



Film stocks
KODAK VISION2 100T 5212, KODAK VISION2 500T 5218

Post-production
Prasad Lab, Chennai

Digital Intermediate
Hollywood Intermediate, Los Angeles

Santosh Sivan
discusses

Before the Rains

Before the Rains is set in 1930s southern India against the backdrop of a growing nationalist movement. The story follows an idealistic young Indian man (played by Rahul Bose) who finds himself torn between his ambitions for the future and his loyalty to the past when locals learn of an affair between his British boss (Linus Roache) and a village woman (Nandita Das). The film marks the English language debut of acclaimed Indian director-cinematographer Santosh Sivan (*The Terrorist*, *Asoka*).

"I was fascinated by this story because it is timeless and universal," says Sivan. "I liked the collision of cultures and the shifting points of view, along with the fact that the characters are so complex. I am always interested in exploring grey shades of people, not just black or white. The land is also a main character in this film."

Before the Rains was produced in less than 33 days on locations in Kerala. The look that Sivan created for the film was partly inspired by sketches and paintings. "I have always been inspired by all kinds of painters, and I do a little sketching myself," explains Sivan. "Sketching is like taking pictures, because one tends to observe minute details much more, and tries to recreate lines and shades to bring out the subject."

"This film is layered with metaphors with the road being one of them, as it depicts the act of violence on nature as the story unfolds. I illustrated this by shooting the film in a style reminiscent of pre-Raphaelite paintings in which the Earth itself carries sentiment and is full of symbolism and meaning. The characters are thus miniaturized in the emotional landscape and imagery of the Garden of Eden, lost again to guilt and sin."

Sivan worked with ARRI 535 and 435 cameras mounted with Cooke S4 series lenses. He primarily used wide-angle lenses to better frame nature as a key character in the story.

He selected KODAK VISION2 100T 5212 and 500T 5218 films for his palette. "I chose these stocks because of how they capture subtleties," explains Sivan. "I like the way the color jumps out at you, and at the same time gives you the subtle detail of color reflected in dark areas and shadows. I feel quite comfortable with the range of the Kodak stocks."

Sivan also knew that he would get a chance to fine tune his work in post-production. The film was processed at Prasad Lab in Chennai, and the negatives were scanned and sent west to Hollywood Intermediate in Los Angeles, where digital intermediate (D.I.) timing was done.

"In the film, characters from different backgrounds struggle to achieve a great partnership, but the making of this film felt like a true collaboration between East and West," says Sivan. "It was a wonderful feeling to work with talented actors from England, the United States and India. Each brought something unique to the production. It is always fascinating and pleasurable when numerous languages are spoken and numerous people have to adjust to different approaches and points of view."

Before the Rains has been showcased at festivals worldwide, and earned Best Theatrical Feature, Best Cinematography, and Best Music at the WorldFest International Film Festival.