

Bolduc's 'War Witch' doesn't flinch in face of danger

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10 Cinematographers to Watch 2013: Nicolas Bolduc

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Nicolas Bolduc may not be a workaholic, but it was a definite fear of the glacial pace of many a director's career that haunted the 39-year-old Montreal native in film school and steered him toward cinematography. "I realized that shooting everyone's film was much more how I had imagined filmmaking, than directing one single film a year," he says. "After school, the whole idea of waiting years to shoot the next film was terrifying, so I had no choice but to become a cinematographer and shoot all the time."

He also admits to being "very afraid of patterns and repeating myself. I never want to shoot the same thing twice."

He shouldn't worry. He's already shot more than two dozen, stylistically varied films, including Kim Nguyen's drama "City of Shadows," the musical comedy "Fatal," the upcoming mystery "An Enemy" starring Jake Gyllenhaal, and the acclaimed Congo war story "War Witch," Canada's Oscar-nominated entry in the foreign-language category that won him the Golden Frog at Camerimage.

“I don’t think I have a particular style because every film has a specific voice,” he says. “And it really comes alive in the bonding you have with the director. The personal stuff that you share through discussions gets in the details of the filmmaking and makes it interesting and vibrant. You’re as good as a director’s trust in you. Ultimately, working on great scripts with good directors can make you a good cinematographer.”

Bolduc also rates the fear factor in the filmmaking equation, which he describes as “putting myself in danger for a film, making it different from what I expect.

“With Kim Nguyen on ‘War Witch,’ we made decisions by instinct about locations in Kinshasa, but then waited on the day of the shoot and improvised with the non-actors, shooting in chronological order,” he adds. “We created the film by instinct and sheer nerves.”

Favorite tool: “Shape handheld handles.”

Inspiration: “My first love of storytelling was through Herge, the master graphic novelist — ‘Tintin’s’ father. Later on I realized that I loved films so much simply because they told amazing stories. It’s all about stories and the actors in the end. The images carry it all because of your passion.”

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