

Three films

For the first time in the history of the Cannes Film Festival, a film originally movies from the official selection.

The epic five-and-a-half hour three-part biopic entitled *Carlos*, which was a late addition to the 2010 festival, dramatises the rise and fall of Venezuelan revolutionary Carlos the Jackal. It took Cannes by storm. There is no doubt that the talent of director/screenwriter Olivier Assayas was the main reason behind the unprecedented decision; a decision that symbolically marks the convergence of the worlds of television and cinema fiction.

The cinematographers behind this ambitious international film project were Yorrick Le Saux and Denis Lenoir, AFC, ASC. They spoke to *InCamera*: "Despite the 100 days allocated for the shoot, we had to face a multitude of sets and locations across three continents in order to complete the three episodes. The tight production budget would normally have led to a Super 16 shoot, but the arrival of 2-perf cameras meant that we could switch to 35mm. *Carlos* is finally in a 2.35 format. It was shot at 24 images per second, so its technical logic is much more akin to that of the cinema."

Critical and public acclaim

This convergence of subject, style and format originated in Hollywood with the great HBO television series such as *Six Feet Under*, *The Sopranos* and *Deadwood*. Not only did they bring claims of nobility to the genre; they also achieved huge critical and public acclaim that led European film makers to adopt similar screenwriting and production methods.

Although the great American chains have routinely shot such programmes in 35mm – and often in 3-perf – European tendencies and budgets have been limited to shooting in Super 16 or HD.



However, with the arrival of 35 2-perf format (or rather its return, if it is considered to be the descendant of the Techniscope format used by Italian director/producer Sergio Leone in the 1970s), television series and individual television film units can now exploit the flexibility of shooting on film and, in particular, they can reproduce the depth of field of a 35mm image. In fact, since the arrival of 2-perf cameras on the market in late 2008, a growing number of television productions in Europe have taken the decision to use them. Examples include such prestigious programmes as Olivier Assayas's *Carlos*, which is produced by Canal+, and *The Turn of the Screw*, the BBC's adaptation of Henry James' classic ghost

story, which was directed by Tim Fywell. The success of 35 2-perf is confirmed by the fact that there are now 18 outlets handling the equipment in France.

But 35 2-perf is not limited to television productions. With the democratisation of 2K digital post-production (and soon 4K), certain post-production channels and movie productions have already taken the decision to change to it for financial reasons. One of the most notable examples is *Of Gods and Men*, directed by Xavier Beauvois. It won the Grand Prix at Cannes 2010 and, with audiences of two million plus, has been a particular success at box offices in France. It was shot entirely on Kodak film stock and was post-produced at Éclair Film Laboratories near Paris.

Caroline Champetier, AFC, cinematographer of *Of Gods and Men*, recalls: "I worked with a mix of two Kodak stocks. The very fine grain of KODAK VISION3 250D

5207 allowed me to go in any direction: hot, cold or neutral tones; neutral is normally harder to achieve. KODAK VISION2 500T 5218 captured the details in the blacks. Christian Lurin at Éclair and Thierry Beaumel, Catherine Athon and Philippe Tourret, who had worked on director Raymond Depardon's *La vie moderne (Modern Life)*, were tremendous. In view of the film image, they pushed for a 4K scan and Why Not productions agreed. It was wonderful to recover the entire spectrum of hues!" she says. And so it's possible to shoot with 2-perf, while economising on half the film stock (in comparison with the historical 4-perf standard), and still achieve a great richness of tone – even on the largest movie screens.

Another prestigious example is *Miral*, award-winning director Julian Schnabel's fifth feature film. It was shot entirely with 35 2-perf and combines different atmospheres and image styles. Cinematographer Eric Gautier, AFC explains: "*Miral* was shot with six film stocks, four of them from different Kodak generations. Sometimes I mistreated them. For example, I would push the stocks three stops, but I was pleasantly surprised with the outcome." KODAK VISION3 250D 5207 can capture up to 11 stops of latitude, and the colour and detail recovered in digital



and 2-perf

intended as a miniseries for French television was screened with the



post-production is very impressive. The stocks have become so perfect that on occasion I purposely create 'accidents' so that I can produce something original, or at least different."

Capture information

The constant theme shared by these three directors of photography is the importance of the quality of the post-production chain. Essentially, film has the ability to capture information which can be drawn upon and explored in all its subtleties during post-production.

The two-and-a-half hour version of *Carlos*, which was created for movie theatres, benefitted from a 2K scan, unlike the full five-

and-a-half-hour film which was telecined to HD. Denis Lenoir, AFC, ASC, summarises the differences observed during the post-production work on *Carlos*. "Our objective following the 2K scan was to retrieve as much information as possible, compared to the simple HD television movie. We had shot in very difficult lighting conditions, for example in Lebanon, when we had to deal with extreme image contrasts without really having the time or the means by which we could control them. The overexposures in the television version were necessarily less beautiful. On the other side of the spectrum, the blacks become gloomier and dense more quickly in the German and London sequences."

- 1 Denis Lenoir, AFC, ASC with Penelope Camera on an easy rig.
- 2 The shooting of *Chez Maupassant*, French TV Series.

Here's a rundown on the 2-perf cameras on the market:

Aaton Penelope - was introduced at the end of 2008. It is a lightweight camera par excellence and its ergonomics and intelligent design find favour with directors of photography. Barry Ackroyd, BSC recently described it as "an extension of his arm." Designed and manufactured for 2-perf (or 3-perf), it has achieved great success since its launch, as is evidenced by the 50 or so Penelopes currently in use on film shoots around the world.

ARRICAM Lite - although the latest model of these German 35mm cameras was originally intended for use at 4-perf, it may be adapted for 2-perf by disassembling the camera. The ARRICAM Lite has an innovative modular design and, with the aid of ARRI accessories, offers easy and flexible configuration into a Studio version. The 1000-foot camera magazine allows the cinematographer to shoot for longer than 20-minutes and the stripped-down version with a shoulder set enables comfortable on-the-shoulder operation. The Canal+ television series *Pigalle, la nuit* was shot by Jean-Max Bernard on an ARRICAM LITE from TSF.

Panavision Platinum - In the 1980s this American brand of camera had a fleet of 2-perf models. It offers great value in terms of robustness, reliability and rigidity (which is even more crucial in 2-perf than in 4-perf). The Panavision Platinum was used by Olivier Assayas on the *Carlos* shoot, in addition to the Penelope.