

**Assessment of the Master's Thesis**

Author of thesis: Leo Michael Bruges

Title of thesis: The Examination Of The Creative Potential Of Cinema Lenses

Assessment of the opponent

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Josef Pecák, FAMU

Evaluation of the content and final form of the thesis (A/excellent – B/very good – C/good – D/good with objections – E/satisfactory – F/unsatisfactory – not recommended for defence)

Suitability of the selected objective and work approach.....A.....  
Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic....B.....  
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....B.....  
Logicality of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters and their proportionalityA.....  
Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....A.....  
Compliance with citation norms (should the text repeatedly contain adopted passages without citing the source, the work cannot be recommended for defence)...A.....  
Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments, graphic layout.....A.....  
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study..A.....  
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....A.....

Verbal evaluation of the thesis including questions that the candidate must address in his/her thesis defence:

**Assessment of the Master's Thesis**

As stated by author in introduction the thesis primary focus is the enquiry into application of cinema lenses by the contemporary cinematographer. It can be a daunting task to decide which set of lenses to choose from with respect to the growth of the cinema lens market. The overall development given by the higher demand for new lenses, greater selection of glasses and also the needs of digital cinema can make the choice of particular lenses rather overwhelming. What substantially influence the lensing are different camera technologies and shooting formats.

To start the discussion about the appropriate choice of lenses author describes the technical parameters of glass and glass elements given by theory of optics. This chapter finishes with a brief description of optical aberrations. Following chapter is dedicated to different types of lenses and how differ cinema lenses from still photography lenses, for example in size, weight, calibration, build quality and cost.

More in detail from the point of view of aberrations are discussed properties of primes versus zooms and spherical lenses versus anamorphic. This part of work is closed in chapter 3 with description of testing methods used by DoP or first assistants to select right set of lenses. Included is also an interesting case study of focus puller Gregory Irwin.

The last chapter focuses onto practical sphere. Presented are three interviews relating to the cinematographers' latest work which were all award-winning films that premiered in 2019. The core question of the interviews was how the cinematographer makes his artistic choice of lensing to best meet the vision of the director and hence work on the part of the story that is told visually on screen.

The approach of Lawrence Sher A.S.C. on *Joker* was to devise lensing for the outside world and the intimate world of Arthur's private life and mind. The two areas would be lensed differently. The outside world with longer focal lengths, to give an intimate feeling he used wider lenses. Also an important role played decision on format and technology – film or digital. Finally after many tests they decided to use Alexa 65. Bigger format did not need to shoot on anamorphic lenses since the format was already giving him a shallow aesthetic with large apertures. The selected set of spherical lenses should respect restriction given by Sher, lenses had to be fast with low T-stops and not to be overtly sharp. Focus puller Gregory Irwin put together lenses from different manufactures – Canon, Nikon, Leica, and some of them modified with special element adjustment or removed lens coating for enhancing flare. He works with the imperfections of the lens.

Quite different visual approach decided to use Cesar Charlone A.B.C. that had to be flexible to respect two distinct time periods in the film *The Two Popes*. For the present day Charlone drew inspiration from the paintings of the Sistine chapel, especially from the ceiling by Michelangelo, that are depicted in a flat lighting style. Higher value is given to color and shape than it does in light. It was a bold choice given it goes against the trends of cinematography seen today which generally follow a less saturated color palette with low-key lighting and frames shrouded in shadow.

The flashbacks were shot with different aspect ratio 1.33, higher contrast and desaturated colors to receive atmosphere corresponding archive press footage. Top priority in term of optics were that they had to be zoom lenses – Angenieux for the 35mm format and some Cook, Zeiss and Canon for 16mm format. They had to be lightweight like the camera to allow for documentary handheld shooting.

The photography of *The Painted Bird* made by Vladimir Smutny A.C.K. was based on a visual aesthetic of WWII photography of the 1940s. This led to choose black and white Kodak XX film stock. Smutny felt the integrity of the film emulsion and texture was important for this project and strived to achieve film closely resembling movie finished on a positive film print even though the film was to be screened digitally. With respect to digital in a film print you get different type of contrast, different focus and in projection you lose some sharpness. To select set of lenses Smutny made many tests under tricky lighting situations in the day and at night and felt that the Zeiss Master Anamorphic glass lacked the characteristic he was after and that the Hawk V-Lites offered the type of so-called imperfections he was looking for. Also anamorphic image 2.39 gives more freedom to operator in composition who can be more daring as compared to format 1.85. Unconventional framing, depth of field and aberration like the curvature can add to the tension.

To evaluate how far the aims of the presented work were fulfilled we can state that the author successfully interviewed and analysed works of three skilled cinematographers. As it is written in chapter „Conclusion“ professional cinematographer adapts his approach and way of thinking about lenses to every new project. This was clearly proved in interviews. He or she should be always in service of the story and putting across the emotion of the characters. Through the choice of lenses manage to externalize the internal feelings of the protagonists. As we could see every of the three cinematographers worked in his own way according to his concept or vision. For the future cinematographers this can serve as an inspiration and this is also the main positive aspect of Bruges´master´s thesis.

Questions: How the depth of field is influenced by format of the receptor ?  
What is depth of focus ?