (CCU), AK-HCU200, combined with the remote operation panel (ROP), AK-HRP200G, a high-grade uncompressed optical fiber transmission camera control system can be configured at low cost. An IP connection with a LAN cable can also be supported. Moreover, a small and lightweight 17.8 cm (7 inches) LCD viewfinder, the AK-HVF70G, will also be available soon. This simple and compact system supports high-end quality studio and EFP image recording.

Panasonic and LiveU will be unveiling the LU40 enabled AJ-HPX600 P2 camcorder, one of Panasonic's new future-proof models. Thanks to the highly innovative LU40 video uplink device, the solution offers live video uplink capabilities and the LU40 can be linked via the camera's interface, giving camera operators a real-time indication of LiveU's transmission status and video transmission quality. This makes it a must-have for a remote crew.

www.panasonic.com/broadcast

RigWheels Announces New RigMount

Scale Your Solution from DIY to Complete System

RigWheels has just released an array of new products and tools designed for moving and mounting your camera in unique and versatile ways. Previously known as a DIY only tool, RigWheels new assortment offers complete flexibility in allowing you to scale your solution from DIY to complete system. The key benefit to this new system is in how the various parts can be interchanged and configured into different types of dollies, sliders, and mounts. One of the most interesting and original items in the line is the RigMount, a high-powered rare-earth magnet with surprising strength in mounting applications for video as well as still photography. RigWheels has managed to turn a few simple, well thought out parts into a very versatile and capable system at an affordable. RigWheels systems will be featured and demonstrated at the next upcoming StudentFilmmakers.com HD/SLR Filmmaking Workshops held in Manhattan, New York City. www.rigwheels.com

Atomos Announces Ronin and Ronin Duo at IBC 2012

A new portable, rack-mountable Recorder/Player/Monitor.

Atomos announces the Ronin portable Recorder/Player/Monitor at IBC 2012. Ronin is a smart solution for both fixed-facility and on-location production. "Atomos has a reputation for developing affordable low power, high functionality, portable devices. We are now leveraging our expertise to move into more production environments, including studio, broadcast and professional AV," said Jeromy Young, CEO and Founder of Atomos. "Our simple to use, touchscreen AtomOS operating system provides the ease of operation that is important to these markets."

Based on the award-winning Samurai field recorder, the Ronin features touchscreen ease of use, capture to Apple ProRes® and Avid DNxHD, professional monitoring and edit review. Like the Samurai, it can operate on location with battery or DC power, but it can also be used in a fixed facility, rack-mounted environment using AC power. In addition, the Ronin has balanced XLR inputs and outputs, along with a front panel headphone jack with channel monitoring selection. It also has an internal battery charging system for attached Atomos batteries when connected to AC power.

Ronin features include: Full HD-SDI recorder, player and monitor in one. Rugged, compact design with carry handle, 1/2 rack and rack mount compatibility. Triple redundancy power options - AC, DC (D-Tap) and continuous battery operation. Balanced XLR audio I/O SDI, timecode, Linc and Atomos Active Serial record triggering. Front panel audio controls and 3.5mm headphone jack. Adjustable front and rear feet for tilt control. Multiple 1/4 inch mounting options for cameras and accessories.

For customers needing HDMI capability, they can simply attach an Atomos Connect H2S and/or S2H converter. The Ronin's compact half-rack size makes it suitable for any video production environment.

Ronin Duo offers two side by side Ronins elegantly mounted in an included custom 19" Rack Adaptor. Combining dual HDD/SSD recording and dual 5" monitoring for recording and playback, the Ronin Duo delivers exactly what professional environments require. Back up recording and multiple monitors give confidence and peace of mind on any production. www.atomos.com



Camera Turret Crane System Returns to StudentFilmmakers.com HDSLR Filmmaking Workshops

Featuring 300 Series Crane, PT20 pan/tilt held system, 15mm matte box rails, and DSLR focus/zoom controller.

The Camera Turret 300 Series Crane sets up in less than 10 minutes. One half turn of socket screw in the internal spreader locks each extension firmly in place. Continuous cable design of PVC coating inbedded in Stainless Steel cable grabs securely for full up or down motion. Construted of 3" diameter, .125" wall 6061 aluminum. Camera Turret's PT20 pan/tilt held system has evolved to be the system by which all CT pan/tilt controllers are measured. The early systems were high quality analog, but with the limitations that analog brings. Camera Turret was the first to control pan/tilt systems by microprocessor, and have been leading the pack ever since. Run from the proportional joystick that auto centers on start up, as slow as 1 revolution in 20 minutes and as fast a 6 RPM. From the end of your crane, tripod or wall-mounted, the PT20 will create movement equal to that of the major studios. The PT20 moves cameras up to 20 pounds ease. And now it is upgradable to the GENESIS Controller for repeatability and Time Lapse. The CT 15mm matte box rail with DSLR focus/zoom controller mounts to 1/4" or 3/8" tripods, includes quick release plate, and receives 15mm (60mm on center) matte boxes. www.cameraturret.com

Sony Debuts New Technology at IBC

Sony Creative Software offers show attendees at IBC a sneak peek of Vegas™ Pro 12, the new version of their award winning NLE, along with Sound Forge™ Pro Mac, the first version of this popular digital audio editor designed exclusively for the OS X platform. The new Vegas™ Pro 12 will be featured and demonstrated at the next upcoming StudentFilmmakers.com HDSLR Filmmaking Workshops in Manhattan, New York City.

Sony's newly-released Sound Forge® Pro Mac 1.0 software is a multichannel audio recording and editing application, Sound Forge Pro Mac software was developed from the ground up on a clean slate for OS X and features an elegant interface that redefines the audio editing experience. The application ships with a full suite of audio

mastering and repair plug-ins, making it a comprehensive solution for audio professionals who work on the Mac platform.

"People who work on audio editing platforms recognize the need for a fresh option in the marketplace, one that's built for OS X as opposed to something that's simply been ported over. In addition, it's no secret that cross-platform professionals have been demanding Sound Forge for the Mac for years," said Dave Chaimson, vice president of global marketing for Sony Creative Software. "Our response is Sound Forge Pro Mac, a truly contemporary OS X design. Producers will appreciate its simple elegance, uncluttered look and amazing flexibility. The included suite of mastering and repair plug-ins makes this 1.0 edition a value-packed editing powerhouse right out of the box. Sound Forge Pro Mac is our second major OS X application release this year, and we're pleased to now be very actively engaged in application development for the Mac platform." www.sonycreativesoftware.com



Edelkrone Camera and DSLR Rigs to be Featured and Demonstrated at StudentFilmmakers.com Workshops in Manhattan, New York

Camera and Rig Systems Added to HDSLR Curriculum

Edelkrone was a recipient of the StudentFilmmakers.com NAB 2012 Best Choice award for Edelkrone's FocusPLUS+ and FocusONE systems. Edelkrone camera and DSLR rig systems and solutions will be featured and demonstrated at the next upcoming StudentFilmmakers.com HDSLR Filmmaking Workshops, in Manhattan, New York City, New York. In addition, Edelkrone's innovative Pocket Rig was recently spotlighted in StudentFilmmakers.com's E-Newsletter – *HDSLR Accessories Edition*. Less than 7 seconds setup time, the Pocket Rig will help you to be prepared and ready to start shooting stable video quickly for spontaneous events that occur during your documentary, news, and special events shoots. The Pocket Rig embodies a stabilization stick which can be extended as much as 12 inches. The stick has a chest padding on the end which creates a large contact surface on your body. You will be able to comfortably press the setup on your chest and get rid of all the micro shakes which is very bad for any type of video project. As tiny as the size of a battery grip, the Pocket Rig is a DSLR rig you can bring anywhere. The Pocket Rig doesn't attract attention and enables you to work better low profile, such as shooting DSLR in public, as well as shooting documentaries, weddings, and corporate events. The Pocket Rig has the size you can feel comfortable with in many shooting scenarios - whether you're shooting narratives or music videos, or video journalism projects. You will be able to achieve professional stable results without attracting much attention. With such a compact size you can fit all your equipment into a much smaller bag. www.edelkrone.com

The Essay Film

Conversation: Hito Steyerl, Nora Alter

Wed Oct 10, 6:30pm | The James Gallery

Sometimes referred to as "filmed philosophy," the essay film originated in the 1920s and has increasingly come to be recognized as a distinct branch of international cinema. Fusing fiction and documentary, it is a dynamic genre that continually transgresses disciplinary boundaries, a form, as Jean-Luc Godard once put it, "that thinks." What then is the relationship of this form to knowledge? In what ways does the disciplinary resistance of the essay film enable its aesthetic resistance? Join renowned filmmaker, video artist and author Hito Steyerl as she speaks with film critic Nora Alter about the history and possibilities of the essay film.

<http://centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery/events/>

The Center for the Humanities
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The City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016-4309
General Information: 212-817-2005

Sundance Institute To Return To Mass MoCA For Fall Musical And Ensemble Lab, Nov. 25-Dec. 9

The Sundance Institute Theatre Program announced that it will return to the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) for its Fall Lab, which provides creative support and direction for innovative musical theatre and ensemble-generated projects. Also announced were the three projects that have been selected to participate.

The projects selected for the Lab are:

Adler & Gibb

Conceived and directed by Tim Crouch

Iowa

Songs & lyrics by Todd Almond

Text by Jenny Schwartz

Directed by Ken Rus Schmoll

Mabou Mines' Glass Guignol

Directed by Lee Breuer

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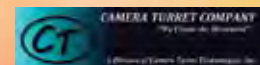
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