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www.fdtimes.com

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FILM AND DIGITAL TIMES

Art, Technique and Technology in Motion Picture Production Worldwide

Cinema Line
FX5

SONY

CLIPS

PLUG IN
POWER

SONY FX5 Special Report

A

FF

5.8

1/250

Fixed



Cinema Line
FX5

SONY

CLIPS

4

FALSE COLOR

MENU

BACK

FULL MENU

FPS
Fixed 24.00

EI 640

Shutter
180.0

TCG 00:02:28:04

FF 5K 3:2

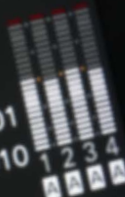
X-OCN LT

Stby

82min

24.00fps 59%

Reel A001
Shot C010



F2.8
Iris

s709
Look

5600 ±00
WB: A



Cinema Line
FX5

SONY

CLIPS

4

MENU

BACK

FALSE COLOR

FULL MENU

The surface of the camera may get warm when the power is on for a long time - this is normal.
La surface de l'appareil peut chauffer lorsqu'il reste allumé.

Shooting
Project
Paint/Look
TC/Media
Monitoring
Audio
Clip Operations
Technical

Project
Back
Base Setting
Rec Format
Anamo. De-Squeeze
HDR Setting
Simul Rec
Proxy Rec
Interval Rec

Sony FX5



5K 16.6 Megapixel
(4992 x 3328)
Fully Stacked Sensor:
Full Frame,
Full Height,
Full Width,
Open Gate,
1.5:1 (3:2),
(available only when
recording in X-OCN).

Improved In-Body
Image Stabilization
(IBIS). A Sony Service
Center can lock it off
mechanically; but this
is irreversible.

This is the latest addition to Sony's Cinema Line. With VENICE 2 as the flagship at the top, FX2 and FX30 at the entry-level, the new FX5 sits between FX3 and FX6. It is not a replacement for FX3. This is the camera to get if only for 3 things: higher resolution, internal X-OCN LT/ C1/C2 RAW, and a sharp, detachable, articulating Electronic Viewfinder. And so much more.

Actual Size:
5.3" wide x 3.11" high x 3.39" deep
/ 132 x 79 x 86 mm



Navigate with VENICE style BACK button
and jog dial.

Large 3.5" 4-axis articulating
rear monitor.

VENICE style "Big 6" display

Push the MENU button for
2 seconds to access the full
"deep dive" settings.

New HOME Button to cycle
between Big 6 and Live View.

New USER Menu Button
for additional "Little 6"
user-definable quick access
settings.

Sony FX5

Detachable OLED EVF with 7.07 million dots, sharp enough to focus, even without peaking, tilts from horizontal to vertical.



Port hatches are hinged—not floppy rubber covers

The rear monitor and EVF show status information in a black surround frame. You can cycle between this and full screen live view, easily mapped to one of the 6 user buttons or from the “Little 6” USER menu

The information in the left column says it all:

- FF
- 5K
- 3:2
- 1.8x (anamorphic desqueeze)
- 800 BASE ISO
- X-OCN LT — internal 16-bit linear recording.
- 24mm lens
- Manual Focus
- Focus distance: 24 ft



Introduction to FX5 in Yokohama



Yokohama waterfront. Sony City Minato Mirai is a short walk from here.

A rainbow arcing, an auspicious beginning, Yokohama Bay.

Admittedly, my Haiku is no match for Matsuo Bashō, the most famous poet during the Edo era. He came from a family of ninja. Composing 5-7-5 syllable Haiku came later.

I was feeling like a jetlagged ninja or maybe a kagemusha (shadow warrior) on the short walk to an undisclosed location and “sign-NDA-first” conference room within Sony’s Imaging Division headquarters. Seeing new Sony cameras was like an episodic streaming series. Episode 1 premiered last year with something flexible: RIALTO Mini. Episode 2 rolled out in June

with something very big: RIALTO 65. And now, here we are on Episode 3 with something extremely small and incredibly nimble.

Nobutatsu (Nobu) Takahashi, Senior General Manager of Sony’s New Content Creation Business Unit Cinema Line Division, likes to present things with a flourish. Planners, designers and engineers dramatically whisked the cover concealing their latest surprise on a long table. Nobu said, “This is what you cinematographers have been requesting after the FX3 came out. I hope you like this pre-production FX5 model. It is positioned above the FX3 which we’ll continue to make. The FX5 will be the newest camera in our Cinema Line, coming this August.”

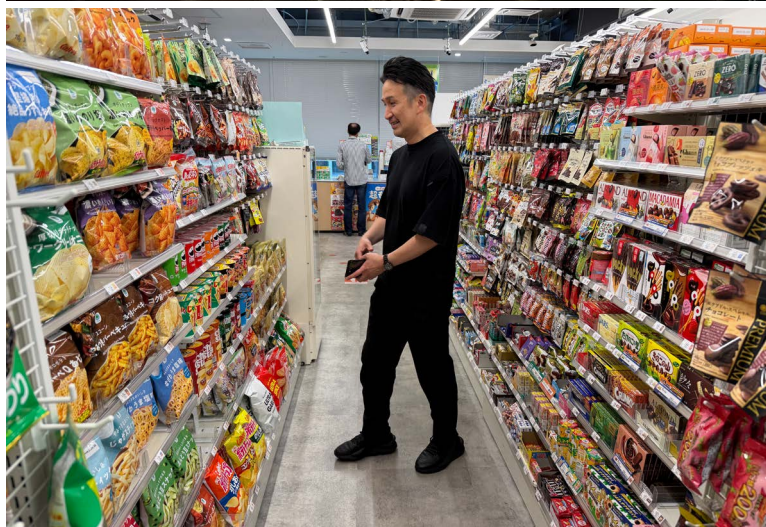
FX5 with a Flourish



Ryoji Yamada (Product Planning for FX5); Nobutatsu (Nobu) Takahashi, (Senior General Manager of Sony's New Content Creation Business Unit Cinema Line Division); Kohei Ohashi (Project Leader); Takuro Ema (Head of Cinema Line Product Planning). Photo: Keita Yasui.



Yokohama to Kohda with FX5



In the conveniently located convenience store within Sony HQ's building and ever mindful of Film and Delicious Times's reputation in Japan for fine dining, Nobu Takahashi (above) suggests that we stock up on snacks for a journey the next day. We will test a pre-production FX5, covered in logo-blocking black tape, ninja-style incognito mode.

I need not have worried about snacks. That evening, under the pretense of learning how to use the camera, a team of planners and engineers has gathered at Daitokuju, a famous 50-year old Yakiniiku restaurant in Minato Mirai, located near Sony HQ and the train station.

At this point, it's a camera that cannot be named. But, having a bad habit of naming names, I suggest Treviso. "This new camera is like a miniature VENICE," I blurt out after a beer too many. "Treviso has canals, medieval palaces and is like a miniature Venice." Silence in the private room suggests the camera already has a name and it's probably engraved, laser-etched or already in production.

Meanwhile, back at the delicious Daitokuju in-table grill, we feast on Wagyu, Kobe and more cuts of Japanese beef than I ever thought possible. It melts in the mouth with a subtle sweetness, rich in umami, quite unlike anything anywhere else.

yakiniiku.daitokuju.com



The next morning, Nobu, Keita Yasui, Koji Morioka and I are heading south on the Shinkansen, destination Kohda to see the manufacturing of G Master lenses and VENICE Extension System Mini — and to feast on chicken wings in Nagoya for dinner.

Yokohama to Nagoya and Kohda with FX5



FX5 Frames at 283 km/h and 120 fps



In Jean-Luc Godard's wrote the famous line in his 1960 film *Le Petit Soldat*: "The cinema is truth 24 times a second,"

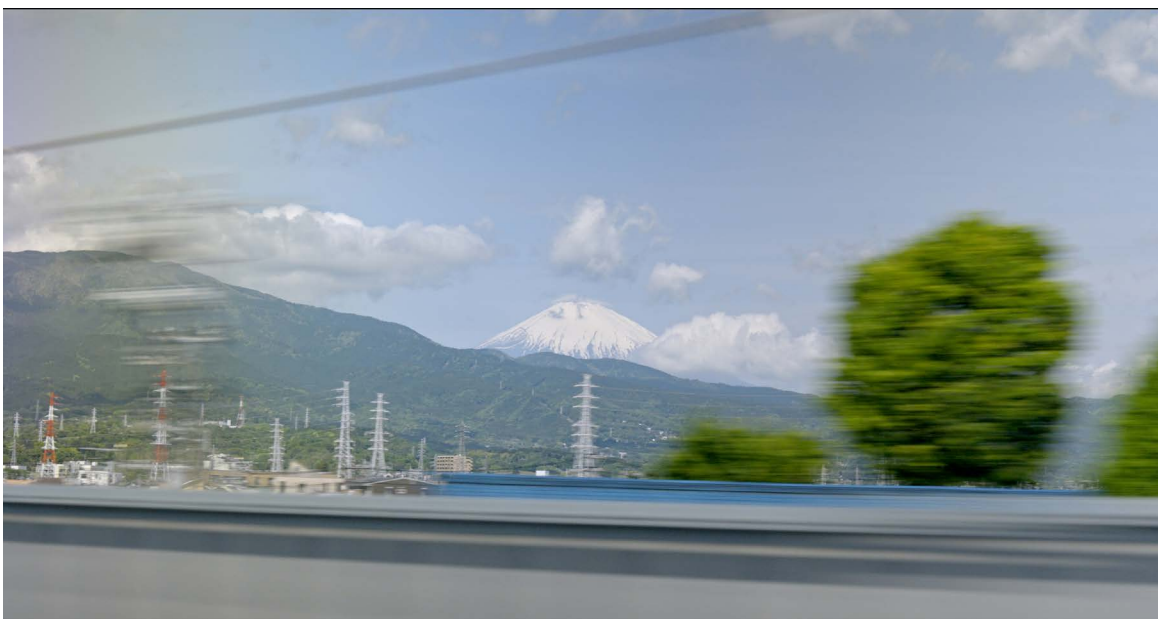
Here we are enroute from Yokohama to Nagoya on the Nozomi Shinkansen.

We'll connect to a local train and then a van to reach the Sony factory in Kohda, but that destination is another story to be continued at a later time.

The truth today is in testing a pre-production FX5 camera traveling at 283 km/h and recording at 24 frames a second.

Actually, base frame rate is 23.98 because we want flow motion up to 120 fps. We're in 4.5K 16:9 Full Frame cropped Imager Mode, 3840 x 2160 XAVC S-I recording in Flexible ISO Shooting Mode and S-Gamut3.Cine/SLog3 at 240 Mbps.

Keita Yasui, at left, has an entire camera truckload of equipment in two backpacks: FX5, Sony G Master lenses, Leitz Hektor prime lenses in E-mount, Accsoon video transmitter and iPad monitor/receiver, small LED lights for restaurant interiors (see next page) and a Sony a7 V for BTS.



Bottom left: IBIS image stabilization is turned on along with Autofocus that locks on to Mount Fuji. Foreground objects are a blur but the object of our attention, the 3,776 meter high summit, is sharp and clear.

Framegrabs exported from original footage using DaVinci Resolve Studio.

FX5 Frames at Sekai no Yamachan



Film and Delicious Times is testing the FX5 at world-famous Sekai no Yamachan next to Nagoya Shinkansen Station.

This Izakaya is one of Nobu Takahashi's favorites.

At left, he demonstrates the proper technique of consuming spicy, peppered, fried Ma-boroshi no Tebasaki (Phantom Chicken Wings).

The menu explains:

"Nagoya's famous fried chicken wings, now one of its most popular foods, started out as an idea at a restaurant way back in 1965, which had piles and piles of discarded chicken wings that nobody thought to use. These were reimaged into a mouthwatering new dish, which made it to the restaurant's menu and thus the wings were born.

"And then on 14 June 1981, Shigeo Yamamoto opened his own little 13-seat, 13-square meter stall in Shinsakae, Nagoya selling the very same amazing wings you get to eat today.

"Yamachan's fried chicken wings became known for their spicy kick, seasoned with powerful pepper unlike the chicken wings at other shops.

"The secrets to Yamachan's famous chicken wings are in the special sauces and the mouth-tingling spices. The explosion of flavor you get from these wings is the result of all kinds of special techniques and ingredients."

All those spices make you quite thirsty. The beer was flowing. Images became hazy or is it just a vintage flare on Koji Morioki, bottom left? I don't even remember how we got back to Yokohama that evening.

yamachan.co.jp/english

FX5 Frames in 5K 3:2 FF Open Gate X-OCN LT





Frames
exported
from original
footage using
DaVinci
Resolve
Studio:
(Color > Stills
> Grab Still).

Sony FX5 Front, Top & Rear

Front Dial
Default is Iris
control



Sony E-mount
18 mm Flange Focal
Depth. 46.1 mm Inside
Diameter. 10x pogo pin
contacts at 6 o'clock
position for Sony protocol
lens metadata and power.

USER Button 6: Instead
of default RECORD, I
mapped it to LUT On/Off

User Button 1: IRIS control. I mapped it to Display Border Info On/Off.

User Button 2: WHITE BALANCE. I mapped it to AUTO WHITE BALANCE.

EVF multipin connector

2x 1/4-20 threads to
secure EVF or XLR Top
Handle .

XLR Audio multi-
pin connector is in
forward position of
Hot Shoe. Audio Top
Handle slides in here.



Clear Image (Digital) Zoom:
Wide to Tele rocker.

GRAB Button. Since it's not
active until a future firmware
update, I mapped it to RECORD.

User Button 3: I left it at default
ISO control.

Multi-Selector Joystick. 4-way
navigation, press to select. You
can use as alternative to Jog
Dial. Also for focus selection.

Multi-Function Jog Dial
(familiar from VENICE)

USER Button 4:
default Focus Operation.
I mapped it to Peaking.

CLIPS: playback

ON-OFF
left position is ON



MENU: quick press for Big 6.
2-second press for full menu.

BACK: escape

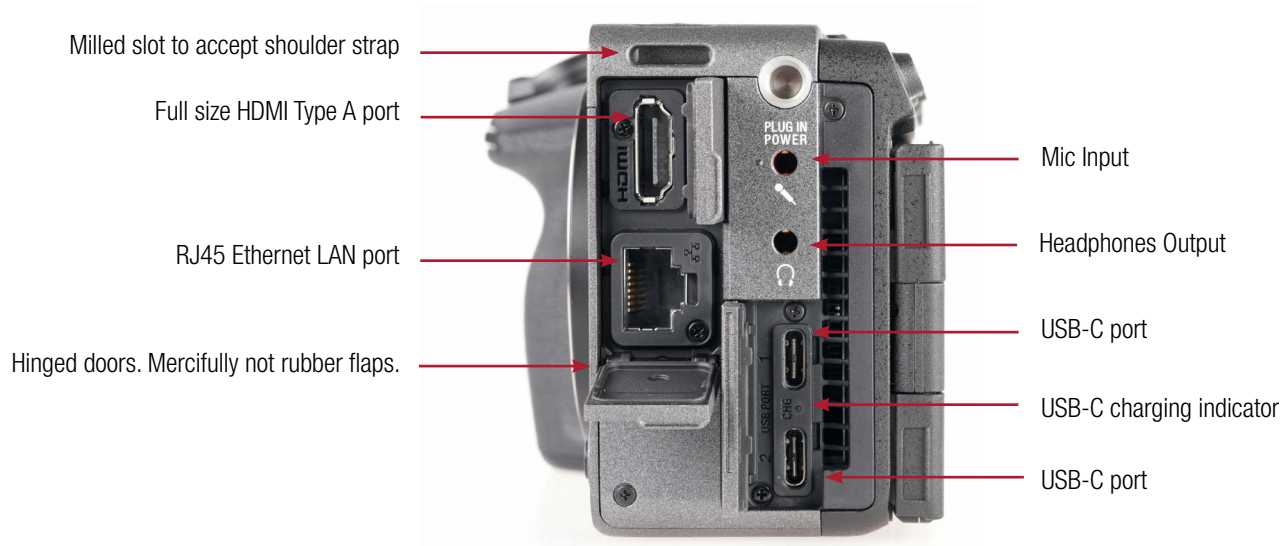
Multi-Function Jog Dial

User Button 5: default Slot Select.
I mapped it to Focus Magnification.

HOME: takes you to Big 6 menu.
Press again for Live View.

USER Menu: It's like a "Little 6"
menu to quickly select favorite
settings.

Sony FX5 Left, Bottom and Right



Sony FX5



Cut to the chase:

The FX5 camera is the camera to get if only for any one of these 3 exceptional reasons:

- Higher 16.6 MP resolution
- Internal 16-bit X-OCN RAW
- EVF (OLED — 7.07 million dots) tilts from horizontal to vertical and detaches. This is my favorite thing.

Of course, there are many more things to applaud. Let's jump in.

The Sony ILME-FX5 is the latest Cinema Line camera. The family goes high and low, to paraphrase the Kurosawa film, from high-end Hollywood blockbuster to entry-level solo and independent production. Each family member is defined by intention and affordability. At the top of the line, there's VENICE 2, VENICE, their respective Rialto tethers and the imminent RIALTO 65. Next comes BURANO. FX9, beloved by documentarians, has retired. FX6 is next in the family tree.

With a pre-release proposed price under US \$4,899 (body only), the new FX5 is positioned between FX6 and FX3. It's not a replacement for the FX3 nor is it an FX3 mark II. The FX3 will continue to be manufactured. FX2, which introduced the pivoting EVF, is the entry level Cinema Line camera along with the APS-C format FX30.

It's interesting how each camera in the Cinema Line is unique not only in affordability but also in capability. The new ILME-FX5 takes this concept ever further.

By the way, ILME is the designation for Sony's compact Interchangeable Lens Movie E-mount Cinema Line cameras: FX6, FX5, FX3, FX2 and FX30, as well as the FR7 (PTZ).

ILCE stands for Interchangeable Lens Camera E-mount hybrid photo/video Alpha series cameras (a1, a7, a9, etc).

Intended Users

Who will use the FX5?

It will show up with almost anyone who makes moving images—from A-list cinematographers on high-end features to independents on low or no-budget shows, reality and documentaries, owner-operators, corporate and commercial production compa-

nies, content creators, students and emerging filmmakers. Essentially, the FX5 is for anyone making movies.

Where does Sony see it? With VENICE 2 and RIALTO 65 at the top, followed by BURANO and FX6, the new FX5 fits just above FX3, FX2 and FX30 in terms of cost. In terms of features and capabilities—let's take a look.

Sony ILME-FX5 Details

The FX5 has a new 16.6 Megapixel Full Frame, Full Height, Stacked Exmor RS CMOS Sensor.

Maximum 5K Open Gate (3:2) 36 x 24 mm resolution is 4992 x 3328 — available only when recording in X-OCN.

Pixel pitch is approximately 7.2 microns. (FX3 is about 8.4 µm.) These are unofficial specs, derived by dividing sensor width by horizontal resolution.

The advanced BIONZ XR2 image processor enables higher frame rates for slow motion: up to 60 fps in 5K, 120 fps in 4K and 240 fps in Full HD.

Recording in 5K 120p and 4K 240p is slated for firmware V2.0—planned to be available in August 2027 or later.

FX5 can record internal X-OCN LT 16-bit linear RAW to CFexpress Type A cards in dual CFexpress card slots. (Type A are the smaller ones.) 16-bit X-OCN provides 65,536 tonal gradations per color for a total of 280 trillion shades. Grading worked seamlessly on a beta version of DaVinci Resolve Studio. The release update is expected to be ready when the camera ships.

In addition to X-OCN LT, there are two additional "compact" modes: X-OCN C1 and X-OCN C2.

Sony recommends CFexpress Type A cards that are at least VPG400 (Video Performance Guarantee of 400 MB/s write speed). They have a clapstick icon with the number 400 on the slate. The latest Sony CFexpress Type A Tough G series 1920 GB (CEA-G1920T) and 960 GB (CEA-G960T) memory cards have write speeds up to 1700 MB/s with VPG400 certification.

BASE ISO gets an additional 4,000 ISO in the middle. It's called THREE BASE ISO: 800, 4,000 AND 12,800. 4,000 BASE ISO is helpful when shooting in low light exteriors and dim location interiors where you don't need 12,800 dark-as-night.

Sony FX5



THREE BASE ISO is automatic—it adjusts when you change the camera's ISO sensitivity manually or the camera does it with Auto ISO. Three Base ISO reduces noise, provides cleaner shadows, wider latitude and helps to maintain a consistent look over the very wide expanse of sensor sensitivity.

BASE 800 covers 200 to 3200 ISO. Base 4,000 covers 1,000 to 16,000. Base 12,800 goes from 3,200 to 51,200 ISO.

FX5 also has Dual Gain for 16+ stops of exposure latitude. Sony explains: "The camera captures and averages two readouts of the same frame simultaneously: one in low gain and one in high gain. The processor then combines them into one file to provide greater dynamic range and shadow detail while keeping noise low and helping to avoid clipping of highlights."

The new accessory EVF attaches and detaches from the camera's hot shoe on top. It tilts from horizontal to 90° vertical. It has a stunningly sharp 7.07 million dot OLED display that's sharp like an optical groundglass to focus even without peaking. It's extremely bright—and dimmable.

The FX5 Menu layout is similar to VENICE with Big 6 and deep-dive menus. Push the MENU button once and you see the familiar Big 6: Project, TC/Media, Monitoring, Audio, Info, and Project Details (full menu). Press the MENU button again to get to live picture view. Long-press the MENU button to get to the deep-dive full menu pages.

There are additional nice VENICE touches on the FX5. The familiar dial jog-wheel to navigate menus and settings is on top. There's a BACK button when you need a hasty tactile escape instead of using the touch screen.

The rear LCD touchscreen monitor is big and bright: 3.5" diagonal. It swivels, swings and tilts in 4 axes—almost every positional permutation from vertical to horizontal, snuggled against the camera body or pulled out to the camera left side.

Display of status information on the rear monitor is similar to VENICE 2: black border all around the picture area with white text. You can also turn the DISPLAY function off (via menu or user-button) to hide the text and enlarge the image to full screen.

Anamorphic desqueeze is available for the LCD rear screen, EVF and external monitors. Settings are 1.3x, 1.5x, 1.6x, 1.8x and 2x.

FX5 has improved IBIS — In Body Image Stabilization. It works

well, reducing vibration and smoothing slow moves. But if you're Claudio Miranda or Dan Ming putting cameras in F1 cars or Top Gun jets, or rigging on a drone, gimbal or bouncing around in the Baja 1000 road race, Sony provides an IBIS locked-off sensor conversion at their customer service offices. This is an irreversible process: once completed, IBIS cannot be restored.

The XLR audio top hand connects to contacts in the hotshoe and attaches with the same two 1/4-20 screws as the EVF. So it's a choice of one or the other. However, MID49 has an accessory setup and cable that lets you have both.

The XLR top handle provides 32-bit float audio for greater range—up to at least 1,500 dB. (A silent S35 movie camera is around 20 to 30 dB; an IMAX camera can be 100 dB.) By way of comparison, 16 or 24-bit audio can distort and clip. 32-bit float audio files have lower noise, finer detail and enable recovery in post-production for undistorted sound. Theoretically, 32-bit float audio could mean that you do not have to set audio levels. But you should.

Autofocus is responsive, fast (or adjustably slower when wanted) and excellent in low light. I used it more often than ever before. It employs AI recognition of people, animals and birds for focus and exposure tracking.

Clear Image Zoom has been updated for combined and simultaneous optical and digital zooming.

ProRes RAW and Blackmagic RAW can be recorded externally via the camera's full-size HDMI Type A port.

FX5 connects remotely via new tri-band Wireless LAN 2.4GHz, 5GHz or 6GHz Wi-Fi, Wired LAN (Ethernet), Bluetooth and USB tether. Camera functions and remote monitoring can be controlled with a smartphone, tablet or computer using the Sony Monitor & Control (M&C) app for iOS (iPhone, iPad or Silicon M-series Mac) and Android. The M&C app provides wired and wireless monitoring, camera menus, exposure and focus control on the larger screen of your smartphone, tablet or Mac. sony.com/electronics/support/articles/CCMC01000

The new NP-SA100 battery lets you shoot longer: about 105 minutes of actual start-stop shooting or 170 minutes of continuous recording. That could be a very long "oner"—an almost 3-hour single take when recorded in XAVC S-L 422 FF 5K 16:9 23.98p.

Sony FX5 Summary of Specifications



- 16.6 Megapixel Open Gate 1.5:1 (3:2) Sensor.
- Sensor size: Full Frame, Full Height, approx. 36 x 24 mm.
- BIONZ XR2 image processor.
- Internal 16-bit linear RAW: X-OCN LT, C1 and C2.
- Three BASE ISO: 800, 4,000, 12,800.
- Slow motion up to 60 fps in 5K, 120 fps in 4K, 240 fps in FHD.
- Recording in 5K 120p and 4K 240p is slated for firmware V2.0—planned to be available in August 2027 or later.
- Open Gate 1.5:1 in X-OCN LT/ C1 / C2.
- 15+ stops of dynamic range / exposure latitude.
- Wider dynamic range with Dual Gain setting.
- Multi-function dial.
- VENICE style UI.
- Big 6 and On-Screen Display black border menus.
- Removable 7.07 million dot OLED EVF.
- Large 3.5" diagonal LCD rear monitor.
- Improved IBIS with optional IBIS locked sensor conversion handled at Sony service centers.
- Better Autofocus in low light.
- AI aided subject recognition and Autofocus.
- Improved low light Autofocus.
- AI subject recognition.
- 6 user buttons.
- Recording tally light.
- NP-SA100 Battery for longer runtime: about 105 minutes of start-stop shooting or 170 minutes of continuous recording. (Your mileage may vary.)
- Clear Image Zoom combines optical and digital zooming.
- 32-bit float audio input.
- Size: 5.3" wide x 3.11" high x 3.39" deep / 132 x 79 x 86 mm.
- Weight: 22.7 oz / 734 g.

Future Firmware updates:

- The FX5 does not have a mechanical shutter and you cannot take stills. It's a cine camera, after all. However, there's a GRAB button on top for frame grabs. It will be enabled in a future firmware update.
- Slow motion: 5K 120p and 4K 240p recording.
- Open Gate 1.5:1 in XAVC-I.
- User Interface for vertical framing.

Approximate Prices and Availability

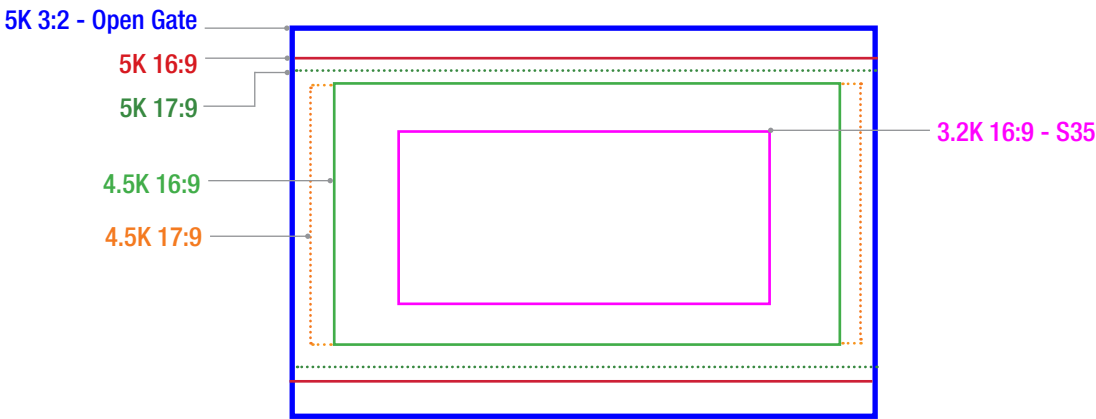
- FX5 body only \$4,899.
 - FX5 with top handle and audio module: \$5499.
 - Optional EVF.
 - Optional timecode cable — USB-C to BNC connector.
 - A selection of Sony G Master lenses can be bundled with the FX5 for a discount of \$300 when purchased with the camera:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| • FE 16-35mm F2.8 GM II | (SEL1635GM2) |
| • FE 28-70 mm F2 GM | (SEL2870GM) |
| • FE 24-70mm F2.8 GM II | (SEL2470GM2) |
| • FE 50-150mm F2 GM | (SEL50150GM) |
| • FE 70-200 mm F2.8 GM OSS II | (SEL70200GM2) |
| • FE 100-400mm F4.5 GM OSS | (SEL100-400MC) |



Sony FX5 Imager Modes, Resolution, FPS

Full Frame

Super35



Approximate dimensions and unofficial specs — updates to follow.

Imager Mode	Resolution	Format	Size	Unofficial Image Size W x H (mm)	FPS
5K 3:2 (1.5:1)	4992 x 3328	FF	Full Frame Open Gate, full height, full width <i>Available only when recording in X-OCN</i>	35.9 x 24	1-60
5K 16:9	4992 x 2808	FF	Full Frame, full width	35.9 x 20.2	1-30
5K 17:9	4992 x 2632	FF	Full Frame, full width	35.9 x 18.9	1-30
4.5K 16:9	3840 x 2160	FFc	Full Frame cropped	—	1-120
4.5K 17:9	4096 x 2160	FFc	Full Frame cropped	—	1-120
3.2K 16:9	3264 x 1836	Super35	Full Frame cropped to Super35	24.0 x 12.6	1-120



E-mount to LPL - PL Mount Adapters



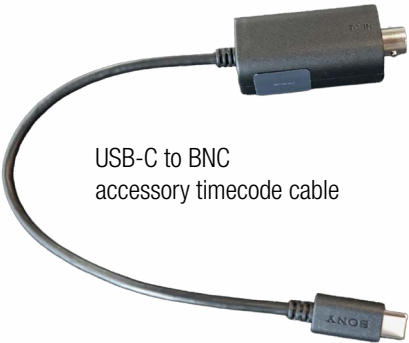
Unlike VENICE, the FX5 doesn't have a PL mount that bolts on over the native E-mount.

Many E-mount to PL adapters are available as accessories. However, for even bigger compatibility, I suggest an E-mount to LPL adapter along with a removable LPL to PL adapter. Note that as of now, no one make adapters with PL or LPL /i lens data pass-through for FX cameras. Machine shops: please start your engines.

- E-mount = 18 mm Flange Focal Depth (FFD) / 46.1 mm Inside Diameter (ID).
- LPL mount = 44 mm FFD / 62 mm ID.
- PL mount: 52 mm FFD / 54 mm ID.



FX5 Audio XLR Top Handle



USB-C to BNC
accessory timecode cable



FX5 swing-tilt-pivot EVF



EVF connects via multi-pin plug

attaches with 2x 1/4-20 screws

Multi-pin socket connects to EVF



FX5 swing-tilt-pivot EVF



FX5 with EVF and FE2.8 24-70 G Master II



FX5 with Audio Handle and FE2.8 24-70 G Master II



FX5 Big 6 and Menus



Turn the FX5 Power Switch ON. This is the home page, the BIG 6 screen — familiar to VENICE users. It shows FPS, ISO, Shutter, Iris, Look, and White Balance. Tap the Multi-Function Jog Dial and turn it to move between settings. Or tap the touchscreen directly. Press the HOME button to cycle between BIG 6 and Live View.



This is the Live View Screen with status information displayed in the black surrounding border. Press the MENU Button to cycle between Live View and LITTLE 6. (More about that on the next page.)

Menus



Long-press the MENU Button to access the VENICE-style Deep Dive menu, better known as the FULL MENU. Press the MENU Button briefly to exit to Live View or press the HOME Button to return to BIG 6.



Press the MENU briefly to cycle between BIG 6 and what I call LITTLE 6 for want of the official name at this time. It's easiest to navigate using the touchscreen. PROJECT DETAILS will take you to the Deep Dive FULL MENU. To return to Live View, press the HOME Button.

Captions



Meanwhile, back at the Deep Dive Full Menu, this is the page for your Project Settings. For 5K 3:2 X-OCN LT, choose Base Setting > Shooting Mode > Cine EI and Cine EI/Flexible ISO Setting > S-Gamut3.Cine/SLog3. Then Rec Format > Project Frame Rate 24. Imager Mode > FF 5K 3:2. Next: Rec Format > Codec > X-OCN LT (or X-OCN C1 or C2).



Press the USER button (below the HOME Button) and you have a SMALLER 6 menu. Display ON / OFF cycles between black border status information or clean screen Live View.



Press the USER Button while in Live View and with Display ON, it looks like this—status information in a black border surrounding the picture.



Turn Display OFF and the Live View image is larger and the screen is clean, with status information gone.

Tilta EVF Extension Cable & Cage for FX5



Tilta FX5 EVF Extension Cable and Shoulder Mount.



Tilta FX5 EVF Extension Cable and Cage for handheld camera setup.

MID49 EVF Extension Cable & Adapter for XLR Audio Top Handle



MID49 accessories for FX5 enable simultaneous use of both the EVF and XLR Top Handle.



Normally, you can only work with one or the other because of a traffic jam at the connection points. The MID49 Hot Shoe Adapter provides pass-through for the XLR Audio connector.





All BTS frames by Mark Bone.

Jon: It's 9:00 AM in Los Angeles. Sorry if you're jetlagged, having just returned from an adventure in Asia with a pre-release Sony FX5 camera. How did this happen?

Gareth Edwards: In 2022, we made a film called *THE CREATOR* as soon as the rules allowed us to travel after the pandemic. It was crazy ambitious thing with at least 80 locations in Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia and Vietnam—all shot with the Sony FX3.

I embraced the FX3 so enthusiastically to be able to work as run-and-gun guerrilla-style as possible, using a gimbal but not having the whole movie feel like a documentary. The gimbal enabled a way of achieving a cinematic look. The problem is the bigger the camera on a gimbal, the more difficult it is to hold. You add more paraphernalia. You need batteries, monitors and things. But I was really looking for the smallest possible device.

The Sony FX3, launched in February 2021, was everything we wanted. I bought a bunch of them. And so that's how we shot *THE CREATOR*. It got a bit of attention as a prosumer camera that shot a movie with a major theatrical release. We even had an IMAX release.

One day, I received an invitation from Sony to attend an event. While there, I tried to find someone who would let me speak to the engineers about future cameras. After annoying the hell out of them for about a week, I was invited to join the biggest video conference I've ever been on. The team of planners and engineers at Sony Japan asked "What would you want in the next camera? What kind of things would you want it to do?" I was like a kid in a candy store and just started listing all the ingredients of a dream camera. It went from realistic expectations to completely blue sky fantasy.

And at the end of it all, I said, "If you only do three things, please have internal RAW, a flip-up monitor and a good viewfinder." I

wanted internal RAW so that I wouldn't need an external drive that just makes things bigger and more complicated.

I wanted a monitor that you could just flip up and look down upon, with some of the ergonomics of a Hasselblad and not something you unfold to the side where it can catch on your body. I wanted to hold the camera like a child in my hands.

And the third request was for a good EVF viewfinder. This was before the FX2 came out. I said all this stuff and everyone was very polite. The call ended and I just thought that nothing would happen but it was worth asking.

Two years later I was contacted by Stuart Cram at Sony. I knew him from his previous time at DJI. Stuart said, "Sony is in town. They have something they want to show you. Do you want to pop over to the Sony DMPC?" I live nearby in Burbank. And so I went over half wondering, "Is what I think it is?" When I got there, it was indeed.

Incredibly, the first things I noticed about the new FX5 camera when they revealed it were those three things that I really wanted: internal RAW, flip-up monitor and EVF. They said that *THE CREATOR* had helped some of their sales and while developing this camera.

And Sony asked you to do a short film with a pre-release FX5?

I don't want to call it a short because it puts too much pressure for it to be a thing. If you just call it a camera test, that would be all right, wouldn't it?

The footage you showed me is much more than a test. It looks great. A test usually reminds me of twinkly lights in the background in a dingy studio with someone's girlfriend in front of camera trying to smile. Maybe call it a Camera Adventure? I expect you enjoyed some other new things in the new FX5?



Yes. It can do 16-bit internal recording—Full Frame, full height, open gate. Crucially important was that it retained the 12,800 ISO.

After getting the FX3, I started to wonder what other cameras were out there. I bought a few to test and play with. The dotted line in the sand for me was very high ISO. It allows you to shoot in available light, during magic hour and when the sun goes down. Things are beautiful in twilight as the lights come on and you can still make out the horizon. I can't let go of that.

The incredibly high ISO of 12,800 is important to me because if you can see it with your eye then you can film it—even at night. The other thing Sony added was a middle ISO of 4,000 which is in between the base ISO of 800 and the high ISO of 12,800.

I didn't really understand why that would be so useful until we took it out on our shoot. I found that I was living at 4,000 ISO most of the time because it was very useful in bright exteriors. I had a variable ND in my E-mount to PL adapter. That meant I could be outside and then run inside, quickly adjust the ND and suddenly get the right exposure there as well.

Were you both the director and cinematographer of this FX5 adventure in Asia?

I made some mistakes because I don't consider myself a professional cinematographer. One day, I didn't realize that the camera was set to 12,800 ISO and I was shooting midday sun in the tropics with maximum ND calming it down. I didn't even notice. The quality was so good. It was only when I looked at the rear display that I realized that the camera was at 12,800. But the images weren't screaming with grain or noise. I've looked at all the footage on a big monitor and I can't tell which ones they are. There's so much latitude.

I like the classical film look. Almost everything I do digitally involves chasing the vintage film stock look that I grew up loving as a kid at the movies and wanting to get into filmmaking. One of my favorite things is to work with complementary colors, eliminating some colors but keeping good skin tones. I'm screening the FX5 footage now and it's impressive.

I didn't realize how good this camera looked until I got home because you're shooting and looking at a five-inch monitor at best. I was actually using my phone. That's the other amazing thing about the FX5: because it has internal Wi-Fi, you can do away with an external video transmitter. You can just log in to the camera using the Sony Monitor & Control app.

So your onboard monitor is a phone?

Yes, I was viewing on my iPhone 17. I specifically bought some new iPhones because they're so bright in sunlight. They're actually as good as some of the best professional monitors and they'll last all day without charging. Since the iPhone has MagSafe (built-in magnetic ring), I attached it to the top of the FX5 with a little magnetic mount. If I wanted to use a gimbal, I could pull the iPhone off the camera and stick it on my arm with a magnetic wrist band. That's all I used the whole time.

What lenses did you have?

I used a Kowa vintage 2x anamorphic 75mm lens, rehoused and in PL mount. As a filmmaker, I prefer to reduce and isolate information for the audience. I've come to appreciate how these vintage lenses blur and obscure the things you don't want to pay attention to. But paired with this camera, the area that you do want to pay attention to is really crisp with high detail.



Where did you get your Kowa anamorphics?

After *THE CREATOR*, I was concerned that everyone would try to rent or buy the Kowas because they're so good for gimbals, they're so light and small. I was worried I wasn't going to be able to get them again. So, I contacted every company in the world that rented Kowas and said, "Would you sell yours?" And they'd say, "No."

Eventually, I got four and had them rehoused at PS Technic. I wanted to have four: one fully rigged for handheld, one fully rigged on a gimbal, one on a drone and the other one on a slider. That way, when you decide to do a certain type of shot, you're not slowing things down by swapping the lens on and off the cameras.

You just grab and go with whatever kind of shot you're doing so

you can go very fast.

Any other lenses?

No, that was it. I shot the whole thing with that Kowa 75mm anamorphic. I'm very happy with that lens. If it got stuck on the camera forever, I wouldn't complain.

Does the Kowa anamorphic cover Full Frame?

Yes, it does actually. Open gate, full height. There's a slight darkening toward the edges. It's not vignetting, but I like that bit of character. It's interesting because I didn't really realize I needed open gate until I had it. Full height anamorphic squeezed two times onto the FX5 sensor covers more pixels than the FX3.

Does the FX5 have anamorphic desqueeze viewing?



FX5 with magnetic iPhone mount on top and P+S Technic rehoused Kowa anamorphic.

Gareth Edwards with Sony FX5



Controlling FX5 on RS 5 via three iPhones.

Yes, it has anamorphic desqueeze settings in the menu and also on the iPhone app.

Is there a story or theme to your film with the FX5?

No, it's just me running around Asia looking for nice shots. It's about the people, faces and landscapes. I don't know if this will happen in time, but I would love to try and test some visual effects and see if I can make it blend in with the look.

I just call it a camera test for now. It's a stack of footage, but dropped on the timeline, I had 24 hours of footage and now I've managed to get it down to about 12 minutes.

Are you editing it yourself?

I wouldn't call it editing, but I'm just condensing and putting it in

order and playing.

Are you grading as well?

No, we're going to Fotokem. I already bought an analogicalab LUT off the internet that looks great with our FX5 footage.

Did you have a crew in Asia?

Not really. Jim Spencer was my producer. He was there when we did MONSTERS, JURASSIC WORLD: REBIRTH and THE CREATOR. Mark Bone was filming behind the scenes.

And then, in each country, we had a fixer—a local who would ask random people “Do you mind being in this documentary? We're just testing a camera.”

So, you operated the camera yourself?



Controlling FX5 on RS 5 via three iPhones.



Yes, I operated the camera. And pulled focus as well, which is tricky when working solo.

What gimbal were you using?

The new DJI Ronin RS 5. It's good because you press the button and it locks all axes. You can put it down or just lay it in a car without having to set it all up again, which is good.

How did you focus the Kowa lens with the FX5 on the RS 5?

It was a bit of an expedition figuring out which focus system to use because I needed the control to be on the rear handle of the Ronin RS 5, but I also needed it to come off and work handheld.

I had three iPhones. One had the Sony Monitor & Control app setup. The second iPhone had an app to trigger a motorized slider. The third iPhone had the DJI Ronin app which [in conjunction with the DJI SDR Transmission Module] acted like a virtual joystick and remote monitor.

This was a quick way to hopscotch between smooth dolly shots and then a more verité style of working. You could film with the gimbal, then quickly pull off the focus handle, sit down and do dolly shots. And then, as soon as you finish the dolly shots, go back and reattach the focus handle for more gimbal work. I took the viewfinder off for the gimbal shots, but if I was going handheld, I definitely would use the viewfinder.

When you took the camera off the gimbal, were you still using the same focus motor?

Yes, the same Tilta Nucleus Nano II motor and Nano II hand unit.

For someone who tells me you're not technical, you're being very modest.

I buy a lot of equipment.

Meanwhile, back in Asia with the FX5, where were your locations?

We went to Angkor Wat in Cambodia, the ancient temple [built

around 1113 – 1150 and now a Unesco World Heritage site] where we filmed monks and local people in a stilt village.

Then we went to Bangkok and shot in the city at night because I wanted to show the contrast between something ancient and something a bit more futuristic. We rode around on tuk-tuks through Chinatown and elsewhere.

In Katmandu, we went to all the heritage sites, the main square and temples and then went up by helicopter into the Himalayas. We filmed in a monastery near Mount Manaslu [eighth tallest mountain in the world at 8,163 m]. It's beautiful there and the people are amazing. We stayed the night filming interiors, villagers cooking, illuminated only by fire light with the camera at 12,800 ISO. The only lighting I took were some small, lightweight, bright, rechargeable Inkee Gold Crow Air 30W RGB LED fixtures. You can quickly inflate them and they are ready to go. I'd carry them everywhere from now on. But they were only used on occasion where you just wanted to see someone's face a bit better. Quite often I was dimming them down to 2%.

How many cases of equipment did you have?

We had a rule: bring nothing you can't carry up a mountain. Everything was in backpacks. There was a backpack for the camera and gimbal, a backpack for the slider. And there was a backpack we called assistant camera, which was basically batteries, filters and whatever else was needed. But we didn't need very much.

Did you shoot internal X-OCN [Sony extended tonal range Original Camera Negative, 16-bit linear encoding].

Yes, we recorded everything internally in X-OCN LT. And the camera also recorded proxies simultaneously. That's what I've been editing with.

Could this FX5 be your future "A" camera or would you use something bigger?

If I were doing my own movie, like THE CREATOR, this would definitely be my camera of choice. This is what I would shoot it on.



If it was a studio film, I'd be showing them some of this footage.

Leading question: what defines a studio camera?

It'd be purely the cinematographer's choice. It's really about how you want to work.

I personally like to have the camera as small as possible with the least paraphernalia necessary to service it. The more run and gun it is, the less intrusive it is in the process of making a film, in my opinion. And so I gravitate to a small camera like this FX5. It has a massive sensor. Of course, there are always things you can improve, but I feel like we're at a place now where people without massive resources can shoot something beautiful. It's literally down to the artist.

The fact that you can shoot in available light and have it look so beautiful with so much latitude and with color science that you can bend to make it feel like film—I think the FX5 is going to be a camera to beat.

With its ease of use, there's no big downside. If you ask someone to list the problems with it, I don't know what they would list.

Maybe someone would nitpick, "Oh, it 'only' has 16+ stops of dynamic range instead of 17..."

But I'm always compressing the contrast anyway, crushing the dynamic range to a film look of maybe 8 stops anyway. You still have enough dynamic range to swing left or right if your exposure's not spot on; it gives you confidence to have that leeway. But I don't like the look of things when you can see a massive amount of latitude. I prefer a beautiful image that has more contrast.

It seems the FX5 resonates with you because of size, ergonomics and having a small crew—going into the mountains and all kinds of places with backpacks.

Also, when filming local people and local situations, you look more like tourists or YouTubers. People don't bat an eyelid or stop you from filming. You don't "infect" what you're filming as much. The street can carry on, cars can move on, people pass by and you

get a lot more naturalistic footage that way.

Are we being too enthusiastic in praise of such a small, affordable cinema camera?

What I really like about Sony is they're not afraid to make the best cameras on either side of the spectrum and they're willing to put all these features in a prosumer affordable camera. Logic would tell you to just save many of these features for the big, expensive cinema camera. The fact they're willing to do this, and obviously the math must work out, makes it exciting because it democratizes filmmaking even more, which can't be a bad thing.

Rhetorical question. If it democratizes film, does that hurt your future as a top-of-the-line, A-list director?

No, I'm all for it. I couldn't be happier for some young person to come along and be successful. That's what I was fighting for early in my career. We did a very low budget films to try and break into the industry. I find this approach very exciting. People are often scared and afraid to take risks on a movie. Anything that helps you take more risks and be more creative and swing for the fences is good for the art.

It is now about the artist and visual storytelling in that you can give the same camera to another person and you get very different results. It's like providing pencils or brushes to artists. We've reached a point with the cameras where the main effort is up to the artist. The cameras are there and now it's mostly about the person holding it, operating it, that is going to make the big difference.

You proved that with THE CREATOR. In film school, I assume you were influenced by the French New Wave?

Yes, we learned about it. The person who influenced me was the filmmaker Peter Watkins. I worked at the BBC and he was legendary as the first person really to do a faux documentary and make it feel real, getting naturalistic performances from people, feeling a strange hybrid between "this must be a documentary, but it can't



be because the story is absurd and impossible.” I love that blend between chaos and reality, where it looks like the actors in front of the lens are not blocked out and feel very naturalistic, but then the camera is doing something very considered that feels preordained. That marriage really messes with your head in a good way where it feels like you would never get it again, when a second take would never happen.

When I was younger, I often went to the Natural History Museum. Every year there was the Wildlife Photographer of the Year award. You’d look at all the amazing photographs and start to wonder what makes one of them the best. I came to the conclusion that the best ones couldn’t be repeated. It was a one in a million opportunity, but the more you can control the elements, the luckier you might get.

I like visuals, imagery and footage that looks like you just got lucky. I love that this FX5 camera can get you into the middle of a monastery in the Himalayas where you are so inconspicuous that the monks invite you inside the temple and they start a ceremony and I’m just walking around with my shoes off just getting these shots that normally would feel very intrusive, but I know that I’m not really bothering them because it’s such a small setup. I don’t need lights or anything. Then you get these little moments within a situation where it looks like they’re doing it for us. It looks like we’ve set it up, but we had nothing to do with that. We just walked in 10 minutes earlier as it was going on and things happened.

In some ways, it goes back to when you and I were in film school and cameras were small and light and you could run around doing *cinéma vérité*. It reminds me of young Raoul Coutard filming *BREATHLESS* with a small Éclair Caméflex camera and then in the opening shot of *CONTEMPT* he’s sitting on a dolly behind a massive 70-pound Mitchell.

It’s funny, these days, even with smaller cameras, there’s the desire by some people to start adding bigger batteries and all kinds of other additions and suddenly it looks like the silhouette of a Panaflex. And then, you ask, why did they go with the mirrorless camera in the first place? Surely the goal is to make it as small as possible.

How did you get into film?

I grew up in Warwickshire, which is the county that Shakespeare is from. I saw films like *STAR WARS* and *ET* and wanted to join the Rebel Alliance and become a filmmaker. I went to film school at Farnham in Surrey, but then I couldn’t get a job after graduating. My flatmate was studying computer animation at the same film school. It opened my eyes to the future of filmmaking. I bought a computer and started learning. The goal was that six months later I would go make a movie with this new technology.

Cut to 15 years later and I still hadn’t. I got massively sidetracked doing visual effects as a freelancer. That paid off because I could basically do the visual effects on a movie and make it look a lot bigger and more ambitious than it was. I made my first film for very little and we were very lucky it got in *South by Southwest*. Then, for reasons I can never explain, I was offered the *GODZILLA* film and that’s how it all happened.

Having worked with both cameras, how would you compare the look of the new FX5 to the FX3 in terms of images?

With the FX5, I feel that there’s more ability to bend the color, getting a little bit closer to film, especially with the skin tones. I didn’t ask for the extra resolution. I didn’t think I wanted it. But now that I’m looking at the 5K 1.5:1 image on a high res monitor, I wouldn’t go back. It’s not shouting out for your attention, but the area that your gaze gravitates toward has something about it that’s even more magnetic. It reminds me of my favorite movies when they’ve gone back to the camera negative and re-scanned it in higher resolution.

I’m not a camera salesman. The reason I was happy to do this demo film was because I would genuinely have bought the FX5 after it launched because of what it can do, because this could be the camera for my next film. Some other cameras get close, but none have such a small body with this big sensor, internal RAW and 12,800 ISO. Those are my checkboxes now.

But rather than talk about the differences between cameras, perhaps it’s best to consider the differences between the artists, the cinematographers. That’s really where the importance is now. It’s essentially down to the people, the artists.

Gareth Edwards with Sony FX5



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