
Hard Light or Soft Light?

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/04/09 08:03

Would you consider yourself a hard or soft man? Were you one and have you become the other? Do you ever wonder if your early lighting was better than the lighting that you do today before you "knew better"?

Do you ever use reflected sources or radiosity? such as bounced Source-4s off the floor etc? Do you prefer neutral lights or do you colour them all to some degree? :

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Re:Hard Light or Soft Light?

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/04/09 08:04

Soft light is more or less the contemporary style because it looks natural. I tend to follow that convention though I look for opportunities for realistically motivated hard light now and then, because I'm not one of those people who want to shoot a whole movie in just soft light. I think you need a little variety in textures to the lighting.

Yes, I sometimes fill or key by bouncing light off of the floor, or lower the contrast and increase the ambience by raking some light off of the ceiling, walls, etc.

Sometimes I look at my earlier work and think it looks more interesting because it's more contrasty and doesn't play it safe, because I didn't know better. I used to notice that my best work in some movies was in the first few days of shooting before I got back dailies and started adjusting my work to fix the flaws I saw. Then when the movie was cut, I start preferring the earlier shots that were rougher and bolder. So it's important to resist the temptation to fix everything in the frame. If I get a kick off of a piece of furniture or some part of the frame is too hot, I like those little accidents.

David Mullen, ASC

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