



Operating on Head to Love (2009)

Daydream Believer

Name: Artur Zurawski

Age: 37

Family? Wife, daughter 8, son 6.

Where did you grow up?
I grew up in Chojna – a very small town in the west of Poland (100km from Berlin), surrounded by forests and lakes.

Where do you live today?
Warsaw, Poland.

Languages?
English, Russian, and Polish.

Occupation?
Director of Photography.

Training?
I graduated from the Cinematography Department in The Polish National Film School in Lodz. One of my teachers was Witold Sobocinski (he shot *Frantic* – directed by Roman Polanski, and

won an ASC Lifetime Achievement Award). Also in the school: Dariusz Wolski (shot *Pirates of the Caribbean*), Pawel Edelman (DOP on *The Pianist*, 2003 Oscar), Andrzej Bartkowiak (DOP on *Speed*), Slawomir Idziak (shot *Black Hawk Down*, 2002 Oscar).

Current assignments?
I'm shooting a documentary in a Polish mountain village for a Polish producer with the smallest crew I have ever worked with: just the Director, Sound Recordist/Assistant, and me.

Have you been busy?
I have been very busy shooting a TV series. Many months on the set, with the digital gradings to be done after each 14-hour

shooting day, leaving me with only one free day a week.

Shooting where?
I mostly shoot close to Poland, and in Germany, England, and Ukraine. This is good as it means I can see my kids regularly. But now, as they are older, I am looking for longer productions and those that take me further from home.

The best thing about the job is making dreams come true – I'm able to create everything we draw in a storyboard.

What types of productions have you mostly shot?
I shoot many fiction projects (also independent) as well as TV series, documentaries, and commercials (I handle these as Director and DOP).



Preparing an African village scene for *Od pelni do pelni* (2009)

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What was your first-ever shooting job?

Before my studies in The Polish National Film School I was studying in the Academy of Visual Arts in Poznan, Poland. One of my teachers chose me as his assistant for his animated film about Dutch painter Piet Mondrian. At that moment I was a photographer and loved to make flipbooks and very short non-camera films (drawing or scraping 35mm film stock). So I became his assistant and one of a few animators. It was in 1995 and we were using 35mm negative. No computers – just classical animation on film with back projections (from original archival 16 and 35 footage). I was also making animated still photographs. So I can say it was my first stop frame job.

Most recent, interesting assignments?

Preparing and shooting the movie *Od pelni do pelni* (2009), directed by Tomasz Szafranski. Preparation took

five months (making storyboards using the director's computer and my hand drawings). It took 36 days of shooting and digital post after that.

Current camera equipment you use?

In the feature *Od pelni do pelni* I was using 35mm Moviecam and Arriflex cameras provided by Panavision Poland. On the current documentary I used a small Sony XDCAM EX.

Other gear you have access to?

I cooperate closely with Panavision Poland and EBH Poland (Euro Broadcast Hire – digital cameras).

What useful piece of gear do you wish someone might make?

I believe it is possible to build an in-ball (football, tennis, etc) camera. It would be a revolution in television sport shows. Imagine: the shots from the ball's point of view catching the concentration on a footballer's face before he kicks it. Fabulous!



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How do you find the Internet as a tool to draw in assignments?

I think the Web is a great tool! I did a few projects exchanging ideas with directors via e-mail. They didn't know me personally but my replies and ideas on how-to-show-this-story helped me to win the contract.

Best thing about your job?

Making dreams come true. Now mostly everything depends on the imagination (and the budget of course). I'm able to create everything we draw in a storyboard.

Worst thing about your job?

The worst thing is starting shooting without really good preparations. Good preparation for me means that I thoroughly understand the Director's aims in every detail.

Dullest assignments and why?

Early on in my career I worked as camera operator on a TV series. The story was boring, we were shooting only in the studio. I didn't see the sunlight for many long months.

Hairiest/scariest assignments and why?

The most terrifying was the animation project. The



Director (an extremely talented guy) was changing his mind very often. When making an animation film, this is a horror!



For example, after hand drawing and painting hundreds of cells, he wanted to change some colours! Now, it could be done with one mouse click, but in the past, with hand-painted cells, it was a nightmare for the animators and painters. Many

times I wanted to quit the job, but now I'm happy I finished it. It made me strong and worked as a fix-me-up before my future career began.

Lucky breaks?

We were on an extremely tight schedule: four nights exterior

shoot on an open deck river ship. The Line Producer came to me and said, "It's likely to rain. What am I going to do?" I answered, "Easy, it will be OK." The night meal was planned for a half hour past midnight. We broke to eat... the rain poured down. When the break finished, the rain stopped and we continued shooting. Very lucky!

Any magic?

We were shooting a story about magic. The location was Wroclaw, about 350kms south west of Warsaw. Suddenly, all our phones and computers went dead, then the ARRI 535 stopped – without reason. Luckily Panavision quickly sent us two replacement cameras that meant we could extend our coverage. But that wasn't the end of the witchery: a huge Fresnel lens on an 18KW lamp cracked and the script girl's laptop lost all its data. Very strange!

How much 16:9 do you shoot?

With all documentary films I shoot I use this format. But also in the last feature film we decided *not* to shoot anamorphic, as we needed a very thin depth of field.

What countries do you most like to shoot in?

I don't travel much professionally, but I think the Far East could be a very interesting and exciting place to make films.

What's your taste in music?

I am working through that area. At the moment I love ethnic rhythms. Indian drums make me happy and give me power and freshness.

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