

## EGSM 10: Lights, Camera, Etc. (Cinematography)

### Content Warnings

- Explicit language
- Mild spoilers for Hereditary and Midsommar
- Mentions of: Christianity, violence (inc. gun violence), war, fascism, death, drugs

**[Cold Open]**

**LIZ**

So if you want to see like a historical recreation of Rome, you can go in and walk through all the sets!

**MIKE**

No!

**LIZ**

So that's like my top like, when you're in Rome, go do that! Don't go to the real colosseum.

(group laughter)

**[Show Theme - Intro]**

**HELEN**

Hello friends and fans, and welcome to Enthusiasm, the show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers, and today I have a cold, but we're doing it anyway, we are going for it, we're gonna have a great time, and then I'm gonna have some lemsip and it's gonna be great. So today, we're talking about cinematography, and I am absolutely delighted and over the moon and beyond the stars to be joined by Elizabeth and Mike.

**MIKE**

Hello!

**LIZ**

Hiya!

**HELEN**

Hello Mike. Hello Liz. Let's introduce you. Liz, can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

**LIZ**

Er, yep, so my pronouns are she/her, and I'm an editor for Rusty Quill. I particularly was working on The Magnus Archives.

**HELEN**

Wonderful. And Mike, what are your pronouns and what do you do?

**MIKE**

Hello, I'm Mike, he/him, and I am the Head of Video for Rusty Quill.

**HELEN**

Fabulous, fabulous. We're gonna jump right into it, and I wanna ask you both, why are you interested in cinematography? Because my answer to this is very short and simple: it's I like when things look good, but I do not know how to make things look good, and so I am fascinated by how people do it. How about the two of you, what do you think?

**MIKE**

Well, I mean for me it's um, it's more about—I've always had an interest in film and I studied cinematography in college, and then a little bit through uni as well because I ended up like falling in with a load of like, film students, TV students, that sort of thing, and like you I love to make things look good, and so yeah that's my, that's my buy-in man. I just like making shit look cool.

**HELEN**

(laughs)

And what about you Liz?

**LIZ**

When I was at high school I started volunteering in like the audio visual club, which was mostly because you got to leave class and not have to be in class, it was pretty amazing for that. So I got into it from a weird route in that I started filming stuff for the TIC club because that seemed to be the thing I was best at,

and then that turned into an interest in camera work and television, and from there, you know, similarly I went to broadcasting school. From there I got into film theory and cinematography, so I went the complete opposite route of not grounding myself in like the images first but instead sort of grounding myself in the equipment and then realising ‘oh you can do things with this!’

(group laughter)

**HELEN**

That’s super cool. I had no idea you went to broadcasting school!

**LIZ**

Oh yeah I’ve literally got a BBC. Bachelor of Broadcasting Communications!

**HELEN**

Okay—

**MIKE**

No way!

(laughs)

**LIZ**

Yep, that’s what it is!

(laughter)

**MIKE**

No way! That’s so cool.

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

Goddamn!

**HELEN**

That is cool.

**MIKE**

I'm such a, I'm such a phoney when it comes to that sort of stuff. I studied psychology, man! I just went and hung out with a load of people who were really cool and like, usually had cameras on them, and I was like 'hey that looks cool'. And then like I ended up dating one of them and then I ended up like falling in with the rest of them, it was great.

**LIZ**

Oh yeah, yeah.

**HELEN**

But you've got all the practical experience Mike.

**MIKE**

Yeah, well, I mean everything that I've learnt about cinematography I've pretty much taught myself over the course of like a number of years, like through YouTube and then through Twitch and then through like general interest, watching, listening, learning, understanding. Like all of the stuff that I've done, I've sort of developed by myself, for myself.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**MIKE**

And that's including like all of the probably years' worth of YouTube tutorials that I've watched.

**HELEN**

Aww. I'm very proud of you.

**MIKE**

Oh thank you! Man, I, do you know what, in prep for this episode, I was even watching some more of them. I was actually watch, I was doing a refresher course on like, angles and shooting direction and the a hundred and eighty degree rule and all of that kind of noise. So yeah.

**HELEN**

What's the hundred and eighty degree rule?

**MIKE**

The hundred and eighty degree rule when it comes to shooting is when you're setting up a shot and you have your actors who are on the stage, you draw a line through the centre of the action however you want to use the camera, and you do not cross that line with the camera, because otherwise it creates a weird sense of space distortion. So for example, if you were shooting an interview, like where two people are talking to each other across a room, your a hundred and eighty degree line might be from one person to the other, because if you were to film on the other side of them, it would look like they were facing in the same direction rather than at each other. If you shoot Person A from the right and Person B from the right, they will both be looking away from each other when it comes to cross shots.

**HELEN**

Ahh, I see. Alright. So the next question I've got written down is: what defines a perfect shot? And I feel like this might get a bit in-depth. Because now we're gonna have to define what is perfection.

**MIKE**

Uh oh.

**HELEN**

Ah. So. Would anyone like to take a crack at that?

**LIZ**

I can take a crack, in that, well, so with 'what is the perfect shot' I think it really comes down to the directing style and then you've got potential perfect shots in that, right? So if you've got a Wes Anderson film, loads of symmetry, and then the colours, the palette, the things that he does in terms of, you know, like structuring what's in the scene, you know the mise en scene, means that a lot of his films they're, they've just got, each shot is like, quite beautiful in itself? But it's quite unnatural. You know, it's beautiful but essentially unnatural.

**HELEN**

Mm, it's, it's staged.

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Like it's deliberately...so, wait a minute, Wes Anderson, um, is he the Royal Tenenbaums and Budapest, Grand Budapest Hotel? Yes.

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Yes, those are all very very deliberate. They all have a very specific sense of aesthetic.

**LIZ**

Yeah, so, so I think a beautiful shot is something which doesn't have anything it doesn't need in it.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

And I guess makes you connect in the right ways. So you've got, then you've got someone like Ingmar Bergman, where it's not restricted but because it's, you know, black and white and it's, he does very realistic...well a lot of his things are very realistic based, although obviously having death appear is not really super realistic. But his films, they're set in nature, so you might have, yeah, just things which just look very natural but it invokes something emotionally that's quite important to the story telling. And then you know you've got movement as well, right, so what I think of as almost a guilty pleasure in terms of cinematography is, umm, I really like Jesus Christ Superstar, the musical...

(Liz and Mike laugh)

**HELEN**

Oh really?

**MIKE**

What a shout!

**LIZ**

Like, er...I love it, I love it, I love everything about Jesus Christ Superstar! I remember seeing it when I was a kid and it had...it was so strange to me because the setting of it is, you know when you're a kid you don't realise that they're setting it in Jerusalem now and there's x y z going on, so it's quite, quite a strange setting of like these modern people sort of get out and hang around these ruins for a bit. But there's a beautiful shot of Judas, who I think is, I can't remember his name, George something I think, but it's like this panning shot, which where it's towards the end and it's this panning shot of him sort of singing post you know, in the final epilogue. And he's got like a little bit of sweat on the brow and there's the people dancing behind him. But the intensity in the face that's captured at that moment, it's just amazing...

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

...and it's also, just, he's so super hot at that point as well...

(group laughter)

**LIZ**

I just remember going, okay yeah my heart is my, is, is yours like, my heart is yours, in that moment.

(group laughter)

**MIKE**

Ah, don't worry man, we've all had that moment in the cinema at some point, hey.

(Helen laughs)

**LIZ**

Every time I see it, either on stage or, you know, something like a movie, it's always the Judas that I fall for.

**HELEN**

Mmm!

**LIZ**

Which I, I feel bad for Jesus in that sense, but the Judas' are always really hot.

(group laughter)

**HELEN**

I mean, as we've discussed in one of the other Enthusiasm episodes, villains are often extremely hot.

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

Oh, Mads. Please never leave cinema. Good lord.

(Helen laughs)

**HELEN**

Well, Mike. What do you think? Do you agree with...how did you put it Liz? That a perfect, a beautiful shot is where...

**LIZ**

Well I guess, I guess the three things I was thinking of is, um, where the...it fits the director's style, so it has, you know like, it's beautiful, it fits the scene.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**LIZ**

It doesn't have anything unnecessary in it. It evokes emotion.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

Yeah, those kind of things. But, but there's so many beautiful shots, I think that's the thing.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

Yeah, I mean, I, I agree, I agree with you Liz. Like all of those things are, are definitely something that really does invoke, like, what you may...what you may conceptualize as the perfect shot. For me, it also has to have a little sprinkle of innovation.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

Like for example, the use of Dutch tilts in Snatch, for example. Where you have, um, there's a scene where Bullet Tooth Tony is pressing a Desert Eagle against the side of someone's head, and the whole camera has sort of like moved with the action to get an extreme close-up of Sol, the guy he's pressing the gun against his face. So you can see all of the emotion of the three characters who are in that shot, but it's a really interesting way to use the camera, and the use of lighting as well tells part of the story, and like obviously the actors do a really great job as well. Umm, but like, the fact that they're using the camera in a way that you wouldn't expect like is sort of something that kind of adds that level of intrigue. It's a similar thing with like Scott Pilgrim vs The World and the use, I can't remember the director's name, but the use of slide transitions and the fluid nature of like how everything fits together.

**HELEN**

Okay, er, two things: what is a Dutch tilt? What is a slide transition?

**MIKE**

Oh, sorry, yes, of course, I should be more specific. Okay.

(Helen laughs)

**HELEN**

No, I, I am such a newbie, you will have to treat me like I am a toddler.

**MIKE**

No no it's fine, you're absolutely right, I should explain this shit!

(Helen laughs)

So a Dutch tilt is when you tilt - normally you have the camera on a fixed parabola, umm, but when you tilt the camera slightly to the right or slightly to the left, it's referred to as a Dutch tilt.

**HELEN**

Like in Inception when they're walking on the walls?

**MIKE**

Like in Inception, yeah. Inception is an absolutely prime example of this Helen!

(Helen laughs)

Absolutely peak! Yeah because the camera is all over the place in Inception, and yes, they use Dutch tilts, the main result of a Dutch tilt is to create a sense of unease, or something feeling off-kilter.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

It's often used to show heightened emotional states, like if someone is crying or if someone's being particularly aggressive. Umm, like another example is The Wolf of Wall Street where, you know in the bit where umm, Leo's got his face pressed right up against that guy and he's like yelling directly at him, all of this sort of stuff.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

The camera actually tilts with the action really subtly to give you that sense of like, he's becoming unhinged? And then when it cuts to our boy Spiderman in the background, it tilts back again, and you'll notice that it fixes itself back at that state, from that point. So it's a really cool cinematographic technique, umm, and I, I, I love it.

(Mike laughs)

Genuinely.

**HELEN**

So then what's a scene transition in Scott Pilgrim...?

**MIKE**

A slide transition. So a slide transition...

**HELEN**

Slide transition.

**MIKE**

... is literally what it says on the tin. It is when a scene, so where one shot and another shot slide across each other, or slide with each other. It's also called a push transition, where it looks like one of the scenes is literally being pushed off by the next shot.

**HELEN**

Ohh...

**MIKE**

Funnily enough I actually use – me and Rusne, actually, my editor – we actually use push transitions quite a lot when we do all the content that we do, whether it's for Rusty Bits or various other things or like, you know, Twitch, like when we're editing Twitch and things like that, we will use push transitions to swap between scenes, because it's a nice quick way of like moving onto something else. But the innovation in Scott Pilgrim actually comes from the fact that there's always a fluid line between two scenes. Like there's one of the scenes which is almost like a tumbling effect, and this is a, an example of a push transition, where the camera moves down, but as the camera moves down, the new scene slides up to meet it.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

And what connects those two things is you still have this old scene, which is now technically in the sky, and along with that you have like a, because Scott Pilgrim's based on a comic, they decided to incorporate like the comic book themes of like having text that moves between...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

...that moves between plates or that moves between, um, the fuck are they called? Windows! Text that moves between windows, as well, to link those two scenes together, and yeah the, the people who pulled that together, like they really thought about how to incorporate this comic book style and used really cool, innovative transitions to make it feel more like a comic book, so.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

Yeah! My idea of like the perfect shot, yes it has to be based, it has to be relevant, right? It has to be a shot that says everything with the use of lighting, with the use of camera technique, with the use of lenses, and various other bits and pieces, it has to obviously make sense, the shot has to make sense, whether it's fulsome or whether it's stripped down. Whether the director has decided to use multiple shots to show chaos in a scene and it's like (clicks fingers repeatedly) cut, cut, cut, cut, cut! Or if it's just very very simple, like for example in Squid Game, where you have a really long...relevant, I know! Where you have like a really long, hanging shot that just sits there for long enough to make you feel uncomfortable, then cuts away. You know, it has to have relevance.

**HELEN**

Mmm, they do that quite often in Squid Game, there were quite a few shots where I was like, I'm looking at this person's face for a very long time...

**MIKE**

Yeah! It's...

**HELEN**

And I don't have anything else to distract me.

**MIKE**

It's another super cool way that you can use good camera work to create a sense of unease without doing anything.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

You can just have blankness. It actually takes a lot of nerve to pull off blank space in film. And that's because you can very easily get blank space wrong. But the use of it in Squid Game is really really cool, as you say, it creates this sense of unease and tension, without using techniques like Dutch tilts and stuff like that which is cool. But like I say, in addition, it also has to have that air of innovation. So it has to be relevant, it has to tell a story, but it can also have these like, interesting ways of using a camera that, or using the technology or using the lighting that you have available, to add that little extra dynamic, that without even knowing that it's there makes you think 'oh, that's interesting.'

**HELEN**

Liz you were going to say something earlier, while we were still talking about Scott Pilgrim.

**MIKE**

Yeah, sorry Liz!

**LIZ**

Oh, I was just going to say the, so you also get things like Pi where the film is known for, you know, adding a new way of filming, for example, and that was something which drew people to go see the film, Pi from Darren Aronofsky, people went to see that because the cinematography was doing something that was really unique. Like he essentially invented a way to, to hold the camera on a person so that it follows them in a very static way, oh I can't think of the way to describe it, but it basically follows the, the person's face, so that you can see their face but it's like, almost steady cam'd, so that...

**MIKE**

Oh, yes, I know the technique you mean...

**LIZ**

Yeah...

**MIKE**

And it's so cool.

**LIZ**

Yeah, so you've got those and then of course you've got the single shot films as well, so something like Russian Ark. And Russian Ark was with film, I think it was using film rather than digital, so it had to have transitions, which were relevant to I think it's about, er, is it forty minutes that film canisters used to do? But they would have to make it so that the transition was seamless for the film canister, so that as it, so when they would do a restart, it would be able to restart and be blended in accurately, but with you know something like Russian Ark it has such a huge cast, er, it's, it's a...I mean it's a wonderful film if you've got a chance to see it. It's basically looking at Russian history by being in one of the palaces there and having characters kind of pop up and in and out. It's kind of a really fun one to watch, but I mean I think was it Dunkirk recently? Is that the right one where it's also a single shot film?

**MIKE**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Oh, is it Dunkirk or 1917?

**LIZ**

1917.

**MIKE**

Was it, was it a single shot?

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

Oh nice.

**LIZ**

And so you've got to do all those techniques too, and I think it's more easy now with digital, but you know, when you, back when you're using film to do that...I shouldn't say more easy, it's still difficult! Like it...

(Helen laughs)

Those types of films, single shot films, where you're not using CGI to build out the scene are still very difficult!

(laughs)

So, bless anyone who does it.

**MIKE**

I was going to say Liz, cutting back to something you said earlier, you're probably going to have to explain what a film canister is, because, I mean, chances are there might be people who have no idea what a film canister is.

**HELEN**

Is it not just a canister that has the film in it?

**MIKE**

Literally. Reel to reel, baby.

**LIZ**

And of course um you know to fit it onto a film camera you'd have to, you know, you, it's a very manual process of like threading the film through that has a certain length like that it couldn't go past because the canisters just weren't, you know, built to hold it and the film, for whatever reason like, potentially tension all those sorts of things that you used to get, you know they could only go for a certain length, so um, that used to be film making. You couldn't just have something going for ninety minutes.

(Helen laughs)

That was, cause that's the thing that I'd always look for actually when I was in the cinema, is the cigarette burn, for the cannister change over.

**HELEN**

Aaah!

**MIKE**

Oh yeah, of course, yeah! Oh man.

**HELEN**

It used to be in the top right hand corner, right?

**LIZ**

Yeah...um, I can't remember left or right now, but it used to be, I mean I think so much of it's digital now that you just go to the cinema and everything's now presented digital, but you know, when I was a kid it was still, there would be a transition between the two reels which was indicated by the cigarette burn.

**MIKE**

There's something so visceral and nice about shooting on film though, right? It's, it's just a differ... it's hard to explain, it's just a different experience. Like I haven't had much experience of shooting on actual 40 millimetre, because most of my life has been shooting on DSLRs and various other things. I did used to shoot on MiniDV back in the day though, which were these teeny tiny little tapes, which you would then put in a special machine which would magic it digital.

(Helen laughs)

That was the technique that we used, we magicked everything to make it go onto the computer.

**HELEN**

(laughing) A wizard did it!

**MIKE**

Yeah we just had people who would sit in these rooms and you wouldn't talk to the people in these rooms, but they knew how to do the stuff, and it was like Gollum, you would just, a hand would reach out and pull in your MiniDVs...

(Helen laughs)

...and then you'd have like, later that day you would just have a disc that would appear on a desk in an unmarked envelope, like, you know...

**HELEN**

Very sinister.

**MIKE**

Those were the days!

**LIZ**

Film was um, yeah I mean people still shoot in it, but when you think about, you literally just have all of these processes that are gone now right, like so checking that the gate is clear, um, it's just something that doesn't happen, and that was checking that there was no hair or lint or other material that had gone between the lens and the film. And that used to happen after each scene was, I think after you'd do each shot from a certain angle, you would check that the gate was clear before you'd carry on.

**HELEN**

Wow.

**LIZ**

Because you were changing cans every, fairly regular as well I'm sure.

**HELEN**

Can I mention briefly, cause like I say: I don't know the names for any of these things, but I noticed something in both of Ari Aster's films in Hereditary and Midsommar. Both times, he's done this sort of upside down shot, in Hereditary Toni Collette is walking down the corridor and the camera angle slowly tips and like follows her, it's like, it's like it's flat against the ceiling...

**LIZ**

Yup.

**HELEN**

...and goes upside down and then she continues. And the same thing happens in Midsommar when they enter the er, I think they're Swedish, like the Swedish cult. And everything sort of tips upside down as you watch the, the van go down the road. And in both of those things it's there to I think, mark a, a major change in the film. In Hereditary the change from weird stuff going on to okay this is, this is demons.

(Mike and Helen laugh)

And in Midsommar the change from 'we're in the real world' to 'we're in a weird world'. I don't know if either of you have seen those films, or if you can tell me what that technique is called, this, this flipping thing?

**LIZ**

I don't know whether it would be referred to as anything other than another type of Dutch tilt potentially, but...

**HELEN**

Ah...

**LIZ**

I've seen Midsommar. I haven't seen the other one and I do very enjoy Midsommar.

**HELEN**

While we are talking about films that we enjoy, do any of you have a film that's like, that you just think is beautiful? That, you know, you just think the cinematography of it is, just makes it stand out, more than others that you've seen?

**MIKE**

I mean, yeah...mine are pretty shit though.

(Helen laughs)

**HELEN**

Don't say that!

**MIKE**

No they are, like the, the film that, because I think that a lot of cinema is quite beautiful, there, the difference for me between a film that is visually pleasing and a film that is beautiful is in the art design. So Free Guy is a very visually pleasing film, because it has lots of elements in there that are really nice to look at, it's very bright, it's very vibrant. Not very much interesting stuff happens with the camera work though.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

Like, there's, there's no interesting and different uses of like cinematographic bits and pieces, like there's no styles of using gimbal-mounted cameras in specific ways to create like, you know, certain effects and blah blah blah. The Matrix films, again, very visually pleasing, lots of innovative stuff, like the classic, you know, Neo spinning around on the pole, and all of that kind of stuff, great.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

Not what I would describe as a beautiful film.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**MIKE**

The Grand Budapest Hotel? Beautiful film. The way they use colour, the way they use light, the way they create intrigue with the camera. Beautiful film, like in my opinion.

**HELEN**

Aww.

**MIKE**

Also, Blade Runner, the new one with Ryan Gosling?

**HELEN**

Yeah

**MIKE**

Beautiful film. The, the hanging shots, the use of colour palette, the symbology of it all, like, the way that they construct each of those images, so you can pause at any point and it's like an art piece that you would hang on a wall or have as a desktop background. Beautiful film! Even Squid Game I would argue is quite beautiful because of the way they use light, the way they use colour. The way that they create, they create this harsh environment by keeping the camera right in people's faces when they really want you to focus in on something, and then pull it all the way back when they want you to see the, the gravity of the situation.

**HELEN**

Yes.

**MIKE**

Beautiful. Like that for me is the difference, is when, you can have something that's good and you can have something that's stylized and you can have something that's technically a very, very interesting thing, but at the same time it doesn't add that element of beauty. But I think that that's because beauty for me is kind of like all of these little nuts and bolts that come together to create this bigger picture that is painted in your audience's mind, and it looks like it was effortless. But the amount of work that went into constructing that one shot, must've been immense.

**HELEN**

Yeah. On that, I think we're going to take a little bit of a break, and then Liz, I would love to hear from you about what you think is a beautiful film.

And welcome back! So, Liz, please please please tell me what you think is a beautiful film in terms of cinematography, like what stands out for you?

**LIZ**

So I think the one that really stands out is Death in Venice, in terms of...

**HELEN**

Oof.

**LIZ**

...the attempt to make every shot look as beautiful as possible, like a um, literally like a sort of masterpiece painting.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

It's Visconti I think, and it's like around nine, early nineteen seventies. And, and you know it's contrasting the beauty of the city with the illness that's happening on and also the, the strange obsession that this guy builds towards another guest at the hotel, er...

**HELEN**

Oh yes, it's a horrible, horrible story!

**LIZ**

Yeah!

(Both laugh)

So that, that to me is like, in terms of something that's just beautiful to watch er, that is one. I really like as well The Conformist for a black and white.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

It's...actually when I was in Rome, I went to some of the buildings where The Conformist was filmed. And The Conformist, I don't know if you've, if you've not seen it...

**HELEN**

No.

**LIZ**

...t's about the, I think, I'd better get this right but I think it's, at the time it's sort of set in Italy and it's um, the guy is conforming to whoever is in power at the time is essentially why it's called The Conformist.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**LIZ**

And he's working with the fascists I believe, so he's, he's helping them hunt down people who might have opposing views. And then of course the regime changes towards the end. It's a beautiful film though in terms of the way it's shot, it's got these very stark sort of black and white shots. It's using this architecture of the time which was this, these grand, grand buildings which were beyond what you kind of needed. It's, so that's another really beautiful film as well in terms of just black and white which you, you know, you might not have seen before.

**MIKE**

Love a bit of brutalism in cinema. Love a bit of brutalism.

**LIZ**

Yeah. Who doesn't love brutalism?

**MIKE**

I don't think, to be fair I actually don't think there are that many people who would say they don't like brutalism. I mean just look at Red Faction: Guerrilla and all of that sort of stuff, like it's, yeah, it's pretty cool. And Bioshock, any of the Bioshocks, yeah.

**LIZ**

In terms of visiting places, Rome is a really great place to stop off if you can to look at, er, film locations. As well they've got a place called Cinecittà, I think? Cinecittà, so it's Cinema City but, you know, Italian. And it's where they shot the TV series Rome, it's where they've shot a number of other series...

**HELEN**

Oh!

**LIZ**

So if you want to see like a historical recreation of Rome, you can go in and walk through all the sets!

**MIKE**

No!

**LIZ**

So that's like my top like, when you're in Rome, go do that! Don't go to the real colosseum.

(Group laughter)

But it is, it's really fun! It's a really fun place to go have a wander if you've got a spare day in Rome. I really recommend it.

**HELEN**

I would really like to go to Rome, there are so many places I'd like to visit in Italy.

**MIKE**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

I'm trying to think about films that I think are beautiful now. And the ones that come to mind are just the ones that I find very visually striking. My aesthetic is very much just like anything that makes me sort of sit up and pay attention. So I'm thinking of films like, er, The Crow...

**MIKE**

Yes.

**HELEN**

Like I had never seen anything so stark and sort of awful looking before, do you know what I mean, like...

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

That entire film, just feels, horrid and dark and sad.

**MIKE**

Mmm.

**HELEN**

And then I think about, umm, I love Guillermo del Toro's work.

**LIZ & MIKE**

Yes, yeah.

**HELEN**

Pan's Labyrinth has some of the most striking scenes in it, but I remember so many scenes of that film with like just, one hundred per cent accuracy, because I had never seen anything like that before. And then you've got something like The Haunting, I don't know if...Liz you said that you were into, while we were in the break you said you were into older films. Have you see the nineteen sixties version of The Haunting?

**LIZ**

I don't think so, um, no. No, no, no.

**HELEN**

That's a really interesting one in terms of the way that the, the set is set up. Because, the whole point of this house is that it's meant to feel weird. Everything is at a slightly odd angle. Like the mirror is slightly tilted forward so it doesn't show the reflection that you think it should show, because it's not tilted forward enough that you can tell that it's tilted. But it's enough so that you're like, 'oh that's showing the floor, but it should be showing the table.'

**LIZ**

Mmm.

**HELEN**

And stuff like that. And all, all the angles are kind of bizarre.

**MIKE**

Mmm, yeah.

**HELEN**

And it's all done in black and white, and everything feels off about it.

**LIZ**

There's also, realism versus like, things that are more unreal, like something like Peter Greenaway with *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*? Something like that.

**HELEN**

Ooh!

**LIZ**

I can never remember the, the, the name of it exactly. But as they move between rooms like, everything moves from being all in white, to being all in red, so the transition is, is someone walks through the doorway, they're changing outfits to, in essentially exactly the same outfit but a different colour.

**HELEN**

Ohh, that's super cool.

**MIKE**

Ohhh cool.

**LIZ**

Yeah, like there's just some great, you know, and that's that thing about Wes Anderson, I just love that really stylised, I love something that's quite stylised like that.

**HELEN & MIKE**

Mmm.

**LIZ**

Because you remember it, it's like the *Pan's Labyrinth* thing with the character with the eyes in his palms, once you've seen that, you don't forget that!

**HELEN**

Mmm! Yes, that's exactly the kind of thing I mean!

**LIZ**

Yeah, well I mean you look at something like the original Blade Runner and you've got the shot of the eye, you know this close up of an eye, and you can see the city reflected. And, what that story is about is like you know essentially the search for God. But, but what you have is this establishing shot of someone taking in this city and it being reflected only in their eye, so they have this very big, big, you know, godlike almost character to that, to that moment. And of course the story revolves around people being identified as being a replicant or not via their eyes.

**MIKE**

Yeah.

**LIZ**

But it's just nicely done. Like it's a nice shot but you're not thinking about why they've done it, until you really start to analyse the film later and you go 'oh okay so that makes sense,' you know it's like a perspective thing of this kind of being above everything and watching and it's also that, you know, on top of that you've got the difference between class in Blade Runner of like the very rich compared to the very poor, and the fact that height...

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MIKE**

Yeah.

**LIZ**

...you know where you live in the city matters and things like that.

**HELEN**

I've just thought of another contender for a film that I thought was really quite beautiful. Um, it's called Equilibrium?

**LIZ**

Oh yeah.

**MIKE**

I've heard of Equilibrium, but...

**HELEN**

That one with, um, the one with Christian Bale and it's, it's set in a future where nobody's allowed to have any emotions. Like they've found a drug that stops you from feeling strong emotions.

**MIKE**

Oh yeah.

**LIZ**

It's very, yeah, very stylistic, yeah.

**HELEN**

Yes, extremely stylistic, and there's um, this one particular scene where, er, the main character has come off these drugs and, um, he's been woken up by the sunrise. And he just tears the, he has like a, some kind of covering on his windows and he just tears it off frantically and then stands there, and he's like covered in like rainbow light, and he just starts crying because he's forgotten what it feels like to see a sunrise.

**MIKE**

Oh damn.

**HELEN**

Um, that for me is extremely beautiful.

**MIKE**

Yeah, yeah.

**LIZ**

Well you know you've got a, you could do a whole episo...a whole episode? You could do, you know, a whole hour on just colour in film, right, like...

**MIKE**

Yeah!

**HELEN**

You could!

**LIZ**

...oranges and gold, gold...

(laughs)

Sorry. The oranges in The Godfather, like, to indicate when something bad is about to happen; I think Emperor of the Sun has this beautiful, beautiful colour play in it. Um, obviously Peter Greenaway with The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover, I hope I've said it right that time!

(group laughter)

Yeah, colour, colour has so much, um, so much resonance and it's also based on culture, so, you know, certain things when you're watching films may be from a different culture, you know, there might be colour play that you're not even realising that's there.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**LIZ**

Just because like, different, I think white is actually associated with death in some cultures versus, um, you know in Western culture we often think of it as being black is associated with death, but I think white is associated in other cultures as the colour to do with death.

**HELEN**

That is interesting, I hadn't thought of colour theory in that way, but of course it's being used.

**MIKE**

Oh colour theory, colour theory is, is...now that if you've just realised this I'm really excited for what happens next, because the next film you watch, you'll look for it and like there are very key films, like I keep talking about Blade Runner, but Blade Runner! The new one! With Ryan Gosling!

(group laughter)

Umm, this one is, that is like a film that was, there were lots of articles written about that film because of the use of colour, mainly orange. But like, you know, because of the way that they used colour palettes to sort of portray different things. Colour can do so much, it can portray emotions...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

...you know for example you have, well I mean obviously like the primary colours, but you have red for, you know, when people are feeling angry, or you have blue for when people are feeling sad, I mean that's a very base level example...

**LIZ**

Yeah.

**MIKE**

...all the way up to Umbrella Academy, where there's a scene in a store, god I don't know how many spoilers to give away. There's, there's a scene in a store where one of the main characters is stood in this store, and you know it's a closed store with no access to the outside, and yet the colours in the background are blue and red because there's a police investigation going on.

**HELEN**

Mm-hmm.

**MIKE**

When you think about it and you rationalise it, you know there's no way that police lights could be in here, but the DOP, the director of photography, has put those lights in specifically-

**HELEN**

Ooh...

**MIKE**

To add to this like CSI style ‘the police are here, they’re doing an investigation’, even though, it’s called non-diegetic, even though you, there is no way that they could exist in there. Those lights are there.

**HELEN**

That’s super cool.

**MIKE**

I mean it trickles down from cinema into YouTube as well if you look at the way certain YouTubers light their backgrounds and light their shots. It’s prime colour theory but it’s using cinematographic techniques. Like for example the kind of shades of colour that you want to use in order to portray a specific kind of emotion in the video that you’re producing. Like it’s so cool, and now you’ve seen it, you’ll notice like some characters always have a certain light on their face or on their, on their person or their costume or whatever. Like there are so many subtle ways that cinematographers will add colour into a scene to symbolise something. I think they even did it in the Grand Budapest Hotel. I remember watching that and thinking ‘oh that’s really interesting that that’s that colour’ and then noticing later in the film that that colour theme continued. Yeah, it’s, it’s fascinating, but as Liz said, you genuinely could have an entire hour just dedicated to colour theory in film.

**HELEN**

We are starting to come to the end of the episode.

**MIKE**

No! Are we nearly done?! Oh man!

**HELEN**

I know, I’m sorry, I’m so sorry Mike.

**MIKE**

This is the only time we get to hang out! I’ll have to go back to my editing dungeon. I stream on my own, Helen, help!

(group laughter)

**HELEN**

I'll come fetch you out some time, I promise. I'll rescue you.

**MIKE**

Yay!

**HELEN**

I want to end on a, a little look into the future; I'd like to know if there are any films coming up that you're, or TV shows, or animations, that you're looking forward to seeing because you think they look like they're gonna look cool.

**MIKE**

I think there's one that may be on everyone's minds right now. Liz, I don't know if you wanna go first.

**LIZ**

I'm gonna assume that you might be referring to Dune...?

**MIKE**

I, yes. I am very heavily referring to Dune, yeah.

(group laughter)

**LIZ**

Yeah, it's the, it's the only cinema date I've got coming up actually, which is very sad but I suppose it's like, just happens to be, you know, you get out of going to the cinema for a while, you get out of going to the cinema. But yeah, like, Dune I'm looking forward to, yeah.

**HELEN**

So is that the same for both of you?

**MIKE**

I mean yeah, I'm, I'm actually, I'm actually the same. Dune is like the big one that's on my calendar at the moment. You know, alongside obviously the hit 2022 release of Clifford the Big Red Dog, but like...

(laughter)

**HELEN**

Colour theory!

**MIKE**

But Dune, Dune certainly is like right up there. And also actually to be fair there's the House of Gucci with Adam Driver. I saw an advert for that the, I think it was, I think it was a few months ago, and it looks, it looks really interesting, but I don't know what that's gonna be like at all.

**LIZ**

I think I play catch up too often you know, where you're like 'ooh I didn't get round to seeing that film' so you're like, got a list from about ten years ago and like, 'oh I still have to see that!'

**MIKE AND HELEN**

Yeah, yeah.

**HELEN**

We've all been there. I'm actually, I'm hoping to see Gawain and the Green Knight on Friday.

**MIKE**

Oh cool!

**LIZ**

Oh yeah?

**HELEN**

I'm really looking forward to that, not, and, partly, and...you're right, now I am thinking about colour theory because I remember studying it in the original like Middle English and how there's an entire verse describing how green the knight is.

**MIKE**

Cool!

**LIZ**

Right, yeah.

**HELEN**

And he's going, 'oh yes, his face was green and his beard was green and his eyes were green and his nose was green and his body was green and his hat was green and his horse was green.' And it just goes on and on like that for the lines...

**MIKE**

Da ba dee da ba die, da ba dee da ba die?

**LIZ**

Can, can we do, can we do an episode just of medieval stuff? Because I studied Medieval and Middle English so I need someone to talk to about these topics!

(laughter)

**MIKE**

No way!

**LIZ**

But yeah, so er, just two, two semesters. But um, it's fun stuff but, cos green has a very specific, you know they had very specific colour theory which is not the same as what we have today.

**HELEN**

Yeah, yeah exactly.

**MIKE**

Nice.

**HELEN**

I shall add that to my list. But yeah I'm looking forward to that, because I think that looks like a very very beautiful film.

**MIKE**

Oh man. There is one more film that I'm looking forward to.

**HELEN**

Oh yeah?

**MIKE**

Yeah. The new Spiderman! No Way Home!

**HELEN**

Oh, yes.

**MIKE**

Which I forgot to mention. How could we forget little Tom Holland, hey? Oh my lord.

**HELEN**

Aww, little Tom Holland!

**MIKE**

Oh little Tom Holland! Our little superstar! He's from the UK, don't you know.

(Helen laughs)

**LIZ**

So Helen, what are you going to watch for Hallowe'en?

**HELEN**

I am going to watch The Guy Who Didn't Like Musicals...

**MIKE**

Yes!

**HELEN**

That's, that's a...

**MIKE**

Yes, you introduced this to me...!

**HELEN**

Yes, we watched it didn't we Mike?

**MIKE**

...it's so good!

**HELEN**

Lots of blue, lots of blue in that one.

**MIKE**

Lots of blue.

**HELEN**

And, um, then I think we're gonna watch The Descent.

**LIZ**

Right! Okay.

**MIKE**

Solid shout.

**HELEN**

Which, er, is notorious for being extremely dark.

**LIZ**

I am, I'm gonna try to catch up on some classics, which I haven't quite seen yet.

**HELEN**

Mm. You should watch The Haunting.

**LIZ**

I will, that's on my list now. I've written that down.

**HELEN**

Yeah. Don't watch the 1999 one with, um, Liam Neeson and Owen Wilson and Catherine Zeta Jones...

**LIZ**

Oh my lord.

**MIKE**

What?!

**LIZ**

Okay. I mean I love a, I love a bit of Owen Wilson but yeah, okay.

**HELEN**

I mean you can, you can watch it, but just know that's not the proper one.

**LIZ**

I mean the only time to watch a remake is if Nicolas Cage is in it.

**MIKE**

Yeah, very, yes, yes, very fair.

(Helen laughs)

**HELEN**

We all love a bit of Nicolas Cage. Okay. We're definitely at the end of the episode now.

(laughter)

Thank you so so much for this, this has been a really cool and like, chill episode. I've learned so much, it's been great!

**MIKE**

Hey thanks for having us, man!

**LIZ**

Yeah, it's been really fun.

**HELEN**

You guys are the best.

**MIKE**

This has been so much fun! I've loved this, genuinely I've really loved this.

**HELEN**

Aww. Well, thank you to the listener for coming along with us, I hope you've got some film recommendations and that you've learned some things as well. But for now, it's goodbye from me – goodbye – and it's goodbye from them. Do you wanna say goodbye, you two?

**MIKE**

Goodbye! Bye!

**LIZ**

Bye, bye!

**MIKE**

See you, see you later, bye, see ya, bye...

(group laughter)

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

Enthusiasm is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial share alike 4.0 international license. It is directed by Helen Gould, produced by Lowri Ann Davies, with executive producers Alexander J Newall and April Sumner, and edited by Marisa Ewing, Tessa Vroom, Jeffrey Nils Gardner and Catherine Rinella. Thanks for listening.

**[Show Theme – Outro Ends]**

Hosted and Directed by Helen Gould

Producer by Lowri Ann Davies

Executive Producers: Alexander J. Newall & April Sumner

Editing by Marisa Ewing & Jeffrey Nils Gardner

Music by Samuel D.F. Jones

Art by Anika Khan