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PETRA KORNER

one of

Daily Variety's
10 Cinematographers to Watch

INNOVATIVE ARTISTS

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10 Cinematographers to Watch

Talent, hard work and indelible images have not only widened awareness of this year's up-and-comers beyond d.p. circles, but as pix like 'Bright Star' and 'Single Man' reveal, their work is among the best.



"The Wackness"

PETRA KORNER With Almodros as her inspiration, femme lenser transcends the odds

Rising star Petra Korner is something of a rarity — a successful female cinematographer in what is, after a century of cinema, still essentially a boys' club. Not that the peripatetic d.p. — who grew up in Vienna, attended school in France, NYU Tisch, FAMU Film Academy in Prague and AFI ("where they prepared me all around for a career") — minds in the slightest. "No way! People sense right away if you know your stuff, technical or otherwise," she says. "The woman factor lasts for about a minute and a half! After that, you're just another d.p."

Not quite. The 2009 Women in Film cinematographer of the year, who won the prestigious Nestor Almendros Award for her NYU thesis

film — "so special to me because Nestor had been a great influence" — has quickly established herself, accumulating feature credits including "The Informers" and "The Wackness" while shooting commercials internationally. Director Jonathan Levine, who'd done some shorts and music videos with Korner, brought her onboard for "The Wackness," and really encouraged me to push creative boundaries," she recalls. "He wanted a summery, nostalgic feel to the early '90s period."

By contrast, Korner went for "a gloomy approach" to the dark, atmospheric mid-'80s feel of "The Informers." "We shot in Uruguay and L.A. and wanted the city to feel a bit outer-worldly, to reflect the theme of alienation."



POV

MOVIE THAT CHANGED MY LIFE: "Snow Falling on Cedars"
D.P. HEROES: "A tie between Roger Deakins and Dariusz Wolski."
FILM OR DIGITAL: Film
FAVORITE TOOL: "My imagination"

Her latest film is "My Soul to Take" for Wes Craven, who promptly hired her after seeing her work on "The Wackness."

"It was exciting to shoot for such a legend and to work with a great team of people at Focus/Rogue."

— Iain Blair

ERIC STEELBERG Nowhere to go but 'Up'



F or Eric Steelberg, coaxing the audience to identify with characters in the indie sensation "Juno" or the adult drama "Up in the Air" means disappearing a little.

"You don't want to overwhelm people watching these movies with crazy camera moves," says Steelberg, "so we don't do things like move cameras through walls or anything that takes away from the feeling that you're right there with George Clooney in a hotel room watching his life with him."

One of the movies that Steelberg saw growing up that caused him to concentrate on a film's visuals was "The Black Stallion," shot by Caleb Deschanel. "Working with his daughter Zoëy (on "500 Days of Summer") was really intimidating because I thought that if I didn't shoot her the right way I'd hear about it from him. Luckily he saw the film and I heard back that he thought it looked great."

Steelberg's give and take with "Up in the Air" director Jason Reitman has evolved into minimum

POV

MOVIES THAT CHANGED MY LIFE: "The Black Stallion," "Empire of the Sun."
D.P. HERO: "There are so many, but Caleb Deschanel is definitely one of them."
FILM OR DIGITAL: "Definitely film. I think there's an emotional sensibility about film and the way it catches the light. Digital isn't there yet."
FAVORITE TOOL: "I'm more interested in the emotional content of what we're shooting, so whatever helps me get that right is my favorite tool at the moment."

communication resulting in maximum results.

"We have a shorthand, so we don't really talk about things a lot," says Steelberg of their working relationship. "I've known him since we were kids in the San Fernando Valley, so we can disagree with each other and it's a healthy creative thing."

— Karen Idelson