

# INCREDIBLE INDIA



# DP MIK ALLEN REFLECTS ON A DREAM ASSIGNMENT DRIVEN BY COLOUR



“Late August presented the sort of treatment a DoP relishes. Five 30-second scripts to be shot across India, each script being driven by a particular colour, for the Indian Ministry of Tourism, commissioned by BBC World News.

With a heavy schedule taking up the best part of a month, pre-production was completed in Mumbai and a compact crew including Director Amit Pandirkar, Savio Shenoy of Skylark Productions and Gaffer, Shikhar Bhatnagar headed south to Kerala.

Before leaving the UK my decision to use Fujifilm 16mm stock had been a quick and easy one given that colour was the key element to each script. ETERNA Vivid 160T was my main shooting stock and knowing that I had various interiors and some high-speed work too, I complemented the 160T with ETERNA 250T.

The southern tropical state of Kerala gave us amazing locations for the script being driven by the colour green. We used the palm tree lined backwaters of Alleppey as our main location. The brief, to capture early morning light, gliding along on a traditional Keralan boat, was an exciting introduction to what was visually in store for me.

We then headed north to Delhi to shoot the opening sequences to each script where each child actor selects a colour before heading off on their respective “journeys”. These sequences were shot around India Gate, Delhi’s iconic monument, at sunrise and sunset. Using Vivid 160T, I was very impressed with how the

stock dealt with the exposure latitude of the low rising/setting sun and the shadowed foreground conditions, with the chosen colours maintaining the saturation I wanted.

With the opening sequences completed in Delhi the core unit embarked on an overnight road trip north, into the Punjab and on to Amritsar and the breathtaking Golden Temple. Having always been amazed by images of this stunning monument, being there in person certainly didn’t disappoint. It was a privilege to be there at dawn and witness the unforgettable sight of the rich Golden Temple lighting up against the still mirror like surrounding water. Very special!

The unit then travelled east into Himachal Pradesh climbing up to the mountainous town of Dharamsala, home to the Dalai Lama. This location concentrated on a beautiful Tibetan monastery and gave us a wealth of options for shooting.

The colour contrast of the deep red gowns worn by the monks against deep blue skies and lush green vegetation worked stunningly on the Fujifilm stock. The final shot in this location involved one of the actors entering from a daylight exterior situation into a candle lit temple and yet again the results the Vivid 160T gave were fantastic.

Having completed filming in the north east it was back to Delhi to catch the overnight train to Jodpur in the state of Rajasthan. Arriving at dawn after a 10-hour journey, all locations were reced in preparation for two days of shooting locations

ranging from fields at dawn to the majestic Mehrangarh Fort. Rajasthan gave us ideal first and last light filming conditions.

After three weeks on the road it was back to Mumbai to complete the project. A brief trip to a beach in Goa and a stream hidden in the Sanjay Gandhi national park gave us our remaining exterior locations and then it was into a sound stage at Film City (giving me my first Bollywood experience) for the last day of shooting where we built a catwalk for a highly colourful fashion show sequence.

Overall the *Incredible India* project was an unforgettable experience. I was extremely fortunate to have fantastic back-up from the crew and was highly impressed by their professional and dedicated approach to what was a very tough and involved schedule. Needless to say my decision to shoot on Fujifilm did total justice to the unique landscapes and colours that this wonderful country has to offer. India certainly is ‘Incredible’.

Crew: *Director* Amit Pandirkar  
*Producer* Savio Shenoy  
*DP* Mik Allen  
*Production Designer* Neharika Awal  
*PM* Liyakat Ali  
*Gaffer* Shikhar “Sumer” Bhatnagar

█ *Incredible India* was originated on 16mm Fujicolor ETERNA Vivid 160T 8643 and ETERNA 250T 8653



Photos: Mik Allen on various locations and set-ups in India