

person to look up at the other, and one to look down at the other. Besides being uncomfortable for the performers, it is visually disturbing to the viewer and more often than not leads to unflattering light. The person at the higher level is forced to look down, which steepens the angle of their key light and creates unflattering shadows. People look haggard and tired under these conditions. This is a problem that I have encountered on numerous occasions and it is very difficult to rectify by adjusting the lighting. The solution: do what should have been done in the first place—place both people at the same seating level! This can be done with apple boxes or other grip equipment designed for that purpose.

• **Properties**—props, as they are commonly known—are small scenic elements like pictures, ashtrays, curtains, carpets, vases, etc., which are accents employed to further reinforce the illusion of reality. If carefully selected, these props do not present any problems. It is poor choice or placing that causes lighting problems, and thus production delays. Overly large ashtrays invariably reflect the light sources within the set, causing specular highlights that are visually annoying. Also, pictures or posters that are mounted, framed and covered by a plain reflective glass are prime offenders. Reflections can be effectively eliminated by angling the offending subject, so that the angle of reflection isn't along the same plane as the camera lens. The best solution though is either not to use any glass in a picture frame, or to use no-glare glass, if the lack of glass would look artificial. Vases or

large bowls also tend to pick up reflections of light sources that appear as specular reflections. Dulling spray or similar technique to reduce the sheen of polished surfaces effectively eliminates these problems, that really can't be rectified by lighting.

• **Practicals** are lighting instruments that are designed to be an integral part of the setting, and as such they are scenic elements which should serve to create or enhance temporal shading.

Temporal shading—as was mentioned above—can only appear convincingly realistic if two features are present:

- 1) the practical must appear to be lit;
- 2) it should cast an amount of light that would be appropriate considering its proximity to the flats, set dressings and actors.

These two elements may seem to be overstatements of the obvious, but it is not always easy to achieve realistic effects, even under studio conditions; the reason being camera sensitivity—or, more precisely, a lack of camera sensitivity. If a source is bright enough to cast an appreciable amount of light, it is likely that it will appear overly-bright on camera. Part of the difficulty in lighting areas so that they appear to be lit by a practical is the problem of secondary and tertiary shadows. A light source such as a table lamp will cast a single shadow of itself upon the nearby surroundings. A problem arises in mimicking the source; we create a secondary shadow to the naturally occurring shadow. This looks unrealistic, and it reveals the true nature of our endeavour to recreate reality.

Careful selection and placement of practical light sources serves to enhance the illusion of reality, while providing the maximum amount of flexibility for the lighting director to achieve artistically and technically correct pictorial rendering.

THE TALK SHOW FORMAT

The Talk Show takes various forms with varied content, but remains basically an interview format where the predominant point of interest is the face—a head and shoulder shot.

In this format, portraiture in the classic sense is of prime importance, because our focus as viewers is concentrated on a face—something that is very familiar. As facial characteristics are so familiar to us, lighting mistakes are quite obvious. There is a particular pictorial problem that crops up, due to the nature of the format. The guests, usually sitting next to one another on a couch while the host sits behind a desk, are often shot in profile. This is perfectly acceptable occasionally, but when it becomes the norm rather than the exception, a problem arises. In an effort to get an over-the-shoulder shot, or to shoot the guest more straight on, directors often have the guests' camera truck too far away from the axis of the keylight. In this case, the guests' backlight becomes the fill light, but it is not at the correct angle or intensity, nor does it have the correct quality to be considered a true fill light.

Thus, an imagined lighting problem seems to crop up where none really exists. It is possible to add a light to accommodate this over-the-shoulder shot, but the effect is often less than satisfactory, resulting in indifferent portraiture and setting the stage for double shadows. It is best to avoid this type of arrangement as it creates more problems than it solves. The way to avoid it is with staging or, alternatively, one can accept the profile shot as part and parcel of this format.

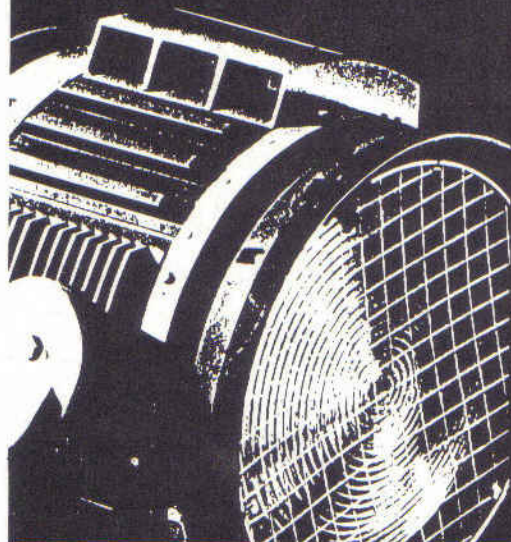
Staging for the talk show format must observe the same general principles as any other form of television production; these include: 1) limited color palette; 2) control of the tonal range; 3) use of a background that is complimentary to the subject matter; 4) shading and tonality used to effect to create a three-dimensional effect on a two-dimensional plane. Without these fundamentals, we get flat, uninteresting pictures. If all of the production elements come together, we can achieve high quality television.

AREA STAGING

Area staging often presents the greatest challenge because of the scope of the production. It is all too easy to become overwhelmed unless we approach it like any other production. All that is different is the

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