

Aladin a polished production



Aladin, director Sujoy Ghosh's masterful fantasy adventure, is enthralling family audiences across India. In a modern, exuberant take on the Arabian Nights story, orphan Aladin lives in the fictional city of Khwaish, in the snowy Himalayas. Bullied and made to rub lanterns, his life changes when the beautiful Jasmine gives him a lamp. After rubbing it, he awakes Genius, a mischievous genie (played by Amitabh Bachchan). But former genie Ringmaster (Sanjay Dutt) proves the real threat. A comic book approach to framing and composition was at the core of *Aladin*, Ghosh's second collaboration with director of photography Sirsha Ray.

"I always prefer film because of its versatility," says Ray. "KODAK VISION2 50D 5201, KODAK VISION2 100T 5212 and KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 are the best emulsions in the world for any kind of situation. I know them like the back of my hand and hardly need a light meter. I chose them for *Aladin*, as well as KODAK VISION3 500T 5219 for a song sequence in a studio set. They have extremely fine grains and the photography matches well with the CGI in granularity and texture." Ray used an ARRIFLEX 535B as 'A' camera and an ARRICAM Lite, with ARRI Master Primes, Ultra Primes and an Angenieux Optimo 25-290 zoom.

Huge sections of buildings were constructed at Film City Mumbai and combined with elaborate digital matte paintings for an entire city recreation. The stunning landscapes of Ladakh and the Siachen Glacier were also created in the studio and lit with 100 6K Space Lights, T12s and an ARRIMAX 18K. "Using Space Lights to this effect was new in the Indian perspective" remarks Ray, who enjoyed the subsequent "fun" challenge. "On another occasion I needed an 18K balloon for a night exterior, but it was so windy that it wouldn't stay steady. My gaffer Prakash Shetty rigged an Alfa 18K onto a 120-foot crane and added a layer of 12 x 12 diffusion underneath. It was tilted down a full 180° and the fall-off was beautiful."

"There are so many fantastic aspects and such huge areas matted with green and blue, that it wasn't easy keeping the lighting simple and natural. But I composed with wide lenses and hid the camera in the narration. Film helped to achieve a visual story-telling which is organic in nature."

Aladin is setting a new standard for VFX/DI quality in India. From the first shot until the last frame was printed, the crew were heavily involved in post-production at Reliance MediaWorks and EyeQube. A year of constantly changing edits proved extremely challenging for both post houses, which maintained a transparent, consistent and organised post-production pipeline. "With over 1,500 complex VFX shots, small changes in colour meant a lot of extra work. It was important that if a shot was lengthened we could rescan it with the identical colour and registration as the previous scan," explains Ray.

Reliance MediaWorks' DI colourist Ken Metzker notes: "Sirsha and I spent much of our time creating the look of this magical movie. He is an extremely demanding DP and painstakingly ensured that every frame created the right mood. For example, we created a romantic feel when *Aladin* serenades Jasmine by working on a slightly desaturated low contrast look. Luckily, as it was shot on Kodak film, we retained all the details in the shadows and highlights and still held onto the full colour range without any muddiness. I'm always amazed how much colour depth and dynamic range film is able to capture."

Aladin was scanned on Northlight 2 and timed on Baselight 8 with a Christie DLP projector. The laser film-out was undertaken on an ARRILASER Film Recorder.

Aladin is produced by Eros International and Boundscript Production.

Key Data at a glance

Director	Sujoy Ghosh
Cinematographer	Sirsha Ray
Cameras	ARRIFLEX 535B as A camera and an ARRICAM Lite, with ARRI Master Primes, Ultra Primes and an Angenieux Optimo 25-290 zoom
Film stock	KODAK VISION2 50D 5201, KODAK VISION2 100T 5212, KODAK VISION2 200T 5217 and KODAK VISION3 500T 5219
Post production	Reliance MediaWorks and EyeQube
Colorist	Ken Metzker