

Polly Morgan

The Truth About Emanuel (2012), *The Pretty One* (2012), *We'll Never Have Paris* (2013), BBC's *Call The Midwife* (2014)

Q: In the last 10 years what has been the biggest change for you as a cinematographer?

A: Actually becoming a cinematographer! Ten years ago I was a clapper-loader, so it's been quite a journey over the last decade.

Q: What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing cinematographers today?

A: Our biggest challenge comes from the ever-changing technology and the fact that digital acquisition has seemingly "opened up" the art of cinematography to producers, directors, VFX supervisors and colour graders. I sometimes feel that people forget that cinematography consists of artfully combining lighting, movement, colour and framing to tell the story and that technology is simply a tool to create that art. And that our job begins way before production starts, where so many of the important choices are made. To be part of such advances in modern filmmaking is exciting stuff, but today cinematographers have to fight to be trusted with the image and keep their vision true to the end.

Q: How do you feel digital compares to celluloid imagery and acquisition?

A: I am constantly impressed with the ever-increasing latitude, resolution and colour rendition of the latest digital cameras, as well as the ergonomics of new designs. However, I believe that despite the incredible advances of digital cinema, the experience of shooting on film is a more rewarding physical experience, and that there is something about celluloid imagery that, for me, is more pleasing.

There is something amazingly satisfying in exposing on negative and creating beautiful creamy skin tones and complex colours without the need for a DI. The texture of grain, the rolling highlights, the wide colour gamut – all those things that are unique to shooting on film. There is no doubt that cinematographers around the world are creating stunning imagery with digital cameras, and that the technology is opening up new and exciting ways to tell a story, however the creation of LUTs, the issues with calibrating monitors and the authorship of the DI are modern headaches that make digital imagery complex.

Q: What developments would you like to see in the future?

A: It would be amazing to have some kind of real standard on compression and viewing screens, so that when your work is seen on iPhones, televisions or the big screen, you could rest assured that it will be seen the way you intended.

Q: What has been the most significant technological development in the last 10 years?

A: The fact that a high proportion of the global population has access to shoot "video", to tell their stories and then broadcast them across the world is pretty phenomenal.

Q: What films, or which cinematographer's work, have you been most impressed with in the last 10 years?

A: I've been equally impressed with photographers and artists alike, but I've loved the work of Natasha Braier (*The Rover*, 2014), Hoyte Van Hoytema (*Let The Right One In*, 2008 and *Call Girl*, 2012) Bradford Young (*Pariah*, 2011 and *Ain't Them Bodies Saints*, 2013) and Greig Fraser ACS ASC (*Bright Star*, 2009). I also love Harris Savides ASC (*Zodiac*, 2007), Seamus McGarvey (*Atonement*, 2007) and Christopher Doyle (*In The Mood For Love*, 2000). Robbie Ryan is on my list too, he's so great.

feel comfortable with digital image capture and I finally put down my light meters soon after. I love the look of celluloid and I soon found digital an even more flexible medium. I found I could still manipulate lighting to get the tone and colour contrast I loved with film, and also be able to shoot even softer, lower contrast images in extremely low light when desired. After several years working in the digital world, and now working with the most advanced digital cameras, I don't know whether I would go back to shooting film again.

Q: What has been the most significant technological development in the last 10 years?

A: Obviously the transition from film to digital was a major one and we finally have extremely high definition cameras that can capture great imagery. Also the amount of affordable HD cameras has made filmmaking so much more accessible for all filmmakers.

Q: What developments would you like to see in the future?

A: I like anything that facilitates making our creative process more efficient. Digital cameras are just about as small as they need to get, there's not a lot more miniaturisation necessary. Higher ISOs will allow even more freedom with smaller lighting packages and the ability to shoot in darker, ambient-lit night environments. Lighting has come a long way with LED technology and will continue to improve. I like it when you can make lighting colour temp and intensity changes instantly, tweaking while the camera is rolling, whether through a dimmer desk or individual remote lamp control. I also appreciate being able to make quick lighting adjustments and turnarounds without slowing down the flow of the shoot. I love to be able to move a camera anywhere in three-dimensional space without restrictions,



DP favourite...
Let The Right One In (2008)
by Hoyte Van Hoytema



DP favourite...
Atonement (2007)
by Seamus McGarvey
BSC ASC



DP favourite...
In The Mood For Love (2000)
by Christopher Doyle

such as with the miniature Octocopter. I'm sure that drones like this will come into play much more as the programmable GPS software, stabilisation technology, reliability and safety features advance.

Q: What films, or which cinematographer's work, have you been most impressed with in the last 10 years?

A: I am always impressed when I see a film where the imagery melds beautifully with the story and I know it's mostly about the director and cinematographer's relationship. A few cinematographers whose films I have admired over the last ten years are Emmanuel Lubezki, Roger Deakins, Robert Richardson, Janusz Kaminski and Rodrigo Prieto. Besides their individual talent they have all teamed up with great directors along the way.