

MOTION PICTURE AND VIDEO LIGHTING

MOTION PICTURE AND VIDEO LIGHTING

Second Edition

Blain Brown



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*To my wife, Ada Pullini Brown, without
whom nothing would ever get done.*

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Preface to the Second Edition

Since the first edition of this book, there have been significant advances in motion picture and video lighting technology, and we have tried to include as many of them here as possible. However, despite the advances in lighting equipment, film stocks, and lenses, and, of course, the introduction of DV and HD video technology and its acceptance in the professional world, the fundamentals of lighting remain the same. Good lighting is eternal; the basic concepts of lighting have not changed since they were explored by Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and other masters.

In this book we attempt to cover both the technology of lighting as well as the aesthetics, the techniques, and the “process”—the thinking and methodology by which a scene gets lit and made ready to shoot.

One factor will never change in motion picture, video, and HD production: time is always of the essence. Production costs money—usually a lot of money. As a result, the ability to be fast is always as important as any other aspect of your performance. This is true whether it is a no-budget film or a large studio film. Ask any Director of Photography; he or she will tell you that the ability to achieve good results quickly is crucial to getting and keeping the job.

Understanding the process is critical to being fast, but knowing the capabilities of the equipment and being well versed in how other people have done it before is also important.

On the set, we often tend to work intuitively. As you learn lighting, however, it is important for you to think carefully about what you are doing and why you are doing it. This will lay a solid ground under your intuitive decisions later on and will ultimately give you more confidence. As you work, others will be watching you: the director, the AD, the producer, your crew. The more confident you are in what you are doing and the approach you are taking, the smoother things will go.

Learning lighting is a life-long pursuit. Few people ever feel they know it all. The chance to constantly learn, get better, and find new ways of doing things is one of the attractions of lighting; if it were done by formula time after time, it would be a boring job.

Whether you are just beginning in the field of motion picture and video lighting or if you have been doing it a while, I hope this book will help you continue in your pursuit of better lighting.