



March 2012

2011 NEWSLETTER

The British Film Designers Guild

Promoting the
BRITISH ART DEPARTMENT



Tyrannosaurus - BAFTA Outstanding Debut Film Winner:
Simon Rogers - Production designer



A belated congratulations to one of our newer members.

- Rage and violence are the subjects of Paddy Considine's directorial debut, but his film is more than a collection of miserabilist clichés.
- Considine's eloquent, savagely poetic script is grounded in a cinematic idiom of bleached light, bleak estates and broken lives.
- A moving story of finding redemption and love in the most unlikely places, *Tyrannosaurus* follows the story of two damaged people brought together by circumstance: Joseph (Mullan), an unemployed widower, crippled by his own volatile temperament; and Hannah (Colman), a respectable charity shop worker, whose apparent happiness belies troubles of her own. A gripping drama, defined by powerhouse performances and a deeply affecting story.



[Guardian article](#) [Wikipedia -Tyrannosaurus](#)



Jonathan Lee's 'STRIKE BACK 3' in South Africa

SKY HD1 popular series has our Steve Carter, Paul Laugier and Fredrick Evard soaking up up the sun and enjoying the red tape.

Chris Ryan's *Strike Back* is a six-part British television series based on the novel of the same name written by best-selling author and former soldier of the Special Air Service, Chris Ryan. The series follows John Porter (Armitage), a former British Special Forces soldier, who is drafted back into service by Section 20, a fictional branch of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).

From our correspondent at the scene...

'Well, South Africa will work well for many countries, but we were also all set up for 10 days shooting in Maputo, Mozambique for it's distinctive look that Jonathan Lee remembered from his time on the Michael Mann film 'Ali'

Suddenly we were denied permission from the Mozambiquan authorities. They were expecting a 'Riot' as they put it, by the civil war veterans, who were marching into Maputo from the countryside, while we were due to be there.

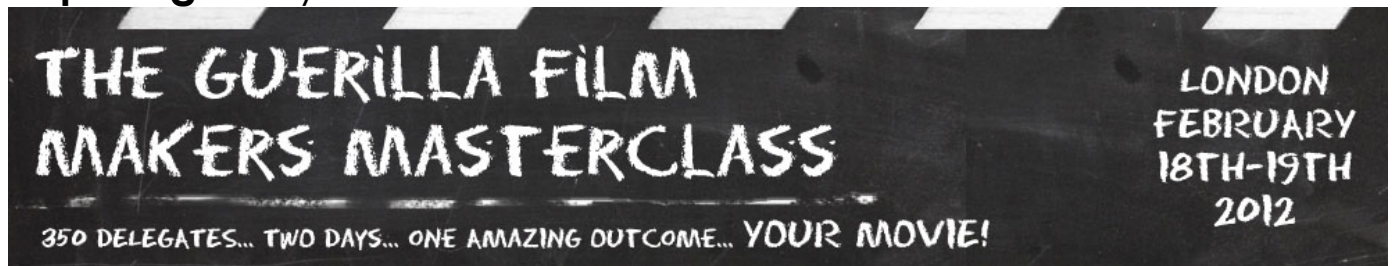
As Strike Back is a show about Special Forces rescuing good guys from bad guys, it is all about gunfire, weapons, explosions etc.



The government decided that if these (probably armed) war veterans heard the film crew gunfire, they would think another uprising had begun and would come and join in our action with real weapons and live rounds. It was decided for our safety and in the interests of National stability to deny us permission. Though we are now going back for a week with absolutely NO weapons of any kind!

Freddy is having a relatively peaceful time with a Tuareg episode, but later may be doing a Fitzcarraldo down the Congo river. Meanwhile Paul is master of a high tech international mobile surveillance unit!' **Steve Carter**

Reportage - by John West



In order to get an over-view of the industry and new methods of film-making I attended The Guerilla Movie Makers Master Class in London and Seize the Future at Stoke-on-Trent. These are some of the points that I noted.

1. 2012 is the year that everything changes.
2. Digital technology now allows film making to a huge number of people that could previously not afford to shoot on Super 16 or 35mm film.
3. The most important thing is to have a good story compellingly told.
4. Make your film astonishing.
5. Keep rewriting your script until it is as good as you can get it. At least four drafts are usual.
6. Avoid night shots and write them out of the script wherever possible; they are more expensive and the cast and crew will be more tired.
7. Combine characters to save money and economise in story-telling.
8. Do not stint on the Art Department budget; a poor prop or costume destroys the illusion you are striving to create.
9. A good visual look to a film is better value than hiring expensive kit for crane shots etc.
10. "White Wall Syndrome" is the curse of low-budget films; when the footage is edited together and all those 'economic locations' result in endless scenes where there is

just a white wall behind the cast. It looks awful and proves the need to discuss the look of the film with a good Art Director.

11. Discuss everything with other Heads of Departments at the end of every day's shooting that you all know what you are striving to achieve the following day.
12. Good planning is essential. The best investment is the money that you do not spend.
13. Don't waste money on expensive kit; at the end of the day a light is just a light. Many lowish to middle price-range cameras today will do a perfectly good job.
14. Do invest in good cinema lenses and good microphones.
15. Don't exhaust your cast and crew. Often you will find that there have been several re-takes of acceptable footage which have wasted time and money.
16. Strive to take every scene completely in a wide shot, before shooting the close-ups; then you will always have coverage.
17. Pay everyone at least the minimum rate. Don't offer deferred payment; profits often do not happen and you lose the trust of those with whom you have worked.
18. Crowd funding and requests for favours can make a film happen.
19. Some very competent films have been made and released using these methods; "Star Wreck" and "Iron Sky" are examples made by people who had previously never made a film before. (Must have been a steep learning curve...)
20. Digital technology allows making a rough cut while you are filming; this allows you to see if there are more shots needed for coverage and get them done on the day. More than one film company has found that they need extra shots for coverage weeks after the set-up has been dismantled. Re shoots can be very expensive.
21. Strive to get good clean shots and avoid "fixing it in post" as much as you can.
22. Strive to find a location that will allow you to shoot several scenes without a crew move which is expensive.
23. Avoid any location that has high noise levels, poor parking etc.
24. Ask a local pub or café to do the catering on a cost per head basis rather than hiring-in specialist caterers.
25. Digital technology usually loses at least one shot every day. Back-up everything in at least two places. Get one of the camera crew to take one of these home so it is kept separate.
26. It is very easy to lose a whole days shooting. Always buy enough memory cards to record a whole days shoot.
27. Don't record the sound on the camera; you need a specialist sound recordist.
28. Use the lists of people appearing in the local theatres as a source of cheap stars who may be happy to work before performances to relieve the monotony of a long run. Ask them directly; don't go through their agents.
29. Every film has an audience.
30. Most established film makers started small.
31. Setting up a web presence can find enthusiast who will help to guide the makers to the subjects that they want to see; maybe the second favourite idea is more popular than you favourite. (Some box office 'bombs' might have been avoided this way.)
32. A successful way of raising finance is to offer DVDs, software or other enticements that would be of interest to your target audience.
33. Somehow the money will always find you.
34. Most distributors are less effective in selling your film than you are; they will want rights to every profit-generator but will not promote many of them well and may neglect many revenue streams due to time constraints.
35. Always insist on having the UK theatrical rights and retain the rights for DVD sales.

36. Films like "Star Wars (IV)" success was more due to sci-fi enthusiast supporting the film on its first release, as Fox only initially booked it for 39 screens across the US. Had the fans not patronised these performances the film's success would have been far from assured.
37. Educational establishments will often buy your DVDs if they are in sympathy with the film's subject matter. Distributors are unlikely to bother with this revenue stream.
38. Most distributors take so much out of the gross that many film makers get no return on their investment. "The Blair Witch Project" cost \$60,000 grossed \$248,639,099 (Worldwide) and it is alleged that the film makers have seen very little of the profits.
39. Selling your film yourself is easier than it seems and greatly increases the returns on your film.
40. Strive to put your film in a small auditorium at a multiplex, this helps you to achieve the percentage which means that it will be held-over for a second week. Monday morning are when the management decides which films to withdraw.
41. Playing in one cinema in a city is better than on two sites as it increases the numbers attending a single screening and thus chance of it playing a second week.
42. Do take the trouble to do good publicity. Do good posters, DVDs, CDs of the music tracks, tee shirts, press releases, trailers and promotional material. If you do not have these, you are not ready to attend a film festival.
43. Some film makers find it pays to allow free screenings for any organisation that would like them and sell the DVDs there; in some cases 40% of the audience bought a copy.
44. Making a DVD costs \$1 and it can be sold for \$24.99.
45. Get someone you trust to make a trailer; you are not telling the story of your film you are enticing an audience.
46. You can put a trailer on your web site and sell DVDs and CDs from that. Even the James Bond films heavily rely on DVD and TV sales to put them into profit.
47. It is better for the British film industry to have many small films in production than three or four "block-busters" as there are more jobs for heads of departments and it spreads the risks.
48. Despite all the economies a feature will cost £30,000 to master and produce the digital prints, DVDs, Blue Ray discs, scripts for translation etc. that the distributors require. Are the demanded economies in the Art Department's budget worth the loss in quality when so much has to be spent on the mastering etc?
49. Films can be very influential in targeting problems and offering solutions. Some organisations have changed their seemingly intractable views after a film has raised issues that had to be confronted.
50. Any venue that can exhibit your films is worth considering.
51. The days when small film makers consisted of "amateurs and nerds" are over.
52. A new audience-driven industry is emerging. It could be as revolutionary as the advent of sound in the cinema.
53. A cynic might suggest that audience-driven cinema was as unlikely to happen as a 2D, monochrome, Academy aspect-ratio, silent film winning Oscars in 2012...

[Master Class link](#)

We are public but under construction...
Public announcements and open site.

[BFDG on Twitter](#)

BFDG DesignersGuild



National Film Television School ...cordially invite those at Shepperton and Pinewood Art Departments lunch time and after work drinkie to admire the clever work.

The Orangery, Shepperton on 15th March

The Ballroom, Pinewood on 16th March.

12 noon to 7pm.

Drinks available from 5.30pm.

Do drop in to enjoy



And more of the same...

British Art Departments: official, we're winners.

No longer breaking news but pats on the back for the British Art Depts of Hugo, Harry Potter DH pt2 and War Horse.

BFDG Awards

'I have received my glass plaque award via the Bushnell/Lamont/Ackland-Snow postal service!
Thank you and the committee once again for this kind and much appreciated gesture.'

Al Bullock



Al, Gary T, Stephen S, Nic H & bloke in grey shirt - HP team in LA for ADG awards



BFDG additional awards.

Extended to War Horse Production Designer and Set Decorator. As our BFDG awards are a new feature it was originally conceived to just present them to members only until a later date.

Committee has subsequently added these two positions.

Also due to BECTU's approaching 21st Anniversary, John West initiated interest a plaque has been produced and to be presented by John at the Union's event.



Congratulations to BECTU.

Information Request from Vicky Simpson about her Father Vic Simpson

"I am wondering if you can assist me please. I am Vic Simpson's Daughter and we are currently trying to write a book about his career etc and as a surprise for him I thought it would be nice to try and get some former colleagues to write something about him.

Could anyone provide photos, memorable experiences (good or bad) about working with my dad? Obviously I want it as a surprise, but would be happy to speak to anyone or have you contact me on email.

With kind regards, Vicky Simpson

Mobile: 07725 801196

Email: vickysimpson73@yahoo.co.uk

PACT and BECTU

We had a very productive, informal and friendly meeting with Martin Spence, Mr Big at BECTU. We now have opened up an avenue for mutually beneficial discussions concerning salaries, contracts, working conditions and payments. Advice can only be given in general terms should the occasion arise, as particular concerns should be raised only by BECTU members.

A key event that is taking place is that they are trying to agree basic salary levels. Refer to the PACT link. This is currently going quite well and should address issues raised by our members at the last couple of AGMs.



Thank you John West for instigating this meeting, who is a very active BECTU member as well.

On a personal note, I found the meeting very refreshing; my out dated image of the ACTT has now been replaced. I recommend joining BECTU and re-join their ranks too.

[PACT UK Trade Association - representing amongst many things British Film](#)



Pinewood Library... Want to visit?

Access to the library is usually very simple.
(Snow White might get in the way right now).

Smile a CCTV camera is being installed.



1. Get into Pinewood, use your own ways on getting through Checkpoint Charlie.
2. Collect the key card from FDI (having already arranged prior to.)
3. Go to the old Stills dept. this is behind the Carpenter's Shop and attached to Effects Associates building.
4. Switch lights on (can be tricky in the dark)
5. Copy, print, photograph to your heart's content.
6. Leave everything as you found it or tidy up if required.
7. Smile at the CCTV camera before you leave.

This procedure will be updated with increased security.
This is the obvious; DO NOT REMOVE BOOKS FROM PINWOOD.
A few of the precious books were 'taken' and sold to Specialist book shops.
This was discovered and steps taken, the film world is very small. Mmmm!
This is a **unique** source, use it, take care of it, it is irreplaceable.



Some of our members may have recently been available for work...

Contact the office for the latest availabilities or check our facebook weekly membership updates.

Justin Brown – AD
Jill Andrae – Reid – P/PP
John West – D /AD
Warren Lever – CM
Terry Jones - PB
Tom Weaving AAD
Luke Edwards – Assist SD
Chris Peters – Affiliate
Clare Winkworth - Affiliate
Isabelle Carboni - Affiliate

Adam O'Neill - AD
Darren Tubby – D
Steve Forrest Smith - SA
Sonja Klaus - SD
James Corker - ADA
Danny Rogers - GD/AD
Malcolm Stone – SAD/AD/SD/PD
Marcia Doyle – Affiliate
Jon Meakins – Affiliate

Internationally based

Giles Masters, LA
Stephen Morahan, NY
Jonathan McKinstry, Spain
Steve Bream, Berlin

Provisional list; intended for Supervising Art Directors and general notifications.
For Production Designer availability contact the office.
Like most members of the British Film Industry, we are open to offers !

NEW MEMBERS..

May we welcome the following new members who have joined the Guild recently. We hope your time with us will be a long and rewarding one:

Caroline Amies
Elizabeth Roach

PRODUCTION NEWS & RUMOUR MILL

UK In Production

Bomb / UK / PD Carlos Conti / SD Liz Griffiths
Got to Dance - TV Reality show / Pinewood
The Hour / London locations / PD Eve Stewart
Skyfall - Bond 23/ Pinewood / PD Dennis Gassner
Gareth Thomas biopic / UK / Dir Anthony Hoffman

International in Production

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty / NY

Strike Back / South Africa / PD Jonathan Lee / SAD Steve Carter / AD Paul Laugier & Freddie Evard

Die Hard 5 / Europe / PD Dan Dorrance

The Hobbit / NZ / Dir Peter Jackson

Romeo and Juliet / Italy

The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 1 / NZ / Peter Jackson

Pre Production

Les Miserables / Pinewood / PD Eve Stewart / SAD Grant Armstrong

Fast and Furious 6 / Shepperton, Europe & London locations / PD Jan Roelfs

Maleficent / Pinewood / Dir Robert Stromberg / PD Gary Freeman

Hummingbird / London loc / PD Michael Carlin / SAD Stuart Kearns

The invisible Woman / UK / Dir Ralph Fiennes

Bridget Jones 3 / Ealing

Pencilled in Productions

'Untitled' / Warners / Leavesden

Captain Phillips / UK / Dir Paul Greengrass

Chapter Seven / UK / PD Alex McDowell

The Hobbit: There and Back Again 2 / NZ / Dir Peter Jackson

The Man from U.N.C.L.E. / Europe / Dir Guy Ritchie

Heat re-make / France / Summer 2012 / Dir Brian De Palma

Post Production

After Earth / NY / PD Tom Saunders

Cloud Atlas / Berlin / PD Hugh Bateup / SD Peter Walpole

Expendables 2 / Bulgaria / Dir Simon West / PD Paul Cross

Early Stage Productions

TinTin 2 / Prod Steven Spielberg / Dir Peter Jackson

Kick-Ass 2 / Prod Matthew Vaughan

American Jesus / Dir Matthew Vaughan?

Dark Tower / Warners

Absolutely Anything (Monty Python Sci-fi) / UK / Dir Terry Jones

Night Stalker / Dir Edgar Wright / Str Johnny Depp

Pride, Prejudice and Zombies /UK

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles / USA / Dir Jonathan Liesesman

Sunset Song / Scotland & Europe / Summer 2012 ?

Divine Rapture / Eire / Prod Barry Navidi / Summer 2012 ?

Seventh Son aka Spooks Apprentice / USA / Dir Sergey Bodrov

Distant Productions

The Boys anti- Superheroes / dropped by Sony

Waiting to Exhale / USA / Witney Houston was lined up

Zorro Reborn / Fox

Robocop remake / Dir Jose Padnilla

Hercules: The Thracian Wars / Str Dwayne Johnson 'the Rock'

Zulu (book not re-make) / Str Orlando Bloom

Movie News

Guernsey / Pinewood / Dir Kenneth Branagh / PD Tim Harvey - on hold

Clash of the Titans 3 / Script in progress

I am Legend 2 / Warners

Arthur and Lancelot / on hold

At the Mountains of Madness / Dir Guillermo del Toro - on hold

Thor 2 / Shepperton? / Dir Alan Taylor / PD Charles Woods – Awaiting agreement

FROM THE RUMOUR MILL... And some of this info has to be considered just so.....If any Guild members have any more definitive information then please let the office know immediately!.....Please check with any individuals mentioned regarding availability... And do not quote or rely on any of this information!...

Rumours are published for the benefit of the membership only!

Please let us know if anything is wrong, and it can be corrected.

Some enquiries the Guild has received have asked us not to publish information but would like to know available crew. So please keep us informed as this happens fairly frequently but we always respect privacy.

And Finally,

Do please, feel free to contribute to the newsletter, by way of comment, with some copy material, news or any info for the RUMOUR MILL....anything that is seriously wrong then please post on Facebook!

Please send contributions via Maddie in the office or to me directly by email.

I am aware that many people, other than members of the Guild, have sight of, and read this Newsletter each month. If you would like to apply to become a member, or express a point of view to the wider membership then please do sign up and get involved.

Susan Whitaker

Chairman BFDG

su@film-design.co.uk

Mads Bushnell

Administrator British Film Designers Guild

Contact info@filmdesigners.co.uk

Address: British Film Designers Guild, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Bucks SL0 0NH

Telephone: +44 (0) 1753 509013 Mobile: +44 (0)7768 573450

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