

Saudi counter culture

Bayareq, the Saudi-based non-profit organisation, recently commissioned a 10 spot television campaign with a message of hope for the young. The commercials convey Bayareq's belief in traditional work ethics and values and reinforce its objective 'to transform Saudi - and eventually global - youth into a powerful and positive source of innovation, energy and leadership' through hard work, team work and a sense of pride in every job.

Rob Crabtree, English Executive Producer of international production company Europa Films produced the entire project. He admits he felt committed to the "valid cause" after hearing only a few minutes of the initial discussion and was determined to roll up his sleeves and lead by example. Taking time at the outset to explain to crew members the reason behind the project before discussing the style of

the commercials, he quickly established positive team work ethics. "We created an amazing level of trust in our production suppliers and a solid commitment within our hand-picked team. More and more film professionals signed up and enabled us to strike a productive balance of talent between the creative minds of Bayareq and the blue-collar workers we hired for each spot."

Award-winning South African Director/Director of Photography, Terence Maritz, was alerted to the project by his agent, Brigitte Janoschka of View-finder in Düsseldorf. "The campaign needed a different approach and Terence combined a distinctive look and feel. His trademark gritty sense of reality was vital to the tonality of each spot," remarks Crabtree.

After a week of constructive boardroom meetings, the crew set off to shoot in numerous locations in and around Dubai, including steam-filled boiler rooms, an elementary classroom and the Formula 1 racetrack, which Art Director, Brendon Poole, and his team magically transformed with steam and smoke effects.

"I needed a versatile film that could handle the different looks and lighting conditions and Super 16mm Kodak VISION2 200T 7217 proved to be my ideal stock," says Maritz. Choosing a mixed lighting package, from 12kW flicker free HMIs to Kino Flos with daylight and tungsten tubes, he combined the more directional HMI Cinepars with soft Kino Flos to achieve the final look. Maritz's main tool was the Steadicam. "Richard Rolf, the Steadicam Operator, was a pleasure to work with and my gaffer and his team were great; there was never a task too large for them - even in tough terrain and

extreme temperatures up to 52°C. The local production crew were highly motivated, experienced professionals. They were fantastically helpful and solved potential problems before they had time to manifest. I truly enjoyed the positive energy that abounded during the shoot and the opportunity to make a positive contribution to Saudi unemployment."

Crabtree ordered the stock from Kodak Cinelabs Dubai, one of the latest additions to the growing network of Kodak Cinelabs in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. "Rob had many technical questions and appreciated the fact that we always responded quickly. He said we gave him the feeling he was in good hands in our facility," states Manager Christian Richter. In addition, Kodak Cinelabs Dubai processed the stock and undertook telecine transfer through to full grading with in-house colourist Dan Mitre.

"Rob is very calm, precise and well organised, so it was easy to define his needs," says Richter. "We supplied negative film stock via our night box, which meant the crew got the key to a box in which they dropped the negatives for processing outside our regular opening hours and picked up raw stock for the next day's shoot. They always had access to film stock stored under perfect conditions: a big advantage in our very hot climate." Kodak Cinelabs Dubai also provided daily rushes on DVD, together with a report on the negative. Richter concludes: "Rob was very pleased with our one-stop-shop package. It was ideal for him." To which Crabtree responds: "Christian was extremely helpful, providing the best film stock and a smooth service."

Post-production was completed in the Netherlands by Europa Films' in-house editing facility with additional 3D effects by company Renescent. ■

Below: 52 degree heat - Blue is cool - Mechanic TVC, the Dubai Autodrome tarmac is melting so the production crew wet down the area for the shot.

