

ED LACHMAN, ASC
MILDRED PIERCE

OPTICAL FILTERS
AND 3-D

2011 SUNDANCE
FILM FESTIVAL

American Cinematographer

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HANNA

ALWIN KÜCHLER, BSC
TELLS DARK TALE



*** Special Sundance Coverage** Fujifilm wants to take this edition of *Fujifilm — On the Inside* to highlight some of the work shot on Fujifilm that was recognized at this year's Sundance Film Festival. We are proud of our association with these brave, independent filmmakers and the wonderful, worthy filmmaking that happens outside the mainstream. —*Michael Bulbenko*, Fujifilm Motion Picture

The Weight of the World

Rob Hauer's Camera Captures the World of Female Powerlifting

Cinematographer Rob Hauer's indie feature debut, *Benavides Born*, is the story of a teenage girl, Luz Garcia (Corina Calderon), from the tiny Texas town of the title, who sees a powerlifting scholarship to the University of Texas at Austin as her only way out of the inhibited life she's otherwise destined to lead. Hauer, who knew the film's director and co-writer Amy Wendel from their days together in the NYU MFA program at the Tisch School of the Arts, was eager to work on this project. But, he recalls, he was initially concerned when the film's producer mentioned that digital capture might be the only way to go.

"I felt for something like *Benavides Born*, which is such a character piece," he says, "that film would make the story even stronger and allow everything to feel more lifelike." But Hauer was well aware of the budget constraints the producer was under and that an argument to spend more for a desired look wouldn't be enough. "I decided to look into Super 16 and I asked if it would be OK for me to get the producer some numbers. She agreed to entertain the idea and it turned out that a budget with Super 16 was very competitive. I believe it ended up being a little bit less expensive and she said, 'Let's do it!'"

Hauer shot with an ARRI SR 2 modified at Los Angeles-



▲ Luz (Corina Calderon) puts her all into her weightlifting.

based Geronimo Creek Film Company with all the SR3 upgrades. "We called it the SR 2.9," the cinematographer laughs. "Ninety percent of the time I had the camera on my shoulder so the image could 'breathe' just a little bit. We wanted the style to be very observational and kept to very simple framing choices. If we came up with something that looked too stylized or called attention to itself, Amy and I would push it aside and do something else."

With a number of locations and a 23-day schedule, the

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* Special Sundance Coverage

Benavides Born

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▲ Luz, center, is flanked by Yasmin (Amanda Rivas) left, and Rosana (Leticia Magana).

crew had to move quickly. “One thing I like about shooting film,” says the cinematographer, who shot *Benavides Born* on Eterna 250D and 500T, “is that I can light through the viewfinder rather than to a monitor. I like to be at the camera. You’re more involved with the process and closer to the actors. And I appreciate being able to light by eye. Of course, the latitude and flexibility helps me get a more desirable look. Blown-out highlights on film still render with more beauty than video can capture.”

He also points out that when shooting with a small crew, tight schedule and less control than a studio feature, mixed-light conditions were inevitable. Hauer noted that both of the Eterna stocks handled these situations extremely well.

In one scene, Luz confronts her boyfriend at night outside an army recruiting gym. “We had a mixture of color temperatures, from the street backlit by sodium vapor to the cool white fluorescents and car headlights,” he says. “We augmented the light, but we still had to make use of all the different kinds of sources at the location. I really like the scene because even with limited resources we were able to shoot a night exterior and add texture to the street and bring the town to life. The film stocks handled it all beautifully.”

Hauer, who trained in the art of still photography before pursuing cinematography, enjoys the photochemical process and designed all his images on *Benavides Born* to work using

traditional printing methods in case a DI finish wasn’t possible. “We were fortunate enough to be able to have FotoKem blow up some of our dailies optically to 35mm,” he recalls. “We projected them in a local theater and I was very pleased. I was also surprised by how grain-free it was, even after an optical blow-up. If we’d wanted to force develop these stocks for any reason, we certainly could have.” ▲

STOCK USED: Eterna 500T and 250D

Map of the Human Heart

Lol Crawley Takes an Unforgettable Journey Through Armenia

An American cartographer (Ben Foster) visits remote Armenia working on a satellite survey of the Eastern European country and meets a lovely young Armenian photographer (Lubna Azabal). Their journey through the country becomes the backdrop for the unusual road movie, *Here*. British cinematographer Lol Crawley and documentary filmmaker Braden King, in his feature directing debut, follow the two as they travel south towards the Iranian border and on into disputed Nagorno-karabakh.

“This was really a dream for a cinematographer,” says Crawley of the project. “It’s poetic and captures something special. It’s about the country’s landscape literally but it’s also about the landscape of the human heart.”

The production had to move quickly during the seven-week shoot over a great many locations throughout Armenia and, given the terrain, the environment was not conducive to running a lot of cables and setting up monitors and blackout tents. The filmmakers sometimes shot in places without any electricity at all. Crawley took two camera bodies—an ARRICAM LT and a 435—and a good