



**“An alive city, in continuous transformation of itself and of the surroundings that goes devouring, serves of bottom to three stories in the film “The bicycle”  
by E. Guzmán**

The Bicycle, secondly motion picture of the director Sigrfrid Monleón and produced for Wanda, Indigo Media and Fénix PC tells three stories with characters placed in different epoches of life: Childhood, the young and old age, it all in the city of Valencia , being this one a character over the film.

Cinematography has run in charge of Alfonso Parra ( A.E.C.) who right now worked with Monleón in your short film "The one belonging to the eye is nothing", " the first conversations with Sigrif about the bicycle led us to references primarily in black and white and in short to De Sica's film The Thief of bicycles. We saw the city like white and blacks spaces, with few greys. Big cities are in reality monochromatic and alone the advertisements of the facades conceal and they dissimulate this reality, we tried to reduce to the full this interference of the colour, clearing this without shooting the film in black and white. We wanted to show an alive city and in continuous transformation of itself and of the surroundings that it goes devouring, and like interrelate with the characters creating spaces where they express themselves and modify the conduct of these". The film passes in Valencia in over forty locations, so much of the suburbs like the center. But according to Parra, not only the thief of bicycles used references of the film, tells us but some others like Charris's paint, for his almost monochromatic pictures and also the work was especially revealing "Cross next to the park Schöneberg " of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.



Frames from The thief of bicycles



Directed by Vittorio De Sica and cinematography by Carlo Montuori

Parra searched, in order to accomplish the photographic development " a contrasted image, that means that you lose detail in black and white like those emulsions Kodachrome of fifty with not much latitude where whites were losing detail and blacks became dark else they were illuminated. However we did not want to lose some natural, soft and somehow friendly tones of skin."

The film has been shoted in HD, system that Alfonso Parra knows and he has used in another one films " The producers had decided to shoot the film in digital system of high definition, something really complicated when the film passes about in your totality in exteriors and insides with big large windows to the exterior that certainly we wanted to see. The city existed outside but also we wanted it to be within the inner spaces. The little latitude of the accessible systems in HD and his not much resolution they got me to do a photographic proposal that take the camera of Sony F 900 to his limit of reproduction."

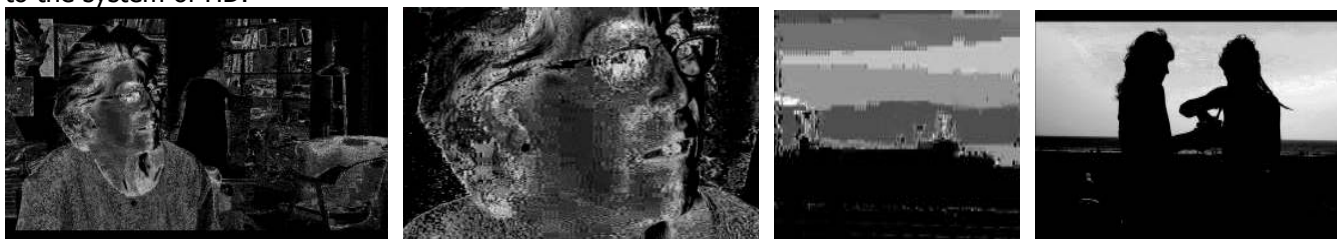


The painter's work Ángel Mateo Charris

In order to obtain the desired results, Parra worked the photo in several addresses, of one side establishing the bases of the same in the camera F 900 ,by means of the modification of two fundamental aspects: gamma curve and the matrix of colour. Otherwise he use the lenses Digiprime of Zeiss " especially the 7 and the 10mm and

eventually the 14mm, very angular lenses that allow me to see a lot of space around the characters with a high T stop for the exteriors, normally between 5.6 and 8 to have focus in the backgrounds of the city and that way bringing more to first term next to the actors. I have tried to work between 2.8 and 3.5 T stops in the insides .” And finally the work during the digital grading, as Miguel Pérez Fotofilm/Deluxe's colourist tells “ we began to a style, weeks before the beginning of the filming work. The desaturation was going to be a prevailing tonic to get close to an image in her that the main characters reign: The characters ... and the bicycle. It was intended to obtain, likewise, a very movie contrast, fleeing away from those washed blacks that at times they reveal to the HD. The use of Kodak Premier 2392 was presented itself, but we left behind the final decision by the time the film be finished. I was follower of getting that black force in the grading, rescuing all of the possible information in the same, than altering it using a positive material more contrasted.

The modifications that Parra made in the gamma of the camera were based on the designed curves with Sony's editing CVPfile from Digital Praxis "these curves have been created transcribing values Cineon in different configurations so that they capture more or less detail in high light and shadows" ( a detailed analysis of the curves can show in [www.alfonsoparra.com](http://www.alfonsoparra.com) ) " Of the five curves we started by trying the nº5 ,the one that capture more detail , once the sample was filmed we could verify that effects appeared from compression at the middle tones of the pictures that they were useless. Our investigations took us finally to Sony that they deduced that the curve generated so much information than the 8bits that the F900 works with it could not contain it, as soon as I decided to use another curve, the nº 2 which has less detail in blacks since that part of the curve answers to the standard 709 for HD . We could observe with this other curve than when some kind of mask was forced in post production the effects of compression were observed ". The especial characteristics of the used curve get to Miguel Pérez to accomplish different proofs for the processing of the material " When we began proofs, once the peculiarity of the images obtained by Alfonso, due to the specific curves that he used, I tried to deceive to my digital grading system, the Lustre. I made it believe that it was at work with DPX logarithmic, so that the grading make off with this system's own controls and no of the linear. Results were fantastic. Alfonso liked it, and to us also. Then I proposed to obtain the same result without deceiving the machine, in order not to force some curves registered of linear form, and I consider whose nature that you have to respect. And really, with those same images we tried a grading from some linear curves, with the aim of obtaining the same result without need to confuse the system of grading. And it failed to match to get it, which is why finally we chose this form of work, since it is more true to the context to the system of HD.



Effects of the compression in Sony's camera F 900 with the curve CinLog2 when forcing with masks. Increased details.

Once the curve was decided and your handling in post production, Parra checked the effects of the modification on the colour against the same: "In a first proof and changing the values of the matrix toward the older's values of digital cinematography than we used for the Betacam Digital we could observe than the desaturation and especially the modification of reds proved to be excessive to work it from the camera and although the result was approaching plenty of to the final result that we were desiring at the instance of production we decided not to force so much the original material, as soon as on these first values I modify the values in RGB and the different tones in order that they serve as base to the grading in the final configuration of the film. I saturate blues lightly that they come near to a tone plus cyan, and I modified yellow and green as well. Red was desaturated although no in excess and I did it lightly colder, toward the magenta. I could have checked than the tones of skin are much better grading with this light magenta dominant of beginning in HD than without her. Finally I changed the detail and some others parameters. The form that finally you were seeing the camera in was exposed during tests so much to makeup and decoration department. With my laptop I did an approximation of how image was going to be after grading. This, finally, has been very important in order to have the image that we were wanting for the film. We filmed some shots to see the result and to find that what we had designed was working during the filming."

In order to get the atmosphere for the city as well as for the tone of skin, Parra decided to work with a soft and low contrast illumination, especially in the insides, trying to restrict the range of contrast what the camera could drive to, " some more eight points of stops with the modifications accomplished in the camera." Really, like the gaffer Salomón Lucas indicates us " The light of the exteriors day has been operated, with H.M.I's projectors flicker free in the main Cinepars ( 6 Kw., 4 Kw., 2,5 Kw., 1,2 Kw., 575k, 200 Kw.) And one good 12 Kw Fresnel, like complement of a solar light, tried in many instances through different diffusions of different sizes ( 6 x 6, 4 x 4, 2 x 2 ), cloths, silks, gauzes, etc.



The pre-illuminations of some spaces had great importance during shooting as Salomón makes us a comment " we have accomplished different pre-illuminations, from sequences like the one belonging to the circular square from Valencia where we change the light bulbs of the streetlamps and garlands ( 250 aprox.), as well as the placement of diffusers in the same. Suffering through sequences in the ones that we placed Space lights in a ship's roof, filtering them through silks and doing big reserves in the backgrounds with black curtains; To the more sequence complicated from the technical point of view of illumination, that

"Rave" was the sequence of the party by the sea, in the one that we constructed of a cube of 3x3 meters , with Meccano tube of duraluminium ( not much weight and great resistance ) closed with diffusion Light grid cloth and colour filters pale violet with an internal structure, housing 60 Kw. provided by 30 Quartzes Kw. regulated by independent faces, to a reasonable distance of filtering.

The cube was placed of twenty meters high by a trunk crane, with the aim of having a good base of work, being this backed up for another one two cranes with Maxi brutes of 12 lamps Par64 of 1 kw ... The final aspect of the sequence of the rave accomplish it Miguel Pérez during the grading " A peculiar situation, it was a scene that develops by night, at an open space crammed with people and cars. We avoided blue colours totally ( so missing in all of the film in general ), getting some browned tones, without coming to a warm dominant.



In consonance with the needs of the sequences, Parra filtered in camera with "white Promist, polas, neutrals and classic soft in almost all the sequences and also with a new filter from tiffen named glimmerglass, that they produce a diffusion in a different way that promist or the FX, a diffusion that was softening especially the high lights in his contours to.

In the course of grading according to Miguel tells us " Alfonso sent me some references that he had been worked up, after talking with the director, of the different levels of desaturation and contrast. After seeing which one "the point" that was right to the all film, I sent him by E-mail several proposals as from five or six frames. He liked very much, and I kept on working in that line. Alfonso advised me to recover the saturation in the red that was going to favour skin tones enormously, in the same way was going to reinforce the presence of the bicycle. The pre-grading all film following those guidelines, it did than when Alfonso arrived to supervise the grading, modifications was half notes. Everything was practically like he and the director had imagined . However, that global desaturation, with a recuperation of the red colour it offered a problem in some shoot: If some red square element, in addition to the characters, appeared you collected too much attention. We had to isolate them it, in order to reduce that intensity of red considerably integrate him of unnoticed form with the rest of the scene.



Original frame from camera

First step grading

Mask

Final Frame



Original frame from camera

First step grading

Dynamic mask to reset the detail of the background

Final Frame

Really, Alfonso Parra tells us how he develop his work with the colourist "I always make a pre grading at home with my computer, there I can apply the final look of film and that way we come to the post production with the obvious ideas, something that time saving supposes and for so much of cost for production.

Film recorder process were with Arrilaser and " before filming the first reel, we gave some proofs of eight very different shots, to see how they responded on the traditional projection. The worked out was very accurate so that we had been working on the digital projection, so that it was decided to film the complete unmodified film without changing any parameter. Only thing that I adjust after viewed those proofs were some exteriors from the city, that it was needing a little more neutrality for the coldness that it was given by cars and asphalt; Coldness that was transmitted in true mode of a perhaps excessive form to the characters " Miguel Pérez makes us a comment. Finally Film was printed on Kodak Vision with a minimal adjustment of analogical traditional colour grading.

**Technical notes**

Camera Sony F-900with curve CinLog 2 from  
Digital Praxis and colour modifications in Matrix's camera  
Digiprime Lens  
HDCAM format 1:1,85  
Intermediate Digital  
Colour grading: FotofilmDeluxe with Lustre  
Film recorder in FotofilmDeluxe with Arrilaser on Kodak 5242  
Positive Kodak Vision