

C I N E M A T O G R A P H Y

W O R K S H O P



led by
CAMERON HEO

organized by
SARAH BUCHANAN

from the
CAPILANO UNIVERSITY FILM STUDENT COLLECTIVE

CINEMATOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

film collective

CHAPMAN

led by **cameron heo**

groups!

5 points if you name the movie/tv show from a still on this powerpoint

1 point for every relevant question your group asks

part 1...



**who the fuck is a
director of photography?**



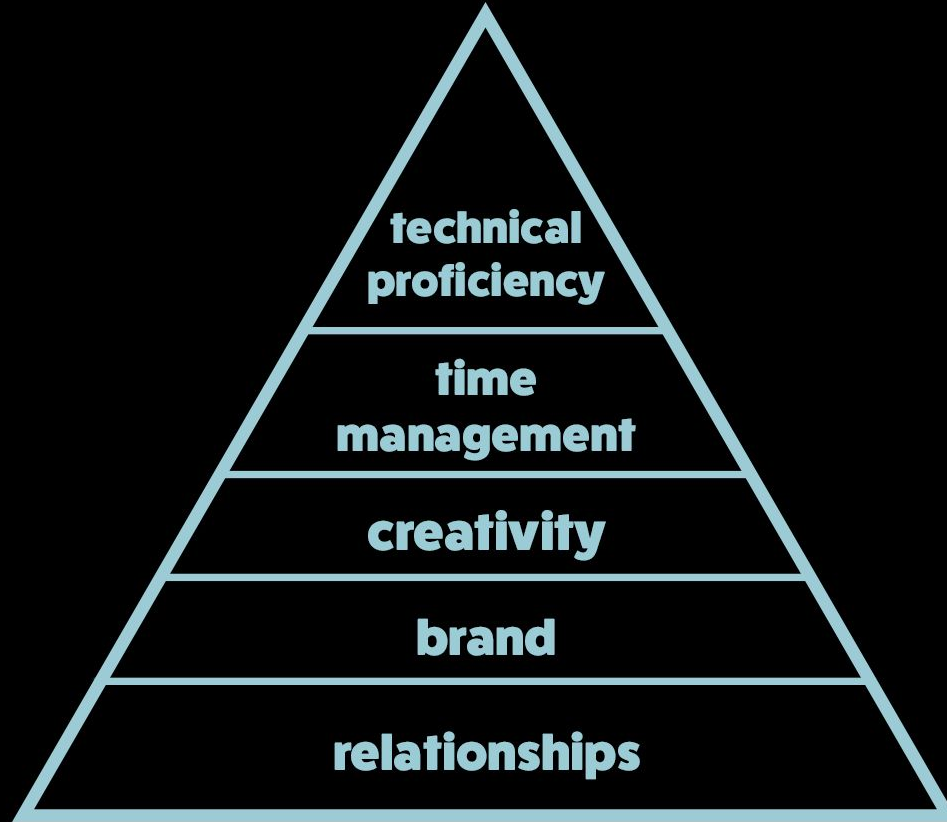
i make camera and light go
brrrrrrrrrrrr.

- cameron heo



Cam's Pyramid of Responsibility

Cam's Pyramid of Responsibility



Creating an Image

- “Don’t light faces, light spaces”
- Camera (Composition) or Lighting?

Creating an Image

- “Don’t light faces, light spaces” BULLSHIT!
- Lighting VS Composition
- **Get out of the ‘cinematographer’ mindset and get into the ‘creator of a super awesome frame that feels full and tells the story’ mindset**
 - Think about: mis en scene, help with locations, collaborate heavily with art department and the director



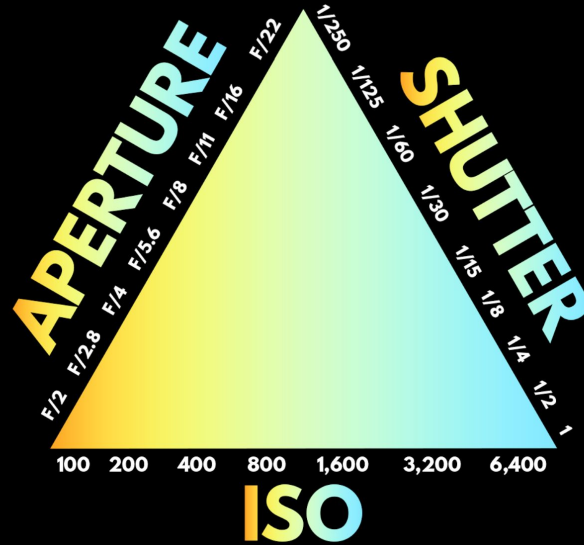




Creating an Image

- The image should have meaning on its own
- Use the camera!
 - Bryn McCashin method
 - Find the frame, work with what you've got
 - Every light is two problems
- Whether or not the movie looks good or bad falls onto you
 - Your job is not a checklist

Exposure Triangle + Helpful Tips



On Exposure

- Lifeblood of lighting
 - Should become an unconscious thought process, a second language
- You will underexpose... I promise
 - Histogram, false colour, etc. are all life savers
 - LUT utilization
 - Crunchy LUT technique
 - Colour grading
- Clipping? Is it okay?
 - If it's intentional, sure* (client approved)
- Lock the things you can't change, then focus on the variables
 - Shutter -> ISO -> Aperture/ND -> Lighting -> ISO (if needed)



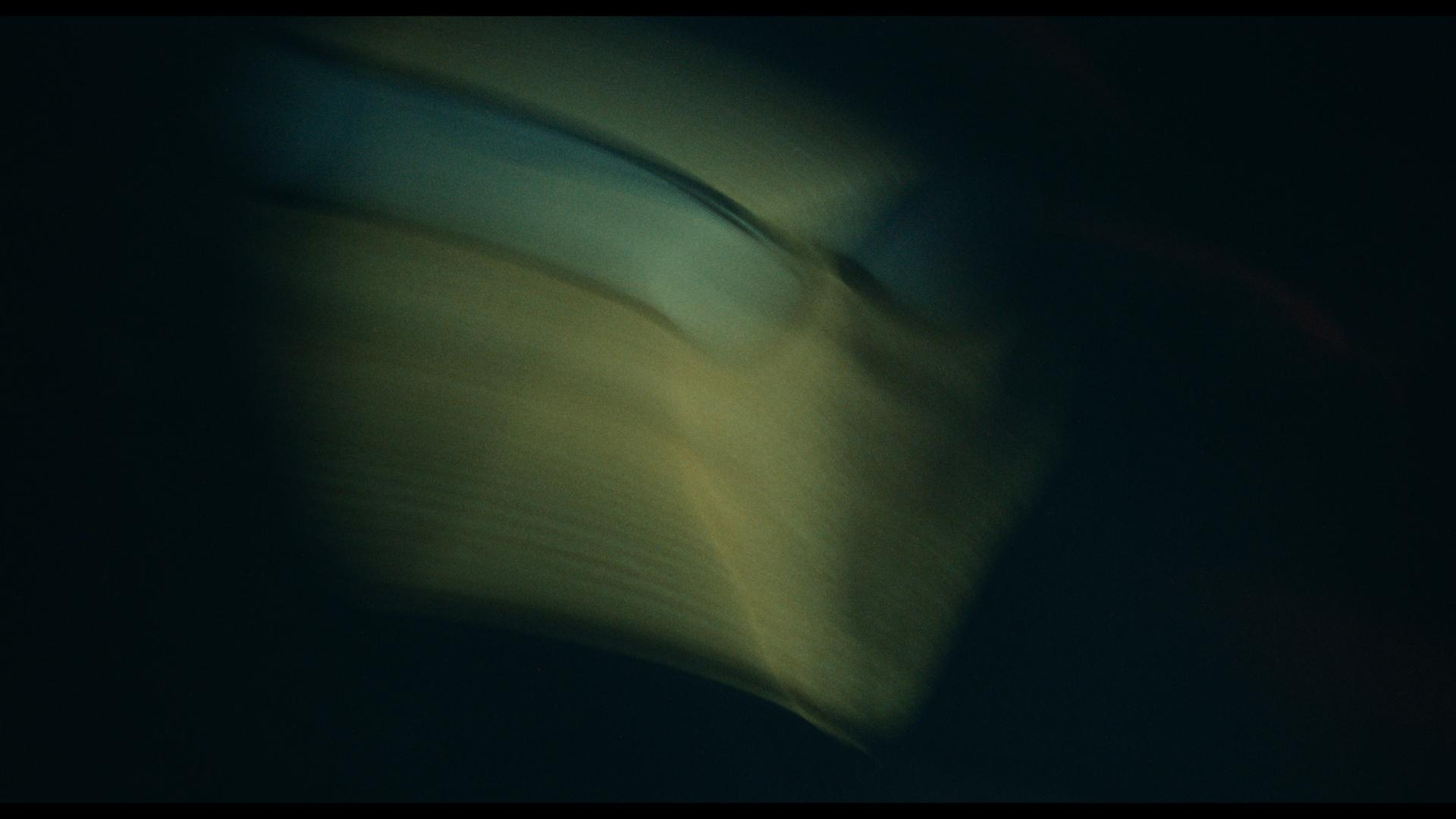




Shutter Angle/Speed

- Controls “motion blur”
- Often unchanged
- Can be used to create a step-print effect or keep movement feeling sharp
 - Step print: Wong Kar Wai
 - Sharp movement: Saving Private Ryan





Aperture

- Controls depth of field
- Of the big three, this is the one I change the most
- Very, personal subjective tip: I often shoot pretty wide open
 - Low-budget productions often have small art budgets and not massive LX crews/packages
 - Adds a bit of production value for the normie viewer

David Bolen on Some Kind of Heaven: “It’s amazing the exposure you can get with the Alexa Mini at 1600 ISO and a Superspeed wide open.

ISO

- You're not just getting more light for free
 - Amplifying signal
 - Leads to more grain
 - Arri grain looks yummy, RED grain looks yucky*
- When shooting at higher ISOs, dig. cameras prioritize not clipping highlights
- When shooting at lower ISOs, dig. cameras prioritize not clipping shadows
- I often shoot daylight scenes at 1600ISO on Arri and crank the ND



Gear: Does it make a difference?

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- Just tools
 - If you can't create a great image on a C100, you can't on an Alexa 35
- **BUT!** Once you understand the nuances gear can provide, **YES**, gear can help you tell your stories
- You want to make sure you have the tools to succeed (2nd year MOPA)
 - Can you compete with daylight? Do your lenses have strong chromatic aberration wide open? How many pages are you shooting a day? Who is your crew?

Gear makes a difference... If you know how to use it!

Lens Choice (in terms of focal length)

- Your lens choice matters!
 - It's your secret weapon as a DP
- Creates so much subconscious emotion
 - Deakins on being between (wide) or outside (tight) the characters
- Terrence Mallick / Benny Safdie
 - Ultra Wide / Ultra Tight

12mm



85mm



Things to Understand

- Far-side key
 - Beginner way to add contrast
 - Adds the challenge of placing lights “in front” of the camera
 - Not the only way to add contrast
- Inverse Square Law
 - Light levels decrease to the square of the distance away you are from the source
 - Close to the light source, light fall off is very noticeable
 - Far from the light source, light fall off is less noticeable

Things to Understand

- Hard Light VS Soft Light
 - Stop being afraid of hard light
 - Generally, only using one feels inorganic/ugly*
 - Using both creates a true-to-life, cinematic image
- Colour Temp
 - 5600K and 3200K are not the only two colour temps
 - Use everything in between
 - I often mix colour temps when lighting “daylight”
- Exposure Tools:
 - False Colour, Histogram, Zebra etc

Things to Understand

- Depth & Contrast
 - Bread and butter of the sexy, cinematic, A24 image
 - Find ways to add light and colour contrast
 - Use elements of foreground, midground, and background
- Codecs
 - When to shoot ProRes 422 (10 bit) VS 4444 (12bit) VS RAW
 - I try and shoot at least 4444 as often as I can
 - RAW Compression Ratios
 - Trade offs: Remember

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part 2...

The image shows a library interior with rows of wooden bookshelves filled with books. The background is a dark brick wall. The ceiling has a grid pattern. The text "succeeding in" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, and "mopa" is written in a red, cursive font below it.

succeeding in

mopa



is film school beneficial...

why or why not?

Film School: Is It Worth It?

- If you want it to be
- SFU, UBC, USC, NYU
 - It's all the same shit in different piles
- You're in a fishbowl, not the big pond
 - Test yourself
- The Industry VS Film School
 - Fairness
- Regardless, you're here

On Film School

- You have a timer of four years to:
 - Figure out how not to make a bad movie
 - Figure out how to make a good movie
 - Create lasting, professional and relationships

- **Is MOPA competitive?**



what's your goal for film school?

MOPA as a DOP

- There's one, undying fear every MOPA student has...
- So what do you do?



build the winning ship

MOPA as a DOP

- Find the most driven people quickly, build the ship together
- Create as much as possible
 - Make mistakes
 - Dream big
 - Inevitably, through practice, you will make something good
 - When people notice the winning ship sailing away, everybody wants on
- It takes one person to derail an entire production
 - Bad gaffer story
 - The winning ship protects you to a certain extent

MOPA as a DOP

- Is MOPA competitive?
 - Fuck yeah! But not in the way it's advertised
- There's only so many directors/writers/producers in the program
 - Of that there's even fewer **talented** directors/writers/producers
 - They must call somebody to DP their movies
 - It will either be you or somebody else in the program
- How can you do this?

MOPA as a DOP

- As a DP in this program, you're 50% a producer
 - Push shit out the door! Get people off their asses! Make things happen!
- People are lazy because they are scared
 - Connect -> Make movies
- Show people the light, and they'll walk
 - Especially if your brand is strong
- Learn everything!
 - Directing, writing, production design, locations
 - The degree of your success hinges on the success of your work
 - But don't overstep... At least try not to :)

The only way to fail in MOPA...

The only way to fail in MOPA...

Is to not have fun and learn from your mistakes.

part 3...

A behind-the-scenes photograph from the movie 'The Godfather Part II'. In the center, Al Pacino as Michael Corleone sits in a director's chair, wearing a red short-sleeved shirt and smoking a cigar. To his left, Al Pacino as Vincent Corleone stands with his arms crossed, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt. To the right, a camera operator with a beard is operating a large professional camera on a tripod. The background is a studio with soundproofing panels and lighting equipment. The text 'what's my path?' is overlaid in pink in the center of the image.

what's my path?

What's My Path?

- Progress is not a straight line
- Your path is unique to you
 - You pave your own way
 - Use your strengths
- There is no clear-cut answer or ladder to climb in film
- Just start!

On Work...

- To tech or not to tech
 - My advice: get in and get out as fast as you can
 - Many get stuck here
 - Learn, make connections
- There is no: 2nd AC -> 1st AC -> Cam Op -> DOP
 - Unless you want to wait 20 years and wait for a magical chance
- My first summer in Vancouver
- Don't let your brand become 'technician'

What's My Path?

- Smaller set DP -> Bigger set DP
- As you scale up, you will begin to have the luxury of choice
- How do I start? Look for opportunities!
 - Make movies with friends
 - Facebook groups!!!
 - Light a scene alone at home
 - To an extent
- As you begin to create, people will notice... This is your 'brand'

On Gear

- Should I buy gear?
 - Maybe
- My philosophies on gear:
 - I don't expect to be hired off my gear (pls don't do this)
 - I don't expect my gear to make my work look good
 - I don't expect to make money off my gear
 - I do expect that I can use my gear to practice and learn
 - I do expect that I can use my gear to help my friends make indie shorts
- If you are going to buy gear expecting to make money, research first

On Gear

- Rental Houses
 - Make relationships
- Don't let the producer take that connection away from you
 - It is rightfully yours!
- It's all about your 'brand'
 - There is a difference between "kid who saw Arri on a YouTube video and thinks its cool" VS "kid who understands cinema and is keen to learn"
- Treat the gear with respect, treat the rental houses with respect
 - They are doing you a favour

On Gear

- Local rental houses:
 - William F White's/Sunbelt
 - Sparky's
 - Brightside Cinema
 - Keslow Camera
 - Inspired Image
 - + More!!!

- Network!

Networking

- The best networking, is no networking
 - Just be chill, man
 - The best thing you can learn is how to be a good listener
- Strategic relationship building is important
 - Who does each, individual person need you to be?
 - Your 'brand' can and will vary from person to person
- Networking happens on many scales, just present a good brand and people will like you

Networking

- What if people don't like me?
 - Some people won't, even for no reason
 - It doesn't matter, let it go

Rejection & Jordan Hall's god-tier advice

Rejection

- There's so much rejection in the industry
- Confidence in yourself
- Things happen for a reason
- There is only one way to handle rejection/failure for me...
 - Cover letter example

Balance

- Detach your ego from your career
- Find other hobbies and things to be confident about
- Have a life outside of film work
- Live holistically*
 - You're one entity, one person

Final (Cheesy) Pieces of Advice

- Your passion for filmmaking will sometimes be the only thing keeping you going
- MOPA movies often die at either the script or the crew-up
- Watch lots of movies
- Make a decision and live with it
 - Trust your gut
- Everything will be fine as long as you don't give up
- All emotions are a larger part of the human experience, embrace everything

Final (Cheesy) Pieces of Advice

- Never be waiting on you
 - One hour rule
- Decision-making and your internal compass
- Set your goals higher than you think
- Take things one step at a time
- You get to just make movies with your friends for four years
 - If you play it right, for the rest of your life

So have fun!

Q&A

KAHOOT to end!

thank you <3