PROMPT CRAFT CHEATSHEET

Cinematic language

The vocabulary a cinematographer already uses, and what each term does to a generated image.

CALM

Eye level, Wide, Medium, Static, Slow pan, Golden hour, Natural, soft, Cooke S4/i, 50mm f/2.0, Warm vintage, pastel tones

INTIMACY

Eye level, Over the shoulder, Close-up, Medium close-up, Slow dolly in, Static, Soft, Candles, Practicals, ARRI Signature, 85mm f/1.4, Warm, lifted shadows

TENSION

Dutch angle, Low angle, Close-up, Extreme close-up, Handheld, Slow dolly in, Low key, contrasty, single source, Zeiss Super Speed, 35mm f/1.4, Cool, desaturated, high contrast

FEAR

Dutch angle, Worm's eye, Extreme close-up, Close-up, Crash zoom, Handheld, Low key, flickering, single source, Helios 44-2, 58mm f/2.0, Desaturated, cold, teal shadows

POWER

Low angle, Worm's eye, Full shot, Medium wide, Crane up, Slow orbit, Backlight, Rim light, Golden hour, Panavision Anamorphic, 40mm, Teal and orange, saturated

VULNERABILITY

High angle, Overhead, Wide, Medium, Static, Slow crane down, Overcast, soft, cool, Canon K35, 35mm f/2.0, Cool Nordic, desaturated

EPIC

Bird's eye, Low angle, Extreme wide, Wide, Aerial pullback, 360 orbit, Crane up, Golden hour, Volumetric rays, Panavision Primo 70, Ultra Vista, Teal and orange, dramatic

ENERGY

Low angle, Ground level, Medium wide, Full, Tracking, FPV, Whip pan, Contrasty, neon, practicals, Angénieux Optimo zoom, High contrast, saturated

NOSTALGIA

Eye level, Medium, Close-up, Slow dolly out, Static, Golden hour, soft, warm, Canon K35, Helios 44-2, Warm vintage, Kodachrome, grain

MYSTERY

Dutch angle, Low angle, Silhouette, Close-up, Slow tracking, Static, Low key, Rim light, silhouette, Zeiss Super Speed, 50mm, Film noir, high contrast black and white

JOY

Eye level, Medium, Two-shot, Group, Light handheld, Orbit, Pan, High key, bright, natural, Cooke S4/i, 35mm f/2.8, Warm, slightly saturated

ROMANCE

Eye level, Over the shoulder, Two-shot, Close-up, Medium close-up, Slow orbit, Slow dolly in, Golden hour, Practicals, candles, ARRI Signature, 85mm f/1.4, Warm, soft halation

CORPORATE

Eye level, Over the shoulder, Medium, Medium close-up, Static, Slow dolly in, Studio, natural, clean, Zeiss Master Prime, 50mm f/4, Cool neutral, clean

LUXURY

Eye level, Slightly low, Close-up, Macro, Slow orbit, Turntable, Dolly in, Studio with rim accents, Zeiss Master Prime, 100mm f/2.8, Rich, deep blacks, gold accents

LENSES

ARRI Signature Primes - portraits, skin tones, premium, Cooke S4/i - portraits, dialogue, drama, Leica Summilux-C - portraits, intimate scenes, Panavision Anamorphic - epic, blockbuster, wide screen, Panavision C-Series - retro epic, seventies and eighties, Panavision E-Series - action, Panavision T-Series - contemporary blockbuster, Zeiss Master Anamorphics - clean anamorphic, science fiction, Hawk Class-X - visual character, drama, JDC Xtal Xpress - auteur cinema, Zeiss Master Primes - product, deliberately sterile, Sigma Cine - product, technology, sterile, Zeiss Ultra Prime - documentary, plainness, Master / MO Primes - general purpose, the cinema default, Canon K35 - vintage, seventies, nostalgia, Helios 44-2 - vintage, art, dreamlike, Zeiss Super Speed - night city, noir, classic, Angénieux Optimo zoom - energy, action, tracking work

STOCKS AND SENSORS

Kodak Vision3 500T - night, neon, the cinema default, Kodak Vision3 250D - natural daylight realism, Kodak Vision3 50D - very clean, bright, detailed, Fujifilm Eterna 500T - pastel, soft, art house, Kodak Tri-X 400 - black and white drama, Kodachrome 64 - retro, nostalgia, reportage, ARRI Alexa 35 - digital with gentle highlights, RED V-Raptor - hyperrealism, hard, technical, Sony VENICE 2 - low light, night scenes, VHS / MiniDV - nineties nostalgia, lo-fi

LIGHTING

cinematic lighting, soft shadows, controlled contrast, golden hour sunlight, warm amber tones, long soft shadows, neon sign reflections, cyan and magenta light, wet pavement glow, studio lighting, key light from above, soft fill, clean backdrop, natural available light, window light, overcast diffusion, high-key lighting, bright even illumination, minimal shadows, low-key lighting, deep shadows, single hard light source, noir feel, practical lights visible in frame: lamps, candles, screens, neon, strong backlight, rim light separating subject from background, volumetric light rays, dust particles in light beam, god rays

GRADES

teal and orange color grading, warm highlights, cool shadows, warm vintage grade, faded highlights, fine grain, lifted blacks, cool desaturated Nordic grade, muted palette, overcast tonality, high contrast black and white, deep blacks, hard key, rich deep blacks, gold accents, controlled specular highlights, high contrast, saturated colour, punchy midtones, pastel grade, soft contrast, gentle greens in the shadows

NOT: IDENTITY

identity drift, face morphing, inconsistent clothing, wardrobe changes

NOT: ANATOMY

duplicate limbs, extra fingers, warped anatomy, blurry faces

NOT: SURFACE

plastic skin, over-sharpening, AI look, cartoon style

NOT: PHYSICS

floating objects, incorrect shadows, unrealistic expressions

NOT: TEMPORAL

flickering, random camera jumps, morphing

CONVENTION, NOT MEASUREMENT

A lens character is how practitioners agree it renders

Naming an optic biases a model toward images made with it. It does not simulate the glass.