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NEWS, TIPS, INTERVIEWS, UPDATES - FROM FUJIFILM MOTION PICTURE / NOVEMBER 2010

Stock Options

Rodrigo Prieto, ASC, AMC Uses Four Fujifilm Emulsions on Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps

liver Stone's Wall Street—a riveting portrait of the world of finance in 1987—has achieved the status of a classic and its villain, Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas), is a fixture of popular culture, along with his era-defining declaration, "greed is good." Cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, ASC, AMC was certainly well-acquainted with the original film and the powerful, kinetic look the camerawork of Robert Richardson, ASC brought to it. But a lot has changed on Wall Street in the ensuing two decades and for Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps, Prieto and Stone sought to define a look for the newer film.

Set in 2007, amid the run-up to the financial crisis that continues to plague the country, the new film finds Gekko recently released from prison interacting with a newbie trader played by Shia LaBeouf. Meanhwhile, Josh Brolin occupies the high-flying position Gekko has long since lost. "I wasn't looking to either emulate *Wall Street* or to have some big departure," Prieto says. "We wanted to capture what Wall Street is now and that meant a doing a lot of research. Oliver is very much into that. We spent time in the trading world and the main differences we noticed involved technology. Instead of using phones and shouting, a lot of that work is done through very sophisticated computer systems. The speed of technology, data and information informed our work. We knew we wanted to incorporate the speed of graphics and numbers into the movie.

"Perhaps in the first film," Prieto elaborates, "the sleekness of wealth was part of the visual grammar, but here it's the adrena-

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↑ Michael Douglas (left) reprising his iconic role of Gordon Gekko with Shia LaBeouf.

line and emotion of achieving more dollars faster than then next person. Graphics, numbers, computers would all be part of the look. I felt I wanted this to be a 'sharp-edged' movie. One of the first decisions was to shoot Super 35 format rather than using anamorphic lenses, which can introduce some softness into the image. I decided to use ARRI-Zeiss MasterPrime lenses, which are extremely sharp and reproduce minute detail. And I added no diffusion whatsoever."

Prieto also utilized a highly mapped-out choice of film, from camera negative through to release print, to help him achieve the look he was going for. "I had used Vivid 160T on Broken Embraces," he says of his work with director Pedro Almodóvar on continued on the next page

V Director Oliver Stone (center) confers with LaBeouf and Douglas on one of the film's many New York locations.



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Stock Options

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▲ Cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, ASC, AMC made use of colored LED lights on set to subtly alter the feeling of certain scenes with slight changes in color. Here LaBeouf and Douglas approach the villain of the piece, played by Josh Brolin (seated).

the Spanish film last year, "and I tested a number of stocks and decided to use Vivid 500T, Eterna 400T and 500T and 250D. What I liked about these stocks was that they offered me a variety of textures, color saturation and contrast to work with. I designed the arc of color saturation for each character using these Fujifilm stocks."

Prieto outlines his approach: "The 400 Eterna has low contrast, low saturation and is a bit grainier than the others. That was ideal for when we meet Gordon Gekko coming out of jail. When we're introduced to Josh Brolin's character, he has the power, he's trading high and making money, and we introduce him with Vivid 500T. Later in the film, Gekko goes to England and starts wheeling and dealing again so I switched to the same Vivid stock for that. For Shia LaBeouf's character, I generally stuck to Eterna 500T—which has a nice color that's true to my perception of reality."

Prieto has done some very interesting work on previous films in the grading phase, but, he explains, "You can achieve a lot in the DI, but I prefer to have as much of the look as I can on the original negative," he says. "I like to test stocks and see how they respond organically and I'll use different emulsions to help tell the story. I approach the DI more like traditional color timing. I prefer not to add or decrease contrast or saturation in the DI if I can avoid it. I'd rather build that into the negative. These Fuji stocks enabled me to work that way."

He also performed extensive tests on various intermediate and release print stocks and chose Fujifilm's Eterna-CI for the former function and XD positive stock for the latter. "I tested intermediate stocks, and comparatively speaking," he says, "this one was really nice and sharp. We made several negatives so the release prints could come directly off the intermediate, rather than having to go through the IP/IN process.

Says Prieto, "The combination of the film stocks, the prime lenses and these negative, intermediate and release print stocks really helped create the look that Oliver and I wanted for the film."

STOCK USED: ETERNA Vivid 500T. ETERNA 250D, 400T, 500T

A Shot in the Dark

Cinematographer Sam Levy Takes a Minimalist Approach to a Scene in *The Romantics*

uring the production of the indie drama *The Romantics*, starring Katie Holmes and Anna Paquin, cinematographer Sam Levy was looking forward to a particular lighting setup. Though Levy and his team lit some vast areas of the Long Island estate where the entire film was set, the scene in question was actually a very simple one, lit with a single 100-watt bulb.

In the film, writer/producer Galt Niederhoffer's directorial debut, the two leads play old friends who reunite at Paquin's character's wedding. Unfortunately for Holmes' character, the groom (Josh Duhamel) is a man she too is in love with.

Just after a rehearsal dinner, she returns alone to the guesthouse she's staying in. She enters an almost entirely dark room, crosses to a bed, turns on a table lamp, sits on the bed, and begins weeping. Simple enough. But the naturalistic approach Niederhoffer and Levy were going for could have been compromised if Levy had used any of the traditional lighting gags cinematographers resort to in a situation like this one.

Instead, Levy exposed for the virtual darkness of the room and let the practical actually light the space. During the DI

at Company 3, New York, he brought the highlights from the lamp itself down to a realistic looking level that didn't totally blow out. Had the film been shot digitally, as some had initially proposed, Levy says, he would never have been able to hold detail in such a wide contrast range—either the lamp would have been blown out or the darker areas of the room would have dropped down to noise.

Galt had been insistent on shooting film from the beginning of the process and Levy backed her up all the way, noting that there were strong economic, as well as aesthetic, arguments in favor of 35mm emulsion. "We had a lot of night shooting and quite a few characters," he says. "We had a 22-day schedule. I've seen some beautiful films that were shot digitally, but I needed to move fast. Film has the latitude in under- and overexposure that helped us in many different ways. Producers say you save money right off the bat shooting digitally but I find that to be a false economy. You need an excellent monitor, perfectly calibrated, to be your light meter and color meter. Our shoot was very streamlined. We could light an area of this estate at night, but the actors and director would always tweak the blocking somehow. I could put the camera on my shoulder and follow people running around this enormous area and know that my [capture medium] could handle it."

Levy shot the entire feature on Fujifilm Eterna 500T. "I love that stock," he enthuses. "For day work I love to rate it at 320 and then pull it a stop. It just gives you this amazing look where skin just glows, not like you used a diffusion filter—it looks natural, but it sings.

"At night I know that I can get away with [EI] 1000 or



▲ Sam Levy shot a great deal of The Romantics in very low light. Here, Katie Holmes' character and the love of her life, played by Josh Duhamel, share an intimate moment.

even 2000," he says, noting that he processed these scenes normally, without pushing. "If there's mostly black in the frame, I don't want to go past 1000, but if there are some strong highlights, 2000 still works well."

The scene, Levy reports, came out just as he'd hoped. "She enters the room in silhouette, walks around the bed and we pan with her away from the backlight and for three or four beats she's illuminated with hardly any foot-candles. She pauses, turns on the lamp and the room is filled with a very soft, golden light. It works very nicely in the story and her performance is very moving.

"I was thrilled with the results," he says. "There are great digital cameras out there and I think anyone with talent can make beautiful images on a cell phone if they have to. But nothing I've seen has the latitude of film. We couldn't have done this the way we did if we hadn't been shooting film."

STOCK USED: ETERNA 500T

Fujifilm Sponsors Power of Super 8 Bootcamp

eople from as far away as Mexico and Amsterdam flew to Burbank this fall for the recent Power of Super 8 Bootcamp, an intensive two-day introduction to the still-verypopular Super 8 format, of which Fujifilm was a proud sponsor. Held at Pro8MM in Burbank, CA the event was a rare opportunity for a wide range of film-lovers—including film industry professionals, wedding photographers, music video directors and students—about this most affordable method of bringing the benefits of shooting film to even micro-budget productions.

"Film material creates an aesthetic itself," says Phil Vigeant, co-owner with wife Rhonda, of Pro8MM, and one of the strongest advocates around for Super 8 production. Pro8mm has been the primary source for filmmakers to get the newest negative emulsions in Super 8 cartridges, as well as cameras and high-end scanning and color grading services. The company offers modified cameras to use the smallgauge film in a 16x9 aspect ratio to create a format they've dubbed "Max8." "For people making commercials or music

recently shot on FUJIFILM

HEREAFTER

Cinematographer: Tom Stern, ASC Warner Bros. STOCK: Eterna Vivid 160T, Eterna Vivid 500T



WALL STREET: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS
 Cinematographer: Rodrigo Prieto, ASC
 20th Century Fox
 STOCK: Eterna Vivid 500T, Eterna 250D.



BLACK SWAN

Eterna 500T, Eterna 400T

Cinematographer: Matthew Libatique, ASC Fox Searchlight Pictures STOCK: 16mm Eterna Vivid 160T and 500T



· DEVIL

Cinematographer: Tak Fujimoto, ASC Universal Pictures STOCK: Eterna Vivid 500T



· LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

Cinematographer: Andrew Dunn Warner Bros. STOCK: Eterna 250D, Eterna 500T



VAMPIRES SUCK

Cinematographer: Shawn Maurer Regency Enterprises (released through Twentieth Century Fox) STOCK: Eterna 250D, Eterna 500T, F-64D



· KNIGHT AND DAY

Cinematographer: Phedon Papamichael, ASC 20th Century Fox STOCK: Eterna Vivid 500T, Eterna 250T, Eterna 500T



THE CLOSER

Cinematographer: David Harp TNT STOCK: Eterna 250D, Eterna 500T



All stocks are 35mm unless otherwise indicated

Bootcamp

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videos for the smaller screen, it offers true 'film look.'"



▲ Pro8MM's Phil Vigeant

"Our customers really love the Vivid," Rhonda Vigeant says of the popular Fujifilm stock. "Both the 160T and the 500T have an amazing color palette. And there is also a lot of interest in the 64D and Reala 500D. A lot of people shooting Max8 are particularly attracted to stocks that bring their own unique look."

Even in the small size, she stresses, the film still has the exposure tolerance and color information inherent to the stocks, regardless of gauge. Pro8mm has made significant investment in new scanning technology to pull more picture information out of that small frame than was possible just a year or two ago.

Among the most popular portions of the bootcamp was a lighting seminar provided by Fujifilm's own Michael Bulbenko. "Film is extremely forgiving," Bulbenko notes, "but you can't just throw a few lights up and adjust them to what you see on a monitor. You have to be able to previsualize lighting scenerios in your head. To do that you need at least a basic understanding of how light works. The ability to plan out even a simple lighting setup will help anybody achieve better-looking results without having to spend a lot of time and money trying to fix the work in post."

"There's a lot of incorrect information out there," Rhonda Vigeant states. "We provided this bootcamp to help counter all that. But from all the feedback we've received since the Bootcamp, we've found that people were also delighted to see the wonderful work being done in Super 8 and to have the opportunity to network with other filmmakers who love working with real film."

