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Special Report

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Technique and Technology, Art and Food in Motion Picture Production Worldwide

ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance



Rodrigo Prieto ASC, AMC

Photo: Jeff Berlin

ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance: SPR



ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance (SPR) lenses are a new set of 7 lenses that artistically emphasize ghosting (flares) and are consistent across the entire set. They are based on Supreme Primes with a warmer color tone. They are not simply the same lenses with the coatings removed. There is no loss of light and no uncontrolled “white-out.” Instead, Radiance lenses have newly formulated T* Blue coatings. While there are 13 focal lengths in a set of Supremes, a Radiance set consists of 7, from 21mm to 100mm, all T1.5. There will be limited production runs. So, be sure to order early.

Lens	Aperture	Close focus	Front Diameter	Length	Weight	Image Diagonal	Focus Barrel Rotation
21 mm	T1.5-T22	0.35 m / 14"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.5 kg / 3.3 lb	46.3 mm	300°
25 mm	T1.5-T22	0.26 m / 10"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.42 kg / 3.13 lb	46.3 mm	300°
29 mm	T1.5-T22	0.33 m / 13"	95 mm	121 mm / 4.8"	1.61 kg / 3.55 lb	46.3 mm	300°
35 mm	T1.5-T22	0.32 m / 13"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.40 kg / 3.09 lb	46.3 mm	300°
50 mm	T1.5-T22	0.45 m / 18"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.22 kg / 2.69 lb	46.3 mm	300°
85 mm	T1.5-T22	0.84 m / 2'9"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.42 kg / 3.13 lb	46.3 mm	300°
100 mm	T1.5-T22	1.1 m / 3'9"	95 mm	119 mm / 4.7"	1.7 kg / 3.74 lb	46.3 mm	300°



ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance



Above: Benjamin Hagen, Marketing Project Leader at ZEISS headquarters in Oberkochen, taken with 50mm SPR (Supreme Prime Radiance.)
Below: Ben Hagen; Christophe Casenave, Product Manager and Arato Ogura, ZEISS Cine Manager for Asia & Oceania, taken with 29mm SPR.





Christophe Casenave taken with 100mm SPR on Sony a9.

Welcome to ZEISS headquarters in Oberkochen. We are talking with Christophe Casenave, Product Manager and Head of Sales for ZEISS Cinema Lenses and Dr. Benjamin Völker, ZEISS Optical Designer. The last time we spoke with Benjamin, he was busy removing ghosts and flares in the months leading up to the introduction of ZEISS Supreme Primes in June 2018. I called him Dr. Ghost Buster. He preferred Dr. Stray Light. This time, September 2019, he was busy introducing ghosts and flares into for a new series of lenses: ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance. I now call him Dr. Ghost Provoker. Quick review: a ghost is a reflection between optical surfaces that shows up on the image. Flare is stray light on mechanical parts, as in internal barrel flare. We'll get back to all that in a few minutes.

Jon Fauer: How did the concept for ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance lenses begin?

Christophe Casenave: It goes back more than 7 years, when I first joined ZEISS. During that entire time, I always heard the same thing. Cinematographers and rental houses said, "Your lenses are superb but they lack character." It was a constant barrage about this vague description of character. Then, when we introduced Supremes, some users said, "You are going in the right direction. They have a newfound character. They have a nice, gentle sharpness. You don't need to de-tune them. But there's something still missing. How do we flare them when we want to? Please give us even more flares (ghosts)."

Jon: What was your mandate, Benjamin...Dr. Ghost? What did was described as the things to do for these lenses?

Dr. Benjamin Völker: We had just finished working on the Supreme primes in April 2018. I remember Christophe came to me after he showed them to some rental houses and they asked for more ghosts.

Christophe: The same lenses, but with a bit more flare or ghosting. I thought we could do the same thing that we did in the past. Just put some uncoated surfaces on the front or rear element and we'll have a flare set.

Benjamin: But I didn't agree with that. From my perspective, one of worst things you can do in a situation like this is a flare set. First of all, when you're confined to certain elements—front or rear—that you change, the shape of the ghost is fixed. And if you're trying to uncoat the glass, the ghosts would be white. It will destroy your contrast and never truly achieve the results you want. It's completely uncontrollable. You lose not only contrast but you also lose light. We had just finished designing excellent T1.5 Supremes. To then omit coatings on a few elements would result in losing a lot of light and all that nice contrast.

Christophe: So he didn't want to do this. This is an important thing. He refused. What did we do then?

Benjamin: I heard there was a demand for vintage lenses. And I have to admit, I watch Netflix very often, like every evening. There are a number of productions that really use flares and ghosts heavily. I remember the new season of "Lost in Space" and several others. So, I was curious if we could do it in another way.

“Provoking the Ghosts”



Benjamin Völker (Dr. Ghost) taken with 29mm SPR on Sony a9.

Not the standard way by just omitting the coating. Most of all, I wanted to introduce ghosts in controllable shapes and colors and avoid the typical white haze and loss of light that results from omitting the coatings. Here in Oberkochen, we don't have vintage lenses that are interesting to DPs. So, we came up with the idea of visiting rental houses in Paris and Hollywood.

Christophe: We flew to Los Angeles two days before Cine Gear. Keslow Camera kindly hosted us behind closed doors. They set up a big table with a huge inventory of all kinds of lenses. We discussed characteristics and they explained which were popular and why.

Benjamin: I knew that there was demand for certain lenses, but as a designer, I didn't exactly know why. These were the questions we asked ourselves as we tested around 25 different lenses. They included K35, Baltar, Super Baltar Canon FD, Kowa anamorphic, Kowa spherical, ZEISS Super Speeds and a bunch of others. We shot for two 10-hour days. I set up a rig and we panned each lens aimed at light bulbs, LEDs and Neon signs. Ghosting depends a great deal on what light you use, at what position in the picture, how the background is illuminated and at what T-stop the lens is set. I got a feeling of what DPs maybe liked and what they did not like. We talked to DPs and staff working at the rental house. Then we returned back to Oberkochen. Going through all that footage was a very long and tedious process.

Christophe: I'd like to say that Benjamin worked the way a good product manager would work in any industry. Don't ask the customer what they want and you do it. The customer would tell you,

"I want uncoated lenses." No. You ask the customer, "Tell me your problem, tell me what you want to achieve. And we will then work on the answer." Benjamin truly provided something valuable that addresses the needs of the customer. He acted not only as a product manager, but also as an artist. He designed something beautiful.

Jon: How did you do it?

Benjamin: The basic idea we had was to add ghosts—controllable, but not too much. That's really hard to achieve. Getting rid of ghosts completely is easy. Introducing them massively by doing uncoated elements is also easy, no work at all. But to find that certain level takes a lot of effort. And the other thing people always told us was they would prefer a bit of a warmer color rendering. So I tried to find a way to introduce all that at the same time and, of course, not to lose any light (because you lose about 1/3 of a T-Stop for every uncoated surface.)

Jon: Are all the elements treated this way?

Benjamin: No. We identified the surfaces that contribute the most to ghosting. A ghost originates from two surfaces. You change the coating on those two surfaces, but then the surfaces of all the other elements may be affected. The hard thing is to find the exact locations in the lens that are sensitive to the style that you want to add.

Jon: How did you get the color rendition warmer?

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Benjamin: We developed a new T* (T-Star) Blue coating. It's a new idea of introducing a coating into the lens that gives you bluish ghosts and at the same time gives you a warmer color rendering. If you take away blue light from the spectrum and use that for the ghosting, at the same time, your color rendering gets warmer. However, you have to be careful not to introduce a green or magenta color tint. Actually, it's a bit more complicated than that. You are not only taking away the blue light, but you are also taking care of the rest of the spectrum so it is still balanced in such a way that you get a warmer look.

Jon: So if you see blue flares, that generally makes the picture warmer?

Benjamin: Not necessarily. It's a combination of the light absorbed by the glass and the light reflected by the coatings.

Jon: Tell me again why did you not like the idea of flare sets?

Benjamin: It's limited and you can only achieve rather vague shapes in the flares.

Christophe: The Radiance lenses are a first for ZEISS doing something like this. We wanted to change the opinion about ZEISS doing only perfect things. We wanted to make something artistic. So that's why Benjamin had the possibility to exchange any lens elements he wanted, even to coat one surface with one recipe and another surface with another recipe.

Benjamin: Our idea was to find our own style. And it was only possible by having all the freedom that I was given.

Jon: How would you describe the style of these lenses to a DP?

Benjamin: The Supreme Prime Radiance lenses show a controllable blue-colored ghosting that will not destroy your contrast. Less contrast is lost than with a typical flare set. Radiance lenses are more versatile because you can use them throughout an entire production. If you don't want flares, you can just flag the light. You still retain the slightly warmer color. You do not lose light. The maximum apertures of the Supremes and the Radiance are the same, T1.5.

Jon: You and I both like wine analogies. How would you compare the regular Supremes to the Radiance?

Christophe: If we would have done completely uncoated elements, I would say we would have gone to a Saint-Estèphe, or perhaps Saint-Julien, on the left side of the Garonne estuary north of Bordeaux. Quite heavy. But for the Radiance primes, we have a comparison that fits quite well to my preferred wine.

Jon: How convenient.



Christophe: I would say it is a very good Pessac-Léognan, from the northern part of the Graves region. When you go to this side of Bordeaux, the terroir is a mix of sand and gravel of round stones.

Jon (reading aloud) "Famous chateaux in the Pessac-Léognan region include Smith Haut Lafitte, Château Haut-Bailly and Château Haut-Brion (Premier Grand Cru Classé.) Eric Asimov writes in the New York Times, "Fresh and lively, with pretty aromas and flavors of violets, red fruits, spices and minerals." Wine Spectator says, "Lush, rich, glorious and beautifully polished." Robert Parker agrees, "profound and arresting, a firm frame of very finely pixelated tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long and achingly stunning."

Christophe: We all agree. Maybe we'll have one tonight.

Jon: It is ironic that in talking about vintage lenses, we often think of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. But those lenses all had AR coatings. The uncoated lenses date back to the 1930s and earlier and the reason DPs avoided flares was because the image would often go to total white-out.

Benjamin: That was exactly the idea behind developing our new coating that resembles mostly the possibilities you had in the six-



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ties, seventies or eighties.

Christophe: Let's take the ZEISS Super Speeds. They were originally made at a time (1975) where you could only do a single layer coating. That's a reason why they are often called "vintage."

Jon: Or maybe because of their weird triangular bokeh? Super Speeds are now cherished as vintage lenses. I owned a set with my 35BL and in those days they were considered clinical.

Christophe: If you would ask my retired colleague Helmut, he would immediately tell you that those lenses are not vintage. He would say, "Put them on a projection. You see they are very sharp." But now people like them. They are softer at T1.3 or T1.4. But as soon as we stop down to T2.8, they are very sharp and the depth of field helps the focus. These days, people love the Super Speeds. And now, 44 years later, Benjamin has the possibility to play with old style and modern coatings with many more recipes. This is art and technology.

Jon: The Super Speeds were sharp at the focus plane, the eye of the actor. And everything else not in focus fell off a cliff. Very contrasty, rich blacks. Not romantic. So why do we call them vintage now?

Christophe: Well, the mechanics are certainly vintage and that is one of the issues about vintage lenses. The whole lens is vintage. The mechanical parts are old. The focus and iris mechanism are old. They can break on set. Not the Super Speeds, of course. They will not break on set.

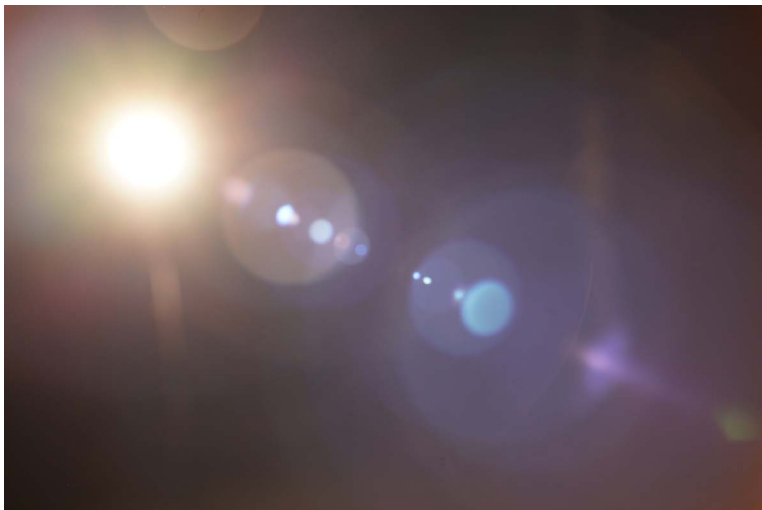
Benjamin: Because they are ZEISS. [laughs]

Christophe: If you look at what's available, there are different choices to add character. Take a vintage lens. Sometimes they are very nice and the ghosts might even be on the same level as Radiance lenses. But you cannot control or match them as well. You have all the drawbacks of vintage mechanical design. Take the Super Speeds. They are really small but they don't have great ergonomics. Or Super Baltars: you never know when you start shooting if at the end of the shoot they will still be working because they are quite old. The K35 are also rather old lenses and unless you rehouse them, it's a risk for the DP. So we wanted to offer DPs a way to bring character to their productions without their having to take a risk.

There's another consideration. A select group of top DPs are confident enough to experiment and not worry about job security on features. And maybe no one will fire them if they mess up a shot



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During assembly, every Radiance Prime is tested for consistency of ghosting to be sure each reflection matches across the entire set.

because a ghost obscures the face of an actor whom the producer has paid 40 million dollars. These are typically the DPs who like to step on the hornets' nests of really sketchy glass. Commercials seem more open to creative abandon. But let's say that the remaining population of cinematographers need to work reliably and consistently and not tempt fate with reshoots. So the way they do it today is to take a reliable favorite, perhaps a Master Prime or Supreme Prime and put the "last mile of character in the image" either in post or with lighting or filters. The images will be nice.

Now, we are presenting a new series of lenses, the Supreme Prime Radiance, where DPs can add character to their images, with consistent and controlled ghosts, without fear of uncontrolled aberrations or controlled retribution from irate producers. That's how the idea came about. How we implemented it is another story. Benjamin will tell you about it because it's something that ZEISS almost never did before in response to what customers told us.

Benjamin: It was really like picking the elements we wanted to ghost and putting a specialty coating on them while adding strong anti-reflective coatings on the surfaces that we didn't want to have ghosts. Furthermore, we treated the Radiance primes as a family. They needed to have very similar ghosting for all focal lengths. That was actually one of the hardest parts of the job: to achieve a comparable level so the ghosting behavior of a 100mm tele lens would be the same as a 21mm wide angle.

Jon: So you had to coat different elements in each lens to keep them consistent?

Benjamin: We had to develop that idea—how many elements in front of the iris, how many in the rear part, where do we position the ghosts exactly? What recipe do we use to get the color rendering to match across the whole family?

Jon: You call them ghosts and we DPs call them flares. We talked about that last year. Please explain it again.

Benjamin: For me, a ghost is a reflection between two optical surfaces that gives you a more or less sharp image of that reflection on the image sensor. Flare for me is more like stray light on mechanical parts like the inside of the lens barrel. I know that we use these words almost interchangeably among DPs and developers and we are not even consistent.

Jon: Last year, when you discussed the Supremes, I called you Dr. Ghost Buster. Now, with the Radiance primes, I think you are the Ghost Whisperer.

Christophe: I would say he's a Ghost Painter. He's an artist. A Ghost Provocateur.

Jon: A Ghost Writer. A Writer with Flair. A Writer of Flares. So why is it that we DPs say that flares or ghosts add character? Is there something else that we are responding to when we say a lens has character? You gentlemen looked at a lot of lenses. What did you discover after your two days at the rental house? What is character?

Benjamin: It is, in some way, a kind of imperfection that you introduce so that your image is not clinically clean and you have to interpret imperfections that add emotion to the image.

Christophe: Let's say I am sitting in the front row of the cinema and I'm watching the images on screen. I don't want to see the same reality that I can see outside the theater. I do not want to see images so perfect that I would bump into the screen if I walked on stage. As a spectator, I think we appreciate everything that helps us consciously or unconsciously to step away from reality. A ghost from the lens is really a part of that disconnect from reality. As soon as I see a ghost, I say it has been painted by someone. It's not part of the reality.

Jon: I'm reminded of Claude's "Seaport" (1644, National Gallery, London.) The sun is setting and the light flares off the water.

Benjamin: You can use ghosts as a stylistic element. If you have a really bright light source and you film it, often that light source clips. You don't really have a perception of how bright it actually is because of the sensor's limitations. But with a ghost, you get a feeling that this light source is really bright.

Jon: I can imagine, as soon as the Radiance go out, customers may ask if they can customize them? Because every DP and every rental house wants to be unique.

Christophe: I think we need to find a very good balance between introducing character and allowing the DP to still have possibilities of bringing additional interest with other elements like using filters. I remember testing the Supremes last year in Paris with

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Samuel Renollet of RVZ and Yves Angelo AFC, SBC. He talked about making his own filters 30 years ago. He kept them in a custom wooden box. “You know you can only do this kind of thing if the lens is sharp enough,” he said. “Otherwise, you can’t really adjust anything.”

I think we can offer a certain level of character you can’t produce by just doing filtering or lighting differently. First we should provoke the ghosts. And then we can use the right lighting, the right filters, to achieve the other looks. I think that was more or less why we did the lenses like this.

Jon: I’m sure you experimented with the Radiance lenses a lot. Can you give us a lesson as to what the different things we can do by shining a light off access, on access, flagging it off, keeping flares out? What are the different possibilities that we have with this set of lenses?

Benjamin: If you want to increase the ghosting, bring the light source to the center. The further you move from center to the edge of frame, or even outside of frame, the ghosting will diminish, but it will not completely vanish. If you’re outside the field of view, there’s an area where you still get a controllable ghosting within the frame. And if you want to get more pronounced ghosting, then begin stopping down. The ghosting will become more structured once you stop down. And it becomes a bit softer when you open the iris up completely.

Jon: It sounds like you put in a lot of work and effort into the Radiance primes.

Christophe: Benjamin told you his side of the story: how he designed the lenses. Now, I will tell my side of the story. For me, it was scary, and I don’t mean Halloween style ghosts. Benjamin was super happy, having a great time designing ghosts. He worked very hard, with very long hours. How many simulations did you do?

Benjamin: Many, many hundreds of hours of simulations.

Christophe: There were hundreds of simulation pictures. And then he would ask me, “Which do you prefer?” We would pick a few. Next, Benjamin would say, “But I can’t guarantee this quite yet, and I’m not sure about the intensity.” We were watching images of ghosts all the time. I would get home in the evening and when I closed my eyes I saw nothing but ghosts. And then the

time came to make choices based on computer simulations. And Benjamin said, “My simulation program is rather good. But perhaps we should purchase a lot of different lens elements and test with real prototypes.”

So we ordered three or four versions of each lens element for each focal length and coated them in different ways. Benjamin had pre-calculated his preferred version but there were many variations. It was like going to the optometrist where they flip various combinations of lenses in front of you. We basically ordered a hell of a lot of glass elements. To be honest, this was damned expensive. Uniquely made glass elements with special coatings took us at least four months. And then some of our favorite choices for some focal lengths turned out not to match others. So we needed to change. It was more than six months of trying, experimenting, deciding and then oops, back to the drawing board because we may have made the wrong decision. It was really something we were not used to. Normally we design the lenses, the simulations are solid, we build the lenses and it’s done.

Benjamin: The point is there’s only so much you can do in simulation. But you cannot describe every possibility in simulation. This was also the first time for me to spend so much time in the lab to actually measure every prototype and try it out under all the different lighting conditions.

Christophe: I would like to mention the fact that we have a whole bunch of lens elements that we never used. More than 500. So if anyone wants, maybe we should sell them. No, but seriously, this was so much fun. We would meet in the basement at ZEISS with flashlights shining in the lenses the way DPs do.

Benjamin: I think it was totally worth it because otherwise we wouldn’t have found that style.

Christophe: This was a very rewarding experience and we look forward to sharing our excitement with cinematographers and customers everywhere.

It was 6 pm. We packed up the Supreme Prime Radiance lenses and cameras into shoulder bags and piled into Christophe’s car for an evening of testing and tasting at the Michelin-starred Ursprung Restaurant. 15 minutes later, we arrived in the charming village of Zang. Chef Widmann and staff were extremely patient as we provoked radiant ghosts upon every dish their tasting menu offered.

ZEISS SPR (NDA) at Ursprung



Photos on the following 4 pages were all taken with ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance wide open at T1.5 .
Below: Arato Ogura provoking the ghosts with his adjustable LED flashlight.





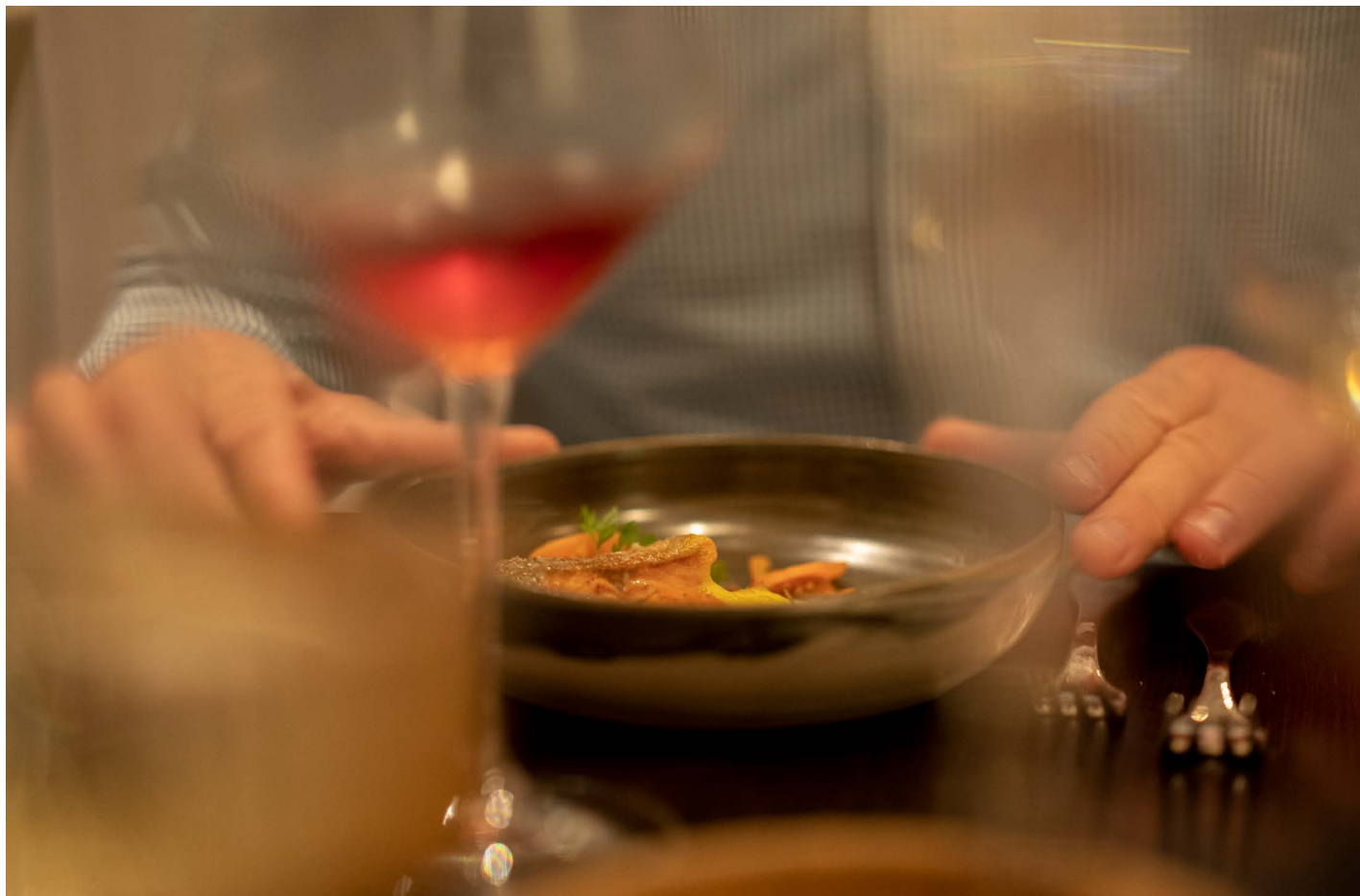
Every detail of the radiant eight-course tasting menu was captured with these secret NDA pre-production Radiances primes: Danube freshwater salmon, tomatoes from the garden, trout with nasturtium, summer beets, venison with corn, apricot with lavender, and apple with walnut pastry.





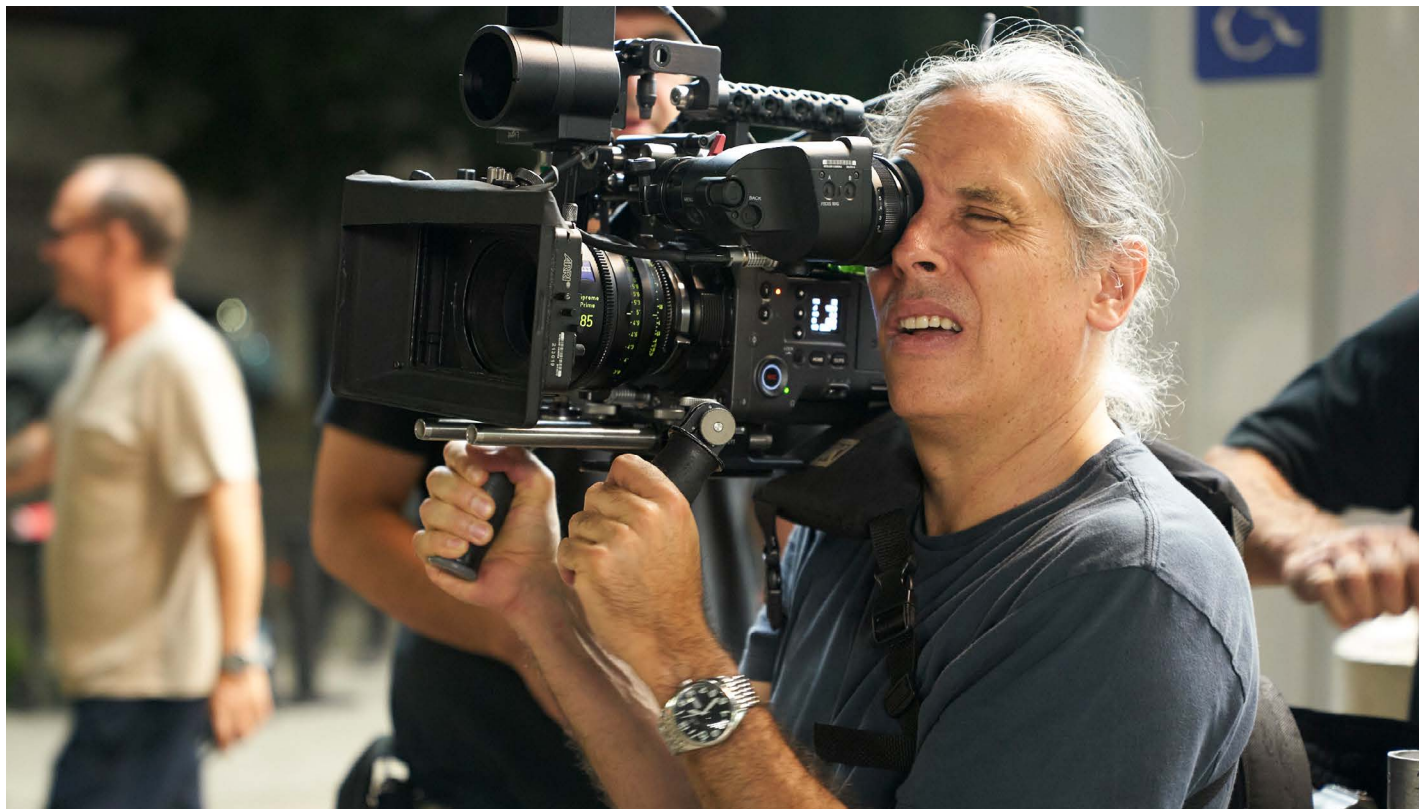
Below: Christophe Casenave compared Radiance to Pessac-Léognan but encouraged us to expand our vocabularies with the vast wine pairing.





Chef/Owner Andreas Widmann is a rising star. He was born nearby in Heidenheim, worked at stellar Atelier in Munich and opened Ursprung in 2015.





JON FAUER: How would you describe the style of the ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiances lenses?

RODRIGO PRIETO: They seemed sharp, but not aggressively so. The flares are not extreme or overwhelming, with a blueish cast to them.

Did you shoot mostly wide open?

Not necessarily. I like to manage depth of field for each shot in order to manage how much of the environment I want to be present. I don't have a rule of thumb about aperture. One thing I like is to be able to use internal NDs and the ISO setting to control the amount of information I want the audience to absorb per shot.

A few words on Full Frame vs. S35—compression, angles, etc?

I enjoy the way a bigger sensor than Super 35 reproduces the angle of view of the lens. When using a wide lens in Full Frame, the distortion is reduced and the vertical and horizontal lines feel closer to what I see with my eye. I think it puts the audience into the scene in a more realistic way while giving the cinematographer a bigger range of options with depth of field. You can use a wide lens and have relatively shallow depth of field, but if you want deeper focus, you can then use ISO or less ND for a smaller aperture on the lens.

Did you like flares better when stopping down or wider open?

I liked the flares better on wider stops. They seemed softer to me.

Which focal lengths did you have?

25, 29, 35, 50, 85 and 100 mm.

When would you ZEISS Radiances and when would you use regular Supremes? Would the script determine one or the other?

I have not used the Supremes. I was asked by ZEISS if I was inter-

ested in shooting a demo for the Radiances lenses. I said I would if I came up with a story that would utilize the characteristics of the lenses and also would be compelling enough for me to direct as well as shoot.

I imagined a man looking at the windows in a prison hallway as he leaves his cell for the last time on his way to the world outside. The sun would glare his eyes as he contemplates his future. I then imagined that the flaring sun could transition into a night scene where the view from a car onto streetlights would flare the lens in a similar rhythm. And that is what inspired the story.

So, this was an instance where the idea for a script was inspired by the characteristics of the optics of a particular type of lenses. I have always considered that as Cinematographers we use the tools at our disposal to elicit sensations and feelings. So, more than making a demo, I thought it was better to show how the characteristics of these lenses could be used as a powerful storytelling device. Because that is what we do as Cinematographers: we tell stories through images.

Why are we so interested in flares these days?

Frankly, I am not a fan of flaring every image. It has become, in my opinion, an overused device. But when it is used with a dramatic intention, like any other stylistic choice, it can be quite effective. When flares are used just because they look cool, the feeling becomes diluted. We all experience glare in our daily lives, which gives us a certain feeling depending on the circumstances. Lens flare allows us to tap into those feelings. I think another reason flares are popular in the advent of digital capture is the desire to counter the inherent sharpness and lack of moving grain in the image. Flares are malleable by essence, because you never know exactly how they will look. So, they do give the pristine digital image a feeling of randomness that I think we respond to as mem-



Rodrigo Prieto ASC, AMC on *R&R* (cont'd)

bers of chaotic Mother Nature.

Where was location? How many shooting days/nights?

I shot one day in an unused jail in Lancaster, CA, and one night around Boyle Heights in East LA. Our hours were very limited due to budgetary constraints. For the prison scenes, I had about 5 hours of shooting time. At the gas station and alley at night, I had about 7 hours.

How did you come up with the story?

The inspiration came from the work my wife Monica Chiapa, who is a Spiritual Psychologist, is doing with two different groups in prisons in California. They are the Compassion Prison Project and the Freedom to Choose Project. These groups focus on encouraging inmates to express their feelings and allowing themselves to be present and vulnerable. I think that hearing her talk about her experiences within prison walls was what made me imagine a story based on a man leaving prison after a long sentence. During the process of writing the script and later casting the short, I spoke with many former inmates and one Corrections Officer in an effort to be as accurate as possible. The stories I heard touched my heart very deeply, and that led to the final script I shot.

The title *R&R* is the acronym prisons use for Receive and Release, which is the area where parolees are let out and incoming inmates are processed.

Did ZEISS ask you to write and shoot scenes that would present these lenses in a certain way or did you come up with it?

They just described the characteristics of the lenses and sent me sample images of the flares of each focal length. But I came up with the story and the shots. They gave me total creative freedom.

The story certainly is helped by the look.

Thanks! It is an example of how you can't really separate the form from the content. In this film they are inextricably part of the whole.

Your focus puller was very good: I assume wide open while you were often handheld.

Hector Rodriguez was not only an excellent focus puller, he also contributed to the story with some of his own experiences growing up around gangs in East LA. The gas station setting was inspired by a situation a good friend of his witnessed. He also loaned us a shirt I liked when I was choosing costumes for one of the characters.

Camera notes?

Sony VENICE at 6K resolution, 1:85 aspect ratio.

Grading? LUTs, Looks?

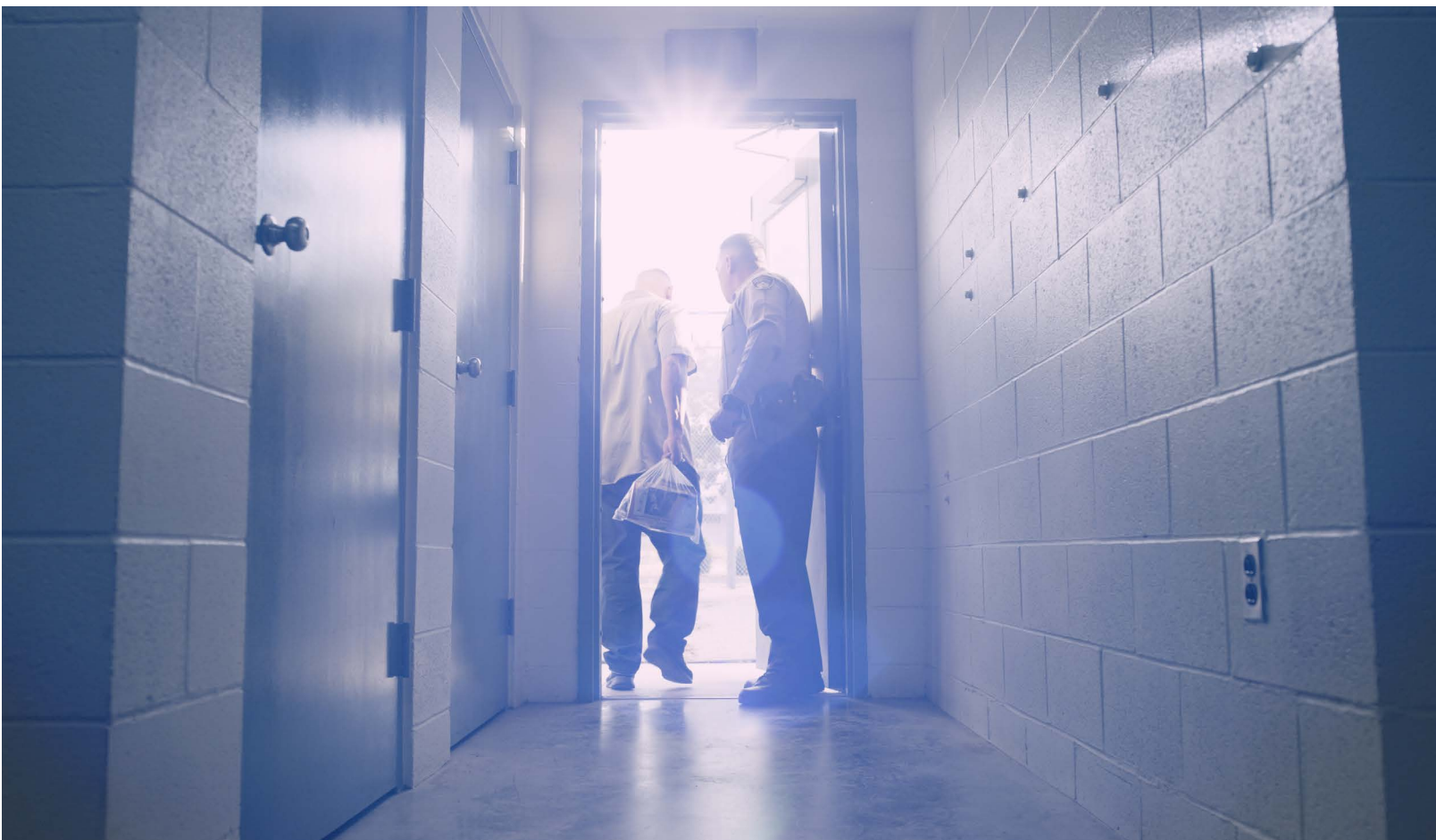
On set I used the Sony Venice REC 709 LUT which has a pleasant, relatively low-contrast and soft color reproduction. I graded the film at Harbor Picture Company in LA with Katie Jordan. We used Harbor's film emulation LUT for the final grading. I approached the grading with a simple philosophy, accepting the response of the raw images to the LUT, and just doing general offsets with points of color and density as in photochemical color grading. Sometimes we would do windows to control certain areas, but only in instances where a white wall was too distracting, for example. I did not do any changes of contrast or color to the flares, allowing them to appear exactly as the lens and sensor responded to them with the LUT applied.

In conclusion?

I am extremely grateful to everyone who participated in this film. It was truly a labor of love. Everyone involved gave 100%, even while no one was making any money. Gaffer Pat Hochi, Key Grip Ryan McGuire, First AC Hector Rodriguez and their teams were all excellent and fully committed. My production team, led by Jen Berry and Little Minx, was up for the task of making my ambitious script possible with limited resources. And the cast was incredible. All ex-cons except for one of the Corrections Officers, who was a real guard who took a day off to do his acting debut.



Production stills by Jeff Berlin



Takuro Ishizaka JSC on *Metamorphosis* with ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance



by Arato Ogura.

On a very hot day in September, about forty crew members gathered at an abandoned brick factory in Honjo, 90 minutes from Tokyo by Shinkansen bullet train. They were there to shoot *Metamorphosis*, a short dance film to demo the new ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance lenses.

The cinematographer was Takuro Ishizaka JSC. His credits include *Zhui bu (Manhunt)*, directed by John Woo; the wandering samurai *Rurôni-Kenshin* films and *Samurai Marathon* (loosely based on a true story about a race that continues to be held annually to this day. The Japan Times calls it “A sprint through Japanese history.” The Hollywood Reporter notes, “There were times it was difficult to catch a breath.”)

Speaking of breath, *Metamorphosis* was breathtakingly edited and directed by Aki Mizutani. Not coincidentally, she compares her editing style to “a comfortable flow of dance.” Ms. Mizutani was honored recently among “40 Under 40” Leaders in Advertising and Marketing by Campaign Asia-Pacific.

For *Metamorphosis*, Aki and Takuro conceived a short film starring dancer KAKA that would benefit from the Radiance lenses under various lighting conditions and setups.

Takuro Ishizaka worked in many departments as camera assistant, camera operator, gaffer, and now DP. He has always been interested in new technology and never hesitated to try out new camera and lighting equipment on his projects. A year ago, he worked with ZEISS Supreme Primes on several feature film projects. He liked the clean and gentle look on ARRI, Sony and RED

Director Aki Mizutani at left. DP Takuro Ishizaka second from right.
Photo: Arato Ogura.

cameras so much that he became the first DP in Japan to personally own a set of Supremes.

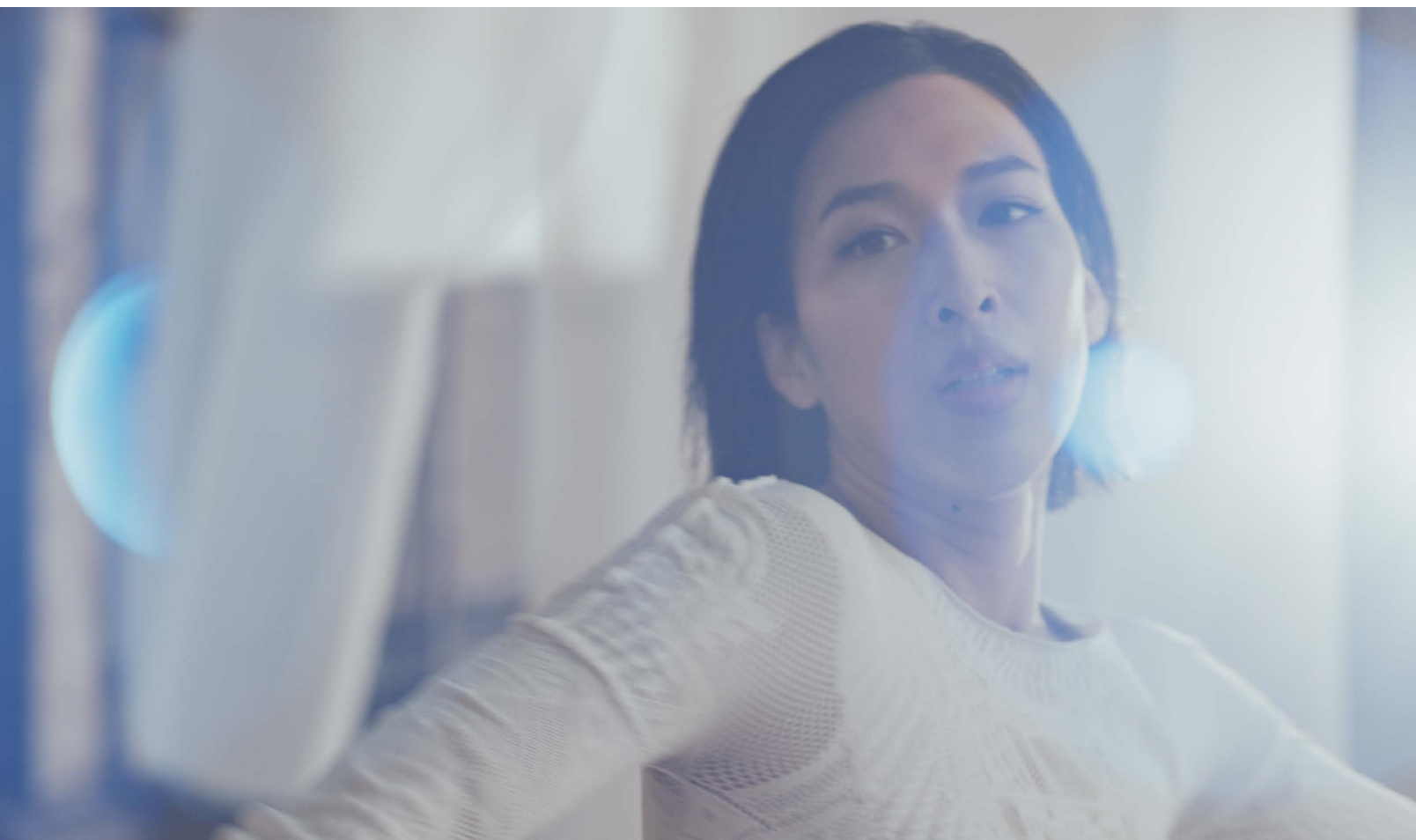
So it was quite natural for ZEISS to approach him to shoot a demo film for the new Radiance. It was especially interesting because Takuro could immediately compare and identify the differences in look between the standard Supremes and the Radiance models. Takuro commented, “The colors that I get from Supreme Prime Radiance lenses are slightly warmer than standard Supremes, but still match nicely together.”

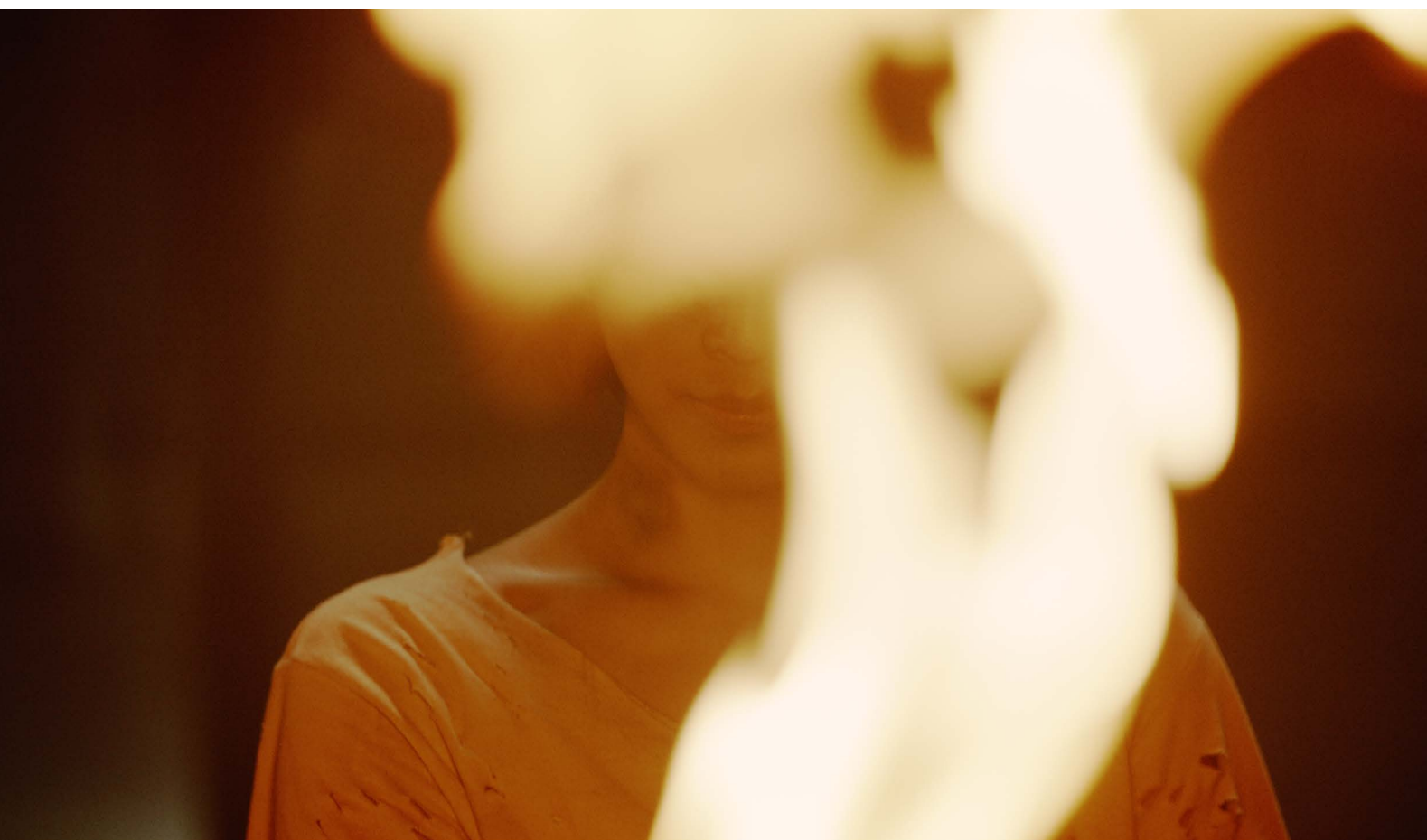
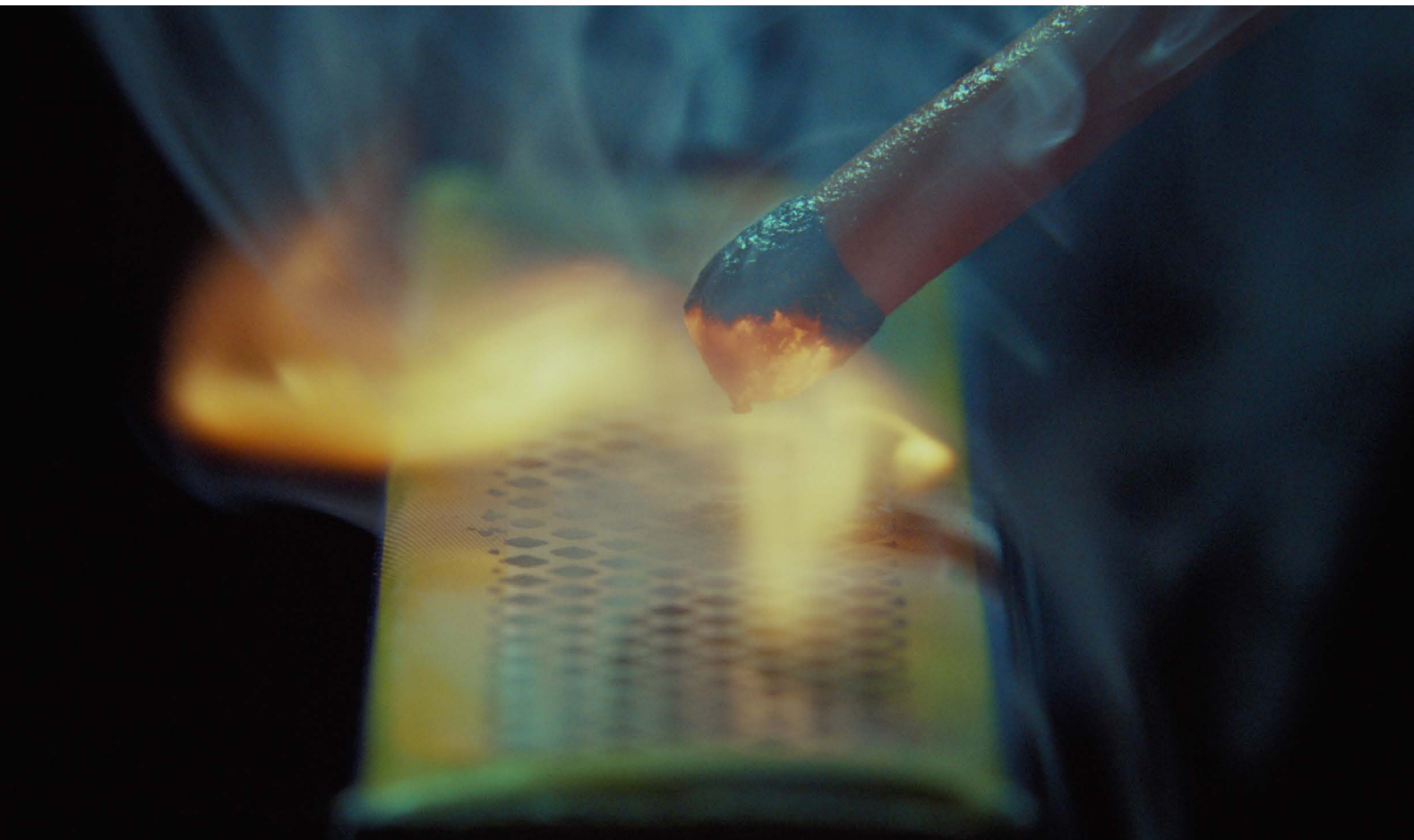
Two technical notes: warmer lenses render cooler flares. Furthermore, the more you stop down the iris, the more defocused the flares become.

Takuro continued, “Initially, I thought only the wider lenses would provide great flares, but I found that even on tight lenses the flares maintain nice shapes. The charm I see in Radiance lenses is that they have nicely rolled-off focus compared to Supremes—but not too soft. It’s just the right amount, and you don’t need any optical filtration to achieve this look. I liked this slightly smoother characteristic, not only the flares.”

Aki Mizutani (Director, Editor)
www.freethebid.com/editors/aki-mizutani/

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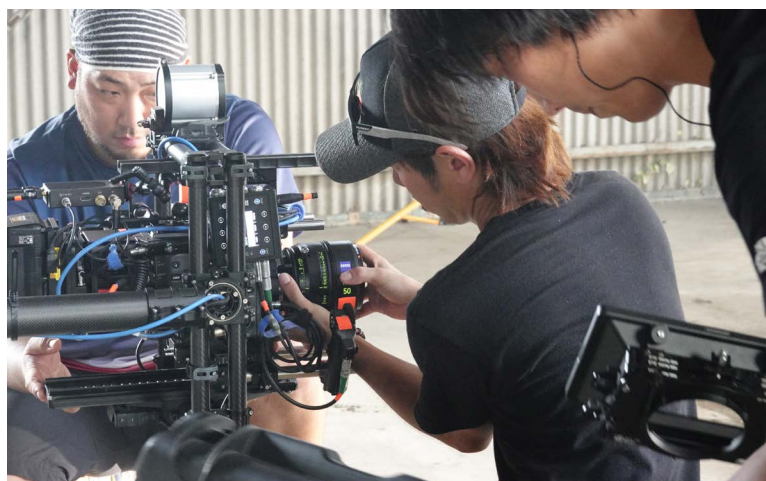




Metamorphosis Production Stills



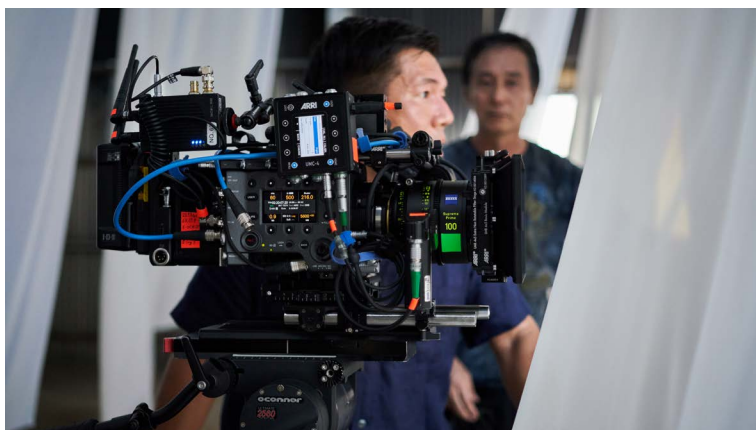
Photos by Arato Ogura.



Metamorphosis Production Stills



Photos by Kozo Takahashi.



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ZEISS Supreme Prime Radiance Special Report
by Jon Fauer

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