

Director Olivier Gondry and DP David Nissen have just finished shooting a new commercial for McDonald's. The commercial was produced by Caroline Petruccelli, director of the animation department of Partizan. It involved almost 900 motion-control images shot on KODAK VISION3 500T Color Negative Film 5219



Film on the menu at McDonald's

"About seven years ago, Georges Berman, the founder of Partizan Productions, set up the animation department," explained Caroline Petruccelli. "Partizan has always had unusual directors like Michel Gondry and it's thanks to them and the free rein with their imagination that Partizan allows them that the company has established its vibrant image style. Indeed at Partizan Animation we love projects that are a little out of the ordinary and the McDonald's 'Happy Meal' commercial (for now intended for French TV) is no exception to the rule."

"The brief here was to highlight the fact that although many things have evolved, the price of the 'Happy Meal' has stayed the same for six years. Some of the things that have changed include the recycled cardboard packaging, the contribution of new organic products, an improved nutritional content and greater environmental protection. The idea was to use images to show an accelerated reconstruction of the box, using a folding system."

"As soon as I knew the project depended on animation," says Petruccelli, "I immediately thought of Olivier Gondry as director. He's got massive experience of images and visual effects as well as a great sense of narrative. "For a long time, Olivier was in charge of SFX on films shot by his brother Michael and furthermore he's a former programmer and therefore someone who has great experience of working on a computer. Since the challenge also consisted of sequence shooting, I knew that Olivier would want to take it up."

"It was a case of filming frame-by-frame," added DP David Nissen, (former assistant to DPs Robert Fraisse and Darius Khondji). "We tried to create an atmosphere with shadows more or less marked out and to select a good weight of paper so that when it's up on the screen it looked interesting. We also had to decide on a drawing style that would be best for creating the illusion of volume since the box was flat."

"Before considering the lighting," Nissen continued, "it was absolutely imperative to record the entire movement of the camera since if we shifted the travel by even a few centimeters, it would change our perception of things drastically particularly regarding the background. For two days, we had to patiently calculate the definitive movement of the camera and decide all the frames in minute detail before knowing what would be the best direction of the light, how much power would be required and how much diffusing would be appropriate."

"Film remains for me the best way of shooting," says Nissen. "Film offers much greater quality latitude in the shadows and the blacks and whites. Even skin tones are a 'tool' that generate a more beautiful depth. Within the framework of a commercial like ours shot on motion control, it couldn't be anything else but film."

"Why did I use KODAK VISION3 500T Color Negative Film 5219?" "I talked just now about the wide range," concluded Nissen, "but I should add that 5219 has a very fine grain structure at 400 or 320 ASA. What's slightly paradoxical is that this softness translates to a nice contrast with blacks that are never sooty. The film stock is so fine that I sometimes get the feeling that the shadows have become 'de-grained'. It's a difficult result to explain but it's very beautiful."

Key Data at a glance

Director	Olivier Gondry
Cinematographer	David Nissen
Client	McDonald's
Production Company	Partizan Productions
Film stock	KODAK VISION3 500T Color Negative Film 5219