

Abstract

In this dissertation I examine the roles of the cinematographer in fiction feature film production. I begin the discussion with a historical review of the emergence of cinematography as a specialised field in early cinema. This corresponds with developments in camera technology that enabled accurate framing, lighting and the possibility of movement. In order to provide a framework for further discussion, the first chapter proceeds with a review of formal definitions and less conventional definitions of the role of the cinematographer. The focus in these discussions is on the cinematographer's engagement with the design, development and application of a unique 'visual style' in the articulation of the director's vision for the film. A large component of this research pertains to the work of the cinematographer in South African feature film productions. The second chapter presents an analysis of two very different South African feature films *Oil On Water* (Matthews, 2007) and *SMS Sugar Man* (Kaganof, 2008). I was the cinematographer on both productions and the discussion engages a reflexive mode of analysis. The third and final chapter is an analysis of the accompanying film *Impunity* (Mistry, 2014), which forms the creative component of this research. I conclude with establishing that the creative engagement of the cinematographer in the design of a coherent visual style contributes to a nuanced and engaging cinematic experience and richer visual vocabulary.