

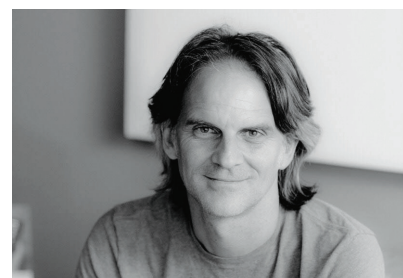


LEFT Kathryn Hahn and Kevin Bacon appear in *I Love Dick* by Jill Soloway, Andrea Arnold, Kimberly Peirce and Jim Frohna, an official selection of the Special Events program at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Courtesy of Sundance Institute | photo by Jessica Brooks

BELOW Jim Frohna, director of photography of *'I Love Dick'*, an official selection of the Special Events program at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Courtesy of Sundance Institute | photo by Marc Vanocur.



How I Shot That: DP Jim Frohna Brings an Indie Film Approach to Shooting Amazon's *'I Love Dick'*

// AFTER SHOOTING EVERY SEASON OF "TRANSPARENT" THE CINEMATOGRAPHER DISCUSSES WORKING WITH SERIES CREATOR JILL SOLOWAY ON HER NEW AMAZON SERIES. // Chris O'Falt, March 8, 2017

Jim Frohna has shot every season of Amazon's *"Transparent,"* making him the natural pick for series creator Jill Soloway to hire for her new series *"I Love Dick,"* which will be premiere on Amazon in May.

While the approach to shooting a series and a feature-length movie can be completely different, Frohna says that with both of Soloway's Amazon series, each season is treated like a five-hour film. By creating a shooting environment where the actors are free to experiment and the DP adjusts to what is happening on set, Frohna has brought an indie film approach to match Soloway's intimate and humorous stories.

The pilot of *"I Love Dick"* is live on Amazon now and while the DP was at Sundance for a sneak peak of three episodes he caught up with IndieWire to

discuss how he shot the new series.

What camera did you use?

We used the Canon C300 Mark II. I think it comes down to taste really. When we first started using the Canon cameras it reminded me of Fuji film. Using the Canon was an intuitive response to what the image felt like it should look like to me. It never felt digital to me. It never seemed oversaturated or anything that would scream HD. I just really liked the color palette and that combination of this cool, detached, softer color which made it all really stand out.

Why was the C300 Mark II the right tool for *"I Love Dick"*?

I started using Canon cameras for *"Transparent"* and the initial choice was because of the nice compact size. And I also liked the quality of the image that

came out of it. We do a lot of handheld work, so it worked on that level as well. At a certain point, Amazon dictated that all their shows be shot in 4K and there was a period when I had to use an external recorder. Then in time for season 3, we were able to use the Mark II, which does the 4K internally. I was very happy when they upgraded so that I could keep using the same Canon.

Jill initially conceived *"Transparent"* to be a five-hour indie film as opposed to a TV show. Both in the spirit of how we shoot the show and trying to take creative and narrative risks in front of and behind the camera, it's very similar to shooting an indie film. Intimacy with the actors is the key. I can build up the C300 Mark II to be a big professional rig with all the bells and whistles, but I can also strip it down to be mobile and allow me to interact and adjust to what is happening on set.

What are some risks that you are taking behind the camera as a cinematographer?

There's a scene as-written and then there is the day of shooting. With a director like Andrea Arnold [the *"American Honey"* and *"Fish Tank"* filmmaker directed three episodes of *"I Love Dick"*], she always wants to shoot the rehearsal. The scene is the guideline to getting to the guts of the matter. So we never set marks.

A lot of scenes take place inside a small house in *"I Love Dick"* between the main couple [Kathryn Hanh and Griffin Dunne], so I will light all the rooms to try and keep it as authentic and real as possible. Actors can then move around the space and then the camera operators don't know exactly where the actors are going to go so in that way we respond to them and what is happening to capture it all. People really respond to the idea that it is unfolding before them. It's a very live process. It's a very challenging process.

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// Jim Frohna

Is there are particular rig you use to go handheld or are you switching based on circumstances?

We have your average handheld rig and then what we do with one of the cameras is we have it stripped down to its essence, where it almost feels like you're holding a still camera. In scenes that feel particularly intimate – emotionally or sexually – we try to have the smallest footprint possible. What I love about it is that I am cradling that thing near my sternum or heart or lower. It's just super flexible. It does not feel like a machine at all. It feels like this small little thing that is capturing the feeling.

How does needing to stay mobile and flexible dictate your choice of lens?

A lot of the time when on tight schedules, or shooting handheld, there are great lightweight zooms that you can use but the style that Jill and I established and that I shoot in doesn't need that. In that way the handheld, mobile thing doesn't really come into play.

Pairing vintage lens with these cameras like on *"I Love Dick"* where we shot using Super Baltars was beautiful. And with *"Transparent"* we used older Zeiss lens and then for all the flashbacks we used these old Leica Leitz lens that were made in the 1930s and early '40s. We choose the lens for the look, and it doesn't necessarily support or hinder the handheld. //

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was part of Indiewire and Canon U.S.A. partnership at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, where we celebrated cinematography at the Canon Creative Studio on Main Street.

Sundance Live: Jim Frohna (*"I Love Dick"*) at Canon Creative Studio

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