



Spotlight on Carly Reddin

Art Director

How did you start as an Art Director/Set Designer?

I worked my way up from Art Department Assistant through Draughtsman to Art Director. I didn't enter the industry as an Art Director. I had to earn the promotions and as we know it's not all glamour, it's hard work!

Is this what you always imagined you would do?

No. I am innately quite creative but after studying maths and science A-Levels my intention was to be a doctor. I changed my mind once I realised that the sight of too much blood made me woozy! Growing up, I had a keen interest in theatre. My passion for set design developed and I became fascinated with the worlds created on television and film.

Where and what did you study?

After completing an art foundation course at Camberwell College of Arts, I did a BA in Design for Television and Film at Nottingham Trent University. I then undertook an MA course in Production Design at The National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Who gave you your first break?

Paul Inglis - Art Director/Designer extraordinaire. Whilst studying, I completed a period of voluntary work experience with Paul on the film Incendiary at Pinewood Studios. Paul

later got in touch and offered me my first job as an Art Department Assistant on a film called The Young Victoria.

You've recently worked on Doctor Who. What did you do on that?

I art-directed an episode that was set on a Soviet K-19 submarine. We built nine sets on stage and also built on location at a steelworks. All the research I carried out has resulted in me becoming a submarine nerd!

For the movie Hanna, you were a draughtsman. What did your role include?

I played around with shapes and sketched ideas for the Swedish log cabin that features at the very beginning and end of the film. Then I planned and set out a working drawing from which the construction team could build. I later changed roles to Stand-by Art Director and was on set with the second unit shooting crew.

How did you get the gig on the film The Young Victoria?

I made a good impression by working hard whilst on a work experience placement. The Art Director offered me a job on his next project.

How does working on a film differ from working on a commercial?

The turn around on a commercial is

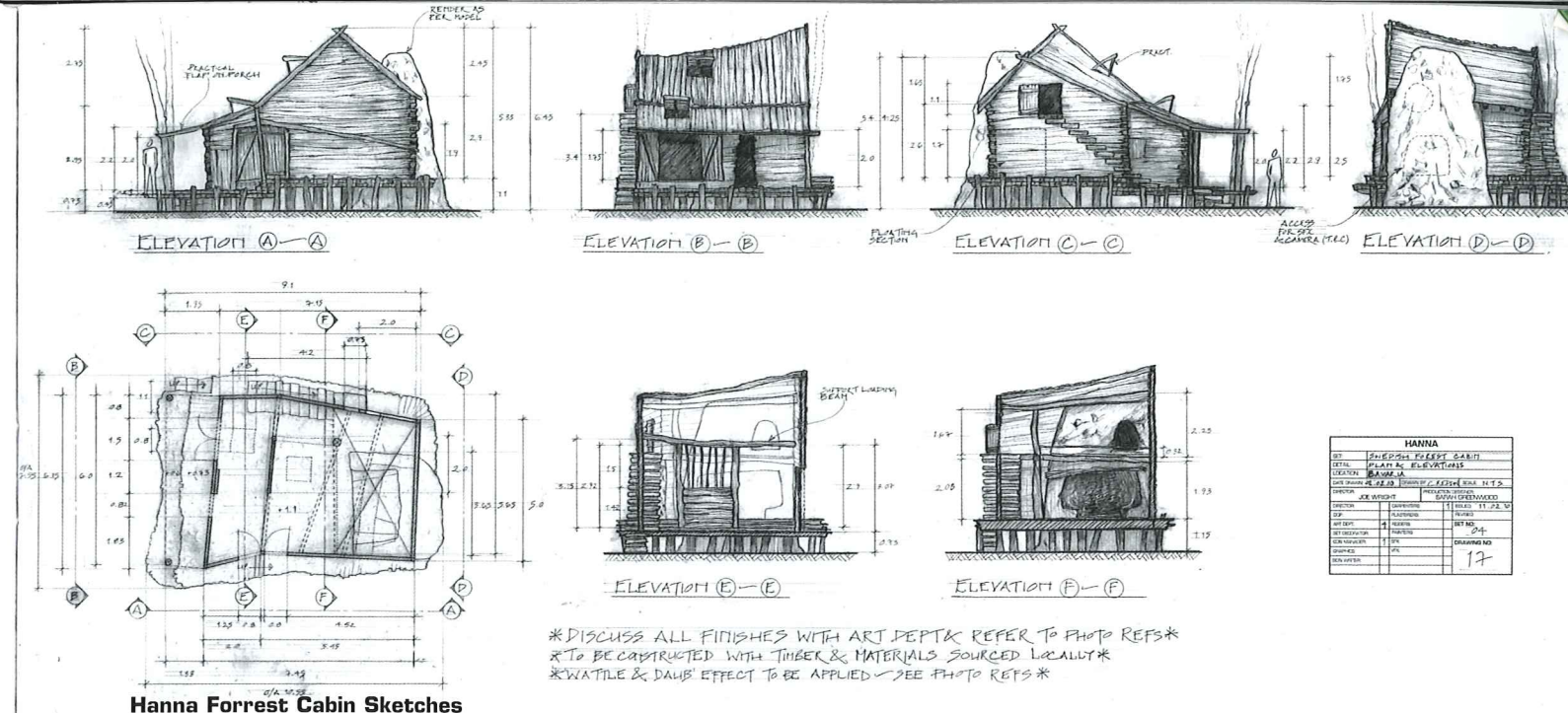
much quicker than on a film. You're not afforded the opportunity for extensive preparation and there isn't as much time to consider the visual look. Sometimes working on a commercial can simply be about trying to please the client. You have to find your chances to be creative!

What piece of technology has made your life easier as an Art Director in the last couple of years?

Computer aided design software such as Vectorworks has come in handy when I have needed to draw something super quick or if there have been many design elements in the set that are repeated. Also, Vectorworks is useful when exporting and transferring files over to the Visual Effects department or for helping to work out camera positions and angles. Having said that, I also draw by hand and it definitely has more soul, something a computer will never replace!

The Hansel and Gretel movie you've been working on is shot in 3D. How does that impact you as the Set Designer?

It doesn't impact me too much as a Set Designer. Although I was responsible for drawing up the set designs, I was working to specifications conveyed via the Art Director. However, I know that shooting in 3D does influence the design of a film. You have to create more layers of detail to help achieve depth in the screen.



All images courtesy of Carly Reddin

Foreground detail is important. If you put more set elements in the foreground you can create more depth.

Which production have you most enjoyed working on and why?

Art Directing on Michael Winterbottom's King of Soho was a project I enjoyed immensely. It is a film on the life of Paul Raymond, the porn baron. We had to reconstruct scenes set in the 50s and 60s, through to the modern day. We took over Walkers Court in Soho, plugged the shops with flatage and turned it into a period setting for Paul Raymond's club The Revue Bar. We also did a large set built at Elstree Studios of Paul's 70s playboy apartment, which the designer Jacqueline Abrahams made look sophisticated and tasteful and not at all 'Austin Powers'! Working on a tight budget with many different periods to recreate was a challenge, but the art department was a hard working team and the end product is a stylish-looking film.

What are you working on at the moment?

I am working on a two-part television drama called The Poison Tree (STV for ITV). This time, the job isn't too construction heavy so I am mainly dealing with SFX, guns and action vehicles. I am also supervising the art team and keeping a close eye on the budget. The crew is a really good bunch of people, which sure makes the job more enjoyable!

Which aspect of your work do you most enjoy?

I enjoy the fact that there is no typical day in my job and that it can be challenging, which gives me opportunities to learn and advance. This job has taught me to be flexible and to enhance my creative problem solving skills.

What is the main inspiration that drives you?

The supremacy of the story is my main inspiration. Nothing should get in the way

of the story telling. Of course, it takes my breath away when I see a well-designed production, but I believe the filmed environments shouldn't be a distraction from the characters on screen. The most important thing is to be taken on a journey along with the characters.

What is your proudest professional moment?

I was pretty proud to work on 'Hugo' and to work with one of my heroes, the Production Designer Dante Ferretti. The entire film was built on stages at Shepperton, Pinewood and Longcross. Everything was built from scratch, including an entire train station, the lobby and platforms, with a real train inside. We recreated Paris in London. It looked beautiful and the scale of the production was huge. I remember walking through the set and thinking "Now this is movie magic! My job is cool."