

Monday, November 21, 2016

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Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2016

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Pictured (l-r) in the "Cinematography and VFX: What Constitutes 'Real?'" panel at the VES Summit are: VFX supervisor Rich McBride; Paul Cameron, ASC; Larry Fong, ASC; Wally Pfister, ASC; and moderator Naida Albright, owner-producer of Conshimfee Productions Inc.

VES Summit: Cinematographers Discuss Their Strong Working Bond With VFX Supervisors



Wally Pfister, ASC (l), and moderator Naida Albright engage in conversation during the panel session "Cinematography and VFX: What Constitutes Real?" at the 8th Annual VES Summit at the Sofitel in Los Angeles.

(https://d2p1n1nn035jt22.cloudfront.net/news/images/2016/vessummit_wallypfister.jpg)

both earning Best Cinematography Oscars for the DP. However, the circumstances of those collaborations were quite different as *Gravity* entailed extensive pre-planning, every frame worked out with Lubezki in advance. By contrast, *The Revenant*—for which McBride earned a Best Visual Effects Oscar nomination—was less planned as director Alejandro G. Inarritu wanted the actors and crew to more extemporaneously experience first-hand the great outdoors, including the extreme cold and harsh conditions that were integral to the story.

Panelist Larry Fong, ASC, known for assorted projects including his lensing of features for director Zack Snyder (*300*, *Watchmen*, *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice*), noted that his modus operandi generally is to work "every day" with the visual effects supervisor. "I try to befriend all the visual effects guys as much as possible," said Fong, acknowledging their importance in helping to realize the look of a film as envisioned by the director and DP. Fong added that on movies he probably spends more time with VFX talent than with the director.

Panelist Wally Pfister, ASC, an Oscar-winning cinematographer for *Inception*, has since made a successful transition to directing in features (the 2014 release *Transcendence*), TV (episodes of *Flaked* and *The Tick*) and assorted commercials. His directorial roost for spots and branded content is production house RESET. On the spotmaking front, Pfister noted that he has formed a strong bond with visual effects house The Mill, particularly with VFX supervisor Gavin Wellsman who's in that company's New York studio. Pfister said of Wellsman, "He's key to my process...integral from pre-pro through the end."

BY ROBERT GOLDRICH

LOS ANGELES -- Cinematographers and VFX artisans are fashioning strong working relationships, according to panelists at a Visual Effects Society (VES) Summit session held this past Saturday (10/28) in Los Angeles. Paul Cameron, ASC, noted, for example, that he's enjoying a strong collaborative bond with VFX supervisor Gary Brozenich on *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*, a 2017 release for which the DP has been working on DI over the last couple of weeks.

Panelist Rich McBride, a VFX supervisor of note, related that he's valued his coming together with cinematographer Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki on *Gravity* and *The Revenant*—

Pfister said that he brings Wellsman in as early as the bidding process, coming up with methodologies and technologies best suited for specific projects.

The VES Summit panel discussion featured Cameron, Fong, McBride and Pfister, with Naida Albright, owner-producer of Conshimfee Productions Inc., serving as moderator.

Virtual reality was also a topic tackled by the panel. Pfister and Cameron think meaningful strides in VR will have to be made by content creators. Cameron conjectured that leaders in content are needed to drive VR, coming up with a project or two which will spark others to say, "You've got to see this.. Now they've nailed it."

Pfister concurred, observing that the prime responsibility on the commercials/branded content front lies with the agency creatives to come up with content that will best mine VR's potential.

Cameron added that the ASC has cast a watchful eye on prospects for virtual reality and is starting to offer to its members some master classes focusing on VR.

Pfister and Cameron also see drones as a filmmaking tool of promise. Cameron shared that a special drone was built for *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*, yielding good results. Pfister chimed in that high caliber pilots such as copter operator Craig Hosking are starting to get involved in drones, which bodes well for the technology as a viable filmmaking tool.

Highlights

Other highlights of the 8th annual daylong VES Summit included:

•Jonah Greenberg, managing director, CAA China, said in a keynote session that the three pillars of business for the talent agency in the Chinese market are: to mine opportunities there for local screenwriters, directors and actors; to connect the talent in China that is world class with filmmaking opportunities in the U.S.; and to bring Hollywood talent to bear on projects in China. Additionally, Chinese financiers, he said, are getting more significantly involved in Hollywood generally.

The cross-pollination of the two cultures, continued Greenberg, is being realized in select high-profile projects, including the feature film *The Great Wall*. The U.S./China co-production stars Matt Damon, is set in China, tells a Chinese story, and is being directed by a preeminent Chinese filmmaker, Yimou Zhang. CAA represents Zhang and has played a key role in helping to bring the film to fruition.

Greenberg added that Base FX, a leading visual effects studio in China, continues to step up its motion picture work and figures to be a prominent player in VR, AR and the gaming biz.

•Edward Grogan, technical director for advanced counter-terrorism technologies at the Department of Defense, was a featured Summit speaker. His job in a nutshell is to determine if terrorist videos and photos are real or not. An expert in media forensics, Grogan asked VES members to provide him with examples of image manipulation and creation to help him and his department remain on the cutting edge of image tampering detection.

•The VES Founders Award, recognizing an individual member who has significantly contributed to the success of the VES, was bestowed upon Kim Lavery, currently an EP of the VES Awards ceremony and an executive committee member of the VES Bay Area Section. She has a track record of service on the main VES Board of Directors as well as the executive committee in Los Angeles. The industry veteran has experience spanning production, post and VFX. She has worked on such films as: *Frida*; *Minority Report*; *Cats and Dogs*; *Charlie's Angels*; *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*; *Terminator 3*; and *Last Samurai*. She was at Weta Digital in various producing roles on Oscar-winning *King Kong* as well as *X-Men 3*, *Bridge to Teribithia*, *30 Days of Night*, *Enchanted*, and *The Water Horse*.

Lavery was also named a VES Fellow as were DP/VFX supervisor Peter Anderson, VES, ASC, and Jim Morris, VES, president of Pixar Animation Studios. Don Shay, founder, Cinefex Magazine, became a Lifetime VES Member. And actor, comedian, writer Patton Oswalt, emcee of multiple VES Award ceremonies, was named a VES Honorary Member.

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Thursday, Sep. 8, 2016

The Visual Effects Society (VES), the industry's global professional honorary society, announced Peter Loehr, producer and CEO of Legendry Pictures' China joint venture, Legendary East, will be key



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Dean Devlin's VES Summit Keynote: Barriers Come Between Filmmakers, VFX Artists
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Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2015

While multi-layered visual effects are an acknowledged work of artistry, the layers that often exist between filmmakers and the VFX team are what in some cases preve



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Dean Devlin named keynote speaker at VES Summit
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Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2015

Dean Devlin, acclaimed writer-producer-director and president of Electric Entertainment, has been named keynote speaker at its The Visual Effects Society's (VES) ann

COMMENTS