

Mersades Malone – Visual Operator

Written by William

When I first received the pictorial propaganda of visual operator Matthew Venables (aka Mersades Malone) I was somewhat intrigued by the scope of material and cross-pollination of disciplines. If it's of the eye, it seems that Venables has a finger on it, around it or quite positively chock a block up it. Specialising in both trad' and dig' photography, Malone also dabbles quite infamously as a cameraman, editor and director of music clips, animations and documentaries. He earns a crust putting his skills to work for the commercial purposes of marketing and advertising companies.

The following is a brief account of some of the more interesting points of our discussion.

**Q. Within a desert island scenario of only being allowed to take one medium/discipline with you, which would it be?**

A. That's quite an absurd proposition! Ahh...how about tool? A stills camera.

**Q. Why?**

A. It was the first tool that I got something pleasing from. There's a certain simple or distilled pleasure in the act of trying to grab a great single frame...of minimalising everything to a particular framed moment...of making yourself so small in the environment or instant as to be nothing more than an integrated, selfless part of its perfect expression.

**Q. Moving back to mediums then, what are the most important/rewarding areas of each of the mediums you work within? Let's start with moving pictures or motion pictures.**

A. By which I guess you to mean all forms of these...clips, dramas, docs and cartoons...

Motion pictures or moving pictures to me is the most exciting because of the challenge. It's the bringing together of photography, sound, writing, people, language, intuition, colour, design and so on and so on. It's setting yourself the impossible task of understanding and mastering all those things and getting them to talk to each other. Though that's kinda megalomaniacal...Orson Wells once said something along the lines of the secret to filmmaking is ensuring you hire people more talented than yourself!

**Q. And photography?**

A. Well I'll have to differentiate between digital and emulsion based photography as they both have their advantages. Digital obviously has the benefits of cost efficiency, and of instant gratification and exactitude, which is borderline essential with any sort of professional or commercial work... y'know, the old axiom of time is money and results

being imperative. More recently I've discovered that digital photography very handily lends itself to stop motion animation due mostly again to cost and time factors. Actually I'm working on a music clip now, which sits between stop motion animation and digital video. It's for artists called Monkfly and Cooknkitch. Am I allowed to plug that?

Film photography on the other hand is a somehow more magical process. Feeling as it does a more open, and at the same time, closed system. What I mean by that is that with film you commit to particular aesthetic path combining a certain light, type of film and chemicals but then, for a period, results are masked, occurring in the dark and to some extent subject to the chance of processing that occurs when dealing with physical materials. Digital feels different...decisions are not so 'locked' in, nor affected by a randomness or physicality...you either pre-imagine the aesthetic or on the computer completely re-imagine it again after the moment.

This movement to actively try and factor out chance is a big manoeuvre...and though a pursuit of understanding or knowledge about doing what you do drives you forward, this closing out of chance is not necessarily a good thing...To me this seems the fault-line along which 'craft' and 'art' separate...and in this context, amongst numerous others, whether digital or film is superior seems a silly question... it's as simple as horses for courses and any other debate is kinda chopping your nose to spite the face.

**Q. And graphic design?**

Like making most anything you have to balance and mix your separate elements but from there the process falls into two distinct categories. The first is the absolute and functional, where the pleasure lies in the utility. Communicating clearly within the confines of the time/money bind and a limited set of parameters.

The second is the more open ended brief which for me tends to happen more with musicians, where you get to drift around with source material and guided by intuition or whatever something delightful or appropriate flops out.

**Q. So how about something like the creative structuring of a music video? How do you tackle something like that with regard to what you've just said?**

A. Well obviously it's a photography through time deal. There's also a sense to which it's just graphical design through time as well. There's a constant and as often as not pleasing tension going on as 'the brief' closes things down some... you have to represent the artist / client how they want to be represented and the sense of image marketing associated with that... On the other hand it's an open system because of the process of filming other people, of locations, of musicality, of time...

You can check out Mr Malone's visual vibe at [www.mersadesmalone.com](http://www.mersadesmalone.com)

If you're a visual artist and would like to be featured in Loop then we'd love to hear from you. Whether you be painter, photographer, tattooist, graff artist, etc. If we can see it and print it then that means you.

Please send a proofing jpeg layout of your image or images as you'd like them to be featured (297mmW x 210mmH, nothing over 3 Meg will be accepted) to [info@loopoz.com](mailto:info@loopoz.com) with the email title - "Visual Operator" . If we choose to feature your work we'll be in contact for a high rez copy. Thankyou.