DIRECTING THE NARRATIVE
and
SHOT DESIGN

The Art and Craft of Directing

by

Lubomir Kocka

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To my beloved father, thank you for your love, care, and confidence in me, and thank you for always supporting me and believing in me. I miss you so much. To my dear sons, Mišino and Ľubino. I am sorry, I didn't know, how to do it. I wish I could do it over, just one more take. And to my Donna, the center of my universe, my life would simply not be the same without you.

PREFACE

"I constantly see people rise in life who are not the smartest, sometimes not even the most diligent, but they are learning machines. They go to bed every night a little wiser than they were when they got up, and boy does that help, particularly when you have a long run ahead of you."

Charles T. Munger, American investor, businessman, and philanthropist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If you're willing to fight for something, to take a stand, to risk getting hurt, if you truly believe in something, if you love enough, it gives you power. You will feel justly entitled to do whatever you will be called for because you will do it heartily.

A man is defined by what he does. Film directing is more than simply a part of my life; it is an indivisible part of my being. I began a career as a child actor at age fourteen. I was able to apply this experience, along with my painting and photography experience, and film graduate education, toward the professional pursuit of my passion for film and television directing. As soon as my professional career took off, I got an offer from my alma mater to return as a film educator, which I gladly accepted. That was the moment when I discovered my passion for teaching. I tremendously enjoy teaching, mentoring, and inspiring a young generation of filmmakers. I owe much of that passion to my parents, who were educators as well and had great experiences.

Nothing is more rewarding for me than instilling a passion for the art of film into my students and seeing the results of their appreciation of cinema in their successful film and television productions. For me, it is like an extension of my own life. Students recognize that in today's workplace, they need to show that they are citizens of the world and that they have cross-cultural competencies that will help them to have more options down the line. Since I have specific overseas experience, I can introduce them to these competencies. I was and am aware of the role and responsibilities as a film educator. A few times in my career I felt that the burden is too heavy for me, that I can't carry this load anymore. When I was about to give up on teaching, my former student, Kevin Phillips *(Super Dark*

Times) sent me an e-mail: *"The weight we carry is as heavy as our passion for life - but don't sweat it. Just be true blue you and all will follow suit. I'd say go to class as you did all these past years, particularly when you had us as students - and know that if you can impact just one student, it's absolutely worth it!"*

Before you begin to read this book, I have to warn you – your life as a film or television director won't be paved with rose petals and sunlight all the time. Be prepared for your film not to be well received by audiences even though you put all your love, passion, talent, diligence, and a lot of money into it. Film critics will enjoy tearing you apart. You will feel like a bucking bull lying down in the arena with multiple hooks embedded in your shoulder, waiting for the final sword thrust, or "estocada," to kill you. At that point, you may try to comprehend the wisdom of the old adage that there is a certain freedom in having nothing left to lose. But then you will stand up, shake yourself off, and start working on another film. Someone once said, *"Obstacles and suffering are inevitable – change is the law of life. We all have inconveniences of one kind or another. How you deal with them ultimately determines how successful you are."*

You will constantly be challenged in your life, but there is a light at the end of every tunnel. If you are aware of your vital power, you will open your eyes and see yourself emerging from troubles with an enhanced awareness of your capabilities. You will again feel that if you want to, you can move mountains. That is when you will know you are ready to stand up from the ashes and direct a new film again. As a director, you will never know if the film you are currently working on is your last film or if you will ever get another chance to direct a film. Because of that uncertainty, you have to work on each film like it is your last chance to direct. So, if you are still interested in this book, I will be more than happy to share my professional experience with you.

Writing a book presents numerous challenges. I never thought that I would have enough courage to do it. I am grateful to a lot of people for helping me with this book. First and foremost, I must thank my SCAD students in the USA and my VŠMU students in Slovakia. Not all the college students who are quoted in this book are mentioned by name, and I would like to apologize in advance for this. These students gave me a chance to think about my own directing style and about the theoretical aspects of filmmaking. I think that one of the most enjoyable things for me in interacting with students is how much I learn about myself. I gratefully kept in mind those valuable pieces of wisdom in the process of writing this book, and now I'm able to share it with you all.

I want to honor the work of all my students, those named and those unnamed in this book. I wish to thank each and every one. This book reflects your work, and your talent is imprinted in the book. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to my former graduate student Jane Barr, who willingly offered her editing services. She just could not stand so many sloppy mistakes, errors, typos, omissions, and

inaccuracies in my first draft of the manuscript. Later on, she took the position of line producer in organizing filming in the USA for the visuals for this book. Also, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to my graduate student, Joanna Brooks, a hardworking assistant director, executive assistant, and casting director for filming visuals in the USA. She is a living sample that success comes from hard work and dedication.

I would like to thank the film crew, who worked with me on visuals, the photographers: Lubo Kocka, Venkat Dilip Chunduru, Ernesto V. Fuentes, Sean Grimaldi, David Allen Jones, and Balša Gobović. I would also like to thank the gifted actresses and actors: Táňa Pauhofová, Róbert Roth, Branislav Bystriansky, Alexander Barta, Torsten Hillhouse, Corine Milian, Vitali Pushkar, Angelina Stanley, Geoffrey Wilson, Michael Foley, Misty Insel, Virginia Patterson, Remy Godwin, Ian Trottier, Liam Ireson, Tiara Maldonis, Geoffrey Insel, Drew Funk, Jarod Valvo, Rachel Valvo, Tiara Maldonis, Sara Wallace, Nick Bow, Cory Carpenter, Emily Huff, Donna Wright, Michal Kocka, Alexandra Hažíková, Marek Geišberg, Eva Sakálová, Hailey Vest, Madison Bildahl, Claire Price, Francesca Crichton, Milena Goncalez, Malikah Cobb, Quinn Lowsky, Claire Price, Dylan Ruggiero, Fairuz Ferrer Elwazir, Luis Felipe Mameri, Norbert Bodo, Andrea Papp, Martin Blažek, Western park Boskovice ensemble cast, Dakotah Terrace, and Colton Terrace. And thanks also to graphic designer Paul Rodecker. Thank you all so much for your incredible talent and work.

Book Cover credits: Cover designer - Vernon Press, Storyboard Artists - Ru Xu, Liss Villella, Costume Designer - Eva Farkašová, Photo - Lubo Kocka.

Photo Album credits: Alan Hyža, Ria Vaňová, Jozef Koršala and the author's archive.

I would like to thank and express my gratitude to the whole team of people from Vernon Press Publisher for taking a risk on this book that is just a hair outside the realm of their past projects.

The book extensively utilizes visuals and presents a deep probe into the core of the directing dilemma: shot design. Here, the shot design is introduced as a powerful, expressive tool and not just as a toolbox for mastering the mechanics of shooting. Over 200 different scenes with real actors in real locations were photographed for the book. Professional actors, actor-models, commercial talents, and non-professional actors were cast to embody scripted characters. A variety of different shooting locations in the USA, Europe, and Africa were used to mimic different periods and genres. Each scene demonstrates a particular situation described in the book and is portrayed through still pictures and floor plans with choreographed action for the actors and camera set-ups. Each scene was shot with a Canon 5D Mark II or Mark III or a Canon 7D. All photographs illustrate the outputs from those camera set-ups. Floor Plans/Overhead Diagrams and Sche-

matics show the performers' blocking and their movement along with the camera set-ups and camera movement. Floor Plans/Overhead Diagrams and Schematics were created with Celtx pre-production software (www.celtx.com). All scenes were uniquely shot for the purposes of this book; plenty of them replicate the scenes from well-known and popular feature films. Even though I do not refer to existing movies explicitly, you might recognize some of them, like *Blue* (Dir. Krysztof Kieslowski), *Citizen Kane* (Dir. Orson Welles), *Amadeus* (Milos Forman), *Contempt* (Dir. Jean-Luc Godard), *The Graduate* (Dir. Mike Nichols), *In The Mood for Love* (Dir. Wong Kar Wai), *Manhattan* (Dir. Woody Allen), *Maria's Lovers* (Dir. Andrey Konchalovski), *Paris, Texas* (Dir. Wim Wenders), *Talk to Her* (Dir. Pedro Almodovar), *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Dir. Sergio Leone), *Dolores Claiborne* (Dr. Taylor Hackford), *Babel* (Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu), and many more.

PROLOGUE

The film is about experience, story, and emotion. It can infuriate us, sadden us, bore us, or it can bring joy, laughter, and happiness. Being a filmmaker is both a privilege and a burden. We see life in a unique way but are expected to communicate that vision to the entire world. The attempted resolution of this problem can inspire a creative act whose closest emotional equivalent is motherhood. As in life, all films demonstrate the dark lows and staggering triumphs contained within every frame. The filmmaking is the noble art of creativity. For those who like scientific definitions, creativity is an exasperatingly slippery concept. Neurologist Arnold Scheibel from UCLA explains the process as *"the putting together of familiar information in an unusual way."*

Regarding creativity, I am frequently thinking about another statement. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky *(Crime and Punishment),* the most important and influential Russian writer who ever lived and who has often been quoted, once said, *"Creativity isn't anything else but 2% of talent and 98% of sweat."* Also, I recall a statement credited to Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, which might seem like it has nothing to do with creativity, but for me, it does: *"Each energy is just transformation of sexual energy."* If you think that I am about to advise you to master your libido and sparingly harness this energy in order to transform it into spiritual energy, you are mistaken. But the opposite may be true. In this instance, maybe no advice would be better. Sex is the essence of creation, from the birth of the life to the birth of artistic expression. To this day, thousands of years after the arrival of Adam and Eve, man has tried to channel this energy into more fulfilling areas which could bring him greatest passion and the blissful joy and pleasure, and mental and intellectual gratification. The filmmaking is one of those areas.

I read an article in the *Scientific American* entitled *Inner Sparks* which was an interview conducted by journalist Alicia Anstead with the ear, nose, and throat specialist Charles J. Limb, who also happens to be a sax player. His research investigates what goes on in the brain when musicians improvise. It's worth reading the whole article, but here are a few things that stuck out to me:

Why should scientists study creativity?
While I think creativity is amazing, I don't put it on a pedestal. I view at it as a very normal biological process that some people are able to take to extremely profound levels,… (…) From a scientific perspective: if it's a biological behavior, if humans are creative beings, we really ought to study it like you study any other complex biological behavior.

What happens neurologically to the brain during creativity?
(…) When you're doing something that's creative, you're engaging all aspects of your brain. During improvisation, the prefrontal cortex of the brain undergoes an interesting shift in activity, in which a broad area called the lateral prefrontal region shuts down, essentially so you have a significant inhibition of your prefrontal cortex. (…) In the meantime, we saw another area of the prefrontal cortex—the medial prefrontal cortex—turn on.

What's next in your creativity research?
(…) The next real direction I'm headed into has to do with trying to clarify our study of reward mechanisms in the brain and their relation to creativity. Why is it that we like to be creative? Why is it that we like to perceive creativity? And what happens when somebody is improvising in terms of pleasure or reward centers? Where is the gratification neurologically, and how does that change according to the emotional content of the music? I've always wondered: Why do we love sad music? Why does it make us feel better and not worse? It's a funny inversion that takes place in the brain. Whereas we try to avoid sadness in life, in art, and especially in music, we almost gravitate toward it. By and large, the effect is very positive. Improvisation causes a similar response: When you're spontaneously creating music that is sad, what are you getting? Are you getting joy? Pleasure? What's the basis of the reward? That's one of the directions I'm heading.

This leads me to the point where I have to explain why I put in this book such a huge emphasis on directing with conceptual approaches and methodological practices while still maintaining an open door for instincts, intuitions, improvisation, and subconscious decision making. Dr. Li Zhaoping of University College London said, *"You'd expect people to make better decisions when given time to look*

properly, but this was not so." He explained, *"The conscious or top-level function of the brain, when active, vetoes our initial subconscious decision – even when it is correct – leaving us unaware or distrustful of our instincts."* So, thinking too much about a decision can leave us worse off. This is what happens with the obsessive compulsive disorder: the subconscious knows very well that you have turned the gas off, but the conscious brain gets too involved and throws the whole thing into doubt, forcing you to second-guess yourself.

In a turmoil of producing the film, you will lead a lot to intuition. The rapid processing of facts is inevitable when you will be forced to make split-second judgments and split-second decisions.

A tremendous responsibility for the result is a huge burden, but trust your gut, you will be surprised by your capacity to make the right call just based on instinct alone. Research published in *Current Biology* shows that in some instances, snap decisions are better than endless pedantic pondering and logical weighing up. Test subjects were asked to pick the odd one out on a screen covered with more than 650 identical symbols, including one rotated version of the same symbol. They performed better when they were given no time to linger and were forced to rely on their subconscious to select the correct answer.

So now Milton Erickson's famous intuition to *"trust your unconscious"* is backed up by research. The booming science of decision-making has shown that more information can lead to objectively poorer choices, and to choices that people come to regret. Your conscious logical brain doesn't always make the best decisions. Sharon Begley wrote in her article published in *Newsweek*, March 7, 2011:

> *(…) an unconscious system guides many of our decisions, and that it can be sidelined by too much information. And it has shown that decisions requiring creativity benefit from letting the problem incubate below the level of awareness - something that becomes ever-more difficult when information never stops arriving.*

But I am in no way trying to convince you to stop reading this book just solely to rely on your gut instincts. No doubt, instincts can open many closed doors for you, but the best possible decisions come from weighing your instincts against your rational thinking. So my advice here would be the following: trust *your instincts* but *rely* on rational thought. Many great discoveries have been made by chance. Louis Pasteur, a French biologist, microbiologist, and chemist, renowned for his discoveries of the principles of vaccination, microbial fermentation, and pasteurization, said, *"Chance favors the prepared mind,"* when he discovered the vaccine for chicken cholera while accidentally using an old and forgotten bacterial culture for inoculating fowl only to find that the fowl became ill but did not die. This statement has stayed with me for a long time. I had the privilege of portray-

ing one of Louis Pasteur's students in the 1977 TV film *Louis Pasteur* directed by Igor Ciel, my film professor.

You will try to figure out your own way around filmmaking without realizing that some of your "discoveries" have already been discovered. You can go back and look at the history of cinema or at the work of others and see how our predecessors intuitively solved their problems. Just look at years of intuitive filmmaking and realize that there are some very simple principles. You can attempt filmmaking intuitively by wandering around and seeing where you get to, but with the "maps" I will teach you, you can plan a route that you know in advance will make some sort of sense. But I have to warn you, they might make an O.K. director good, but they won't make a good director great. I have borrowed that idea from the composer and music theorist Dmitri Tymoczko and largely adapted it to film. *"I don't want to sell maps as the royal road to composition,"* he advises. *"They don't substitute for the hard work of learning how to move notes around. But they can help show when a new idea is promising and when it will probably lead to a dead end."*

I am not the first director in the world, and I certainly will not be the last one who came to the realization – after having had a long and substantial career as a director of produced fictional feature films inside the studio system and in independent films – that it wasn't until I started teaching that I truly began to understand my own directing process. Also, I found that along with my love and aptitude for teaching others, teaching deepened my directing. I found passion in sharing the knowledge and insights gained from my personal journey. Harvard's first tenured black law professor, Derrick Bell, once said about his major effort in teaching *"(…) they (students) should be ready and able to take risks and make sacrifices for the things they believe in, and their real success in life will come from making those sacrifices and taking those risks, regardless of outcome."*

With this quote, I am not opposing my previous declaration regarding learning; I just want to introduce the concept of learning through practice and explore the concept of effective practice in developing new directing skills. In this book, you will find a lot of practical exercises that are aimed at helping you to master some important directorial concepts. These concepts will not just provide you with a toolbox; you will also learn how to use individual tools from that toolbox. I am going to teach you how to use them in just a moment. Thereafter, I want you to respond to them either by adopting them or very consciously rejecting them for some reason.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The landscape of film is rapidly changing – this book can be a "directing-altering book," since it provides high-quality learning resources that encourage and challenge film enthusiasts, aspiring directors, film students, and professionals to break through to new levels of excellence and impact in their film directing, television directing, and new media directing.

The directorial concepts introduced and presented in this book, along with the practical exercises, provide a foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge that any person can learn and apply. The goal of this book is to teach specific directorial skills through specific directorial concepts and specific directing exercises, and to teach, develop, and evolve film enthusiasts', film students', and cineastes' narrative filmmaking skills and visual storytelling abilities, to educate and train them to make professional films of a high artistic level and to develop their artistic talents and film craft skills related to directing. After studying all directorial concepts covered in this book, readers will be able to execute their vision with clarity and decisiveness.

The forms and methods of teaching the art and craft of directing are still changing, but not the basic principle. The method of teaching is based on the knowledge that the best way to learn how to make a film, TV show, or new media product is to go through the entire creative process of writing, shooting, and editing your own project. This principle is applied to the structure of the book with an emphasis on blending the theoretical and the practical aspects of filmmaking. A huge emphasis is put on directing with conceptual approaches and methodological practices, while still maintaining an open door for instincts, intuitions, improvisation, and subconscious decision making.

What makes this book stand out is that it covers a set of clearly defined directorial concepts universal to all filmmakers. Methodology and visual strategy for rendering a scene based on a character's perspective is one outstanding feature of this book. When a director conceptualizes a scene, he has to give it precision and clarity. Critical director's choices discussed in the book make this book stand out. This book also offers other unique features that have not yet been covered in a single published book on directing, which makes this book stand out from existing texts:

- Psycho-physiological regularities in left-right/right-left orientation transferred to a shot design. How directors can manipulate the viewer's perception of a character and of the journey they are on using screen direction.

- Methodology and visual strategy for rendering a scene based on character perspective.
- Directorial concept of emotional manipulation.
- Demystifying the 180-degree rule.

The Target Readers

This book is designed for everyone from beginners to graduate-level film students. It shows readers how to unlock the full potential of their creativity using shot design, as well as the psychological effects of shot design. Film educators can use this book as a primary source in directing classes, a resource I've often wished I had throughout my years as a film and television professor.

- **Novices and Film Enthusiasts** without any formal film training, who want to make films and videos accessible to the public via the Internet on diverse video-sharing film platforms, virtual galleries and digital archives, and private websites.

  - This book assumes the reader has no knowledge of the field; therefore, basic concepts and terminology are introduced.

  - Novices will learn how to skillfully and creatively use the expressive tools and means of the film medium as well as how to design shots in a way that effectively develops and carries out their vision.

- **Aspiring Directors and Young filmmakers** who want to make professional shorts and then showcase them on mobile devices for film industry representatives who are looking for new talents.

  - This book encourages learning by doing.

  - Aspiring directors are faced with tackling how to develop the vision for a film and how to carry out that vision.

- **Undergraduate Students** who want to learn how to make films and afterward are looking for a chance to break into the industry.

  - Since the core of the book presents the methodology for translating a vision to the screen, it teaches students from the very beginning of their careers to be precise and well organized in their creative process.

  - Students develop narrative filmmaking skills and visual storytelling abilities.

- Students integrate theoretical and practical knowledge with hands-on experience.

- Students learn basic blocking, staging methods and principles, staging style, and staging pattern.

- Students learn how to design a film scene by integrating and implementing the newly acquired theoretical knowledge and directing skills related to the aesthetics of the shot.

- Students learn to make critical choices, which include the mood and tone of the scene, character perspective, and the director's choices in designing a shot.

- Students learn how to creatively master the relation of the shot to the emotional meaning of the situation.

- Students learn how to translate the inner feelings, motivations, and insights of their characters into filmable situations.

- **Graduate Students**

  - The book presents a focused approach to film directing and therefore is an invaluable contribution to their theoretical and practical growth.

  - Students continue in examining all aspects of director's art and craft through theory and hands-on work.

  - Students evolve their ability to interpret a script, choose every element within the frame, shape the actor's performance within a shot, and develop overall visual storytelling skills.

  - Students evolve their ability to visualize the inner state of mind of a character.

  - Students learn how to control the design of the shot and how to fashion each visual element to create a strong emotional and psychological connection with the viewer.

  - Students learn how to efficiently use their deep knowledge of modeling character perspective for the sake of engaging the audience with the events and emotions in a scene.

  - Students are encouraged to discover their own view of the world around them and then taught how to interpret it. On this basis, each student can find his/her own special, solitary and inimitable artistic expression from which they can create their own unique directing style.

- Students will discover that breaking the rules can be a very creative way to achieve excellent results.

- Students learn how their own temperament, emotionality, and mannerisms can impact the vision, abstraction, and interpretation of their films.

- **Professional Filmmakers and Cineastes** associated professionally with filmmaking.

  - No matter how skilled a director may be, no matter if he/she has been directing for many years or just for the first time, he/she will always face the same problem: how to conceive a vision, develop that vision, and execute it. This book will help them to rationalize this largely intuitive process, expand their creative capacity, and speed up the process of making critical directorial decisions.
    The book presents a focused approach to film directing and therefore is a vital contribution to a filmmaker's consistent theoretical and practical growth.

- **Film Educators**

  - The way the material is organized, the book can be used as an invaluable source for teaching directing classes based on the quarterly system, semester system, or one-year system.

  - Since the book contains many handouts for practical exercises, film educators can use them in classes and adapt them to their own teaching methods.

  - Practical guidance in the planning, execution, and implementation of the theory-based directorial concepts makes this book very hands on.

  - Other pedagogical features in the book include: floor plans, tests, quiz, a scene from a screenplay, examples of written homework of students on the given topics, the assessment assignment, and students' self-assessment, which is a written analysis on what students have learned or discovered from all the practical exercises and assignments that they found valuable and can apply to their future work.

Exploring original and unique ways of the art of storytelling, as well as examining my own experience verifying and evaluating alternative methods for solving dilemmas creatively within the films I have directed, is the very essence of this

book. Bias is an inclination to present and hold a partial perspective. Because I wanted to postulate more generalized directing concepts related to film and television directing, which are not just derived from my directing experience, and therefore they can generally be applied all over the board, I have chosen not to include too many examples from films I directed. Referring to my own films would make me feel self-centred, even self-obsessed, it would make me feel that I am bragging about myself, and don't credit others around. Later in the book, I have a quote from the Polish film director Andrzej Wajda *(Man of Iron)*, which comprises my whole philosophy implemented in the book: *"There should be less lecturing by directors on how they made their own films and more practical hands-on experience offered to students. How I made my films is unimportant to young film-makers."* I am using quotes from great filmmakers or from film theorists and film historians after postulating specific directorial concepts, in order to add credibility, sort of "universal" gravity to those directorial concepts postulated by myself. Something like reassuring the readers that those concepts are not composed from a limited and contingent perspective, and they haven't been invented by me and that they have no just limited application to my films, and they have been here for a pretty long time, but nobody put them in concise statements/definitions.

PAGES MISSING

FROM THIS FREE SAMPLE

PHOTO ALBUM

1. Lubomir Kocka, Director

2. The 37th Student Academy Awards, 2010, Samuel Goldwyn Theater, Saturday, June 12, 2010. Narrative Bronze Medal, *The Lunch Box* by Lubomir Kocka, Jr.

3. Lubomir Kocka, Director with his parents and older brother

On the set of TV Series *Mountain Rangers*, directed by Lubomir Kocka

On the set of TV miniseries *The Goblin,* directed by Lubomir Kocka

On the set of film *The Bridge*, directed by Lubomir Kocka

Aphrodite Film Posters

The Goblin Posters

The Bridge Film Poster

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lubomir Kocka (Slovak pronunciation: ˈʎubɔˌmiːr Kɔt͡ska), born in Žilina, Slovakia, is a Slovak-American director, screenwriter, professor, and producer. His films include: *Mountain Rangers* (Horská služba), *The Goblin* (Škriatok), *Aphrodite* (Afrodita), *The Bridge* (Most), *From Morning till Dawn* (Od rána do úsvitu), and *Fallacies of our Traditional Morale* (Omyly tradičnej morálky).

He graduated from the University of Muse and Dramatic Arts, Film and Television Department, Czechoslovakia, with a specialization in film and television directing. The school, along with the famous Film Academy FAMU in Prague, Czech Republic, educates highly professional filmmakers. He has a substantial career as a film and television director of produced fictional feature films – both inside the studio system and with independent films. He has directed nine feature films, 13 television dramas, and seven TV series and miniseries. His productions have been aired globally.

He has won numerous awards from international film and television festivals around the world: the Best Director Award for the film *How Julia Saved the Riddle Kingdom* and for *Aphrodite*, awarded by The Prize of Children Jury for the film. He was a director of many films chosen to be part of the official selections at international film and television festivals including Cannes, France; Monte Carlo, Monaco; Prix Italia, Italy; Reims, France; Golden Chest Plovdiv, Bulgaria; Varna, Bulgaria; Munich, Germany; Prix Danube Bratislava, Slovakia.

Aside from directing, he is also an author and co-author of several feature-length screenplays that went on to be produced. He produced Lubomir Kocka Jr.'s film entitled *The Lunch Box*, which was named a bronze medal winner in the narrative category for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science's 37th Annual Student Academy Awards competition (2010).

In addition to his numerous directing credits, he is also an acclaimed film educator, with 17 years of teaching experience at the university level in Europe (Czechoslovakia and France) and 15 years in the USA at SCAD – altogether, 32 years of college teaching experience. Currently, he is based in Savannah, Georgia, USA, at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) as a Professor of Film and Television, where he has taught since 2002.

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