

Mandao Returns

Look Book - Astral Projection



We established the astral world in the first movie. Here are the key take-aways:



Top light, skirted with the hotspot centered. There should be a strong fall off on the walls if there are any present. The above shot shows the most extreme version of the astral world. Pitch black shadows are ideal

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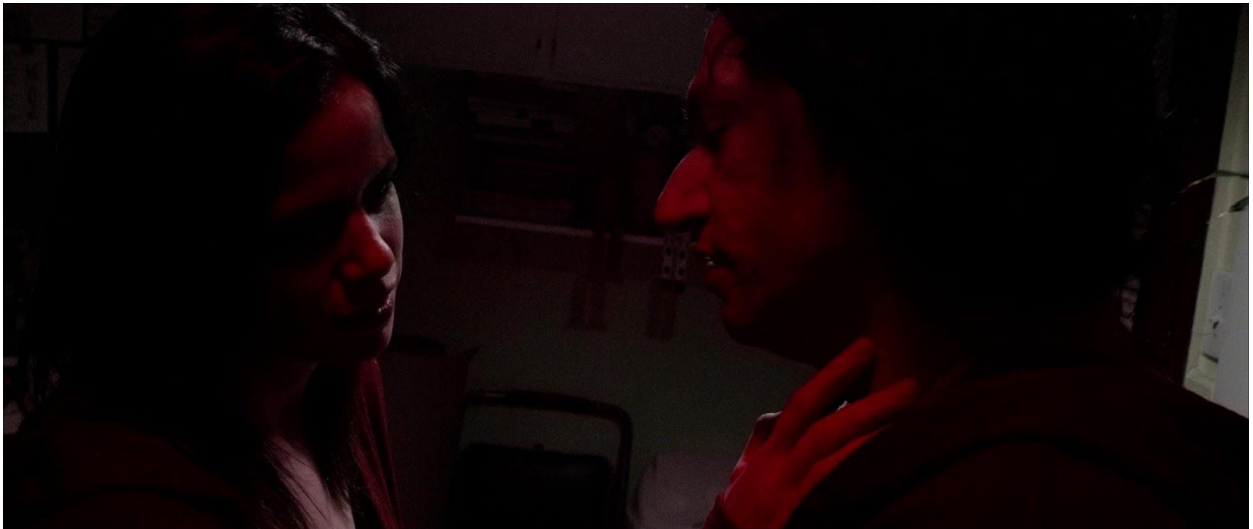
Color, and the lack thereof, is key for the astral world. A character's assigned color is highlighted on their costume. There are a few scenes where we had a colored edge light in the first film, but it wasn't consistent for the film especially if a character was moving around a lot.



Dutch angles are used in almost every shot. There are moments in the first film where the camera was level either out of necessity or because we were still discovering the look of the world as we shot it. In either case, we should be as dutch as possible.

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Intense colors for specific areas of an astral world were used in two key scenes of the first film: the bathroom door and Maeve.

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A slow shutter was used to amplify the other wordly effect of the astral plane. We shot the astral scenes with a 360 degree shutter on the GH5.



Fog was added in post during the first film for a few scenes, but wasn't present through out all of them.

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The look was finalized in the color grade. Above are two stills; left is the real world and right is the astral world. The color grade was where we amplified the contrast, desaturated the image, and selectively added color to costumes. We intentionally made sure the blacks/shadows were crushed beyond zero in the astral world while the real world had its blacks/shadows hover above zero.

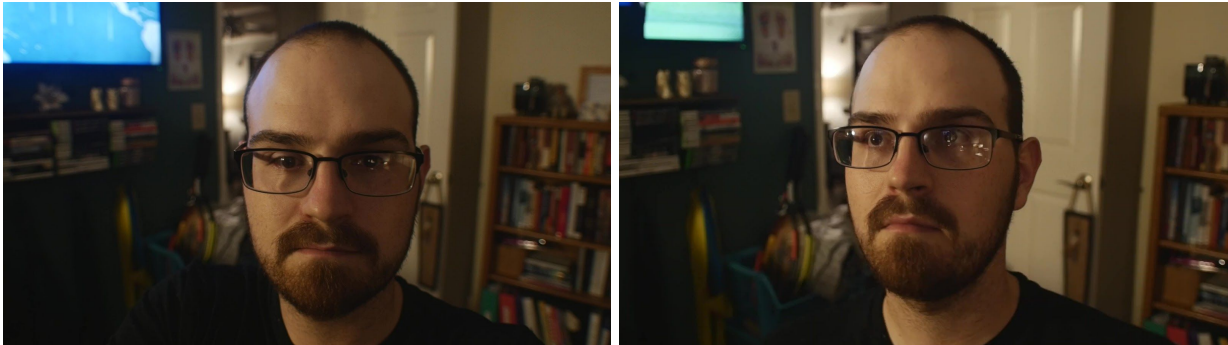
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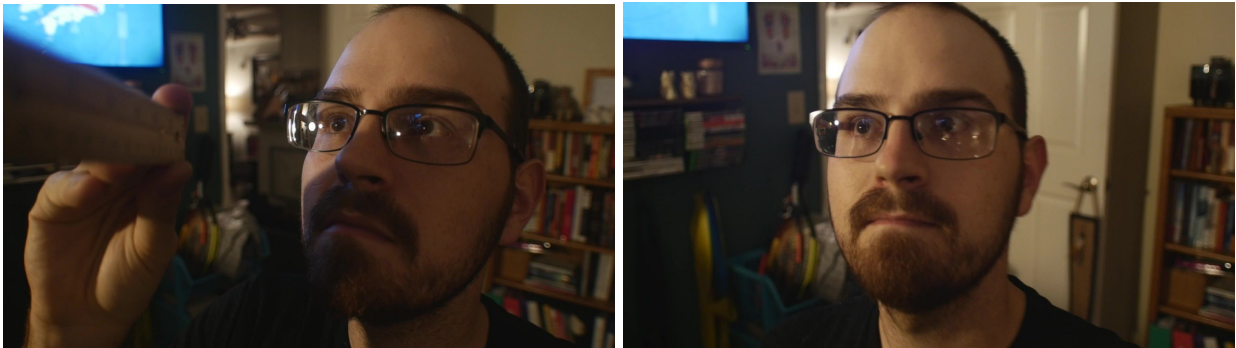
Improvements for the sequel



Wide angle distortion was used to be best of our abilities and what was available, but we didn't get the warping that we desired. I've acquired a wide angle adapter for the 20mm lens we used on the first movie.



Left is the 20mm with the adapter, right is without. It's subtly wider and stretches the face a bit more. There is a small loss of light, but luckily exposure was never an issue for the astral scenes.



Another example of the difference. It's subtle and hard to tell with these small frame grabs, but we *feel* it more as an audience.

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Top light was effective in the first film, but I want to refine it more with a better unit/head/fixture. I've secured a LiteMat 2, which is a lightweight LED that is easier to control the spill. It's also shorter than the chinaball we used, uses no clamps, and can give a stronger output.



We also used a weird cocktail of gels on the astral light that was a) disregarded in the color grade and b) unnecessarily complicated. Instead, we'll shoot the astral world with tungsten balanced units and add colored lights when the story needs them.

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Edge light should be used in almost every scene. There were shots, like the above, where we lost the characters in the black background.



Even though you can barely make out something in the background, the characters are still getting absorbed into the darkness, and not in a good way.

A bonus of using an edge light is that we can bring back the character's colors via the edge light!

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Real fog should be used when we can. Though, it'll introduce complexity on set. The post-production adding of fog worked for the first film, but it would be nice if we could have real fog in the astral scenes.

Only during special scenes.

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The color grade for the astral world in the first film was a success. It clearly established the difference between the two worlds and filled in the holes from the lighting on set. The only slight improvement in this area is a consistent grain structure. So, we'll add grain in post to keep it consistent from shot to shot.