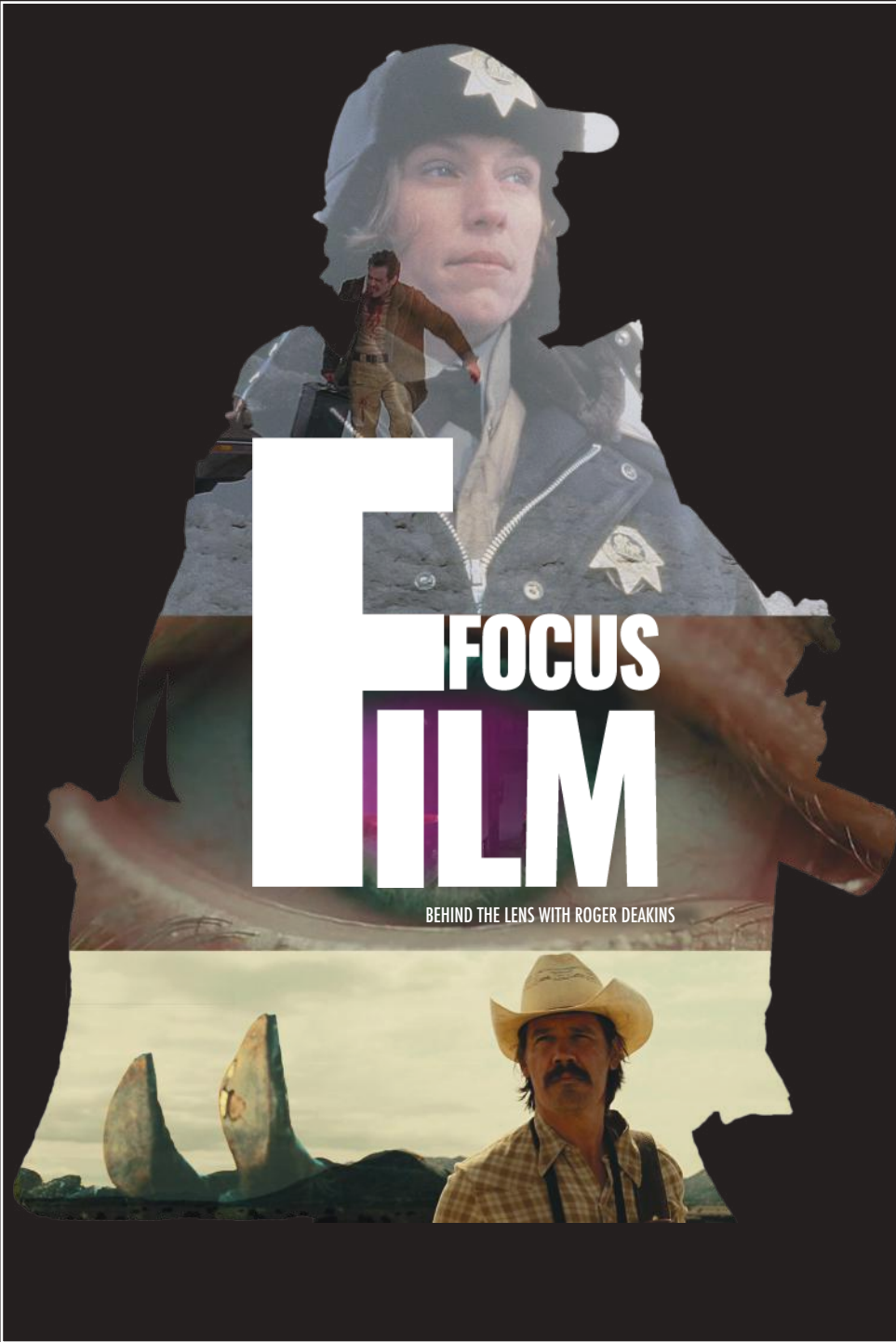




FOCUS FILM

BEHIND THE LENS WITH ROGER DEAKINS

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Dear Film Focus Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Film Focus, where we celebrate the timeless artistry of film photography and cinematography. I'm Elizabeth, and I'm thrilled to embark on this visual journey with you.

In this issue, we shine a spotlight on the legendary Roger Deakins, a master of light and shadow whose work has captivated audiences around the world. Through exclusive interviews and captivating visuals, we delve into his creative process and the magic behind some of cinema's most iconic moments.

Each issue of Film Focus will dive deep into the world of analog artistry, exploring the craftsmanship and dedication that goes into every frame captured on film. From the rich textures of celluloid to the warm tones of vintage prints, we aim to inspire a new generation of artists and filmmakers to embrace the beauty of traditional techniques.

I invite you to immerse yourself in the stories, images, and insights we've curated for you. Let Film Focus be your guide to the art of visual storytelling, where every page is a testament to the enduring magic of film.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Here's to many more frames of inspiration and creativity.

Warm regards,

Elizabeth Thom
Editor-in-Chief, Film Focus

A Cinematic Odyssey Through Time

2049 **BLADE RUNNER**

In the heart of a sprawling metropolis, where neon lights flicker against rain-soaked streets and artificial beings grapple with existential questions, *Blade Runner 2049* emerges as a visual masterpiece that transcends the boundaries of traditional filmmaking. With its intricate storytelling, breathtaking cinematography, and mesmerizing visual effects, this film has captivated audiences worldwide, earning acclaim as a modern sci-fi classic.

To delve deeper into the creative process behind *Blade Runner 2049*, we sat down with the visionary minds behind the film, including cinematographer Roger Deakins, director Denis Villeneuve, and members of the cast. They shared their insights into the intricate world-building, the challenges of bringing Philip K. Dick's dystopian vision to life, and the magic of creating a truly immersive cinematic experience.

Roger Deakins, the masterful eye behind the film's stunning visuals, spoke passionately about his approach to cinematography in *Blade Runner 2049*. He emphasized the importance of creating a visual language that would not only pay homage to the original film but also push the boundaries of what was visually possible. "Blade Runner 2049 presented a unique challenge in terms of its visual style," Deakins explained. "We wanted to create a world that felt familiar yet otherworldly, a future that was both dystopian and beautiful."

Director Denis Villeneuve echoed Deakins' sentiments, emphasizing the importance of using visual storytelling to convey the film's themes of identity, memory, and hu-

manity. "Blade Runner 2049 is not just a sci-fi film; it's a meditation on what it means to be human," Villeneuve said. "Every frame, every shot, was carefully crafted to immerse the audience in this rich, complex world."

The cast members of *Blade Runner 2049* also shared their experiences of working on such a visually ambitious project. Ryan Gosling, who plays the film's protagonist, Officer K, reflected on the challenges of portraying a character caught between two worlds. "Officer K is a character struggling to find his place in a world that is constantly changing," Gosling said. "It was a deeply immersive experience, thanks to the incredible sets and visual effects that brought this world to life."

Harrison Ford, reprising his role as Rick Deckard, also spoke about the film's unique blend of practical and digital effects. "Blade Runner 2049 is a testament to the power of practical effects," Ford said. "From the intricate set designs to the breathtaking visual effects, every aspect of this film was designed to create a 'more than visual experience.'"

In crafting the visual tapestry of *Blade Runner 2049*, lighting played a crucial role in creating the film's moody and atmospheric world. Roger Deakins, renowned for his mastery of light, explained his approach to lighting the film: "We used a combination of practical lights and LED panels to create the film's signature look. The use of practical lights added a sense of realism, while the LED panels allowed us to create the film's iconic neon-lit cityscapes." The film's special effects also played a pivotal role in creating

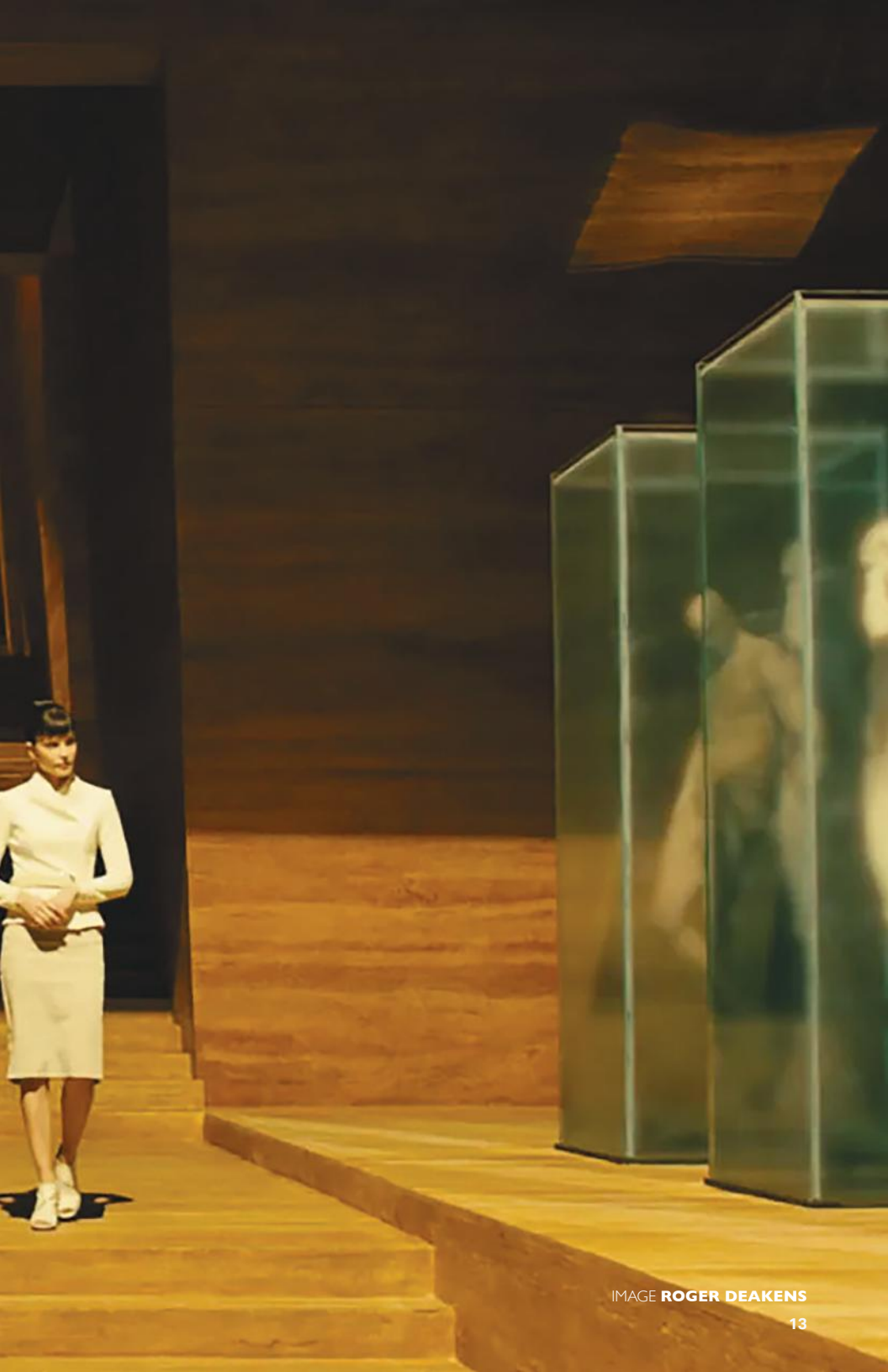
IMAGE **ROGER DEAKENS**















*"We wanted to create a world that felt familiar yet other-worldly, a future that was both dystopian and beautiful."
- Roger Deakins*

its immersive world. From the breathtaking holographic displays to the seamless integration of CGI elements, the special effects team pushed the boundaries of what was visually possible. Denis Villeneuve praised their work, stating, "The special effects team did an incredible job of bringing this world to life. Every detail, from the smallest prop to the largest set piece, was meticulously crafted to create a truly immersive experience."

Blade Runner 2049 also made extensive use of "real" effects, such as practical sets and miniatures, to create a tangible sense of place. Ana de Armas, who plays Joi, a holographic companion, commented on the use of practical effects: "Working with practical sets and props helped me as an actor to fully immerse myself in the world of Blade Runner 2049. It felt real, even though much of it was created through visual effects."

The film's commitment to creating a "more than visual experience" is evident in every frame, from the intricate set designs to the stunning visual effects. Blade Runner 2049 is a testament to the power of visual storytelling, a film that lingers in the mind long after the credits roll. As Ryan Gosling aptly puts it, "Blade Runner 2049 is not just a film; it's an experience, a journey into a world that is as beautiful as it is haunting."

Director Denis Villeneuve echoed Deakins' sentiments, emphasizing the importance of using visual storytelling to convey the film's themes of identity, memory, and humanity. "Blade Runner 2049 is not just a sci-fi film; it's a meditation on what it means to be human," Villeneuve said. "Every frame, every shot, was carefully crafted to immerse the audience in this rich, complex world."

Blade Runner 2049 is not just a film; it's an experience. With its stunning visuals, compelling storytelling, and thought-provoking themes, it pushes the boundaries of what cinema can achieve. Through its stunning visuals, intricate storytelling, and profound themes, this film has left an indelible mark on the sci-fi genre and continues to inspire filmmakers and audiences alike. As Roger Deakins aptly puts it, "Blade Runner 2049 is a film that lingers long after the credits roll, a testament to the power of visual storytelling."

"Blade Runner 2049 is a film that lingers long after the credits roll, a testament to the power of visual storytelling."
- Roger Deakins



IMAGE **ROGER DEAKENS**

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

Capturing the Essence of

In the heart of the American Southwest, amidst the stark landscapes of West Texas, the Coen Brothers crafted a modern masterpiece of cinema, "No Country for Old Men." Adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel, the film stands as a testament to the power of storytelling through visuals. At the helm of its visual narrative was the legendary cinematographer, Roger Deakins, whose mastery of light and shadow brought the film to life in ways that words could never convey.

We had the privilege of sitting down with Roger Deakins, as well as the Coen Brothers and some of the cast members, to discuss the intricacies of creating a film that transcends mere visuals to become an immersive experience for the audience.

For Deakins, the journey of capturing "No Country for Old Men" began long before the cameras started rolling. "The Coen Brothers' screenplay was like a blueprint for visual storytelling," Deakins reflects. "Every scene, every line of dialogue, was meticulously crafted to evoke a specific mood or emotion. My job was to translate that onto the screen."

One of the most striking aspects of "No Country for Old Men" is its use of time as a narrative device. The film unfolds in real-time, with each moment building upon the last to create a sense of tension and urgency. "Time was a crucial element in the film," says Joel Coen. "We wanted the audience to feel like they were right there with the characters, experiencing every heartbeat, every breath."

Deakins' use of light and shadow in "No Country for Old Men" is nothing short of masterful. From the harsh glare of the Texas sun to the dimly lit interiors of roadside motels,

every frame is a work of art in its own right. "I've always believed that less is more when it comes to lighting," Deakins explains. "I try to create a sense of realism, using natural light whenever possible to enhance the mood of the scene."

Lighting is often referred to as the cinematographer's paintbrush, and in "No Country for Old Men," Roger Deakins wielded that brush with the skill of a true master. His use of light and shadow not only illuminated the film's visual landscape but also played a crucial role in shaping its narrative and emotional depth.

"I've always been fascinated by the way light can transform a scene," Deakins muses. "In 'No Country for Old Men,' I wanted to use light to create a sense of atmosphere and mood that would draw the audience into the world of the film."

One of the most striking aspects of Deakins' lighting in the film is his use of natural light. Whether it's the harsh, unforgiving sunlight of the Texas desert or the soft, ethereal glow of a moonlit night, Deakins used natural light to enhance the film's sense of realism and authenticity.

"I believe that natural light has a certain quality that artificial light can never replicate," Deakins explains. "It has a warmth and a texture that can bring a scene to life in ways that artificial light simply can't."

"The motel room scene was a real challenge," Deakins recalls. "We wanted to create a sense of intimacy and unease, so we used a combination of practical lights." While "No Country for Old Men" is known for its gritty realism, the film also features a number of special effects











IMAGE **ROGER DEAKENS**





that help enhance its sense of authenticity. From the practical effects used to create the film's realistic gore to the use of digital effects to enhance the film's landscapes, every effect was carefully crafted to immerse the audience in the world of the film.

One of the most notable special effects in the film is the captive bolt pistol used by Anton Chigurh. Designed to look and function like a real bolt pistol, the weapon was a crucial element in creating the character's sense of menace and unpredictability.

"We wanted the bolt pistol to be as realistic as possible," explains Ethan Coen. "So we worked closely with our special effects team to ensure that it looked and sounded authentic." In the end, "No Country for Old Men" is more than just a

visual experience. It's a film that challenges the audience to think, to feel, and to question the nature of morality and fate. Through the meticulous craftsmanship of Roger Deakins, the visionary storytelling of the Coen Brothers, and the unforgettable performances of its cast, the film stands as a timeless masterpiece that will continue to captivate audiences for generations to come.

As Joel Coen sums it up, "Filmmaking is a collaborative art form, and 'No Country for Old Men' is a testament to the power of collaboration. From the script to the screen, every element of the film came together to create something truly special."



In the end, "No Country for Old Men" is a film that transcends mere entertainment to become a true work of art. Through its masterful use of lighting, its innovative special effects, and its thought-provoking storytelling, the film stands as a shining example of the power of cinema to inspire, to provoke, and to move us in ways that words alone never could.

In a world dominated by CGI, "No Country for Old Men" stands out for its use of practical effects to create a sense of realism. From the practical effects used to create the film's iconic weapon, the captive bolt pistol, to the practical effects used to create the film's gruesome violence, every detail was carefully crafted to immerse the audience in the world of the film. At its core, "No Country for Old Men" is more

than just a visual experience. It's a film that challenges the audience to think, to feel, and to question the nature of morality and fate. "We wanted to create a film that would linger in the minds of the audience long after the credits rolled," says Ethan Coen. "A film that would spark conversations and debates about the nature of good and evil."

In the end, "No Country for Old Men" is a testament to the power of cinema to transcend mere entertainment and become a true work of art. Through the meticulous craftsmanship of Roger Deakins, *"I've always been fascinated by the way light can transform a scene," - Roger Deakins* ■



Painting With Light

1996 **FARGO**



In the pantheon of modern cinema, few films have achieved the level of acclaim and admiration as the Coen Brothers' "Fargo." Released in 1996, this darkly comedic crime thriller has captivated audiences and critics alike with its brilliant storytelling, unforgettable characters, and stunning cinematography. At the heart of "Fargo's" visual brilliance is the masterful work of cinematographer Roger Deakins, whose keen eye and artistic vision brought the film to life in ways that continue to inspire filmmakers and cinephiles to this day.

We had the privilege of sitting down with Roger Deakins, as well as the film's directors Ethan and Joel Coen, and some of the cast members to discuss the making of "Fargo," the challenges they faced, and the enduring legacy of this cinematic gem.

One of the most striking aspects of "Fargo" is its screenplay, which blends dark humor, suspense, and tragedy with effortless precision. Ethan Coen, who co-wrote the script with his brother Joel, explains their approach to storytelling: "We wanted to create a story that was both entertaining and thought-provoking. 'Fargo' is a film that explores the darker aspects of human nature while also finding moments of humor and warmth."

Joel Coen adds, "The key to 'Fargo's' success lies in its characters. Each character is fully realized, with their own quirks and motivations. This attention to detail in the writing process allowed us to create a rich and immersive world that draws the audience in from the very beginning."

One of the most striking aspects of "Fargo" is its use of light and shadow to create mood and atmosphere. Roger Deakins, the film's cinematographer, used a combination of natural light and carefully placed artificial light to enhance the film's visual storytelling.

"We wanted 'Fargo' to have a cold, stark look that reflected the harshness of the Minnesota winter," Deakins explains. "To achieve this, we used a lot of natural light, particularly during the exterior scenes. We also used artificial light to create contrast and shadow, which added to the film's sense of unease and suspense."

One of the most memorable scenes in "Fargo" is the woodchipper scene, where a character meets a grisly end. Deakins used lighting to heighten the tension of the scene, casting deep shadows and using harsh, directional light to create a sense of claustrophobia and dread.

Despite its gritty realism, "Fargo" features some impressive special effects that add to the film's sense of unease and suspense. From the blood-soaked snow to the gruesome aftermath of a murder, the special effects in "Fargo" are used sparingly but effectively to enhance the film's storytelling.

"We wanted the special effects in 'Fargo' to be as realistic as possible," says Joel Coen. "We worked closely with our special effects team to create practical effects that would be convincing on screen. This attention to detail helped to make the film's more violent scenes all the more impactful."







IMAGE **ROGER DEAKENS**











"We wanted ' Fargo' to have a cold, stark look that reflected the harshness of the Minnesota winter,"
- Roger Deakins



IMAGE ROGER DEAKENS

ROGER DEAKINS

Behind The Lens





A name synonymous with excellence in cinematography, Roger Deakins, has carved a legendary path in the world of filmmaking. Born in Torquay, England, in 1949, Deakins grew up surrounded by the stunning landscapes of Devon, which would later influence his artistic vision. "I think my love for nature and its beauty comes from my childhood in Devon," he reflects, "I spent countless hours exploring the countryside, and that sense of wonder has stayed with me throughout my life."

Deakins' journey into the world of cinematography began at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, where he honed his skills and developed a keen eye for detail. "It was at film school that I really fell in love with the art of cinematography," he recalls. "I was fascinated by the way light and shadow could transform a scene, and I knew then that I wanted to pursue it as a career."

TEXT **BERRY MORE**





Throughout his illustrious career, Deakins has worked on a myriad of acclaimed films, including the iconic "Blade Runner." His work on the film, renowned for its futuristic yet gritty aesthetic, pushed the boundaries of cinematography. "Blade Runner was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Deakins reminisces. "Ridley Scott's vision was so bold and ambitious, and I wanted to capture that in every frame."

Roger Deakins' work on "Blade Runner" is nothing short of revolutionary. Collaborating with director Ridley Scott, Deakins sought to create a dystopian world unlike anything seen before. "Ridley had this incredible vision for the film," Deakins recalls. "He wanted to blend futuristic technology with a gritty, film noir aesthetic, and I knew that my role as cinematographer was crucial in bringing that vision to life."

To achieve the film's iconic look, Deakins and his team employed a variety of innovative techniques. "We used a lot of practical effects and lighting to create the film's atmosphere," he explains. "For example, in the famous 'rain scene,' we actually used a fire hose to create the rain effect, which added a sense of realism to the scene."

One of the most challenging aspects of filming "Blade Runner" was capturing the intricate details of the film's futuristic cityscape. "We spent months creating miniature models of the city," Deakins says. "It was incredibly detailed work, but it was essential in creating the immersive world that Ridley envisioned."

Deakins' attention to detail paid off, earning him critical acclaim and setting a new standard for visual storytelling in cinema. "Blade Runner" remains a landmark achievement in cinematography, a testament to Deakins' talent and dedication to his craft.

"No Country for Old Men" presented a different set of challenges for Deakins, but ones he embraced with enthusiasm. Working once again with the Coen Brothers, Deakins set out to capture the stark beauty of the film's Texas landscape. "The Coens wanted the film to feel raw and gritty, like the landscape itself," he explains. "So, I focused on using natural light and shadow to create a sense of realism."

One of the most memorable scenes in the film is the tense standoff between Anton Chigurh (played by Javier Bardem) and gas station owner Carson Wells (played by Woody Harrelson). Deakins' cinematography plays a crucial role in building the suspense of the scene. "I wanted the audience to feel the tension and the danger of the situation," he says. "So, I used a lot of close-ups and tight shots to create a sense of claustrophobia."

Deakins' work on "No Country for Old Men" earned him his first Academy Award for Best Cinematography, a testament to his skill and artistry. The film's haunting visuals and gripping storytelling are a testament to Deakins' ability to capture mood and tone with unparalleled precision. In "Fargo," Deakins once again collaborated with the Coen Brothers to create a visually stunning masterpiece. Set against the backdrop of snowy Minnesota, the film's cinematography is







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I like character films. I like photographing a human face. I find that more interesting than anything else, and that's what I will continue to do.

- Roger Deakins



both beautiful and bleak, reflecting the film's darkly comedic tone. "The Coens wanted the film to have a cold, desolate feel to it," Deakins explains. "So, I focused on using a lot of natural light and muted colors to create that atmosphere."

One of the most challenging aspects of filming "Fargo" was capturing the essence of the Midwest landscape. "We spent weeks filming in the snow, which presented its own set of challenges," Deakins recalls. "But it was essential in creating the film's unique visual style."

Deakins' work on "Fargo" earned him another Academy Award nomination for Best Cinematography, further solidifying his reputation as one of the industry's finest cinematographers. His ability to capture the essence of a story through his visuals is unmatched, making him a true master of his craft. Throughout his career, Deakins has collaborated with some of the industry's most talented filmmakers, including Denis Villeneuve, Sam Mendes, and the Coen Brothers. His ability to adapt to different styles and genres is a testament to his versatility as a cinematographer: "Every film is a new adventure," he says. "I never know what

to expect, but that's what makes it exciting." When asked about his approach to editing, Deakins emphasizes the importance of collaboration. "Editing is a crucial part of the filmmaking process," he explains. "It's where the magic happens, and I always try to work closely with the editor to ensure that the film's vision is realized."

In terms of equipment, Deakins is known for his preference for traditional film cameras, particularly the ARRI Alexa. "I love the texture and depth that film brings to a project," he says. "It's a medium that has a timeless quality to it, and I think it adds a certain richness to the image."

As for his future projects, Deakins remains as passionate and dedicated as ever: "I'm always looking for new challenges and new stories to tell," he says. "Cinematography is my life, and I can't imagine doing anything else."

In conclusion, Roger Deakins stands as a true master of his craft, a visionary whose work continues to inspire and captivate audiences around the world. His commitment to excellence and his unwavering passion for storytelling make him a true icon of cinema. ■



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