

The Art of Cinematography



When Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC speaks, people listen. Whether his ideas are spoken, written or filmed, he is universally recognized as one of the world's most influential cinematographers. It is fascinating to learn who influenced him.

Storaro presents a magnificent new book, "The Art and History of Cinematography." This is his fifth publication in a prolific career of more than 50 feature films. He won Best Cinematography Academy Awards for "Apocalypse Now," "Reds" and "The Last Emperor."

At a recent lecture introducing the book, Vittorio said, "This book represents three years of work. I thought how lucky I was to have a great team of collaborators. In my studies and research, it was clear to me that there is so much in the history of cinema. Without those who went before, we would have never had the opportunity to be where we are now."

Vittorio contacted his friend Luciano Tovoli, ASC, AIC and they decided to do a project that would recognize the great masters with a very personal journey following the history of cinematography as seen through the eyes of fellow cinematographers.

The book introduces 150 cinematographers in 350 pages, from 1914 to the present, each accompanied by a "trademark film." Vittorio edited 150 "double image" still photos to illustrate a quintessential film by each cinematographer. The text in both English and Italian was written by Lorenzo Codelli and Bob Fisher.

This is a book for all art lovers, film lovers, museum goers. It is the kind of art book one is accustomed to buy in a museum, a work of art on its own, to be carefully read, referred to often, placed in one's living room or in a prominent position in any screening room for ready reference on matters of style and cinematography.

Just don't dare call Vittorio a "Director of Photography, DP, or DoP."

He will explain, "I'm a Cinematographer, not a Director of Photography. Because the term 'Director of Photography' has two major mistakes in that very title. A movie is like an orchestra. There is only one conductor, and only one director. There isn't another director for the actors and for the style. Photography is expressed in one single image. In cinematography, from the Greek word *kino*,

to move, we have movement, motion. We need time. We need rhythm. In photography, there is a photographer; in cinematography there is a cinematographer."

Storaro's "The Art and History of Cinematography" begins with a similar appeal. Vittorio writes, "Photography is the art of expressing oneself through a still image. Cinematography is the art of expressing oneself through multiple moving images. Photography is an individual art, while Cinema, as a joint work, can be created solely with the contribution of several collaborators, each specific authors in their fields of expression. They are directed, like musicians in an orchestra, by the main author of the cinematic work: the director.

"Cinema is not, therefore, an individual work. Cinema is a language of images through which a concept is expressed, since the image is revealed by the conflict and harmony of light and shadow... At the beginning of the last century, a name had to be given to the person who practiced the new art of photography (writing with light) and the individual author of that visual art became known as a photographer.

"Therefore, with the invention of cinema, a spectacle of moving images, it was only natural that the person who executes this intellectual work should be known as a cinematographer, the author who writes with light in motion."

"The Art of Cinematography" is a collaboration, with Luciano Tovoli, Daniele Nannuzzi, Gabriele Lucci, Lorenzo Codelli, Bob Fisher, and Vittorio Storaro guiding us through 100 years of film history defined by the works of 150 cinematographers. The journey begins in 1914 with Segundo de Chomón ("Cabiria"), and one page later we're already up to Billy Bitzer, another member of the gang of ten greatest cinematographers of all time ("Birth of a Nation," 1916). And so it goes, alternating between famous titles and names perhaps forgotten ("Battleship Potemkin," Eduard Tissé) and legends remembered ("All Quiet on the Western Front," Arthur Edeson). The book ends with "Anonymous" (2011, Anna Foerster), and like any good movie, always leaves you wanting more—or perhaps a sequel.

The authors explain that their choice of 150 cinematographers was guided "by the heart and soul. They are the cinematographic co-authors who have accompanied and inspired our individual careers for generations. Artists whom we admire and identify with profoundly, and look on as the ultimate models of cinematographic creativity. Great personalities who have led us to discover, made us dream, taught us to love, and then become part of The Art Of Cinematography. This is a tribute to Cinematographers from Cinematographers."

The book is produced by Aurea, a company that organizes photo exhibitions and has co-edited several books on cinematography.

Published and distributed by Skira and Aurea, this gorgeous 29 x 29 cm (11.5 x 11.5 in) book includes a DVD with original music by Francesco Cara.

Order online from: www.aureaweb.com

Or from Rizzoli Bookstore in New York and online.

Delivery via Amazon.com is expected to begin April 1, 2014.

The ASC Bookstore stocks autographed copies of "The Art of Cinematography": www.theasc.com

Bob Fisher, who wrote half this book, once told me, "Vittorio was my best mentor. When I first interviewed him after 'Apocalypse Now,' he told me not to ask 'how' but 'why.'"