Kingsley (left), as magician-filmmaker Georges Melies, gets direction from Scorsese on the set in London.

Making of *Hugo*

In a dazzling homage to movie history, Scorsese re-creates the magic of cinema in 1931 Paris

MARTIN SCORSESE'S new film *Hugo* is like an incredibly detailed and expansive tour of the filmmaker's mind and memory. *A Trip to the Moon.* Charlie Chaplin. *The 400 Blows.* Audrey Hepburn. *Dial M for Murder.* It's as if he wired a projector straight to the mental cinema archives he's amassed over his 69 years and simply let the images and references overlay the story of an orphan boy in 1931 Paris who finds a new family through the magic of movies.

Adapted from Brian Selznick's Caldecott Award-winning illustrated 2007 novel *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, the movie follows Hugo (played by British newcomer Asa Butterfield), who lives in the walls of a train station and tries to unlock the mystery of a strange

automaton (or primitive robot) left to him by his dead father. His journey, abetted by an adventurous girl named Isabelle (Chloe Grace Moretz), brings him to the work of French filmmaker Georges Melies (Ben Kingsley), a real-life magician and filmmaker responsible for some of the earliest visual effects, including the famous rocket in the moon's eye from the 1902 masterpiece *A Trip to the Moon.*

"The final key that made me realize I should make the picture was that, ultimately, the mystery is resolved through the invention of cinema," says Scorsese. "It took me back to that very primal connection to the illusion of motion."

He cites specifically his own childhood viewing of *The Magic Box* in 1951, which detailed British inventor William Friese-Greene's efforts to create camera projection.

"He just was obsessed with perfecting this idea of the illusion of movement to tell stories — the belief in the ability of the moving image to make a better life for everyone," Scorsese says.

Scorsese's dedication to that ideal leaves little question why he was drawn to a film adaptation of Selznick's novel. Ostensibly a family film, the 3D *Hugo* is just as much an exploration of the power of cinema and the lost legacy of seminal artist Melies. Producer Graham King, who financed the movie through his GK Films, first optioned the novel with Johnny Depp when both had production deals at Warner Bros., months before Scholastic Press even published the book in January 2007. (The project eventually migrated to Sony, then Paramount, in search of a Thanksgiving holiday slot; it opens Nov. 23.)

Scorsese and King already were talking about turning it into a feature together when they won Oscars for *The Departed*, the same weekend that *Cabret* hit No. 1 on *The New York Times* best-seller list. While John Logan, who had written *The Aviator* for Scorsese, worked to nail down a script, Scorsese went off to make *Shutter Island* for Paramount. Other filmmakers were interested in *Hugo*, but King waited.

"I couldn't get my head out of Marty directing this," King says. "It's such an homage to cinema. There's no one better to do that than Martin Scorsese."

When Scorsese had completed *Shutter Island* and was finally free to tackle *Hugo* in the summer of 2010, he told King that he wanted to try shooting in 3D for the first time. Although the cameras and extra tech crew would add 15 percent to the $100 million-plus budget, King felt the 3D would also create an intriguing marketing hook: a vaunted old-school filmmaker taking on the newest of technologies.

"No one had ever shot like this in 3D before," says King. "A small part of what's great about how Scorsese tells you a story is the way he moves those cameras, right? The tracking shot in *Goodfellas*, for example. I thought, if he does those kinds of tracking shots in 3D — wow. It'll be fantastic."

Selznick's novel had captivated readers in part because of his copious illustrations, which took up half the book and were designed to evoke the frames in a cinema reel. Much of *Hugo*'s story takes place in the concourses and catacombs of the beautiful station, inside its clocks and walls, as Hugo searches for clues and avoids the dreaded station inspector (Sacha Baron Cohen) determined to send him to an orphanage.

The decision to shoot the movie in 3D was incorporated into every aspect of the production, not just the tunnels and clock towers of the massive train station but even the choice of dogs. "If you read the screenplay, there are a lot of descriptions of moving through

things — moving through the tunnels, moving through the clockwork gears, moving into things — to give it that sense of motion," says Logan. "It became all-important. Even things like jokes — that's why I picked a Doberman pinscher and two dachshunds. I purposefully chose long dogs with big, long noses that would be effective either in a comical way or in a frightening way in 3D."

The modern 3D technology actually fit the story: Melies, in his 1903 *The Cake-Walk Infernal*, and other filmmakers such as the Lumiere brothers already were experimenting with it in the early 1900s. The medium also was popular with a very key constituency: Scorsese's 11-year-old daughter, Francesca, and her friends. "One of the reasons we did the 3D was that the minute we mentioned it to any of the kids that were around, they immediately jumped up, 'In 3D! In 3D!' " he says. A fan of some of the 3D films shot during the medium's previous heyday in the 1950s, Scorsese pulled reels from his personal archive and had his cast and crew watch a few of his favorites before filming *Hugo*.

"He was a secret fan of 3D," says visual effects supervisor Rob Legato (*Titanic*). "I had no idea. We screened his personal 3D prints — *Dial M for Murder*, *House of Wax* and other movies. He would say, 'Go for it; make it hurt first, then we'll back off.' "

The director discovered that the 3D cameras brought out the imposing stature of the inspector as well as intimacy when focused on the faces of Moretz and Butterfield, who were both 13 years old during filming. "It suddenly becomes much more intimate with them, and it's like when I look at my daughters' faces," says Scorsese. "My first inclination is to embrace the kids. And I had that feeling when we were shooting them. That it was something warm and really intimate. They were just so lovable, and I wanted
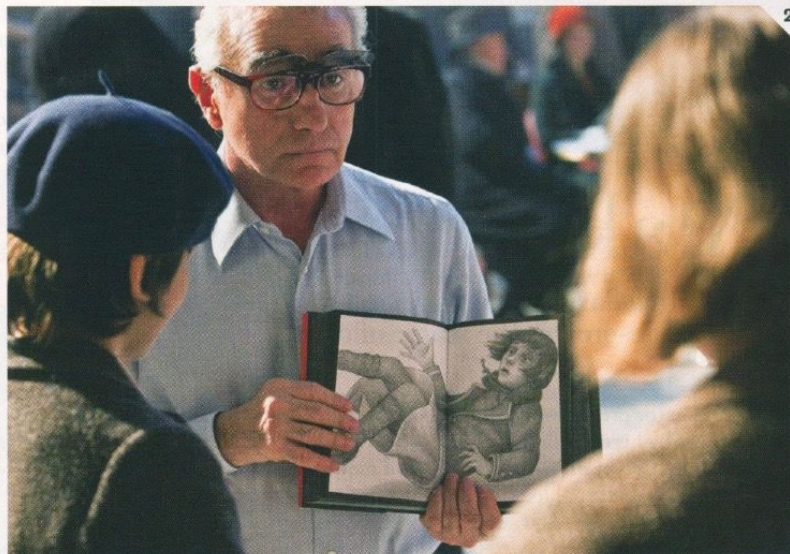
to translate that to the audience, and the 3D really helped. You wanted to share that world with them." That closeness and clarity had its dangers, too. "That camera picks up *everything*," says Moretz. "Every little hesitancy and every movement. So if you're having an off day, and you're not feeling the character, you can [see it in the footage]. It looks really bad."

On the other end of the scale, production designer Dante Ferretti (*Gangs of New York*) and his team spent six months constructing the elaborate train station set on the backlots of both Shepperton and Longcross studios in London. (The rest of the five-month shoot was done in Paris and at London's Pinewood Studios.) "You walk in, and immediately

you feel like you're in the 1930s," says Moretz. "Especially when we were filming. All the steam was going and the fake cigarettes and everything. The station felt so real. It's always best when you walk into an environment and if you look around you won't spot a Coke can, you'll just see actual news clippings from the 1930s. It was beautiful."

Scorsese's encyclopedic knowledge of film history and literature began popping up everywhere. Ferretti built the staircase up to Melies' apartment as a replica of the one in Francois Truffaut's *400*

Blows. Scorsese and Logan had Dickens in mind with Hugo, the orphaned boy with the dirty face. Cohen, whose role was beefed up from the book to add more comedy and antagonism, was encouraged to make use of the silent-film goofing of Chaplin and Keaton for physical humor. A suspenseful sequence with Butterfield hanging from a giant clock hand mimicked the famous Harold Lloyd scene from the 1923 film *Safety Last!* And Isabelle, the eager accomplice in Hugo's solemn journey, was modeled after one of the most charming stars of the 1950s and '60s.

"When I first got to London, I met up with Marty, we had a whole conversation about Isabelle and the look and the hair and everything. She was always a very Audrey Hepburn. book-smart, fun, take-charge sort of girl," says Moretz, who dug into *Funny Face*, *Roman Holiday*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and the rest of the Hepburn canon at Scorsese's request. "Our main thing was to make her the girl who wants to live the adventure. Audrey lights up the screen. I tried very hard to convey that."

Working with kids was something Scorsese hadn't done for

some time, and labor laws in England meant he only had his two young stars for short periods of time. "We had the kids for four hours a day, including rehearsal time," says King. "That was really stressful for him and stressful for the production." The director also had to incorporate the new-to-him 3D tech crew with their ever-present laptops, substantial greenscreen and the trio of Dobermans who played Maximilian, the station inspector's loyal dog. Butterfield occasionally even had to wear glasses with bits of sausage attached for scenes where he had

to keep the canines' focus (something that then made it difficult for Moretz to focus), but Scorsese claims the mutts are creatures he's grown to love since his asthma has retreated in his later years.

"Dogs have become very important to me," he says. "So the dogs were like the kids and the people in the movie to me. We used to joke, 'I've got to cut to the dog.' "

That their names were Blackie, Enzo and Borsalino brought yet another reference to mind. Jokes Scorsese: "I said, 'We're making a gangster picture.' "

— JAY A. FERNANDEZ AND CAROLYN GIARDINA
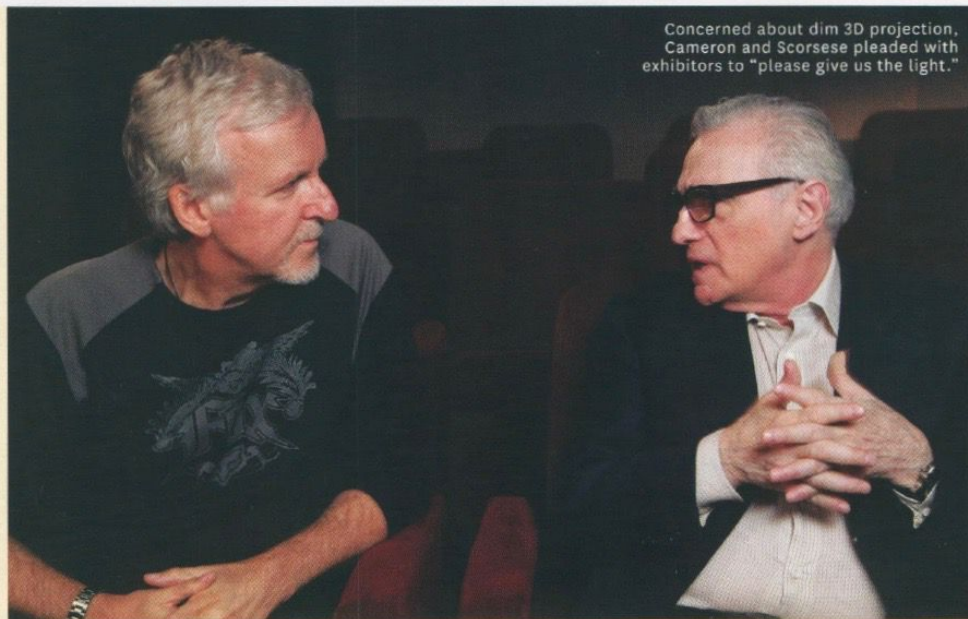
Concerned about dim 3D projection, Cameron and Scorsese pleaded with exhibitors to "please give us the light."

'It's the Best 3D Photography I've Seen'

On Nov. 6, after a screening of *Hugo* at L.A.'s DGA Theater, *THR* sat down with a laudatory James Cameron, who was in the audience, and Scorsese for an exclusive discussion of the movie and its use of 3D

Marty, this is your first foray into 3D moviemaking. How did you use 3D to enhance the storytelling in *Hugo*?
SCORSESE I found that the setting of the story lent itself to using the element of space and depth. It had a lot to do with the machinery of 3D, which creates something beyond itself, the movies that could bring people together. They create images that go up on the screen, and once they're experienced, they're gone. But the emotional impact stays with you.
CAMERON I found the film to be very emotional. I felt like the audience was right there with the nuance of every moment.
SCORSESE What happened is that, rather than 3D being used in a way that I used to enjoy, too — with the camera flying around — I was trying to take the audience and put them in that world. And bring the children forward. Because seeing the kid [actors] every day first thing in the morning, I'd grab them and hug them and kiss them. And that's what I wanted the audience to feel like.

And you felt like the 3D would bring the audience in closer?
SCORSESE We discovered it. That's what we felt, saying, "Why's it better this way?"
CAMERON But the beauty of what you did is that you reacted to the 3D instinctively. You saw

it and you said, "Oh, I can do this, and I can do that." You weren't waiting for some 3D guy to tell you what you can and can't do.
SCORSESE That was the key thing. It was [DP] Bob Richardson, and [3D stereographer] Demetri Portelli was really good on the I/O. Intraocular — that's the lens for the right and one for the left. And if you take it too far apart, that hurts. You would hear me scream. So
CAMERON We made up a term: "brain sheer."

Jim, were there things that you saw in *Hugo* that you felt the 3D really enhanced?
CAMERON It doesn't serve the film to talk about the 3D as if it's a separate thing. I mean, of course it's a lead story that a filmmaker of Marty's stature and pedigree is working in 3D. Because it's sort of breaking down this idea that 3D is for just hyper-commercial films. What you did was you integrated it with the color, with the composition, with the camera movement, with the acting. Everything. I would say it's like a 16-cylinder Bugatti firing perfectly on every cylinder. It's absolutely the best 3D photography that I've seen. It's constantly supportive of what you're doing artistically and never detractive.
SCORSESE The big stigma is

the fashion to say it's a gimmick. You gotta understand, when moving images first started, people wanted sound, color, big screen and depth. The Lumiere films, two of them are in 3D. And Melies was already going there.
CAMERON Your film is about the very first days of the magic of cinema. And in its execution, the medium is the message. The movie is magical to watch. So you've exactly closed the ellipse in such an amazing, artistic way.

a long time that drama is being overlooked for 3D. People are thinking the obvious knee-jerk way that it should be action or science fiction. Something like this, where you have a great artist that's created this, I think it's gonna break some doors down in the minds of Hollywood of what's possible.
SCORSESE Every subject can encompass this medium. Really. Shakespeare in 3D. What Time Warner should do is take *Dial M for Murder* and make a transfer

> ❝ I've been saying for a long time that drama is being overlooked for 3D. I think *Hugo* is gonna break doors down in the minds of Hollywood." — James Cameron

SCORSESE They were going there anyway.
CAMERON Can you imagine Melies today with digital tools? The guy would be going crazy.
SCORSESE Well, he was a genius. He was also a great magician. So he understood the illusion. And then he figured out how to do the illusion with film.
CAMERON It's all tricks.
SCORSESE It's all tricks.

Does *Hugo* bode well for more live-action 3D movies that are not in traditional genres?
CAMERON I've been saying for

to digital. Remaster it into 3D. That'll show it's a dramatic film, it's 3D, and it works.

Is there a takeaway for the industry and other filmmakers?
CAMERON I can just tell you my reaction, which was it was a joyful film for me to watch to see a great artist embracing the new tools of 3D so perfectly. You're going to have to brace yourself for talking about 3D a lot now.
SCORSESE I like it! It's such an exciting chance for the medium to expand this way. Everyone's getting on board. — J.A.F.