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# WISH UPON A LASER

What we see upon the silver screen can move us to tears, make us laugh until it hurts, and transport us from the everyday to faraway lands, ancient or future times and even to alternate realities. None of this, though, is possible without the expertise of the set decorator.



As head of the set decoration department, the set decorator is responsible for the selection, budgeting and positioning of all decorative items in the film, which underpins the storyline and defines the characters that live in the space. He ensures the vision of production design and direction is thoroughly expressed through the arrangement of the set.

#### SETTING THE SCENE WITH DISTANCE LASER MEASUREMENT

Before any film is shot, the set decorator must undertake intensive location visits to find suitable towns, streets, houses and objects. Measurements must be taken quickly and under difficult conditions.

Uli Tegetmeier is the set decorator for the 2016 German film *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank (The Diary of Anne Frank)*, a documentary on the historical figure Anne Frank who hid from Nazi capture for more than two years during World War II before her and her family were discovered in a secret room. When Tegetmeier was in search of a reliable distance laser metre, he turned to the DISTO™, the laser distance metre made especially for outdoor measurements.

“For each set, we had to face a different set of challenges,” said Tegetmeier. “In rain or shine, we had to continue with design. The Leica DISTO™ functioned even in the brightest midday sunshine. By means of the four-times magnification of the camera, I was able to measure distances for which I would otherwise have had to use a crane.”

Many dimensions would have not have been able to be measured since it was not possible to set up a crane or lifting platform due to the heavy road traffic and limited space. With the Leica DISTO™, though, all measurements could be taken without problems.

#### TRANSFERRING FROM SITE TO SCREEN

Filmed in Amsterdam, the film crew had to capture complete rows of houses. These included the entire façades on the Brouwersgracht, Leidtsegracht and other canal venues in Amsterdam. All the windows in the houses had to be blacked out as they would have been at that time during WWII. In addition, modern houses had to be masked by erecting mock façades.

The façades were able to be photographed extremely well and dimensioned using Leica DISTO™ sketch, the free app able to create ground plans or tables on iPhones and iPads. All data was continuously sent to Tegetmeier’s tablet where all the information was recorded.

“With the DISTO™ sketch app, I could easily save all our measurements and work with them directly on my tablet on the set, saving time and costly returns to the office to process the data,” said Tegetmeier. “We were able to quickly get the set designed and ready for filming.”