



Nucoda

Nucoda Film Master gets to
the heart of Indian feature 180

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Respected freelance colourist, Kevin Shaw, spent time in India grading the first feature film of the famous Commercials Director, Jayendra.

Called 180 and released in June, the film was shot in India and the US and was recorded in dual language (Tamil/Telugu) including all the songs. The feature has created a lot of press attention in the region as the complexities of the plot and the meaning of the title 180 have been a closely guarded secret. During recent press junkets Jayendra told journalists that it's important for audiences to watch the film and interpret it individually.

The theme that runs throughout the film is “the power of the moment”. The protagonist, played by famous Telegu actor Siddarth, decides that he can't live his life thinking about yesterday or planning for tomorrow. An inquisitive girl (Nithya Mannon) falls in love with his impulsive now-or-never philosophy without knowing anything about him or where he came from. When she proposes to him he instinctively decides to flee the city but destiny stops him. As the girl travels with him to America, the audience discovers his story, his love, his plight and his need to live a life of anonymity. The soundtrack, which was composed by Malayalam composer Sharreth, has already been released in India to rave reviews.

The majority of the 180 shoot was recorded on RED One with a few scenes shot on Canon 7D and one of the four-to-five minute songs captured on the high-speed Phantom camera at 2,500 frames per second. Traditionally in India this genre is shot on film, however Jayendra wanted to break the mould as he felt digital acquisition would allow more freedom to focus on the story. He explains, “I strongly believe in digital capture and I wanted the choice to shoot as much material as possible. It's very important for me to concentrate on performances without having the burning of stock in the back of my mind. Film would have been completely impractical for this project.”

Jayendra believes that one of the biggest hurdles cinematographers face shooting digitally is the omission of the optical viewfinder. He says, “They find this a real impediment and so continue to lean towards film. In my case as a director I was very clear that I wanted to shoot digitally and I made my cinematographer understand that. Initially he was a little apprehensive but he's very happy with the result.”



Kevin Shaw spent five weeks in India preparing and grading the project. He explains, “It was made clear to me from the start that there were concerns that shooting digital might compromise image quality so it was critical that we had the best possible calibration for film print and digital cinema release.” Once this was in place Shaw imported selected RAW RED, Phantom and Canon camera files into the Film Master and then conformed and composited using the systems multi track timeline. He says, “The whole feature was finished in Nucoda Film Master: there was no online edit, which is a reflection on the flexibility and quality of the system and the extensive toolset helped me to match the three very different camera formats.”

The work completed by Shaw on Nucoda Film Master also included a number of VFX shots. These featured scenes filmed in hospital and apartment buildings during the San Francisco shoot where a green screen was used over the buildings' windows.



The VFX team created tracking backgrounds with mattes, which Shaw then composited using Nucoda Film Master so that he could grade background and foreground elements separately. This made it easier to alter the time of day according to the narrative.

Jayendra adds, "We took a very interesting direction in the grade, which is governed by the mental state of the protagonist. It was essential that Kevin really understood the philosophy of the film to reflect the psychological state of the key characters. He did and the result is stunning."

Shaw also enhanced the lighting in a number of scenes he explains, "The tracking tool was key throughout the grade. The DoP wanted to add a streak of light from a window in a scene that had a lot of smoke and also to enhance shadows in certain areas. Jayendra's commercial background meant the whole feature was beautifully shot. There are a lot of close up portraits on both the hero and the two heroines and I tracked their facial features using Nucoda Film Master's DVO Tracker to enhance lips and brighten eyes. It gives a very striking affect."

He adds, "I was given a lot of creative freedom and it was important to Jayendra that I could express the story through the grade. There's a philosophical difference between the Indian and the US elements of the story and I reflected this with colour enhancement. In the Indian footage I made the scenery a very lush green and used the Film Masters new "ikeyer" repeatedly. I went somewhat colder with a neutral blue blend mode in the US footage to illustrate the built-up city. I also did this to portray the emotional changes that take place in the two countries."

Jayendra concludes, "The final grade is absolutely beautiful and that's not just my opinion. The film has received a great deal of publicity and industry leaders who have seen the trailer and a couple of the songs have asked Kevin how a feature shot digitally looks as good as film with such high quality in the detail. The Nucoda Film Master system fulfilled all the creative elements required and I was delighted that Kevin could reflect the heart of the story through the grade."

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