



# Nike **Goal** spot scores awards

When Nike commissioned director Mai La Thai to create a television commercial, they asked for a spot that promoted its soccer products while celebrating the World Cup. Thai chose Valentina Caniglia to photograph the project based on her reel and ability to tell powerful, compelling stories through beautiful images. The spot earned a bronze in the best commercial category at the 28th Annual Telly Awards.

Caniglia was born in Italy, and began her career in London. Her resume includes popular music videos (Staind, Aesop Rock) and award-winning commercials for GBX, British Airways, Ford and other international clients. Additionally, her narrative credits include *Nightmare*, which earned kudos at the 2005 Chicago Film Festival, *Ho Man!*, an official selection at the Berlin Film Festival, the Showtime telefilm *Vespertine*, and *Landlocked* directed by Jerry Melichar, director of International

Services at Focus Features International.

The Nike *Goal* spot features a one-on-one impromptu showdown between two kids in a graffiti-scarred alley. When the ball is kicked into an improvised goal, a series of increasingly surreal shots ensues of various characters shouting “goooooaaaal!” in the exaggerated manner of television “futbol” announcers.

“I was very impressed with the concept of the spot,” says Caniglia. “The story was like a scene from a feature film, very cinematic, full of details, with extremely stimulating visuals. We chose Super 16mm film in part because we would be shooting day exteriors, and I knew that with film’s latitude I could control highlights as well as depth of field. The stock was KODAK VISION 250D 5246; it held the contrast and blacks very well.”

The filmmakers scouted a gritty Brooklyn neighborhood that would give the spot a tough urban atmosphere. “We wanted to show the texture of the location, which was characterized by industrial buildings with brown brick walls, broken streets, subway trains running in the background, and big signs,” says Caniglia. “I suggested a contrasty, desaturated look with a light blue, almost cyan color dominant.”

Caniglia achieved that look mostly in camera by combining an 82A filter on the lens with a bleach bypass in post. “I mostly used available light bounced on bleach muslin and silver board reflectors earlier in the day. Additionally, a 50K Soft Sun was used as a source of key light to replicate the sun and direct hard day light units – 4K and 12K HMI Pars – coming from the side or from three-fourths back to create strong highlights the day after,” she says.

To create an eye-catching effect in some closer shots, she used a shutter angle of 11.2 degrees, sometimes in combination with overcranking at 48 fps. She fine tuned the images during color correction with colorist Damien Van der Cruyssen at The Mill in New York City.

Camera movement was fast, precise and linear, and inspired by the famous footballer Diego Maradona. “We wanted to give the feeling that the camera was there with the talent and the ball,” says Caniglia. “We wanted to move the camera fast and remain smooth and fluid with the movements. Every frame was composed to show in a few seconds the emotion of the moment.”

In addition to the Telly Award, the Nike spot won a Webby Award from the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences.

**1** Cinematographer Valentina Caniglia on location preparing to shoot a scene for the Nike *Goal* spot.

Photo by Mai La Thai