



STELLA ARTOIS

WATERCOLOUR TVC

A DIRECTOR'S TREATMENT BY MARK SELIGER & EM COOPER



WE ARE WATER.

The average adult human body is 50-65% water.

71% of the earth's surface is covered with water.

Water is the greatest force on earth.

It has shaped this planet.

It shapes our destiny.

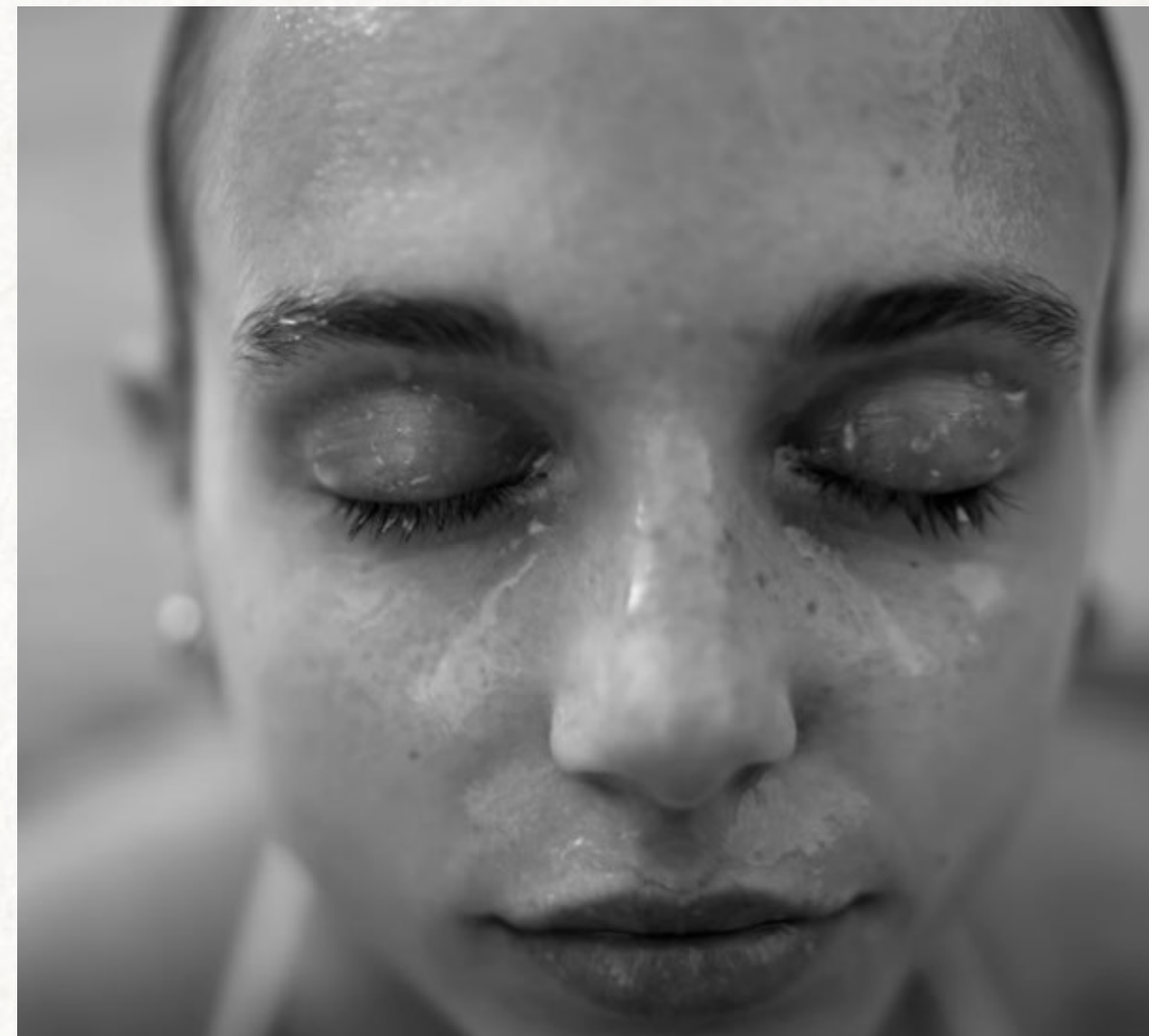
We are born from water.

It is the symbol of purity.

Water is critical to our life and survival.

Yet so often take it for granted.

Until now...





VISION

PEOPLE DON'T BUY FACTS, THEY BUY FEELINGS.

Most advertising is designed to get people to spend money they haven't got, to buy stuff they don't need, to impress people they don't like.

This is different. Radically different.

Close to a billion people lack access to safe water at home. Two billion have no access to a toilet.

Matt's work with water.org and Stella Artois provides access to water that helps turn poverty into possibility. It's a pleasure and a privilege to be part of the solution.

Giving back 4 hours more a day means freedom in energy, time and relationships. That's 12.5 years over an average lifetime.

Impressive though these statistics are, the idea comes to life through emotion, passion and purpose.

Stories teach us empathy.

They reveal to us ourselves through the lives of others.



APPROACH

STORY IS A PASSION MEETING A PROBLEM.

Telling a story in 30' is a luxury for me. As a photographer, I'm used to distilling a story into one frame. Instead of the 720 frames in your average TVC. Yet, the principle I use is the same.

*Every story has three elements:
Attention, Empathy and Reward.*

A good example is the world's shortest story from Ernest Hemingway.

"For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

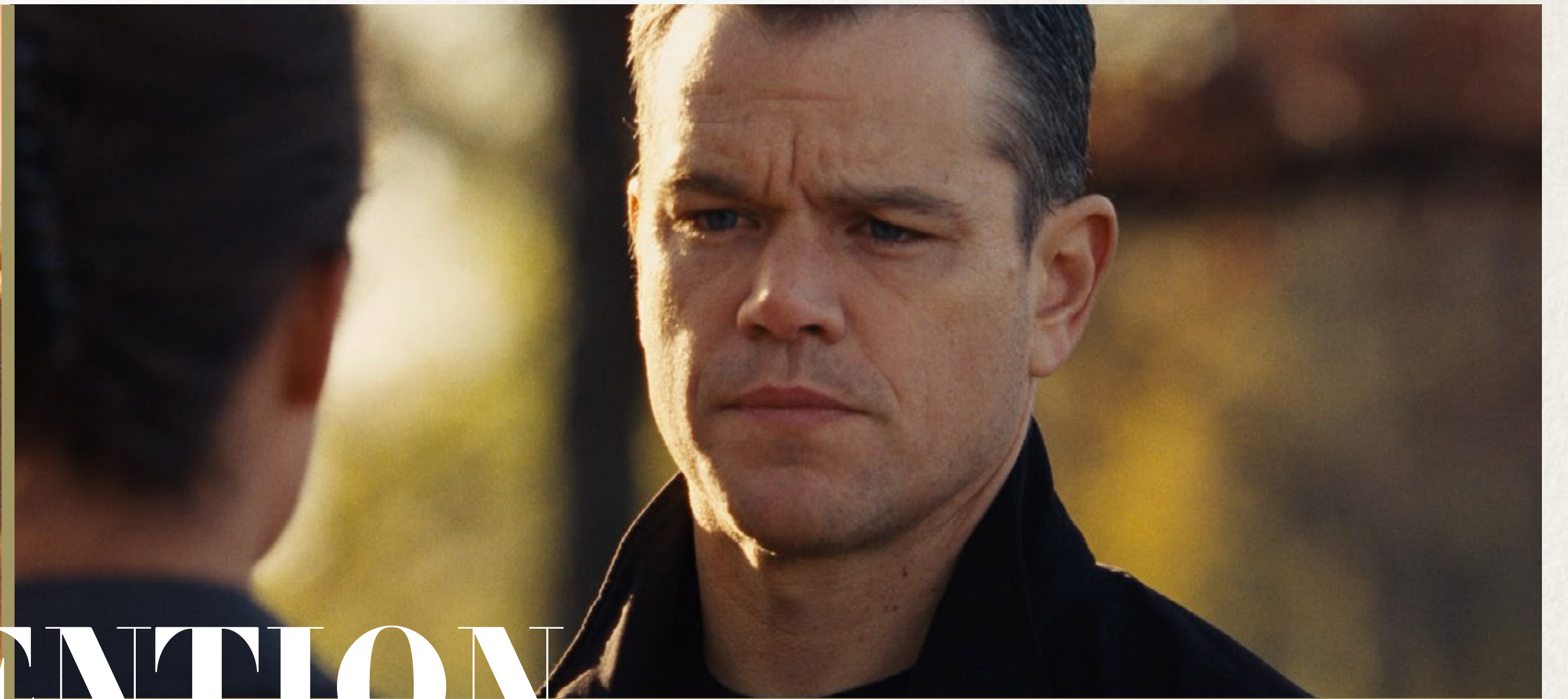


Attention... empathy... and reward: the whole story in six words.

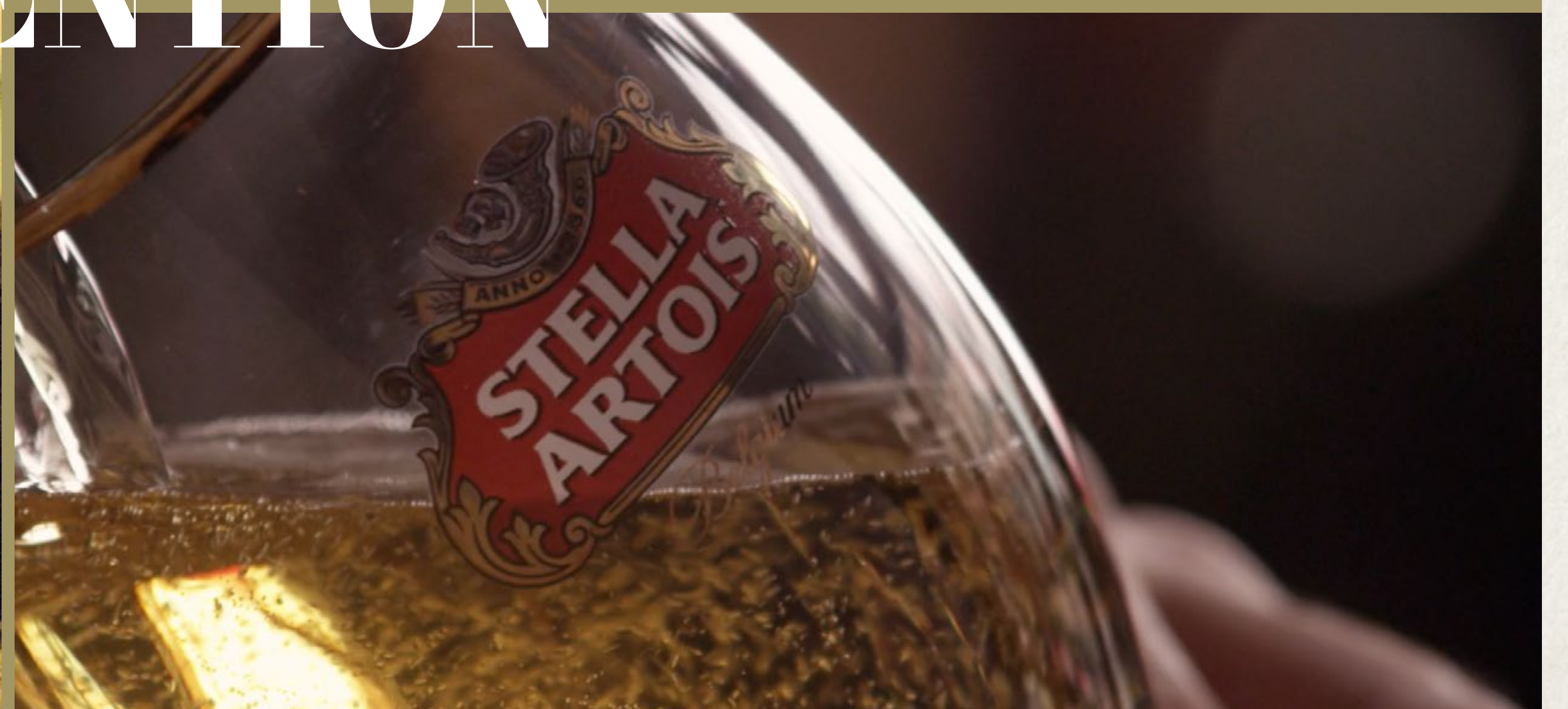
Something captures your eye, draws you in emotionally and rewards you for your attention.

In a picture, most of that work's done in your head. In film, we do it on screen. Let's break that down for our project...





ATTENTION





THE WORLD RUNS ON ATTENTION.

We start with Matt Damon over drinks. His star power catches your attention.

Is Jason Bourne about to take out Santa?

Has Loki struck up an affair with an elf?

As he pours a Stella, a droplet from the glass transitions us into his imagination.





EMPATHY





EMPATHY BUILDS CONNECTION.

Now we unleash Em Cooper's superpower.

As a live action filmmaker working in paint, I'm supremely confident of her ability to reveal the grandeur of Matt Damon's imagination...

...the splendour of his vision... the majesty of his interior world.

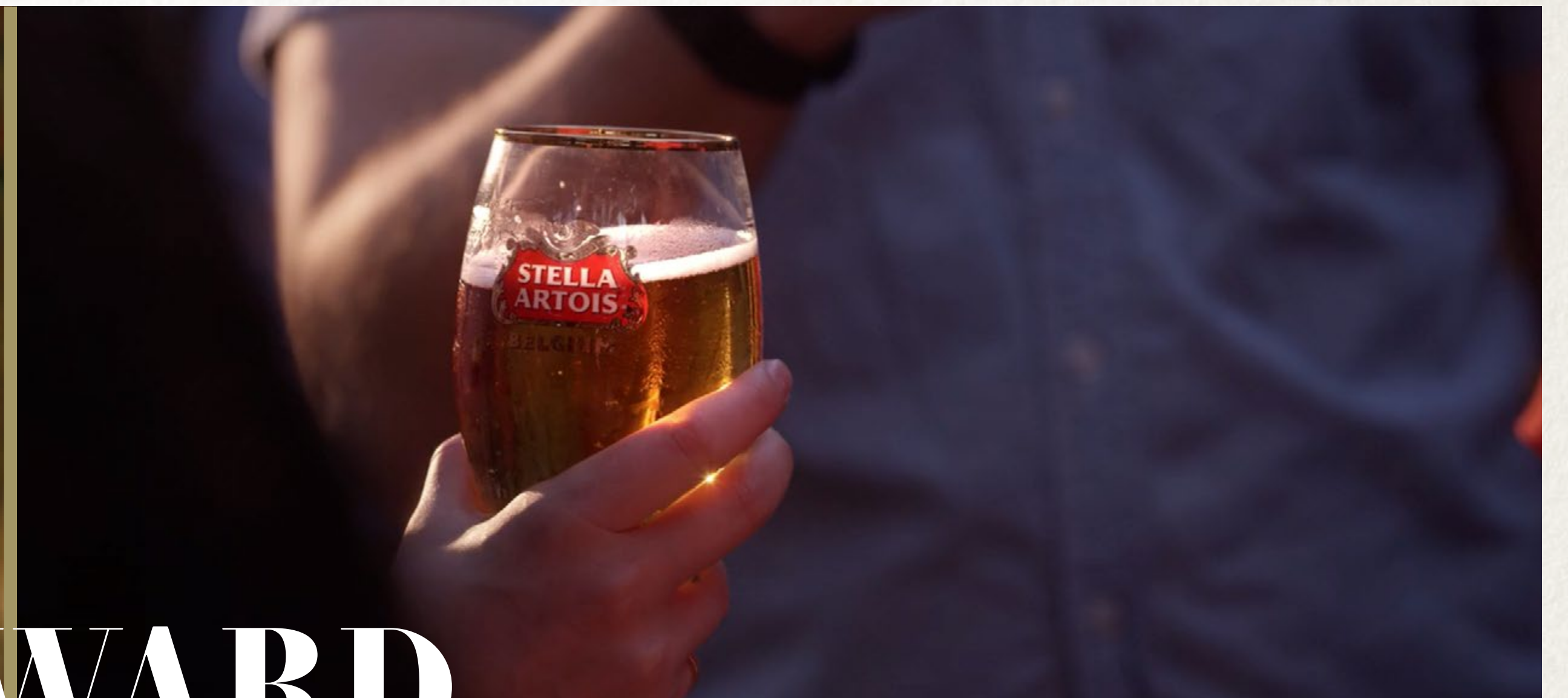
Her work is fluid, mesmerising, beautiful and gracious. She'll create a flawless stream of consciousness of Matt's purpose and passion for helping to ease the water crisis and positively impact the health and livelihood of more than one-third of the world's population.

I'm looking forward to how she'll raise the emotional temperature to build empathy by creating a sense of being and showing Matt's [water.org](https://www.water.org) initiative. While the live action sets it up, the watercolours do the spot's emotional heavy lifting.

I love her process! Look at this, [a masterclass in creative consciousness](#).

Her watercolour dreamscape paints a smooth, flowing and graceful story arc to show how Stella and Matt understand the dire water situation in so many places. It beautifully demonstrates the transformation of the seasonal initiative Stella Artois will deliver. The pictures frame a Yuletide purchase as the perfect opportunity to help slake your thirst and that of someone less fortunate.





REWARD



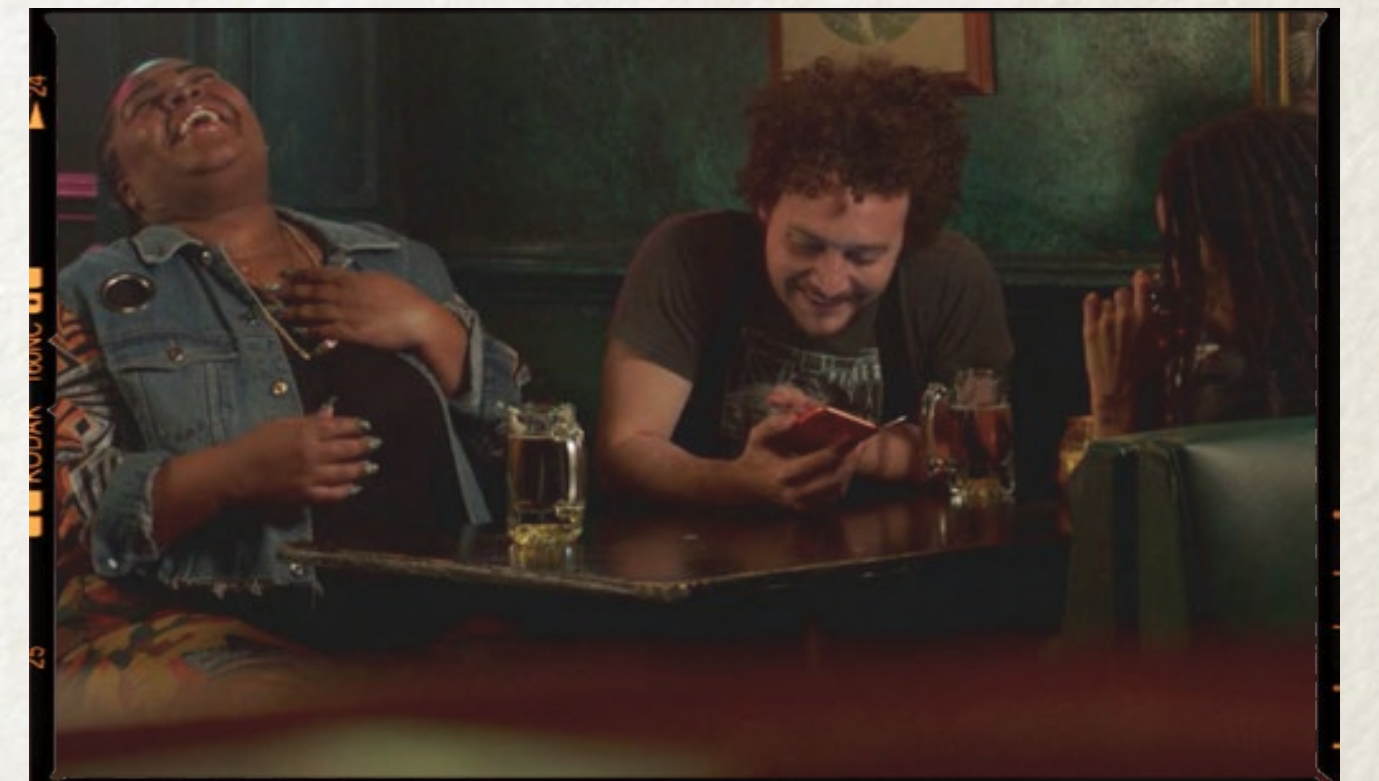


VIRTUE IS ITS OWN REWARD.

Then we transition from the water-of-life, watercolour world through Stella Artois being poured into a chalice as we're back to live action... the real world chez Matt.

This is our chance for a cool reprise: a cheeky toast from Matt and his friends, an impromptu joke, quip to camera or perhaps something completely unscripted we discover on the day. I've shot Matt before. I know I can get a memorable reward for the viewers' attention to climax the spot. I always arrive spring-loaded with some pre-emptive ideas.

Now I'll have over to Em...



ANIMATION

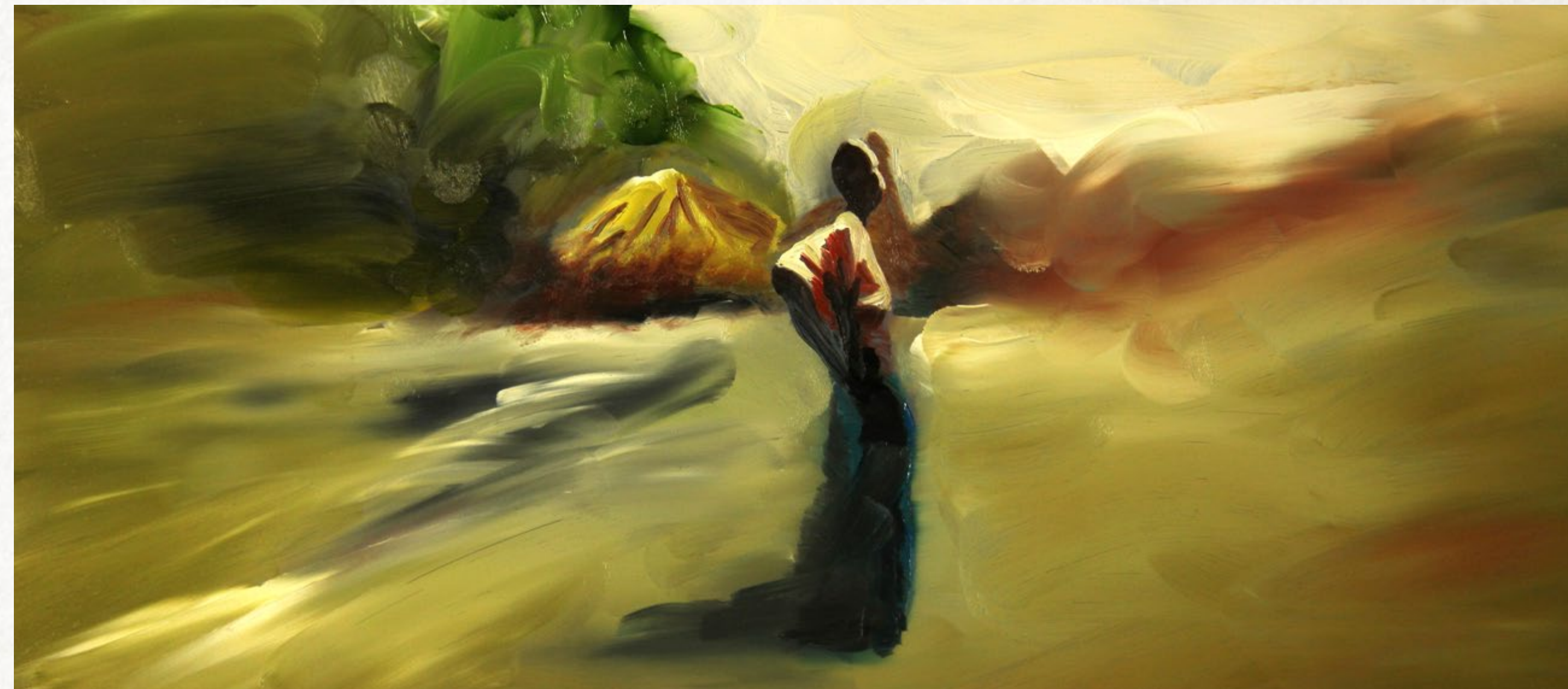
I'm excited!

Watercolour was my first love. It's still my default mode on holiday.

This is a powerful script. The use of watercolour not only makes sense for the subject matter. As a medium, it allows for emotive storytelling, which is what I do best.

Of supreme importance is the flow, using the medium to drive the transitions and narrative. I'll focus on the intimate moments within the script that will help the viewer feel part of the positivity that builds throughout reaching a crescendo at the end.

My style works with close ups, details where one image follows another in a choreographed sequence which transition with fluidity. These transitions are unique to my style. They add power and dynamism, evoking emotion in sequences as they unfold.



DIRECTORIAL APPROACH

In the animated portion of the script, we start with a shot of a woman walking alone, carrying water. I imagine this figure alone in her landscape: we see her from the outside - an isolated figure on the blank paper background - a sense of monotony, effort and isolation. I imagine her painted relatively tightly, and using an ***objective camera angle***, seeing her from the outside.

As the VO mentions the hours she spends collecting water, her figure begins to morph. The strokes and colours which make up her body become sucked downwards, melding together until we realise that the paint feels as though it is ***being drawn down through an hour-glass***. Her time is literally being drawn away from her by this task of collecting water.

We follow the paint on its cascade downwards through the neck of the hourglass. It hits the ‘pile’ at the bottom, precipitating a bounce of movement, which propels us into the positive imagery. The music kicks in following the line ***‘But what if they didn’t have to?’***

From the ‘bounce’, a waterstation/tap/pump rises up into existence. Her hand turns on the tap, and water flows in a beautiful sparkling stream. Now we are in a new mode: characterised by ***subjective camera angles***, camera movement, continuous morphing of close-up elements and a choreographed ‘dance’ of the paint as it flows, bringing life to one thing after another.



The thread of flowing water opens out and the interior of the woman’s home morphs into existence. We float over a table and chairs with a spread of food. We pass family and friends - all created by the water as it passes over them. We see the figure of the woman picking up her child morphs as it spreads perhaps into the image of a child glugging water from a glass. Flowers or crops blossom as we move past them, perhaps following the footsteps of a running child. Fruit falls and splashes into water. Our trajectory is whirled upwards again with a sense of the women dancing, as a momentary close up catches the finger work of playing a musical instrument.

Each of these elements forms a continuous morphing stream of imagery. For example, the paint spreading so that the red of a T-shirt might flow into the pink bloom of a flower. The gold sparkle of a woman’s earrings as she turns her head, might then fall in a cascade of white to become the glints of light on a water glass.

I imagine the thread or stream of water to be a motif which recurs, sometimes taking us from one image to another. All the while the colours running out of each image blend into lines of pigment in the thread itself.

Finally it is that thread of pouring water from the woman’s jug, which transitions back into live-action into Matt’s house, as he pours a glass of Stella Artois.



LOOK/LIGHTING

I have a passion for light. I love creating sequences which seduce us with the play of light and shadow.

My aim for this project will be to find the unique combination of media which give me this ability to play fluidly with light.

The natural state of watercolour is that of a light background. The paint only takes up a portion of the frame. I imagine using this characteristic especially at the beginning and end of the animated sequence. Also it will work well when the paint retreats to a simple thread of water. However when a scene opens out, I imagine paintwork filling the screen, so we feel completely immersed in the paint. That will allow me to create the darker backgrounds I need in order to bring out the play of light.



ANIMATION AND TECHNIQUE



As a painter/animation director, I am familiar with the processes involved in a hand painted animation film.

For this project, I have been experimenting with and trying out the different watercolour techniques and different surface media to find the perfect balance between controllability (needed for precision images, such as faces, hands, details etc) and the fluidity of paint.

My aim is to find moments where I allow the paint to spread and run, in its natural watercolour way, whilst also being able to rein it in, to control the moments of precise detail.

My animation is 'old-school'. I always work entirely with real paint and brushes. My work is hand painted - every frame is a real painting, on celluloid or paper. Every brush stroke and mark I make is entirely authentic, painted by my own hands, not computer generated.

My work has an emotional quality to it - a sense of the human feeling behind it, which the audience can sense in the flicker of the tactile brushstrokes which make up each frame.

AUTHENTIC & EMOTIONAL

For me it is important to have both an emotional and an authentic connection to the work. I usually use live action footage as a guide for my animation.

For this piece, I would like to use that aspect to our advantage, so that we could fully embed the animated section of the film in the reality of the work that water.org is doing. It would be my aim to connect with a project facilitated by water.org to gain footage and cultural references which would be used within the animation. The aim would be to celebrate the specifics of a particular project from water.org, rather than stereotyping or giving an ‘overview’.

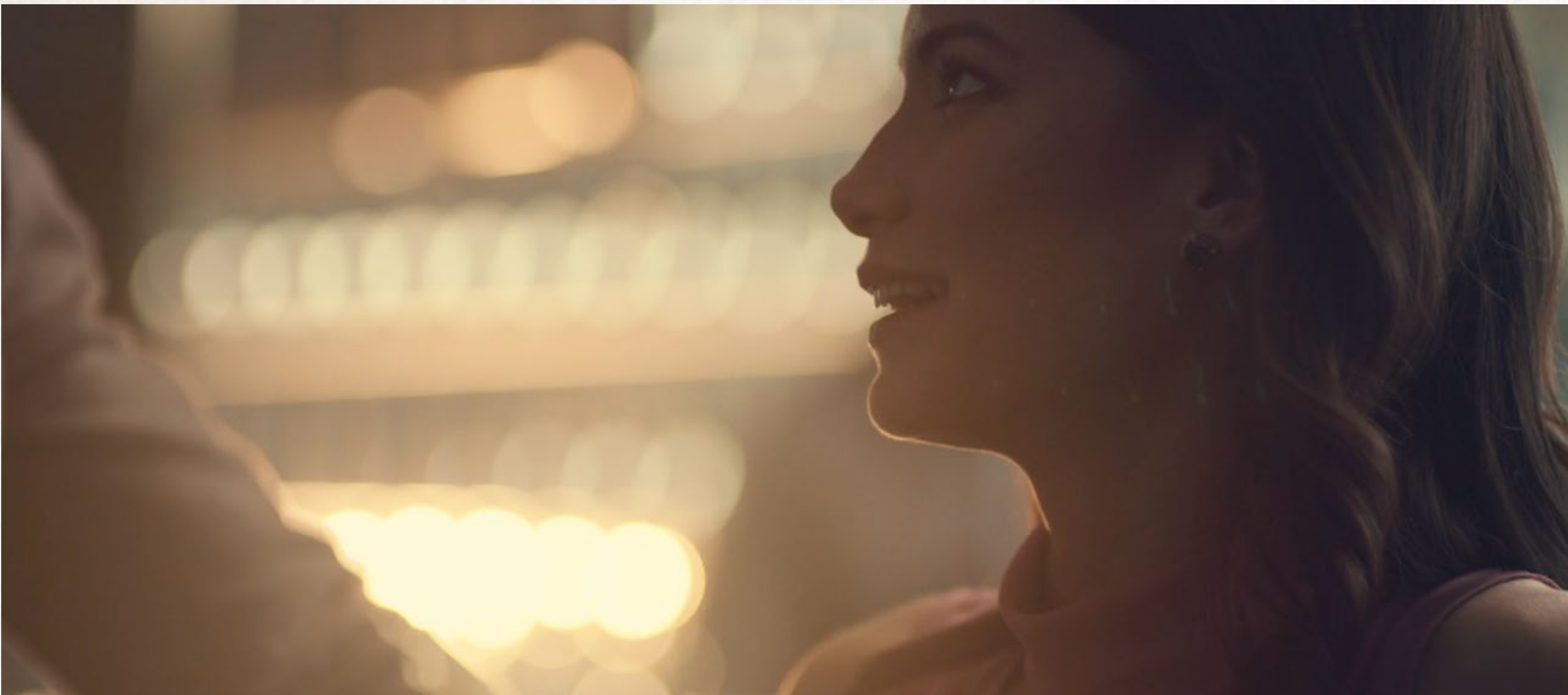
For me, this is also important as a director: my specialism is creating work with a subjective perspective. In the past, I have made films which kindle a sense of the unconscious, or fleeting thoughts and feelings. I have created pieces which evoke the inner world of neurodiverse individuals, or the perspective of children or babies. My ideal would be to have the time to gain an understanding into the specific world of the women in this story, so as to best be able to conjure their world.

Pictures speak louder than words so please take a look at my test film:

<https://slt.re/70365>

And now I'll hand it back over to Mark...





CINEMATOGRAPHY.

Even though it's a warm intimate moment casa Damon, we still want that blockbuster feel and gorgeous cinematic glory. Warm red, gold, yellows and lens flare set the festive feel before we segue into Em's watercolour world. The real trick will be creating a unified look and feel in the grade that matches the fluidity of the edit.

My DOP is mighty [Pete Konczal](#). BMW, Cosmo, House of Card, Jay Z... he's got that gorgeous A-list look that makes every shot a cut above. Take a look at [The Weekend](#) and [New Gallery](#) and you'll see he's got what it takes to [Rise To The Occasion](#).

CASTING

IS 81% OF DIRECTION.



I've worked with Matt. I am comfortable with his type, around heavy hitter, A-listers. I prep with military precision so that we can be completely relaxed on set. The irony is that while it takes a lot of effort to get to this position, it's surprisingly easy when you have this level of talent to work with. They know how to act and respond well to direction.

For Matt's friends, we'll pick a diverse, idiosyncratic group; relaxed character actors who all look like they could be someone.

Ultimately, Stella Artois is the quintessential social lubricant. We want to be able to reflect that in the toast, consumption and drinking shots.

Wardrobe to be elegant, not too dressy, and with a festive flair and a nod to the brand colours of red, white and gold.



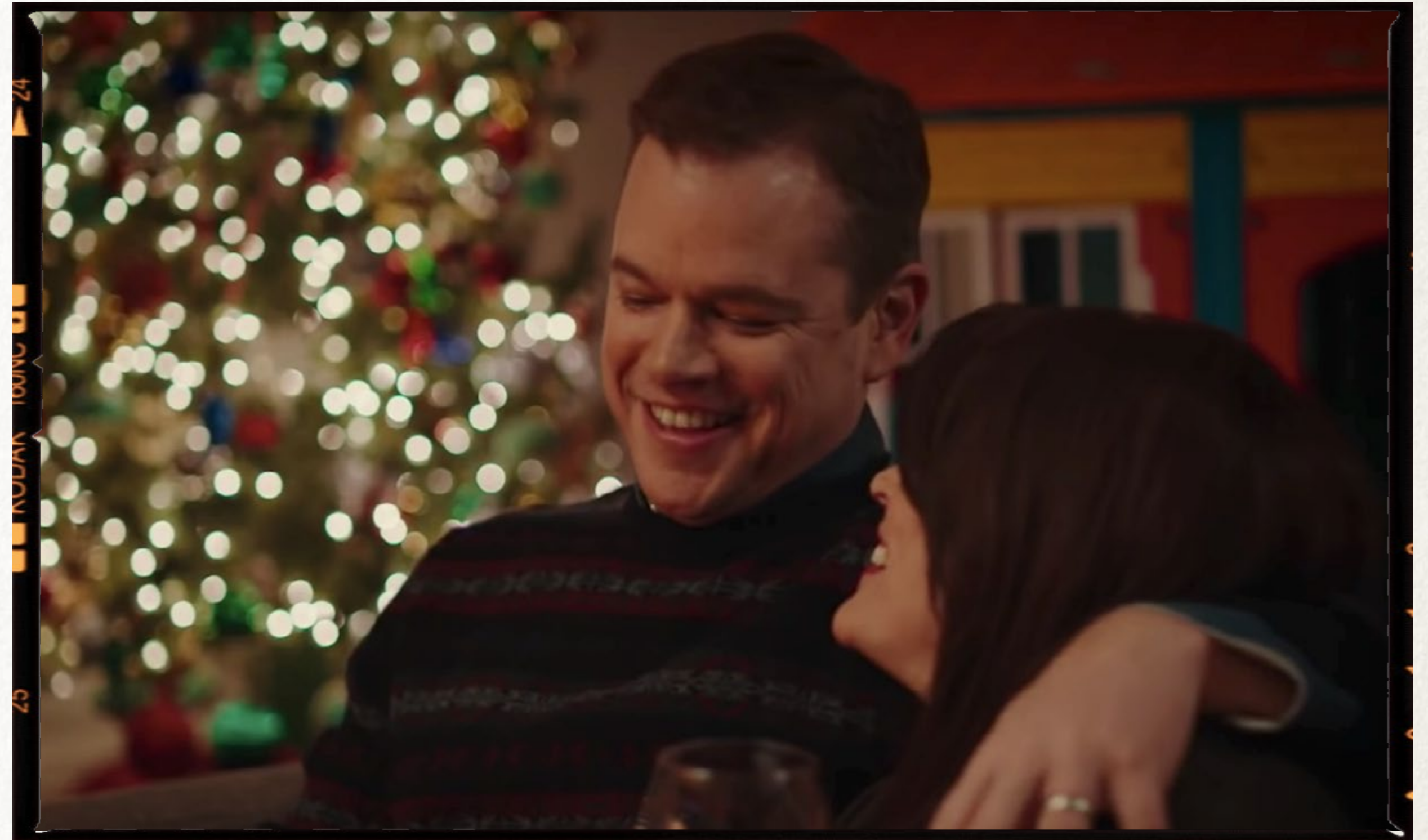
ACTION!

OPEN ON MATT DAMON.

He comes home bearing gifts. In his living room, we see a few chalices of Stella Artois wrapped as gifts. The place is stylishly decorated with Christmas fairy lights, candles and ornaments.

Relaxed and chilled, he unwraps one of the chalices and pours a Stella Artois into it. He rests the perfectly poured chalice on the table on top of the sumptuous wrapping paper.

We dive into a close-up to reveal a droplet of condensation forming on the side of the glass. It slides all the way down onto the wrapping paper underneath.



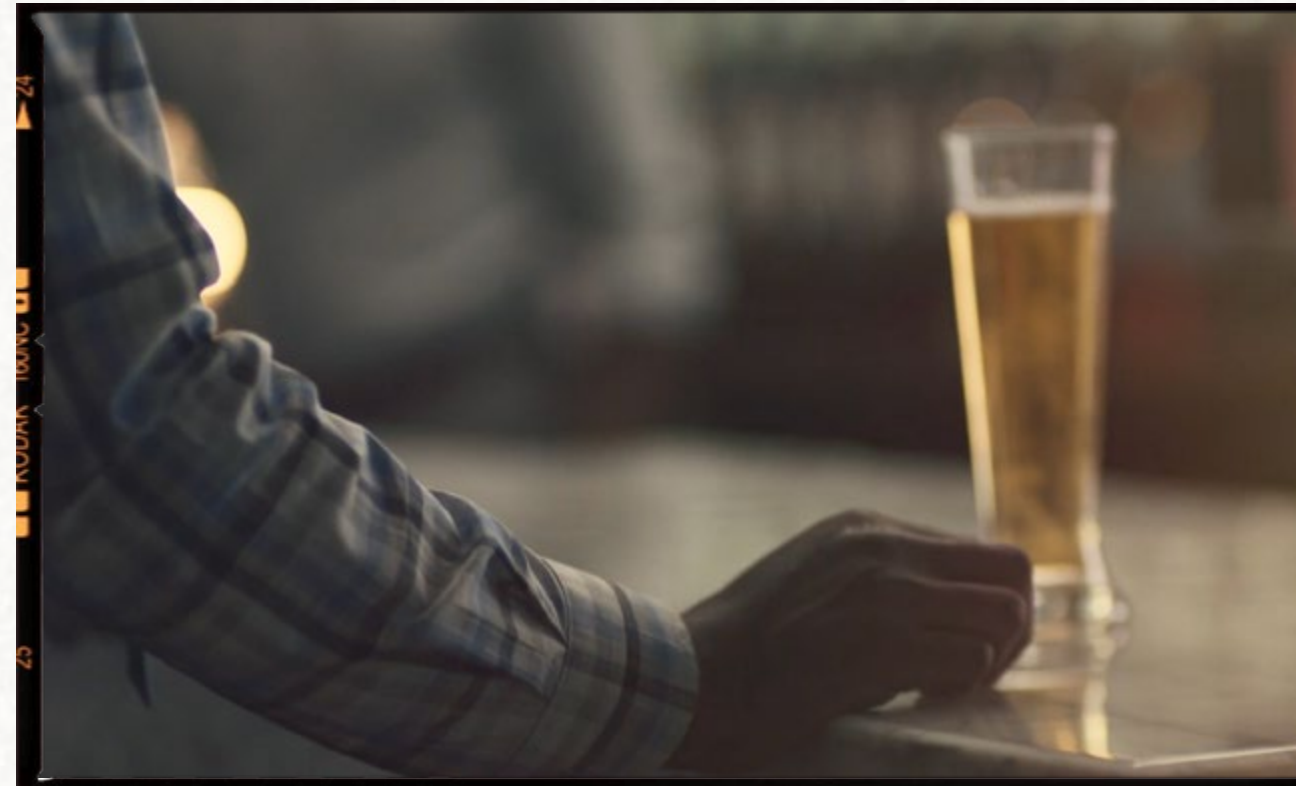
This is the transitional point of the film. As the droplet hits the motifs, we see a mesmerizing watercolour effect. The camera moves through the paper to transport us into the glorious watercolour world of Matt's imagination.

It's as if we've gone from inside the room to inside his head.

At first, we're in a sparse, dry landscape. We see a woman walking alone.

Matt: Millions of women like Maria spend hours a day collecting water. But what if they didn't have to?

We watch her walking to a water pump in the middle of her village, a recent addition to her world. "Time is on my side" kicks in. As she pushes the pump, the water flows from within and magically adds life to her surroundings.

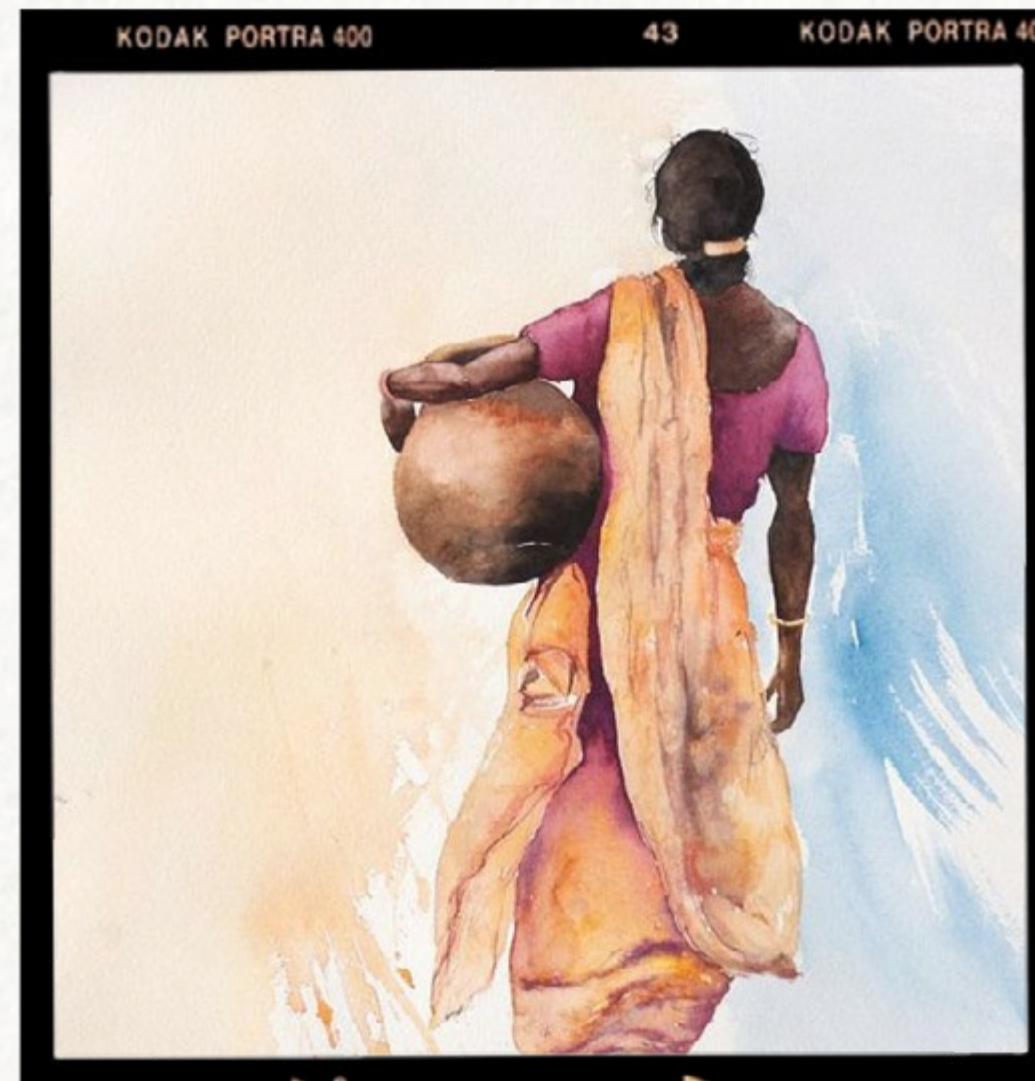


Suddenly, a house appears in the scene. Our heroine walks inside as the watercolour continues to flow around her, creating a table and chairs and then a spread of food and drinks.

She turns on a tap at the sink and the running water immediately adds life, vibrancy and colour the scene. She is now surrounded by friends and loved ones as the water flows.

She puts her hands under the running tap and playfully flicks them at her friends. The water droplets flow around a friend and turn her dress into a brightly coloured dress.

Some fruit appears and slowly falls in mid-air. As it falls, a beautifully painted bowl appears underneath. One of the women picks a piece of fruit and bites it. Another woman fills an empty vase with water. The water flows in mid-air, then creates vibrant watercolour flowers that fill up the vase.





As the water continues to flow, the home transforms again as the table moves to one side, creating a space to dance. A traditional musical instrument appears in one of the women's hands. The friends laugh and enjoy each other's company, make music and dance, celebrating the life of possibilities that the water has created.



Finally, our hero woman pours some water from a jug into her friends' glasses. The animation ends with water swirling into the final pour of live action as we transition from this water being poured into a glass to a Stella Artois being poured into a chalice. Pull wide to reveal that we're back to the real world in Matt Damon's house.

His friends call him over to join them as they all enjoy a beautiful moment together. The idea is a fantasy or a fable. Matt is inspired by the liquid pouring and he goes into thought



Matt: Every Stella Artois supports Water.org and provides years of water. So, take the time, grab a Stella, and give time.

They raise a toast.

SUPER & VO: Give the Gift of Time in The Life Artois



LOCATION

IS CHARACTER.

Matt looks like the kind of guy who has good taste.... no tiger striped pool tables chez Damon! We want a bright, light airy space with simple classic Nordic style furnishings that we can add a subtle festive touch to. We can look at options of lounge sitting areas and kitchen/breakfast table areas on stools which might work well and look more informal. Outside deck space is also a good possibility.



EDIT

(LIFE MINUS THE BORING BITS.)

The master chef for this prime cut is [Barney Miller at Cosmo Street](#).

If some editors have a magic touch, he has The Infinity Gauntlet. He's gloriously adept at live action and animation-type work. I love Barney. He deepens the narrative to the next dimension.

And he always makes me look good.



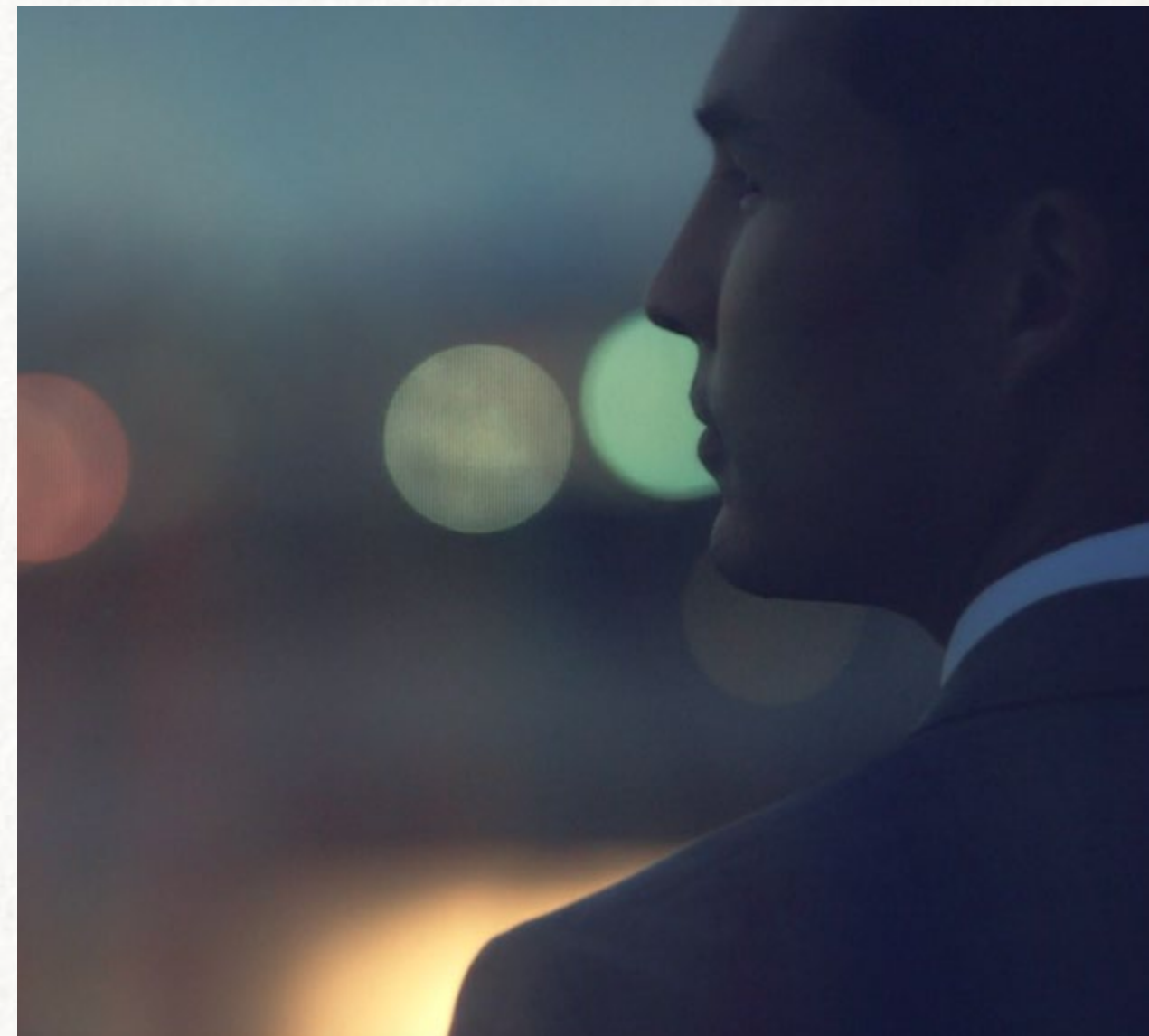
MUSIC



SOUND IS THE MOST POWERFUL SFX.

I don't want to blow my own trumpet but I think it's fair to say that music is a unique identity for me as a director. Over the last 30 years, I've shot and filmed some of the most iconic musicians of our time and have recorded several records of my own. As a singer songwriter, music is a second language for me.

Working alongside our Music Supervisor, I'm happy to leverage my relationships and knowledge of music to ensure that the final piece has a soundtrack that's as stunning as the visuals.



WRAP

It's always wonderful to work with an A-lister for a sophisticated premium brand. But it's a rare pleasure to be able to do so for a cause as worthy and innovative as this.

I can't wait to collaborate with Em Cooper. Seriously looking forward to see how her art translates into empathy. Great art is always a transfer of emotion. Her medium has a warm, tactile soulful quality. A true artist, she creates from heart to head through hand. She will quite literally bring a handcrafted look and feel to this film.

I've total confidence in my DOP, editor and crew. These are my people. They've consistently delivered for me across a spectrum of projects including the last one with Lenny which I think we blasted through in less than a week. Or at least it felt like that.

What's going to drive this spot is Matt Damon's star power and Em's animation genius, sliced and diced to give the whole piece a vibrant, fluid and dynamic live action aesthetic and feel.

Good pre-pro is a confidence transfusion. I like to be thoroughly prepped so that I can hold the client's hand through all the details, so they're calm and relaxed on the shoot. Then they can sit back and enjoy the experience. It's going to be great fun. Do let me know if you have any questions.

Now it's Saturday night here in NY, I think I've earned a Stella.

Cheers,

