

# Kodak Look Manager System facilitates collaboration on **Final Destination 3**

**C**heating Death: *Final Destination 3* centers on a high school senior who has a premonition of a fatal roller coaster accident. It is the fourth collaboration between cinematographer Rob McLachlan, ASC, CSC, and director James Wong. This time, McLachlan used Kodak Look Manager System (KLMS) to help communicate his intentions for the visual style of the film to all his various collaborators in the visual effects and post-production arenas.

In spite of the large number of visual effects slated for the film, the production planned on a traditional optical post-production process rather than a digital intermediate. The production also planned to view dailies in HD format. McLachlan wanted to make sure everyone, including the dailies timer at Technicolor in Vancouver, British Columbia, was on the same page.

"With a one-light print and film dailies, I always know exactly what I'm going to get," says McLachlan. "My big concern going in was that the process of transferring film to tape for HD dailies could alter what we intended dramatically, and more alarmingly, create images that we wouldn't be able to reproduce during optical post-production. I saw a demonstration of KLMS, and I was very excited about it for that reason. It meant I could show the dailies timer what the film could be expected to look like after I had supervised the optical post process."

McLachlan says that one of the strengths of KLMS is that it's totally intuitive to a person with a basic knowledge of film and tape post-production tools. "Two weeks prior to principal photography, I was already running different looks and approaches by James, without shooting a frame of film," he says. "Normally testing various looks is a very laborious and expensive process."

McLachlan used a Nikon D70 camera with the 17-55 mm T2.8 lens. "That lens is incredible, and it was important to shoot the digital stills at the stop I normally work at," he says. "I printed reference stills on a Kodak EasyShare printer, and kept them in an album along with T-stops and lighting notes."

He also purchased a 17-inch LaCie CRT reference monitor and calibrated it using the Kodak's Display Manager System. "Eventually I was able to get pretty close just using the LCD screen on my laptop," he says. "I bought a top-of-the-line G4 Power book with extra RAM to help speed things up."

McLachlan's daily routine consisted of powering up and calibrating the monitor, and setting the still camera to the right stock (usually Kodak VISION2 5229 500T film), ASA and T-stop. "Usually on the

last rehearsal before shooting, I'd shoot a still frame that matched as closely as possible the frame of the principal camera. Later, I could download the images to my laptop and run the software, adjusting the image using only the standard film timing tools emulating our anticipated release print stock, etc. The results were amazing. After a

couple of cross checks between digital HD projection and one-light dailies, I found the film-to-HD transfer to be so close that I didn't bother printing film anymore, saving us additional money."

McLachlan saw a test screening built from the assembled dailies and said it looked remarkably close to what he expects the finished film project will be.

"The film tested terrifically, and the fact that it looked so slick may have been partly responsible," he says. "Kodak's Look Manager System is equivalent to sitting in the room at dailies, but with no

more getting up at 4 a.m. to make sure that our hard work wasn't screwed up due to ignorance or miscommunication. A lot of my work has very specific looks. Thanks to this software the timer can give us exactly what we want to see in dailies. And the studio and the producers are thrilled." ■



**Above:** (L to R) Actors Ryan Merriman and Mary Elizabeth Winstead in a scene from *Final Destination 3*, shot by DP Rob McLachlan, ASC, CSC.

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