

BRUNO DELBONNEL, ASC, AFC
DARKEST HOUR

PHEDON PAPAMICHAEL, ASC, GSC
DOWNSIZING

BRANDON TROST
THE DISASTER ARTIST

American Cinematographer

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THE SHAPE OF WATER

DAN LAUSTSEN, ASC, DFF
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SHORT TAKES



Left: The Society honored Loyola Marymount University undergrad Logan Fulton for his work on *Widow*. Right: Fulton receives his award, flanked by ASC President Kees van Oostrum (left) and ASC Secretary David Darby.

Undergraduate Category

Widow

Cinematographer: Logan Fulton
(Loyola Marymount University)

After shooting director Rachel Econ's junior-level thesis film, Logan Fulton rejoined her for *Widow*, a short Western about a retired gunslinger (played by Naiia Lajoie) who, after she finds her husband shot to death, pairs up with her brother-in-law (portrayed by Jordan Jones) to find the truth — and ends up finding betrayal. Fulton says the prospect of shooting a Western was immediately appealing. "There is something inherently cinematic about them," he says, "and the theme of revenge is also inherently dramatic."

Widow was shot in Benson, Ariz., where production designer Marisa Stelly turned an abandoned building into the protagonist's home. Econ and Fulton referenced *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* — shot by Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC (AC Oct. '07) — for its use of light, shadow and silhouette. "Rachel and I share similar tastes aesthetically," says Fulton. "We like to shoot dark, gritty things, and we wanted it to look realistic."

From Loyola Marymount University's camera collection, Fulton selected an Arri Alexa Mini and a set of Arri/Zeiss Ultra Primes. "I think one thing that's nice about the Alexa is the great dynamic range," says Fulton, who captured 3.2K ProRes 4:4:4:4

XQ files to CFast 2.0 memory cards. "I'm impressed with its low-light capabilities, which was important for our night work."

Fulton opted for the Ultra Primes because of their sharpness and reliability. "Since we had to move quickly, I liked that each lens was [a similar] size and weight, which meant that we could swing lenses without needing to reconfigure our matte box and follow focus," he says. "They also have easy-to-read and reliable marks, which was important for first AC Dawson Taylor, who prefers to pull off measurements rather than look at a monitor."

For lighting, Fulton had an Arri M40 HMI and a 6,500-watt generator, both from Castex Rentals, as well as Loyola Marymount's 3-ton grip-and-lighting package, which included an assortment of smaller HMIs and tungsten heads; a J.L. Fisher Model 21 Jib; and a Fisher Model 11 Dolly, the small size of which made it a good choice for interior locations. Exterior scenes were lit largely with muslin in front of Ultra-bounce, with both materials tied to the same 12'x12' frame. "This gives the Ultra-bounce a slightly softer quality, which helps you not feel the source as much," the cinematographer says. Occasionally he also used the M40 outside, either as an edge or to throw it into the bounce when the actors walked through the shade.

For interior work, Fulton mostly lit with HMIs through windows. "Then," he says, "we used a lot of skip bounces — 2-

by-4 'silver surfer' bounces to catch sunlight, or we'd throw a Joker-Bug 800 into them. This was a fast way to add natural-looking fill."

In one scene, the widow and her brother-in-law face the outlaws in a saloon. "It was such a large space and the camera was moving a lot," says Fulton. To light the expanse for the wide shot, Fulton waited for the sun to be in the best spot to shoot, and then hazed the interior to create shafts of light through the windows. Key grip Griffin Voth and gaffer Mike Buchbauer then used the M40 to push a beam into the background to maintain continuity for close-ups.

In achieving the movie's final look, Fulton lauds the work of DIT Laura Kulik — who also edited the movie, using Adobe Premiere — and colorist Kevin Reilly, who graded with DaVinci Resolve.

Fulton is also proud of *Widow's* final scene, which he and his collaborators opted to shoot at blue hour. "I hadn't really experimented with this before," he says. "We had planned the final scene to be shot just after the sun had set. It was scary to see a gorgeous sunset go away and then have 15 to 20 minutes to get several shots. As a cinematographer, you sometimes fight the urge to take beautiful images in order to stay true to the story. It was a gamble, but I'm happy that it panned out."

Widow photo courtesy of Logan Fulton.