

The Transitions of Life

Transition is about the stories of three women and their struggle to live in current socio-economic hardship in Sri Lanka

The film is written and directed by Mr Bennett Rathnayake, a well-known Sri Lankan filmmaker whose first film **The Compensation**, was screened in several prestigious international film festivals.

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Cinematographer Biju Viswanath is from India and his previous English feature **Déjà Vu**, which he directed and photographed, was shot entirely on Kodak Vision 800T 5289. **Déjà Vu** premiered at the Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland. "To me, every film is a new lesson, sometimes maybe a fresh concept, or new and refreshing technical and aesthetic challenges for me. In the case of **Transition**, I found the script to be very interesting and felt that it offered a lot of visual possibilities to interpret the story. I found that the main difference between working in India and Sri Lanka was the size of the crew, because of bigger budgets, Indian DPs can have four or five assistants, whereas in Sri Lanka I had to work without an assistant. This was very challenging because we had to work fast. However, the lighting crew always worked extremely hard and were very supportive."

Distinct visual styles

Because **Transition** is narrated through a series of flash-backs, the Director and Cinematographer decided to use three distinct visual styles for each of the three stories. Viswanath says, "For the first character, a housewife whose story is set mostly indoors, I lit these sequences quite darkly, because at that point in the film we are showing a dark phase of her life. Due to its extended underexposure latitude, I chose the Kodak Vision 250D 5246 film for these sequences. This is my favourite

stock, I love the soft, almost lyrical quality it possesses. The male character of the film is a cheating husband," Viswanath continues, "the film delves into his dark mind. To convey his inner conflict and somewhat sinister demeanour, I used Kodak VISION2 500T 5218. The speed of the stock allowed me to utilise deep focus techniques while playing these scenes quite dark."

"The character's confession to his wife about his extra-marital relations is the turning point of the film," Viswanath continues, "these 'confessional' scenes were shot very low key using shades of cyan, green and blue. The results were very exciting and we are very happy with the latitude and tonal values of the VISION2 5218. This is the first time I have used the 5218 film stock," Viswanath explains. "Previously in India I used Kodak Vision 500T 5279 for all my films and was a little hesitant about the new 5218, partly because my fellow



Cinematographers in India were still using the 5279 and advised me to stay with it. However, I'm very glad I decided to experiment with the new VISION2 series. I had a lot of support from Mr John Pytlak from Kodak, he was very helpful in giving me the right advice for choosing the stock. He suggested that I try the Kodak VISION2 100T 5212 for the third character's story, which is set mostly in bright lit outdoors.



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Transition was shot in Sri Lanka from July 4th 2004 to August 4th 2004 in standard 35mm with an ARRIflex 3 camera in 1.1.85 aspect ratio using Zeiss lenses. ■

Top: Cinematographer Biju Viswanath (behind camera) with Director Bennett Rathnayake (in blue polo shirt and holding file).

Above: Actress Sathya Erandathi in a scene from the film.

Below: Palitha Silva (foreground) and Chandani Senerathne in **Transition**.

