

GENERATION NEXT

FIVE AWESOME NEW GUILD
TALENTS TELL THEIR STORIES

by **MARGOT CARMICHAEL LESTER** *photos courtesy of THE MEMBERS*



Welcome to our fourth annual Generation NEXT spotlight on five rising young Local 600 cinematographers, whose work is as diverse as their creative passions. What they all have in common is a love for innovation and new digital media, while still relishing old-school techniques - a combination that produces memorable moviemaking while still pushing the art and craft of cinematography. Each is aware they're working at the edge. "It's a very big step for humans," observes Gen. NEXTer Ben Kasulke, "to accept that the lasting visual narrative of who we are is now being archived on something as ephemeral as the Internet or ever-changing data-storage technology."



POLLY MORGAN, 33

Home: Los Angeles

Education: MFA in Cinematography, American Film Institute, 2010

Favorite film: Lynne Ramsey's *Ratcatcher*

Most recent DP gig: *American Horror Story*

Potent Quotable: Filmmaking is a team effort, and each crewmember is as diverse, talented and important as the next. One of the exciting aspects of my job is the opportunity to work with so many different and inspiring individuals.

Union Love: Working with union members ensures that my crews are highly skilled in their varied disciplines of filmmaking, and being a part of the Union means that I am a member of a professional family that supports, nourishes and educates its members.

While a student at AFI, Polly Morgan learned some valuable lessons from the future Oscar-winning DP, Wally Pfister, ASC, whom she assisted on *Inception*. "He taught me to tell people what I needed, not what I would like, and how to manage my crew," the British expat recalls. "Most of all, he helped me sophisticate my knowledge of lighting and hone my aesthetic."

Morgan's career began as an AC on commercials, music videos and movies, such as *V for Vendetta* and the *Hairspray* remake. As a DP, she has shot a string of festival-award-winning shorts and indie features, and she is now shooting additional photography on critically lauded episodics like *American Horror Story*. Last year, her work earned an ASC Rising Star award, and the BSC placed her in 'the new wave.' Recently she has been heralded for her work on the Canon short *Mobius* that was commissioned to showcase the Canon C300.

All that said, her favorite project is her most recent feature, *The Pretty One*, directed by Jenée LaMarque, in which their character's journey is charted with precise visual motifs. The look

was influenced by *Any Human Heart*, shot by Wojciech Szepel, who Morgan says "tackled the different time periods in an elegant yet visually exciting way. His lighting, framing and choice of lenses fit the narrative perfectly and conveyed the emotions of the main character, from fearless youth to lonely old age. Szepel helped to inspire my choices in composition and encouraged me to be bold and to not stick to classic framing."

Morgan is excited by the accessibility of filmmaking in the digital era. "With new affordable cameras, post software and access to broadcasting, young filmmakers are able to create and distribute their work and develop careers," she adds.

And she's ready to guide the next generation much as she was guided by the one before her. "One of the best things about the industry is the process of mentorship and advancement and how people are open and willing to help those below them on the crew list," Morgan concludes. "It's something I have been fortunate to benefit from, and I hope that I can do the same for others in the future."

