

The charm of Franswa Sharl

Franswa Sharl scooped the prestigious Crystal Bear for the Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival and the IF Media Award for Most Popular Film at Flickerfest.



Based on co-writer Greg Logan's own youthful experiences in 1980, this charming short film focuses on Greg, a 12-year-old boy who has inherited his father's strong competitive streak. After his creative skills fail to win his father over, Greg succeeds in capturing his attention during a family holiday in Fiji. To his father's dismay, he reinvents himself as a French girl and enters the resort's beauty competition.

"Director of photography, Judd Overton (*Dr Plonk, All My Friends are Leaving Brisbane*) was on board from the very early stages and became a huge collaborator," says producer Linda Micsko. "It was essential to receive his feedback, so director Hannah Hilliard and I involved him in the location reces. As Judd and Hannah wanted to evoke a fairytale feeling through light and colour, yet remain true to the real life events in the film, we minimised the stylistic camera work to create a sense of reality and immediacy."

"*Franswa Sharl* is set in 1980. Hannah and I knew film provided the feeling for this period, so we made the decision to shoot on S16mm and aimed for a DI from the outset. Film was not only an aesthetic choice; it enabled me to shoot exteriors quickly in available light and gave me the latitude to maximise options in post" notes Overton, whose "love of celluloid is both professional and emotional. I believe film is the benchmark of the industry; a measure for all other formats."

"KODAK VISION50D 7201 proved a great workhorse stock," he continues. "When correctly exposed, it's comparable to a fast 35mm stock. KODAK VISION3 250D 7207 is amazing in over-exposure, grain and mixed colour temperatures. I used it on some dusk and night establishing shots and the extra speed really helped. In a night tent scene, I switched to KODAK VISION2 250D 7205 and lit with practical tungsten torches, which I half-corrected. Lighting assistant Bec Marchant added a diffused ARRI 650 to ensure we didn't miss any action as the romantic leads have a moment in an atmosphere of warm innocence."

1 Night scene inside a tent with young actors Ivy Latimer and Callan McAuliffe. (photo Alina Gozin'a)

Shooting in autumnal New South Wales meant the risk of heavy downpours and gaffer Paul Booth and his team worked extremely hard to maintain a look consistent with tropical Fiji. "Our one prayer was that we'd have clear blue sky for our huge finale: the parade scene," states Overton, who lit with two 4K HMIs and utilised an array of 12-foot griffons, sails and hard reflector boards. "When it started to rain on our parade, we hid under the sails and created contrast with HMI backlights. The overcast conditions and constant downpours meant that many close-ups had to be shot night for day into sails and poly sheets lit with HMIs and full CTB." Then the sun came out. "It was difficult matching wide shots of 50 extras in cloud and rain with inserts lit by the harsh Australian sun, but 7201 and the DI team at EFILM saved the day. The EFILM staff handling the daily rushes transfer noted the footage was amongst the cleanest 16mm they'd seen."

"Kodak was extremely generous, giving us a great discount on the 16mm stock and sponsoring us for stock for our 35mm DI print. We wouldn't have been able to afford it without Kodak's support. It's companies such as Kodak and EFILM that make it possible for films such as ours to screen at internationally-renowned festivals and compete with other films that are screening from a 35mm print," acknowledges Micsko.

Key Data at a glance

Director	Hannah Hilliard
Director of Photography	Judd Overton
Producer	Linda Micsko
Digital Intermediate	EFILM
Film stocks	KODAK VISION50D 7201 KODAK VISION3 250D 7207 and KODAK VISION2 250D 7205