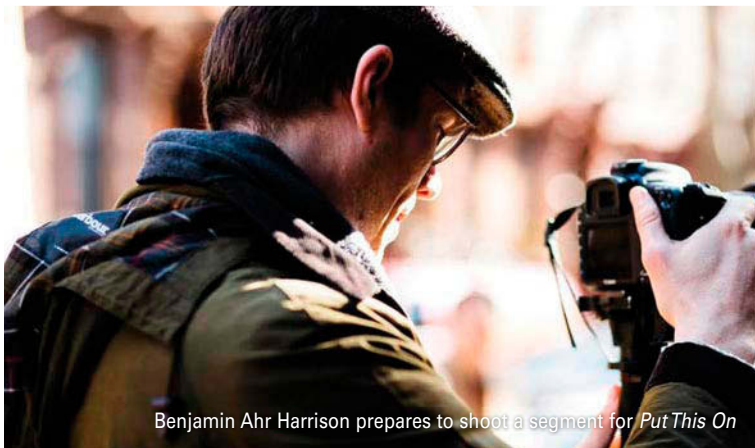


JENNIFER WOLFE

# ELEMENTS OF STYLE

Producing the Popular Web Series *Put This On*



Benjamin Ahr Harrison prepares to shoot a segment for *Put This On*



Harrison with Canon DSLR

PHOTOS BY ZAC WOLFE

Billed as a web series about dressing like a grownup, *Put This On* is the brainchild of series creators Jesse Thorn (@JesseThorn) and Adam Lisagor (@lonelysandwich). The show offers sartorial wisdom and guidance on men's classic style with gentle wit, genuine knowledge and passion.

As the writer and host of *Put This On*, Thorn lends his signature dandified style to the show, whose episodes are shot in Los Angeles, New York, London and Milan. Now in its second season, the series—and blog—came to life in late 2009 and quickly gained a dedicated following on iTunes and on the web, with episodes surpassing 100,000 views.

Series editor and season two director Benjamin Ahr Harrison (@BenjaminAhr) is equally inspired by classic men's fashion, although he insists he's not as insightful as Thorn. Based in Brooklyn, the NYU film school graduate shot the documentary feature *Kadi* in Kenya last year, has directed numerous music videos and commercials, and is a contributor to the "Down and Dirty" filmmaking boot camp and book series.

Shot primarily with a Canon EOS 7D, *Put This On* maintains a light footprint during production, requiring only a DP, producer and sound person. "It was a very lightweight production," Harrison



Harrison

comments of the series' second season. "We mostly used the 7D, although our second camera in Milan was a 5D. A couple of backpacks, standard Canon lenses, and even though we ended up using a 1x1-foot LED panel in London, we did our best to work with natural light. That light footprint and use of natural light is something Adam established from the first episode, and it's definitely something we wanted to continue."

Harrison admits that travel for the series can be exhausting. "This series is a labor of love—there's no payday for anyone involved," he explains. "We're shooting 14-hour days some of the time, and afterward you're just sitting in your hotel room exhausted ... and then you have to get up early the next morning and hop on an airplane."

As the series editor, Harrison was also tasked with transcoding footage following each day's shoot, backing up material to portable hard drives using a 15" MacBook Pro. Editing took place on a 27" iMac using Apple Final Cut Pro, with motion graphics handled in Adobe After Effects.

Harrison found it a challenge to transition from short-form projects to cutting 10- to 15-minute episodes. "When I do commercial spots or music videos, there are a lot of individual cuts, but optimally you only need to hold somebody's

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Put This On host Jesse Thorn



Thorn and crew (Harrison at far right)

PHOTO BY ZAC WOLF

attention for three and a half minutes,” he says. “But there are a lot of really valuable moments in those interviews,” he says of *Put This On*, “and sometimes it’s heartbreaking because you’ll have a solid hour-long interview that you’re cutting down into a five-minute segment, and you end up with reams of gold that you have to throw out.”

While Harrison enjoys the low-light capabilities of HDSLR cameras, he finds that he misses features from more conventional video cameras. “For the past year I’ve been working on projects shot almost exclusively with DSLR cameras, and you can get a lot out of not much light,” he says. “But I did a job recently working as camera operator and was asked to shoot with the Panasonic AG-HVX200. I pulled my old HVX out of the closet and charged up the batteries and picked it up and I was like, ‘Man, it is so nice to shoot on a camera that’s actually designed for video.’ There are so many little things in the interface that I’ve never really appreciated before now.”

“I’m actually really curious to see how the 5D Mark III will solve a lot of these things,” Harrison continues. “I’ve heard it has much better audio, previewing options and all that. I’m a firm believer in recording audio on a separate medium, but in a pinch it’s kind of nice to be able to just plug a mic into the camera.”

While a labor of love, *Put This On* achieves a level of quality that keeps viewers coming back for more. “Considering how much of a limited operation this is in terms of funding and body power, I think that we actually get away with putting together a pretty professional looking show,” Harrison concludes. “Adam Lisagor really set a high mark for the show and I was quite honored to step into his shoes. The look he established is terrific—a lot of composed shots and nice camera work with a distinctly different feel from most of the video you see on fashion blogs. The classiness of his aesthetic is very well suited to the show and I’ve done my best to continue in his tradition.” **dv**

Production values start from the ground up, don't compromise on camera support.

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