

We've identified a new wave of cinematographers who... have a decent slew of films under their belts... are not upstarts, but not quite of "a certain age" either... are not yet members of the BSC... but who have the potential to become the next Roger, Alwin, or Jack.

## Jake Polonsky

### Filmography (so far):

TV: *Spooks* (2004), *Hustle* (2004), *Secret Smile* (2005), *Primeval* (2007)

### When did you discover you wanted to be a cinematographer?

I'd always been interested in stills photography as a kid, but it wasn't until my Dad took me to see *Drowning By Numbers* when I was 16 that something just clicked in my head. When I walked out of the Renoir I knew I wanted to make films. After that I devoured everything I could, in the days when you could go and see European art house triple bills at the Everyman, the Scala and the Riverside.

### Where did you train?

I first picked up a movie camera at Saint Martin's, and went to film school at the American Film Institute and then the Royal College of Art.

### What are your favourite films?

*2001*, it's a unique experience on every level. *A Matter Of Life and Death*, as it still feels modern and ground-breaking, and has one of the few great cinematography script gags with, "One is starved for Technicolor up there". *Ipcress File*, for great framing and great music. *Tampopo*, Juzo Itami's very funny pastiche of *The Seven Samurai* set in a Tokyo noodle bar, its visually inventive, genuinely hilarious. *Rushmore*, as Wes Anderson has never bettered this brilliant and fabulously shot comedy.

### What's the best advice you were ever given, and from whom?

Ivan Strasburg - my first teacher at the RCA - when I was writing down something he was saying, said... "Don't write it down. If you can't remember it, it's not worth remembering!" I'm not sure if he was right, but it sounded good.

### Who are your DP/industry heroes?

Michael Samuelson. He was a huge help when I was starting out, and it was part of his whole ethos to nurture talent. I will always be very grateful for his help.

Jack Cardiff. I still can't believe *Black*

*Narcissus* was shot in a studio. His work with Powell and Pressburger is surely always going to be one of the greatest achievements in the art of cinematography. Roger Deakins. I think Roger has in the last few years hit a peak of work that most of us can but dream about. And the fact that he operates those movies himself... I don't know where he gets the energy from. Alwin Kuchler. Of the younger generation, Alwin's work really stands out to me. He's not afraid of experimenting and going out on a limb. I'm always interested to see what he's been shooting.

### Have you received any nominations or awards?

Nominated for best cinematography at CADS music video awards in 2002, 2005 and 2006, won in 2004. Best young camera/lighting person B+ awards in Broadcast Magazine 2002. Winner ARRI award for best cinematography Fuji Film scholarship 1996. Awarded Freddie Young/BSC cinematography scholarship at the RCA 1995-7. My short film *School Of Life* won best short film at the BIFAs in 2004.

### What's your proudest moment?

The birth of my son.

### What's the worst knock-back you ever had?

Getting separated from directors you've developed a good relationship is always a shame.

### Tell us your most hilarious faux pas?

Probably asking a producer what his TV show was actually about. Looking back on it, it may have not come out quite the way I intended. Or maybe it did.

### What one piece of kit could you not live without?

Panavision's 55mm macro anamorphic lens. My favourite piece of glass.

### What's the hardest shot/thing you've had to light/frame?

First shot of the Ismail Merchant film *Cotton Mary* where I was operating for Pierre Lhomme AFC. He wanted a tracking 300mm with a geared head. I was sweating like a pig. My operating improved though.



### Tell us your hidden talent/party trick?

I have a double first in History and English from Oxford, so I'm not bad at Trivial Pursuit (except the sport questions), and I make a mean schnitzel.

### In the entire history of filmmaking, which film would you love to have shot?

Some recent choices... Anton Corbijn's *Control*, as I'd kill to shoot a B&W movie. Soderbergh's *Out Of Sight*, as it's one of the coolest films ever made. Although I'm sure

Kubrick would have driven me mad, *2001* is probably THE one.

### What are your current top albums?

Vampire Weekend, and I have a guilty pleasure in the new Prodigy album. It's like going back in time to 1997.

### What are your aspirations for the future?

To shoot an anamorphic movie in or around London with five day weeks, my choice of crew and catering from The Ivy.

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