

filmbase

STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER ON SET

STILLS PHOTOGRAPHER: Their craft consists of focusing in on the film's key scenes during filming and capturing them in precisely the light i.e. the mood that the director and cameraman have envisaged. The stills photographer produces the material that is ultimately used to advertise the film.

❖ A good quality photo is one taken with:

- o A good quality digital camera (good optics and digital sensor)
- o A photo that hasn't been enlarged in post-processing or by using the in-camera digital zoom (avoid using the digital zoom)
- o A photo that has been properly shot (good lighting, no blur, good composition)
- o A photo that has been stored in either a lossless format (TIFF) or the highest camera JPEG quality setting

❖ A good still is one that represents your film, contains a scene, and it can be used as promotional material.

- Don't bring in a friend who has a digital camera, ask somebody who has a good camera and can take good photographs.
- The stills photographer should talk to the director and have access to a copy of the script to find out what the key scenes are.
- They should also talk to the DOP, particularly about those key scenes, and find out which lenses he/she is using as well as the camera movement. The photographs should be taken from the cameraman's position. **THE ACTION MUST NOT BE DISTURBED.** That means suppressing the clicking of the camera by a sound-proof cover (the blimp). The photographer also has to get by with the light that is available.
- It is not always possible to capture key moments straight away during the filming. That means that the scenes have to be redone for the photographs.
- **Stills photographers should be present everywhere but keep themselves as unobtrusive as possible.**
- You can take pictures of the crew while they are working or the cast while they are getting ready for a scene but don't expect that to be your promotional material.



SUBMITTING YOUR PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL TO THE MAGAZINE

- When you are submitting a picture to *Film Ireland* magazine for a news piece or for the production news section, make sure that it's printable. Printable meaning you send it at 300 ppi and that is big enough. Avoid sending film grabs, their quality is very poor and grainy.
- If it's a low-resolution image (pixelated), not big enough or blurry it will be automatically dismissed. Technically it is not printable.
- Ultimately think that your still is going to give the readers an idea of the quality of your film. A bad still could misrepresent your film. A blurry, grainy, overly dark or bright image might give the idea that the DOP wasn't good.
- If your photograph is printable but it's not a still from the film (crew shot, actors having lunch, etc) it's not saying anything about your film and therefore we'll avoid using it when possible.

All cinema fans know their photographs. Even before a film is released we find stills in film magazines, brochures, display boxes at cinemas and on posters. Often, these pictures become synonyms of the films they represent. So don't take the stills photographer for granted!