



A full digital data workflow was employed for the feature "The Papyrus" shot around London in March 2008 by DOP Andrea Chiozzotto.

Interview by John Collins

*Andrea, what is your position about shooting digital instead of 35mm ?*

I must say, every time I go for digital it's a real challenge. No matter film is historically considered to be the reference of quality for the motion picture industry, I believe that digital should be carefully watched and appreciated with fresh and absolute eyes instead of being compared with a different media. Therefore, apart for a sentimental bond with film, I am truly opened to choose what is best for any project I start.



*What made you choosing Viper cameras for this feature?*

The project required a considerable amount of VFX but this was just the triggering reason to go and check out digital cameras. I could shoot 35mm but I felt now I could try something new in digital that was not available before. I remember one of my first experiences with digital in 2002 when my lighting plan was constantly modified by coping with technical restrictions.

Now, 6 years later, there are several innovative cameras in the market but still most of them have a gap in the workflow, which doesn't allow a cinematographer of being constantly in full control of the image. There are also very good cameras but their complex setup is not suitable for movie productions and they are very fragile and unreliable.

I heard about the Viper Filmstream since a while then I found out that Rogue Element Films Company in Pinewood Studios built an interesting workflow capable of truly going through an intense feature shoot.

I invited my camera crew to go and visit Dan Mulligan who I discovered has a long experience in digital cameras since the first models came out. We sat down with a cup of coffee and Dan very kindly explained us the whole workflow in details, connecting and running all necessary equipment.

The footage frames are recorded natively and stored as uncompressed DPX 2K files on Stwo Take2 DFRs capable of providing ProRes 422 offline copies for editorial. This portable system could allow me to create and apply LUTs onset thanks to Iridas mobile color timing suite, which means I could always be in control of my color space and collect daily samples of my personal guide grades to store on my USB Key for future reference at the lab.



*Do you like Viper Filmstream image look?*

The look of each digital camera is much more variegated than the difference existing between one film stock and another one. Being an electronic device, it brings on board major native differences, which are more or less controlled via tuning menus and additional parameters. What it really counts for a director of photography is to become familiar with the personality of the native RAW CCD image and then appreciating the way colors and contrast respond to grading within the generous color space provided.

I believe this is the good approach as trusting camera tests is not always satisfactory. I always get to know the real thing once I've been emotionally involved in shooting the actual feature. Now that I tried out Viper Filmstream, I can say I will certainly employ it again on other suitable projects.

*Was it suitable for the lighting work you designed for The Papyrus?*

My lighting project employed HMI sources with chimeras most of the time. My gaffer Lee Walters got on well with that and we never had to compromise our work because of camera technical limitations.

I was very happy of the atmospheres that I could manage to achieve while working in interiors at old London libraries. The Viper canvas is really reach and sometimes motion-wise very intriguing thanks to its mechanical shutter.

Even the typical reflections on shiny objects' surfaces especially bookshelves wood and books covers came up being smooth enough to work well with. The experience with practical lamps in interiors was excellent. Viper was very generous with all these extreme lighting conditions including the 6 stops overexposed exteriors seen through open windows which resulted being a sort of creamy area still with interesting shapes on it.

