

Shane Daly



Q Is there any particular style you like to shoot in, or any particular medium you prefer to use?

A I've always felt that I'm a features DP in my heart. I fell in love with narrative cinematography in the cinema and that's always been my destination. I really enjoy shooting commercials too but films are ultimately where I see myself concentrating. As I've developed as a DP I've realised that documentaries aren't for me. I love watching them - my TV hard disk is always full of *Cutting Edge* and *Dispatches!* - but I would feel frustrated making them, not being able to light and shoot with any level of control.

My favourite format is anamorphic film - it looks and feels slightly different from the way we see, distorted, smudged but beautiful. I grew up lost in fantasy films and anamorphic photography complements the fantastical worlds in those films - it doesn't record in the spherical way that the eye sees and so distances us from reality into cinema. I remember loving the feel of the Bond movies before I even knew what anamorphic was!

I also love the fact that it's the highest resolution 35mm format, I instantly fell in love with the shallow DOF and anamorphic artefacts, the elliptical highlights and beautiful flares. Now that I've shot a lot of anamorphic work, particularly on the Panavision E and C series, I feel most comfortable shooting with that format. I used to search for the cleanest, sharpest images possible but lately I've become very interested in softer pictures. Soft light and sharp lenses seems to interest me at the moment. Using smoke has given my work a different feel recently and has been something I've enjoyed.

I'm proud that my reel has many different looks that hopefully all suit each story. I never want to be pigeon-holed as the 'glossy guy' or the 'b&w guy'. I have tried very hard to use the craft to create different looks as necessary in camera as much as possible. I think anyone can shoot a neutral neg and grade it later; it takes more skill to hone the image through stock choice, camera set-up, lenses, filters and lighting.



Most of the clips on my reel were achieved largely in camera, or at least only polished in the grade. Grading is a fantastic process which I have embraced completely and know well, but I think it's a finishing tool to be used as an element when constructing an overall approach, not as something to rely on.

My theory is that cinematography must ALWAYS be story led, so I think the format is the first creative choice from the Director and DP and should suit the story. Loach's films wouldn't suit anamorphic photography and *Indiana Jones* couldn't be shot on S16mm. So I think it's a great shame when the budget or broadcaster dictates the format irrespective of the story. I would shoot a feature on DV or a mobile phone if that was most appropriate to enabling and delivering the plot and performances, biggest isn't always best.

Q Where do you stand in the film vs video debate?

A Nothing compares to film yet. It's not all about resolution it's about feel. We are organic creatures and we tell organic stories - film captures that in the same way. There's a synergy present that delivers more than just an image, there's texture, a patina, a soul to film. A producer friend once told me that that is a hopelessly romantic argument but there you are! If it's a cliché it's one I stand by. A love story just doesn't fit into binary code - not yet at least.

Q Where do you see yourself in say the next five years?

A I've just moved agents up to McKinney Macartney and I'm thrilled with the change. I've shot several features but I hope the next five years will see me established in the company of the film DPs whose work I respect so much. I want to tell interesting stories that affect and move people, promote thought and discussion and ultimately of course entertain! If I can manage to create worlds like those I grew up in I'll be happy.