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LANDI MADURO INTENSIVE FILM DIRECTOR WORKSHOP

Hello filmmakers and welcome to the Virtual Intensive Indie Film Director's Workshop. I am so excited to work with all of you and share the things I have learned through trial and error and working as a consultant for first time directors in the indie world. I have been hired on many occasions to direct the projects of others so I understand the delicate balance of staying true to the writer's vision while still providing my interpretation. I have also been a judge for several indie filmmaker competitions and I have often seen the same problems with many projects. Poor pre-production lead to mishaps and pitfalls on shoot days and left the director feeling lost or ill prepared to handle the issues. Beautifully written scripts lost their luster when converted to the screen because the filmmaker didn't know enough to visually tell the story well. This is the reason I wanted to do this workshop to help keep you from making some of the mistakes I have seen by indie filmmakers time and time again and some of the mistakes I have made myself. The goal of this workshop is to:

- *Enhance your perspective on visual storytelling*
- *Help you extensively prepare during the pre-production process*
- *Provide you with tips for shooting with minimal gear on a limited budget*

The Job of Director: Despite what most may think the job of the Director is not to boss everyone around and fight off the pushy Executive Producers who pops up on set and create crazy demands putting everyone on edge. Okay, well maybe the later part of that is true but the point is, although the director is essentially the boss on the set of a film their job is not to be bossy. They are the leader who has the ultimate vision for the film and needs a good team to help them achieve the end goal. I like to think of the Director as a conductor of an orchestra. They don't have to know how to play each instrument but they do need have a general understanding of the sound each instrument makes so they can lead the group of musicians to make a beautiful symphony. Directing a film is no different. You don't need to know the intricate details of how a camera works, or how

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much power a tungsten versus a LED light needs to evenly light a scene but you do need to understand how lighting and camera positioning can help you tell a compelling story. How the look and feel of 24mm lens to a 85mm lens can emphasize vast space or uncomfortable closeness. The director has to be willing to *slow down* and find compelling ways to visually tell the story (*beyond what is written on the page*) before production starts. The world needs to know your stories, told through your eyes and how you see the world.

"If there's specific resistance to women making movies, I just choose to ignore that as an obstacle for two reasons: I can't change my gender, and I refuse to stop making movies."
Kathryn Bieglow

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."
Maya Angelou

In This Workshop We Will Cover:

1. Camera Blocking (How camera movement helps tell your story)
2. Camera Perspective (The importance of what is in frame and out of frame)
3. Camera Angles (How they help tell your story and intensify your actor's performance)
4. Lighting (How lighting can reveal things about your character)
5. Film Tone (Light, exposure and how to plan your tonal range)
6. Script breakdown/Analysis

VOCABULARY WORDS:

High Contrast: Bright highlights and dark shadows.

Low Contrast Narrow range of tone and might feel flat or dull.

Exposure: The amount of light you are letting into your camera.

Aperture: Controls the amount of light you are letting into the camera.

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Shutter Speed: Is the unit of measurement that determines how long the shutter remains open to let light in. The slower the shutter speed the longer the exposure. Together the *Shutter Speed* and the *Aperture* control the total amount of light reaching the film or image sensor if you are shooting digitally.

Mise en Scene: The arrangement of everything that appears in the frame.

Depth of Field: Depth of field is the distance between the nearest and the farthest objects that are in acceptably sharp focus in an image.

Deep Focus: Great depth of field, using relatively wide-angle lenses and small lens apertures to render in sharp focus near and distant planes simultaneously. A deep-focus shot includes foreground, middle ground, and extreme-background objects, all in focus.

Rack Focus: Changing the focus of the lens during a continuous shot. The term can refer to small or large changes of focus. If the focus is shallow, then the technique becomes more noticeable.

MOS: It stands for "Mit Out Sound" and is used when you want to shoot a scene without audio.

Check In the Gate: This term is not really necessary in digital filmmaking as the term refers to checking the part of the camera that sits between the lens and the exposed film for dust particles or strips of film emulsion that may have come off before moving to the next shot.

Exposure: How much light you are letting into the camera. It is what determines how light or how dark your image will be.

Art Direction: Is the tonal difference between your set dressing, props and wardrobe. This is what gives the film its unique visual identity.

Rule of Thirds: An image is divided evenly into thirds, both horizontally and vertically. A subject in the image is placed at the intersection of those dividing lines, or along one of the lines itself.

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Aspect Ratio: Refers to how the image appears on the screen based on how it was shot—the **ratio** of width (horizontal or top) to height (vertical or side) of a **film** frame, image, or screen.

Motifs: A recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story. Through its repetition a motif can help produce other narrative aspects such as theme or mood.

CAMERA ANGLES

Eye Level: An eye-level shot is a camera angle where the point of view is set at the eye-level of the subject you are capturing. The head of the subject or the object in focus should be level with the camera. Eye level shots are neutral and non-threatening.

Low Angle: A shot from a camera **angle** positioned anywhere below the eye line, pointing upward. It can even be below the character's feet which is called an extreme **low angle** shot.

High Angle: The camera is above the subject looks down. This can make the subject appear submissive, weak or frightened.

Overhead: The camera is above the actors. It's somewhere around a 90-degree angle above the scene taking place.

Dutch Tilt: Also known as **Dutch angle**, **canted angle**, or **oblique angle**, is a type of camera shot which involves setting the camera at an angle on its roll axis so that the shot is composed with vertical lines at an angle to the side of the frame, or so that the horizon line of the shot is not parallel with the bottom of the camera frame. This produces a view point similar to turning one's head to the side.

LIGHTING

Key Light: Main light source.

Lamp Left: If a person is standing behind the light they will turn the light to their left

Lamp Right: If a person is standing behind the light they will turn the light to their right.

Motivated Light: is the technique used to imitate or accentuate an existing light source. The light source makes sense and is realistic to the environment of the scene being shot.

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Broadside Lighting: (Also known as near side lighting.) Is when then the light is hitting the broadside of the actors face. If their face is at an angle it would be the side that faces nearest to the camera.

Short-side Lighting: will have the lighting on the short side of the actor's face if there face is at an angle it would be the side facing away from camera.

Side-Lighting: Light coming from the side of your actor's face. Great way to create a dramatic image.

Rembrandt Lighting: Is characterized by an illuminated triangle under the eye of the subject on the less illuminated side of the face. It is named for the Dutch painter Rembrandt, who often used this type of lighting for his paintings.

Back Light: A back light hits an actor or object from behind, and is usually placed higher than the object it is lighting. A backlight is often used to separate an object or an actor from a dark background, and to give the subject more shape and depth.

Rim Light: The subject is backlit in a low light scene. The technique gets its name from the fact that **lighting** a subject in this way produces a thin line or '**rim**' of **light** which appears to cling to the subjects outline.

High Key Lighting: Is an even light that reduces the lighting ratio in a scene making the lighting feel airy and light.

Low Key Lighting: Lighting that contains predominantly dark tones and colors. This type of lighting has a lot of contrast and can feel more dramatic.

Cross Lighting: A common scenario in **filmmaking** is that you have two characters standing talking to each other and you need to do a two-shot and an over-the-shoulder of each. A quick way to **light** this kind of scene is **cross-lighting**: you set up two **lamps** so that each **lamp** serves as one character's backlight and the other's key light.

Fill Light: To help control your contrast you can use a fill light. This light is used to fill the shadows. This can be a light source or a bounce which is basically a light reflector or poster board that you can bounce light off of and onto your subject.



CAMERA SHOTS

Wide Shot AKA Full Shot: Is generally used as an establishing shot to show the subject within their surrounding environment. It tells the audience where the scene is set and when the scene takes place.

Medium Wide Shot: Usually shows a character cut off just above or below the knees. It's wide enough to show the setting in which the scene is taking place, but also close enough to also show characters' facial expressions. This shot is also known as the Cowboy Shot.

Medium Shot: Shows a character cut off about the waist up.

Medium Close-Up: Falls between a Medium Shot and a Close-Up, generally framing the subject from chest or shoulder up. This is sometimes called a bust shot.

Close-Up: Usually frames the subject about the head and shoulders cutting out most of their surroundings making the point of focus the character's face. This shot is mainly used to show the characters emotion.

Extreme Close-Up: This is traditionally used in film to allow the viewer to enter the character's intimate space, revealing certain characteristics and emotions that would otherwise go unnoticed from afar.

Insert or Cut-In Shot: This shot is used to emphasize a relevant object in the scene. It can also be used to emphasize emotion such as hand movements to show enthusiasm, agitation or nervousness. This shot is usually added to the film in editing.

Cut Away: The interruption of a continuously filmed action by inserting a view of something else. It is usually followed by a cut back to the first shot.

Point of View (POV): Is also known as the Subjective Camera and is a shot of a character's point of view through the camera lens as if you were seeing through their eyes.

Over The Shoulder (OTS): A shot of someone or something taken from the perspective or camera angle from the shoulder of another person. The camera is placed behind the actor and the audience can usually see a part of the actor's back, shoulder and head.

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Two Shot: A shot where the frame encompasses two people. The subjects do not have to be right next to each other.

One Shot: A one shot or continuous shot is one long take by a single camera or manufactured to give the impression it is one long take.