

The anatomy of **Factory**



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Think of *Factory Girl* as a painting in motion that artfully captures a tragic slice of life in the New York City art scene during the mid-1960s. One of the main characters is Edie Sedgwick, a beautiful, rich party girl who drops out of Radcliffe College in Massachusetts and re-settles in Manhattan. The other main character is a struggling young artist named Andy Warhol.

Warhol promises to make Edie a movie star, but the story devolves into a tragedy as she slips into the drug culture prevalent in the 1960s. Director George Hickenlooper and cinematographer Michael Grady collaborated on translating the complex and intimate story into a compelling film. Sienna Miller was cast as Sedgwick and Guy Pearce portrays Warhol.

“We watched tons of Warhol movies and documentaries that

focused on him to get a sense of who he was and what that time and place looked like,” Grady recalls. “Warhol always had an 8mm or 16mm camera around, and most of his film was raw and harshly lit.”

Grady describes the motion picture canvas envisioned by the director as a post-modern collage that reflects a tactile sense of the time and place in which the story evolves. There are black-and-white flashbacks of Sedgwick as a child, in high school and at art classes at Radcliffe. There are additional pieces of film simulating Warhol’s 8mm and 16mm camera work and video news and documentary footage focusing on him.

Grady considered using silver retention and other lab techniques until he and Hickenlooper began sharing ideas and feelings about how Oliver Stone and

- 1 (Front, L-R) Cinematographer Michael Grady lines up a shot with actor Guy Pearce.
- 2 Cinematographer Michael Grady takes a light meter reading on actress Sienna Miller.
- 3 (L-R) Actors Guy Pearce, Jack Huston and Sienna Miller in a scene from the film.

photos by: Patti Perret

Girl

How Michael Grady explored new territory



Robert Richardson, ASC visually punctuated the emotional flow of *JFK* by shooting scenes in 8mm, 16mm and 35mm formats, using eight different color and black-and-white films.

"At one point we were going to shoot in all three of those formats along with some video, but it ended up just being Super 16, Super 8 and a little bit of video," he says. "Everyone was taken aback when they heard that we shot it mainly in Super 16 with some Super 8 film. They assumed it was all about saving money, but we had around a \$9 million budget, so it was mainly an aesthetic decision."

They spent a few days establishing settings in Cambridge and Manhattan, but principal production took place in Shreveport and New Orleans, Louisiana. Grady notes that location was chosen

primarily because of financial incentives, but the buildings were a reasonable architectural match for New York in 1965. The authorities were cooperative and there were ample extras and period cars. Some key sets were built in an empty warehouse.

Panavision provided the Super 16 gear, including an ARRI SR3 camera with Cooke SR4 prime and Canon 8-64mm and 11-138mm zoom lenses. Grady asked Panavision to strip the coating off a Zeiss 10-100mm zoom lens for shots where they envisioned "kind of a *Saving Private Ryan* look." He also used a couple of older lenses when he wanted a flared look.

Grady assembled a comparatively large palette of films, including KODAK VISION2 500T 7218, KODAK VISION 200T 7217 and KODAK VISION 7274 films, two Ektachrome color reversal films,

and four Kodak black-and-white emulsions. Pro8MM, in Burbank, provided the Super 8 camera and films. They also handled lab and telecine work for all the Super 8 and the Super 16 color reversal films. FotoKem in Burbank was responsible for the rest of the Super 16 front-end lab work. The miniDV camera was used for a few video news interviews.

"We shot some home movies of Edie's childhood in Super 8, but sometimes there was no rhyme or reason to why we chose formats or stocks, other than we felt they were right for a shot or scene," Grady says. "Sometimes I used black-and-white and color reversal stocks for shots that called for a found documentary look. I wasn't worried about a uniform grain structure because the nature of the story called for different looks."

Hickenlooper and Grady created a visual arc for Sedgwick designed to make a subliminal impression on the audience as the story evolves. "She looks innocent and beautiful in the opening scenes," Grady explains. "I used backlight, soft sources and a little filtration on lenses. After Edie begins using drugs, and her life starts sliding downhill, the look gradually gets rawer. By the end, there are shadows under her eyes with no softening of the look."

The various film and digital formats will be blended into a uniform format during digital intermediate (DI) timing, where Hickenlooper and Grady will put final touches on the look for continuity and emotional content. The timed digital file will be recorded on 35mm color intermediate film for distribution by The Weinstein Company.