

Review of thesis **“A Night's Portrait - A journey through night's reproduction in cinema”**

written by student **Gabriele Buffa**, CINKK, katedra kamery, FAMU 2017

This thesis tempts to give a very personal view on how to capture and record night atmospheres in movies. Gabriele Buffa analyses various filming techniques and methods, gives multiple examples and states different cinematographer's views. In the second part, he concentrates on film noir, stating that night atmospheres are a fundamental part of this genre.

Gabriele starts with general, but not generalising, thoughts about darkness, shadows and blacks; both it's perception and reproduction. In this introduction I immediately understood, that this thesis is not analysing technical facts, but has a wide approach based on human sciences, physiology and psychology, and art in general.

In the following chapter about the differences between day and night, our student continues reflecting on the illusion of cinema and the perception and depiction of night. He explains fundamental rules and contexts of contrast, lighting ratios, exposure in a comprehensive, very readable way.

Reflecting on colour and black and white representation Gabriele quite elegantly bridges the range from greek art to the origins of cinema. The hesitant recognition of colour movies, early colouring methods and the natural desire to depict reality in colours and not as a black and white stylisation are pointed out quite incisively.

The special techniques of day-for-night shooting are pointed out both on a theoretical and technical level. Examining various examples of both historical and modern movies applying this photographic “trick”, form a comprehensive overview.

The chapters about film noir explore this genre on a quite complex level: literature, figurative art, the political situation in that period, the historical development of this phenomem, the shifting from b/w to colour, lighting techniques, storytelling approaches. In a few examples, spanning from classical icons to modern samples, Gabriele carefully choses a mix of citations, personal views and numerous examples. Thus he skilfully manages to explain the filmmaker's intentions, the making and the techniques behind and analyses this genre as such.

In the concluding chapter this thesis offers profound information of modern technical achievements and their impact on depicting nights. Again, the successful combination of movie examples, analyses, citations and thoughts form a balanced whole.

Generally speaking, it was a pleasure to read this thesis. It is clever and informative, very readable, inspired and inspiring. It shows that Gabriele Buffa is a cultivated and educated person.

I recommend to accept this thesis for the graduation commission's consideration and would suggest to it evaluate it with grade “A”.

MgA. Klaus Fuxjäger

29.9. 2017

