

# MOVIES 101

WITH JIM SOTO



# MOVIEMAKING

**“Being a filmmaker is certainly not easy, and really, if you’ve ever heard someone say it is, they’re lying.”**

**- Kevin Smith (director of Clerks & Cop Out)**



**Moviemaking is not an easy thing. Nor is it simple. In virtue of its collaborative nature it requires:**

- **lots of planning**
- **lots of organization**
- **lots of coordination**
- **lots of attention to detail**
- **lots of aspirin**



Martin Sheen rises from the river in Apocalypse Now (1979).

Film making has been a group effort with well defined, separate, professional departments since its inception; Script-writer, Director, Cameraman, Editor and, an army of other craft-defined professionals, Gaffers, Electricians, Grips, Prop-people, Soundmen, Boom-men, Loaders, Continuity Girls, plus assistant this and assistant that....



Leading all these people into working towards achieving the producer's or director's vision is not without its difficulties. However it can be a lot of fun!

# MAKING A MOVIE

Before shooting a single frame filmmakers must make decisions regarding:

1. The script
2. The format
3. The budget
4. The script breakdown
5. The location
6. The casting
7. The shot list
8. story board
9. managing the script
10. The shooting schedule
11. The crew
12. The gear
13. The business aspects

# THE MOVIEMAKING STAGES

The fundamental phases or stages of the entire film production process are pretty “fluid” by nature. They are:

**PRE-PRODUCTION**

**POST-PRODUCTION**

**PRODUCTION**

**DEVELOPMENT**

**DISTRIBUTION**

# THE MOVIE MAKERS

Movies are made by a variety of people who are specialists in a particular area of production. They are generally divided into two major groups: the **cast**, or those that appear on screen and the **crew** or those that work behind the scenes.



# THE CAST

The cast includes all the actors and extras. They might have speaking part or not. Their work happens in front of the cameras.



Actor John Travolta and director Quentin Tarantino discuss a scene from Pulp Fiction (1994).



**There are five common types of acting roles actors and extras:**

- **Background roles**
  - **Cameos**
- **Recurring characters (in series)**
- **Supporting roles**
  - **Staring roles**

# THE CREW

The crew is the largest group and can be divided into the Primary crew and the Secondary crew. The Primary crew is usually made of:

- Screenwriter
- Director ✓
- Production Designer
- Director of Photography
- Editor
- Sound Designer/Editor
- Composer
- Executive Producer ✓

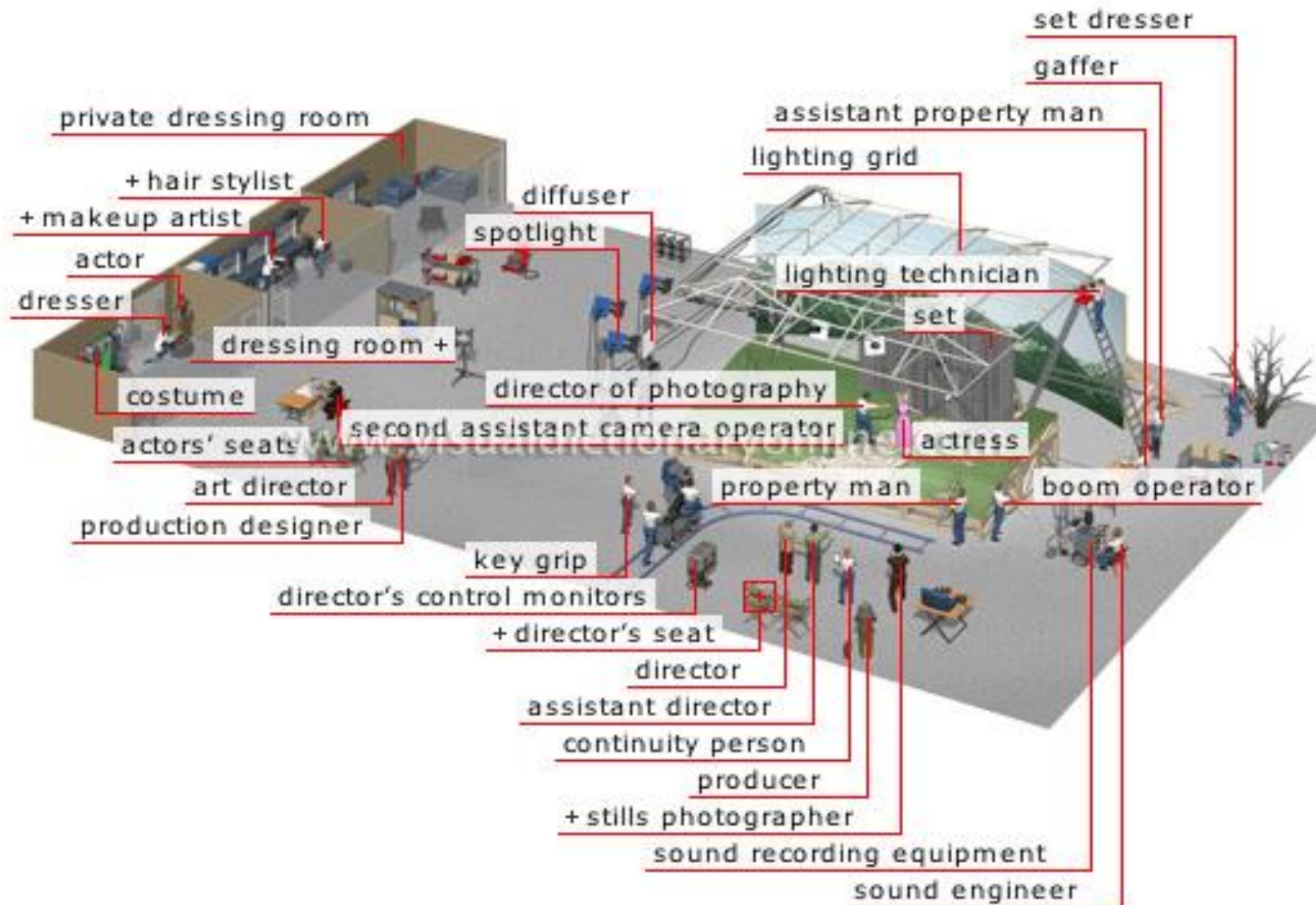


Producer Howard Kazanjian, Director Richard Marquand, Exc. Producer George Lucas, and designer Nilo Rodis-Jamero discuss Return of the Jedi (1983).

There is also a secondary crew that is usually made of at least:

- First Assistant Director
- Production Assistant
- Script Supervisor
- Production Accountant
- Location Manager
- Art Director
- Set Decorator
- Lead Man
- Set Dresser
- Props master
- Props builder
- Armourer
- Construction Coordinator
- Head Carpenter
- Makeup artist
- Hairdresser
- Costume Designer
- Camera operator
- First assistant camera operator (focus puller)
- Loader
- Camera Production Assistant (camera intern)
- Production sound mixer
- Boom operator
- Key grip
- Best boy grip
- Dolly grip
- Gaffer
- Best boy electric
- Lighting technician
- Negative cutter
- Visual effects supervisor
- Dialogue editor
- Sound editor
- Re-Recording Mixer
- Music supervisor

# BASIC SET LAYOUT



# THE TOOLS

It would be impossible to make a film without some basic tools, after all filmmaking was made possible with technological innovations during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore cinema is very dependent on the mastering of certain technologies. Some of the tools used by big movie studios are so expensive (e.g. Panaflex lenses) that they'd rather rent them, instead of purchase them. Fortunately, in our times, further advances in technology allow for the "common" man to have the power of filmmaking at his fingertips.



## Among the tools necessary to create cinematic works are:

- Cameras
- Computers
- Camera stabilizers
- Editing software
- Recording media
- Sound recording equipment
- Artificial lighting
- Light reflectors
- Lots of pens and paper
- ect...



# THE MARKET

In addition to being artistic endeavors movies are also commercial enterprises. The average movie costs millions of dollars to produce; therefore a profit is expected from this investment. That is why movies that fail to generate several times their investment are considered “failures”, at least from a financial perspective.

Like any other commodity, films are part of a commercial activity where they are bought and sold. This is known as the movie market. In this market, studios, media corporations, broadcasters, and the audience form part of a well oiled machine that has been chugging along for over a hundred years.

# THE AUDIENCE

The role of the audience in a performance is mostly one of consumer. The audience is the consumer of the product, the film.

The audience refers to the theatre-goers (or Netflix junkies) the scriptwriter had in mind when he/she wrote the script. Ultimately, they determine the type of films that are produced since films are a consumer good that must sell tickets to justify their financial investment. Quality, unfortunately, is not the main factor!



Movie studios will be very reluctant to invest in a film/product with limited return investment potential. Ask yourself, what type of movie is Hollywood investing more resources nowadays and why?

1



**Avatar (2009)**  
\$2,922,917,914

2



**Avengers: Endgame (2019)**  
\$2,797,501,328

3



**Titanic (1997)**  
\$2,194,690,964

4



**Star Wars: Episode VII -  
The Force Awakens (2015)**  
\$2,069,521,700

5



**Avengers: Infinity War (2018)**  
\$2,048,359,754

6



**Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021)**  
\$1,916,306,995

# RESHOOT

1. Why is considering the audience of a proposed screen story important?
2. What important decisions must a filmmaker make before shooting a film?
3. Which are the essential tools of cinema?
4. Which are the FIVE phases of film production?
5. How do we define a movie market?



Next:

# THE TECH THAT GAVE BIRTH TO CINEMA

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