



INTERVIEW WITH BJORN CHARPENTIER.

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Something new! Because of my love for anamorphic lenses, and to add something new to the Anamorph Facebook page, I collaborated with **Stanley Hsu** and decided to do some interviews on the topic of anamorphic lenses. I had the privilege to do a short interview with Cinematographer **Bjorn Charpentier**.

Since 2007 Bjorn is working as an independent cinematographer. Over the past few years, he shot many commercials, short fiction projects and music videos. Some of his projects were selected for national and international film festivals. In 2010 the music video he shot for Belgian Indie Band Zomik won the 'Music Industry Awards' and 'the European Independent Film Festival'. He recently shot his first feature film as a Director of Photography. Bjorn is a father of two and likes to eat carrots.



Hugo: Can you share something about your background? How did you learn the art of filmmaking?

Bjorn: I worked for 5 years as a camera assistant on feature films, I loved being a second assistant. It gave me the opportunity to see and learn a lot from the DP's.

Hugo: When did you start as a cinematographer?

Bjorn: In 2008 I started to work full time as a DP.

Hugo: Do you have any directors or cinematographers that inspired or influenced you?

Bjorn: I had the honor to meet the late Jack Cardiff, who made a HUGE impression on me. Other than that: Roger Deakins, Matthew Libatique, Januzs Kaminski, Darius Khondji, Emmanuel Lubezki, Conrad Hall, and many others.

Hugo: What qualities do you think one should possess to become a cinematographer?

Bjorn: To understand the meaning of a scene, and then to transform that into light and composition.

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Hugo: How would you describe your style?

Bjom: Organic and naturalistic.

Hugo: How do you work together with directors?

Bjom: I try to be their shadows, the more I know about a scene the more I can propose my input creatively.

Hugo: Can you tell something about your work together with Norman Bates?

Bjom: We work very often together, and they have amazing treatments and storyboards so that helps me to see what there are willing to have on a project. We know each other very well, they know exactly what they want, but still give me "free runs" to propose different frames in 1 shot.



Hugo: When did you start using anamorphic lenses?

Bjom: In 2011 for a music video (ZORNIK "The Enemy") <https://vimeo.com/34709043>

Hugo: Which anamorphics and camera do you like to shoot with?

Bjom: When I can I will shoot on Elite anamorphics (depending of the project). I do love the softness and contrast of the glass as the way they flair. It's all very organic.

Hugo: What do you like about anamorphic lenses? What's the magic? Which characteristics do you like?

Bjom: The Elite's are from the '80s, and the glass is soft and that works beautiful with digital cameras. For me, the newlenses are too sharp, and they miss "a soul". I love to frame with them. It feels so natural to me. The 75mm

lens is the workhorse of the set. It's perfect for wide frames as it is for close up's. Every lens is a long lens in DOF, so you have less distraction in the background. The older glass have "mistakes": they flair, they are soft, there is a distortion on the wide lenses. But with all those "mistakes" I do love them for it. It makes them what there are: lenses with a soul.



Hugo: Do you only shoot with anamorphic lenses?

Bjom: No. The other set of lenses are Cooke S2, but my preference is anamorphic. But it's not suitable for every project. You still need to have the right gear that suits the story.

Hugo: If you would have shot, for example, the Samsonite commercial, without anamorphics but 'plain' lenses. In what way would the commercial have been different?

Bjom: It will miss the cinematic value. There will be more distractions in the frame, and without the softness of the lens will make everything less for some reason, I almost don't need to put lights on my subjects. The glass is just so wonderful.

Hugo: Do anamorphics require a special way of working?

Bjom: It has it's advantages and disadvantages. With anamorphics you need more "decor". Because your shot will be wider but it helps to have 2 close up's together in 1 frame so you need to know your locations and see if they work in a horizontal composition. I shoot everything hand held, and with an Alexa and the Elite's the camera is about 22 kg. So you need a strong back.

Hugo: What are your future goals? Plans?

Bjom: I love to shoot a feature with Norman Bates.

Hugo: Anything else you like to share?

Bjom: Put more money in better locations and art department because it makes it much easier for all of us.

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