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In Camera " April 2008

Focus On Film

Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop with Janusz Sikora

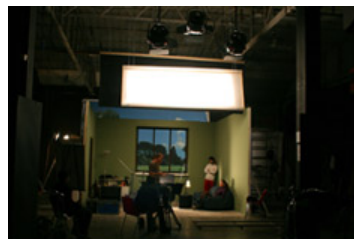
Extended Website Version

Movie & Sound Florence Srl hosted the October 2007 *Dancing with Light* black-and-white workshop. The intensive 35mm training programme, which focused on the artistic aspects of cinematography, was designed by Janusz Sikora (*17, A Man's World*).

For twenty years, the prize-winning director of photography has promoted the classic approach to lighting employed by the masters of art and photography. He travels throughout the US and Europe teaching the nuances of lighting and exposure, promoting artistic expression in motion picture imaging and demonstrating the creative potential of cinematographic tools. His *Dancing with Light* technique embraces theory and the whole gamut of processing, printing and telecine. "The workshop enables directors of photography to create mood with light based on a preconceived mental image and helps to instil a sense of eloquence in their cinematic expression," says Sikora.



Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop



Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop

Held at Movie & Sound's Vallina Studio, *Dancing with Light* was geared to new directors of photography with some experience of film. The 15 students, each of whom was selected on experience, were individually monitored at every stage of the two-week workshop.

In the first week, Sikora demonstrated the potential of expressive lighting and camera movements in artificial light and naturally-lit exteriors. His focus throughout was on the key aspects of light, exposure, development, print and telecine. In the second week, he

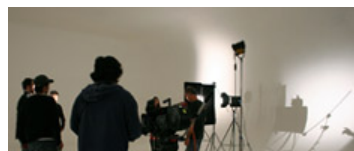
guided the students individually as they shot on EASTMAN DOUBLE-X 5222 and EASTMAN PLUS-X 5231 and produced their own "elaborate" 35mm film. The negatives were then printed on EASTMAN Fine Grain Release Positive Film 5302 in Movie & Sound's own laboratory and projected onto a large screen.

"A *Dancing with Light*-designed cinematic sequence needs to be organic if it is to relate to the emotional and/or the intellectual content of a scene," states Sikora. "This can only be achieved when elements chosen for visual interpretation are psychologically motivated and are of a homogeneous nature. One incorrect element causes an effect that is parallel to a wrong note in music."

"The technique addresses the technical and creative aspects of cinematic expression and expands them into Ansel Adams' method of Zone System and Pre-visualisation. The Zone System of Exposure is a foundation of the technique; an imperative element in the process of translating imagined values of grey into the language of film," he continues. "It is a systematic and logical approach to the realisation of the creative process and is an invaluable tool for directors and directors of photography in their pursuit of self-expression."



Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop



Marco Pagni, Movie & Sound's managing director and technical manager, personally supervised the technical aspects of processing, printing and film-to-video transfer. "The aim of the workshop shoot wasn't about telling a story. It was about helping students to develop the ability to express emotions and



Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop

that demonstrates their ability to express ideas and emotions visually."

Sikora concludes: "The *Dancing with Light* workshop in Florence was a unique approach to the teaching of cinematography because it combined the technical with the artistic, and was held at a production centre with studios, equipment recovery, development, printing and telecine facilities. It was a success." There are plans to hold another *Dancing with Light* black-and-white workshop in Florence in 2008.

Janusz Sikora lives in Los Angeles and designs lighting for television and the theatre. He has shot numerous features and is also an experienced extreme cinematographer, having shot at the North Pole, the Arabian Desert and the Indian Ocean. Sikora teaches his *Dancing with Light* technique at workshops and seminars at DreamWorks and several American universities, including the University of Southern California. He is a lighting consultant for Spectra Cine Inc. in Burbank, California.



Dancing with Light black-and-white workshop

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