

American Cinematographer

An International Association of ASC

GOOD OMENS

ON LOCATION WITH:

- GAVIN FINNEY, BSC
- DIRECTOR DOUGLAS MACKINNON
- WRITER & SHOWRUNNER NEIL GAIMAN

JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 3 - PARABELLUM
DAN LAUSTSEN, ASC, DFF

GODZILLA: KING OF THE MONSTERS
LAWRENCE SHER, ASC

TEEN SPIRIT AND
THE SUN IS ALSO A STAR
AUTUMN DURALD ARKAPAW





CLOSE-UP

Suki Medencevic, ASC, ASBiH, SAS

When you were a child, what film made the strongest impression on you?

Apocalypse Now and *Enter the Dragon*.

Which cinematographers, past or present, do you most admire?

Jaroslav Kučera, and ASC members Vittorio Storaro, Roger Deakins and Chivo.

What sparked your interest in photography?

In high school, I was interested in astrophotography. Gradually, I started taking pictures of people, landscapes, and anything that would catch my attention. In my hometown — Derвента, Bosnia and Herzegovina — we had a very active photography club where we shared our ideas and inspirations.

Where did you train and/or study?

I started my cinematography education in Belgrade, Serbia, at the School of Dramatic Arts — FDU. After three years, I continued my education at FAMU, a national film school in Prague, Czech Republic.

Who were your early teachers or mentors?

I was fortunate to study under some great European cinematographers. In Belgrade at FDU: Milorad Marković and Predrag Popović. In Prague at FAMU: Jan Kališ [ACK]; Jaromir Šofr [ACK]; and Jaroslav Kučera.

What are some of your key artistic influences?

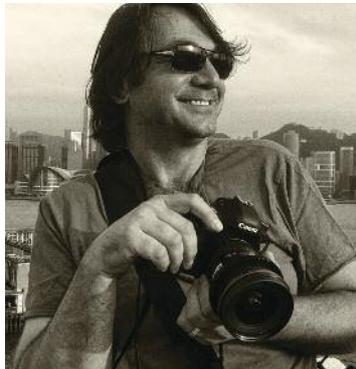
Since my early days, photography has been an important source of inspiration — and I've admired the works of such classic masters as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton and Ansel Adams. When I was first discovering cinematography, I was equally influenced by cinematographers Sergei Urusevsky, Yuri Ilyenko, Sven Nykvist [ASC], Vittorio Storaro [ASC, AIC] and Jaroslav Kučera from Europe, and [ASC members] Gregg Toland, Conrad Hall and Haskell Wexler from the U.S. But the film that made the strongest impact, and inspired me to become a cinematographer, was *Blade Runner* and the work of Jordan Cronenweth [ASC].

How did you get your first break in the business?

After graduating from FAMU, I came to the U.S. to pursue a career as a director of photography. Francis Ford Coppola's editor Anne Goursaud was transitioning into directing, and she brought me in for the movie *Embrace of the Vampire* with Alyssa Milano, Jennifer Tilly and Martin Kemp.

What has been your most satisfying moment on a project?

During production of the Taiwanese film *In a Strange City*, shot in the Philippines, we were at a location by the ocean to film the



sunrise and sunset scenes. Heavy rain started in the morning and lasted all day. Everybody was convinced that we would never get to shoot the sunset scene, but I kept insisting that we would, and that we should keep rehearsing. While the rain was still pouring, the sun dipped under the clouds and created the most amazing sunset I have ever seen. The camera was ready and the actors were on their marks — and since this was a dream sequence, the rain added a surreal effect we would never have thought of.

Have you made any memorable blunders?

Every day on the set there are some blunders on a small scale, which I manage to resolve and nobody is aware of. So far, there has not been a big one.

What is the best professional advice you've ever received?

A friend who is a seasoned cinematographer told me shortly after I came to the U.S., 'If you want to be a cinematographer, don't waste your time doing anything else.'

What recent books, films or artworks have inspired you?

The Smell of Film Emulsion — or *Miris Filmske Trake* — an autobiography by renowned Bosnian cinematographer, and dear friend, Mustafa Mustafic. And *Born to Ice*, a photography book by Paul Nicklen.

Do you have any favorite genres, or genres you would like to try?

Fantasy stories and fairytales have always inspired me. I am also interested in exploring VR as a new medium.

If you weren't a cinematographer, what might you be doing instead?

I would be a photographer, for sure — but a chef or a musician is a possibility.

Which ASC cinematographers recommended you for membership?

Jacek Laskus, Phedon Papamichael and Christian Sebaldt.

How has ASC membership impacted your life and career?

Being an ASC member is a great honor and a responsibility to deliver the highest standard in cinematography. It is also a great opportunity to meet some of the world's leading cinematographers and to participate in the exchange of ideas, and in the many activities within the ASC. Being a part of the International Committee at the ASC has given me the opportunity to be involved in many projects focused on strengthening our global cinematography community.

