For cinematographer and SAE Institute lecturer David Hawkins, 28, life is a moving picture, full of great lighting and perfect framing.

Q&A Love your work

What is the role of a cinematographer? In the simplest terms, it's everything to do with the camera, including framing and lighting.

Isn't that the director's job? The director's job is to oversee the whole production - it's a very creative but managerial position.

Do you only work on set? No, we work with the director on the pre-production process. On set, I take over so the director doesn't have to think about anything except performance.

What have you worked on? People might know The Saviour, which was nominated for an Oscar this year for best live-action short film.

What makes a great picture, composition-wise? There are lots of theories about working in circles or triangles to achieve a pretty picture. Over the years I've learnt the structures so I just move the cameras around and at a certain point you know that's the one.

What do you mean by working in triangles? It's about trying to create triangular structures by using people or forms to create a shape to guide the eye.

Have you begun to see life as a series of scenes? Yes! I'm always seeing good shots and great lighting and wonderful framing. I went through a period of keeping a book of them but it got too fat, too quickly.

What sorts of things make your job difficult? Two things: time and money. In the Australian film world we have so little of both.

Which film has perfect cinematography? I'm a Dion Beebe fan, the Aussie who shot Chicago and Memoirs Of A Geisha and who won an Oscar. He has the most beautiful, subtle style.