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Aesthetic and expressive elements in underwater filming: the interaction of light, color, and movement

-summary of doctoral thesis-

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION. ARGUMENTATION

This paper examines how the underwater environment influences cinematic language, generating distinctive visual and expressive forms. It starts from the premise that water – an essential element of nature and of artistic expression – imposes a re-thinking of the relationship between light, colour and movement, offering cinema its own aesthetic and narrative space.

The research combines a theoretical component – based on aesthetic and technological analysis of underwater footage – with a practical component, centred on three representative cinematic projects: *Impromptu*, *BLK* and *Refuge* (Castelul Crăiței). These productions progressively illustrate how the aquatic environment transforms image composition, the relationship between light and colour, and the perception of movement in film space.

The first part of the thesis presents the historical context and importance of underwater filming in cinema, from the early twentieth-century experiments to contemporary productions. It analyses the main stages of technological development and the impact that recent innovations – digital cameras, LED lighting, underwater drones – have had on current visual practices. In parallel, it discusses the situation of Romanian cinema, where underwater filming remains an emerging field with significant artistic potential.

The research aims to define the aesthetic specificity of underwater filmmaking, to investigate the technical and artistic solutions used by professionals, and to identify the symbolism associated with aquatic images in constructing cinematic narratives. The working hypotheses are that underwater cinematography develops an autonomous visual language, determined by the properties of the medium and the particular interaction between light, colour and movement.

The methodology combines direct observation, visual experiments and comparative analysis. It includes image studies in different aquatic environments (fresh, salt, clear, turbid waters), light measurements, comparisons between natural and artificial sources, and interviews with practitioners – Dinu Lazăr, Cristian Comeagă and Cristi Mitrofan. This approach correlates practical experience with theoretical reflection, offering an integrated perspective on underwater cinematography.

Through this effort, the thesis aims to show how the underwater environment extends the boundaries of cinematic expressiveness, becoming not only a technical challenge but also a poetic and conceptual space in its own right. The research thus contributes to understanding contemporary cinematic language and to developing a specific aesthetic for films made under water.

CHAPTER 1 – THE SCOPE OF UNDERWATER FILMING IN WORLD AND ROMANIAN CINEMA

Underwater cinematography is an area of visual expression with spectacular development, positioned at the interface of science, art and technology. This chapter defines the historical and aesthetic context of underwater filming and highlights how it has contributed to expanding cinematic language. The analysis starts with the fundamental premises of aquatic exploration – curiosity, the need for knowledge and fascination with the unknown – and reaches the modern forms of representation in which water becomes an autonomous narrative space.

Technological progress was the primary driver of underwater filming. The emblematic figure of Jacques-Yves Cousteau occupies a central place in the history of this field. In 1943, together with Émile Gagnan, Cousteau invented the autonomous diving apparatus, a device that revolutionised underwater filming by giving operators freedom of movement and autonomy. His subsequent documentaries – *Le Monde du silence* (1956), *World Without Sun* (1964) and *Voyage to the Edge of the World* (1976) – established not only a new filming technique but also an aesthetics of filtered light, slow movement and diffused colour. These productions transformed underwater exploration into a form of visual poetry, while also raising public awareness of the marine environment and consolidating ecological consciousness.

Beyond the aesthetic impact, underwater cinematography stimulated deep reflection on the relationship between humans and nature. The research emphasizes that the underwater image imposes a different perception of time and movement, and that light, altered by the density and clarity of water, becomes an essential expressive tool. Filming under water is no longer a simple technical extension of conventional cinema, but an autonomous field with its own rules of composition and expression.

In Romanian cinema, underwater filming evolved gradually through periods of pioneering and recent developments. The first attempts appeared in the 1960s with the film *Scoicile nu au vorbit niciodată* (The Shells Never Spoke, 1962, Sergiu Nicolaescu), which introduced an underwater perspective in Romania for the first time. The film is considered a technical and aesthetic milestone, demonstrating Romanian operators' ability to adapt to the difficult conditions of the aquatic environment. Later productions such as *Brațele Afroditei* (The Arms of Aphrodite, 1979, Mircea Drăgan) and *Întunecare* (Darkness, 1985, Alexandru Tatos) continued the exploration of underwater expressiveness, integrating it into fiction narratives.

After 1989, once the market was liberalised and digital technologies emerged, underwater filming became more accessible. Specialised teams developed, international collaborations appeared, and new equipment – compact cameras, durable housings, LED lighting systems – allowed much greater visual precision. Examples like *The Cave* (2005) or the BLK advertisement illustrate the transition towards complex productions in which the underwater image becomes an essential expressive element and not just a spectacular effect.

Today, underwater filming contributes significantly to diversifying cinematic language. Through detailed control of light, choreography of camera movement and a slow perception of time, the underwater image creates its own poetic. Water is no longer merely a backdrop but an active medium that changes visual perception and the rhythm of the narrative. At the same time, the field has gained greater ecological and artistic relevance, due to global interest in marine conservation and the sensibility conveyed by this type of image.

In the context of Romanian cinema, the research emphasises that although underwater filming remains uncommon, there is significant development potential. Access to high-performance equipment, the emergence of trained technicians and the growing interest of young filmmakers in visual experimentation outline the premises for rapid evolution. Underwater filming can thus become a direction of aesthetic innovation, giving Romanian cinema a distinct visual identity in the European context.

The chapter also highlights the symbolic dimension of underwater imagery. In the aquatic environment, the perception of space, light and colour changes fundamentally. Movement slows, sound is attenuated, and the relationship between subject and lens gains new intimacy. These features generate a specific form of cinematic expressiveness in which water

becomes a metaphor for the unconscious, memory and the fragility of existence. In this sense, underwater filming offers not only a field of technical exploration but also an opportunity for poetic and philosophical reflection on the relationship between image, humans and nature.

Through its historical, technological and aesthetic analysis, this chapter establishes the general framework of the research and argues for the importance of studying underwater cinematic language. In a visual world increasingly dominated by digital artifices, underwater filming remains an authentic experience, governed by the laws of physics and the sensitivity of the human eye. From this perspective, the field is defined not only by its technical complexity but by its ability to reconnect cinema to natural reality, pure light and the direct emotion of the image.

CHAPTER 2 – THE TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN UNDERWATER FILMING

Underwater cinematography builds its artistic expression on a specific technological infrastructure in which the camera housing becomes the critical link between the author's intention and the aquatic environment. Beyond acting as a "watertight box", the housing ensures full operational control (focus, iris, zoom), mechanical and electrical protection and an ergonomics that allows prolonged work under conditions of pressure, currents and varying temperatures. Modern materials – anodised aluminium alloys, titanium and engineering polymers – offer corrosion resistance and reasonable weight, while current sealing systems (O-rings, clamp closures, vacuum sealing) have significantly raised the safety threshold. Modular design allows quick changes between configurations, adaptation to different depths and integration of accessories, from optical ports and lighting arms to focus motors or external monitoring systems.

Historically, the shift from the heavy metal-and-glass solutions of the early twentieth century to the optimised housings of the Cousteau era radically changed the way filming is done under water. Collaborations between filmmakers and engineers (such as that between Cousteau and Jean de Wouters for Éclair cameras) produced robust housings with fine control and superior optical clarity. Applied research – from Harold Edgerton's stroboscopy to Robert Ballard's deep expeditions – pushed the limits of depth and reliability. Today, manufacturers such as Nauticam and HydroFlex offer solutions for professional cameras (including the ARRI Alexa

Mini/Mini LF), with full access to functions and extensive compatibility of ports and lighting, making possible underwater cinematography for productions like *The Abyss*, *Titanic* or *Avatar: The Way of Water*. In parallel, housings for mirrorless cameras (Nauticam, Ikelite, Sea & Sea) have made flexible, lightweight equipment accessible to independent authors, and the action-cam segment (GoPro, watertight without housing to around 10 m and with a "Super Suit" for greater depths) has opened the field to amateur filmmakers through advanced stabilisation and multiple accessories.

The optical element defining the visual result is the port. A flat port simplifies the optical path, favours predictable focusing and provides an apparent magnification of around 25%, advantageous for detail and normal/telephoto lenses. In contrast, it narrows the field of view and can accentuate aberrations towards the edges when using very wide lenses. A dome port counteracts the refraction of water, keeping the angle of view almost as in air and maintaining clarity at the edges; optically, it creates a "virtual image" in front of the lens, which requires underwater calibration and disciplined working distances. Overall, the flat port favours proximity and control of detail, while the dome is the preferred instrument for wide fields, fisheye lenses and underwater landscapes, including split-shot transitions when managed correctly.

The choice of lens is organically linked to the port and the working distances imposed by water. Wide lenses are fundamental in the underwater environment because they reduce the water column between the camera and subject, increase clarity and allow safe proximity, especially when combined with a properly calibrated dome. Normal lenses preserve natural proportions and work well for scenes of human interaction, particularly when emotional proximity is sought without pronounced distortion. Telephoto lenses are more difficult in waters with modest visibility, where suspended particles become visible and light loss is significant; however, they remain useful in scientific documentaries or situations that require a safe distance from wildlife, at the cost of bulkier housings and consistent lighting. Macro opens a distinct expressive territory: at close working distances, depth of field becomes critical and dedicated lighting – constant, well positioned – makes the difference between texture and blur. In this area, "wet" diopters (close-up lenses attached in front of the port under water) offer the versatility to switch in a single dive between wide shots and extreme details, at the cost of careful handling

and appropriate lighting. Finally, anamorphic lenses can bring the classic cinematic signature (oval flares, elliptical bokeh, extended aspect ratio) but require specially designed housings and ports and a rigorous approach to lighting and calibration – which is why they are chosen in projects with high artistic stakes or budgets.

Colour and exposure filtering complete the technical vocabulary. Water progressively absorbs warm colours, and dedicated filters can restore tonal balance: red in blue waters at shallow to medium depths to recover skin tones and textures; magenta in green waters to neutralise the dominant colour; yellow in very clear or near-surface waters. Neutral density (ND) filters permit exposure control without affecting colour, useful in clear water and at the surface, while polarising filters – though used less often under water – can temper disturbing reflections at the water surface. UV filters reduce "haze" in strong sunlight, and graduated neutral density (GND) filters balance exposure differences above and below the water line in split shots. The effectiveness of any filter depends on water type, depth, camera-to-subject distance and postproduction strategy; well-chosen filtering reduces grading time and provides a cleaner base for colour correction.

In synthesis, this chapter shows that artistic expression in the underwater medium is born from coherence across the technical ecosystem: the housing provides safety, control and modularity; the port determines the image geometry and its relationship with refraction; the optics and accessories (from wide to macro, with "wet" diopters or even anamorphic) define the image scale; and filtering restores colour balance and controls exposure. When these elements align with aesthetic intention, water ceases to be an obstacle and becomes an expressive medium with its own visual poetry. There is a specific cinematic grammar in which optical and housing decisions are not mere technical solutions but the premises of an image that breathes with the rhythm of water and turns physical constraints into aesthetic possibilities.

CHAPTER 3 THE DIMENSION OF AESTHETICS AND THE VISUAL WORLD OF UNDERWATER FILMING

This chapter looks at how the underwater environment shapes the cinematic image from both technical and aesthetic perspectives: from the optical laws governing light in water to their

consequences for composition, movement and emotional effect. The starting point is the physical specificity of water. At the surface, reflection may be specular or diffuse depending on the water surface, while in depth refraction – described by Snell's law – alters the path of rays and narrows the field of view. The refractive index of water makes objects appear about one quarter larger and closer, distorting familiar terrestrial perspectives. Selective absorption quickly eliminates red, then orange and yellow, leaving green–blue tones; the phenomenon becomes evident from 10–20 m and is drastic at 30–50 m, where warm colours almost disappear without artificial light. Light scattering, amplified by turbidity, particles and biomass, reduces clarity, softens contrast and shifts the palette towards cyan or green. All these transform composition, lighting methods and even the choreography of the camera and actors.

Light consequently becomes the central expressive instrument. Natural light is volatile – dependent on time of day, sun angle and weather – and is quickly swallowed by water and particles; artificial light restores lost colours and contrast but requires fine control of the beam to avoid back-scattering and the "fog" caused by particles. Current practice brings light sources close to the subject and decouples lamps from the lens axis, using two or more moderate sources positioned laterally or backlit to achieve volume, texture and separation from the background. HMI lamps or dedicated underwater LEDs offer stable output and colour temperature; brands such as Bigblue and Keldan are noted for robustness, autonomy and high CRI values, useful when chromatic fidelity becomes an aesthetic criterion. Waterproof solutions for LED tubes like the Astera type extend the plastic vocabulary, allowing controlled effects and dynamic schemes. Accurate light measurement under water – traditionally with dedicated light meters such as the Sekonic Marine Meter or Ikelite photometers – ensures proper exposure in conditions where the incident spectrum changes with each metre of depth. The colour chart used in tests becomes both a field reference and an anchor in post-production; however, correction in post cannot recover spectral information that was absent but only balance what was actually recorded.

From the perspective of filming technique, the chapter discusses differences between lighting styles. Front lighting yields detail and colour but flattens the image and increases the risk of back-scatter; side lighting reveals volume and texture and reduces visible particles; backlighting makes shadows dramatic and the atmosphere deeper, though care is needed to expose faces correctly. In dynamic situations, an underwater "gaffer" remains mobile to

maintain light ratios as the subject moves. At night, light sources become the only narrative possibility; in caves the constraints increase: compact equipment, impeccable buoyancy control, avoidance of disturbing sediment, and portable sources that are functional rather than dramatic, with a constant risk of losing visibility. In the VFX area, underwater greenscreen has its history and pitfalls: materials, chlorine, uniform lighting and extending the screen beyond the water's surface to "continue" the colour in the reflection are key details for workable keying.

Camera movement under water constitutes its own language. Neutral buoyancy of the camera-housing assembly, mass distribution and hydrodynamic resistance create fluidities impossible to achieve on the surface, but also unexpected difficulties: the most challenging are often static shots, which require immobility while suspended without support from the ground. Platforms such as sleds or scooters enable smooth glides if speed remains low to avoid vibration. The choreography of actors requires specific preparation: water resistance imposes slower tempos, flowing directions and constant buoyancy correction. For dives without visible equipment, costumes, air retained in clothing and neoprene dictate the amount and positioning of weights; otherwise, descents to 4–5 m become laborious and natural performance is lost.

Compositionally, water rewrites the rules. Absorption and diffusion of light flatten distant planes and reduce contrast, while the absence of a stable horizon frees the frame from terrestrial gravity. Operators exploit the freedom of rotation in all axes, constructing "disoriented" perspectives which paradoxically seem natural to the spectator precisely because the underwater world has no incontestable up-down. Depth of field, visibility and particles often constrain towards shallower depths and nearby subjects, and the background – coral, rock, vegetation – becomes an active part of visual design. Light entering from the surface, rippling shadows, the filigree of particles: all function as living filters capable of instilling calm, mystery, danger or dream without words. In this register, choices of framing and lighting are not only aesthetic but deeply narrative.

The symbolic and affective dimension concludes the argument. Cousteau's documentaries or modern nature series have transformed visual immersion into a catalyst of empathy and pro-conservation behavior: wonder opens the way to responsibility. Fiction explores water as a metaphor for the unknown, rebirth and transformation: *The Abyss* uses the deep as a test of courage and empathy; *The Shape of Water* converts fluidity into a language of

love that dissolves boundaries; *Avatar: The Way of Water* elevates sensory immersion to epic strategy, where contact with the ocean becomes a familial and spiritual initiation. The power of these images derives from their dual status: an exacting physical reality that imposes optical, lighting, movement and compositional decisions, and a mythical space where themes of life, isolation, communion or danger are experienced viscerally.

Overall, the chapter shows that underwater aesthetics are the direct result of the physical laws of water, transformed through the craft of the operator into a coherent language. Mastery of reflection, refraction, absorption and scattering, choice and measurement of lighting, control of buoyancy, choreography of actors and composition without a fixed horizon converge on the same goal: a credible, expressive and emotionally charged image capable of transporting the viewer into a world that, though close to us, remains by nature ever mysterious.

CHAPTER 4 – THE NARRATIVE AND DIRECTORIAL DIMENSION OF UNDERWATER CINEMATIC LANGUAGE

Chapter 4 synthesises the narrative and directorial dimension of underwater cinematic language, focusing on how the aquatic environment influences directing actors, organising the crew, scriptwriting and integrating underwater scenes into the film's overall narrative. Filming under water is not only a technical challenge but a profound transformation of how the director communicates, builds tension and expresses emotion.

Directing actors in this context requires major adaptations. Verbal communication is replaced by signals, lights and pre-planned procedures, and safety becomes an absolute priority. Examples such as *The Abyss* or *The Rescue* show the logistical complexity of these productions, in which each actor has an assigned safety diver and the entire team functions like a perfectly synchronised underwater orchestra. Preparing actors becomes part of the artistic process – training in freediving, buoyancy control and managing physical and psychological stress are conditions of performance authenticity. Experiences from *Impromptu* or *Avatar: The Way of Water* demonstrate that immersion in water not only challenges actors but offers them a way of accessing real emotions filtered through a medium that amplifies vulnerability.

The chapter also highlights the logistical and organizational impact: each department – camera, lighting, sound, stunts – operates under constraints of visibility, mobility and time. In large productions, the director becomes an expedition coordinator, assisted by underwater operators and technicians. BBC's *Blue Planet* productions exemplify on a global scale this kind of coordination, in which directing extends beyond the script, becoming both a scientific and artistic act of planning.

From the perspective of the script, the underwater environment radically changes the dramaturgical structure. The absence of verbal language requires pure visual communication based on gesture, gaze and rhythm. Silence, slow movement and filtered light become expressive components, and the actors' performance is reconfigured through the body. Practical limitations – the short duration of filming sessions, the weight of equipment, lack of dialogue – are transformed into poetic resources that can generate a unique form of sensory cinema. Water becomes a partner in directing, shaping the temporality and breathing of the scene.

Once realized, underwater sequences must be integrated into the film's narrative with clear intention. The examples analyzed – from *Last Breath* and *Sanctum* to *The Shape of Water* and *Avatar 2* – show that these scenes can serve multiple narrative functions: creating suspense and danger, revealing character traits, acting as symbols of rebirth, love or transcendence. In *The Abyss*, the underwater environment becomes a catalyst for conflict and reconciliation; in *The Shape of Water*, water is the metaphor of love that dissolves boundaries; in *Avatar 2*, it extends the fictional universe and provides contemplative space. Documentaries such as *Blue Planet* make maximum use of this visual power, letting images generate emotion and meaning without verbal intervention, transforming aquatic reality into a global poetic narrative.

In conclusion, the chapter demonstrates that underwater directing is not simply adapting to a difficult environment but developing a distinct cinematic language. Water transforms the way the story is told: it eliminates speech, reconfigures movement, filters light and adds a unique sensory and symbolic dimension. When used with narrative intention and directorial rigour, underwater cinematography becomes a form of visual poetry in which technology, the actor's body and nature meet in a joint act of expression.

CHAPTER 5 – THE DIMENSION OF THE FILMS PRODUCED, PROPOSED FOR ANALYSIS

Chapter 5 outlines, through three case studies and a comparative bridge, how a personal project becomes a laboratory for a coherent cinematic language capable of naturally moving from fiction to advertising while maintaining its aesthetic identity. At its center is *Impromptu*, the author's first deep contact with diving and its invisible rules. The film marks the revelation that underwater colors are not merely different but become a dramatic stake: the red chosen deliberately as a vital sign fades after a few meters, requiring careful color grading and a practical understanding of the spectrum filtered by water. Here the working principles are fixed: natural light as a poetic ally, slow choreography of the body, controlled "breathing" of the camera, restoration of colors without negating the medium's precariousness. The choice of the Arri Alexa Mini, wide focal lengths and a deliberately pushed "splashbag" housing, plus the monitoring and focus system from the surface, show a calculated risk put at the service of a spectacular image with freedom in grading. Music becomes a character – Debussy and Ravel, performed by the actor–pianist herself – passing from the concert hall into the depths as a narrative and emotional bridge. Symbolically, light, water and sound form a single visual phrase about vulnerability and salvation. Historically, the film stakes a pioneering claim in post-'89 Romanian fiction with underwater shots and opens subsequent collaborations.

Refuge (Castelul Crăiței) moves the same ethic of realism from the ocean to the ridge of the Piatra Craiului. The mountain becomes a severe and revealing character, and directing embraces radical verisimilitude: filming exclusively in exposed terrain, itinerant camps, a compact crew, collaboration with mountain rescue and real climbing training for actors. The choice of diegetic light – headlamps worn by actors at night – imposes a dramatic aesthetic and volumes cut from darkness, with restrained sound privileging the mountain's breathing. The use of Arri Alura zooms and the introduction of a steadicam on the ridge bring suppleness to the movement without betraying the austerity of the environment. The film is critically and festival acclaimed, but its stake remains intimate: a family film about loss and recovery in which nature does not decorate but catalyses decision and maturation.

The BLK advertisement transfers the lessons from fiction to advertising and distils them into an autonomous visual object. The image functions as a choreographic composition in water:

fluid movements, lateral light, cool palette with warm accents, artificial depth that abstracts space. The underwater chroma key, filming on 35 mm with a special housing, adds a painterly quality rare for that time. Casting professional athletes preserves bodily accuracy, yet the project opens a useful discussion: when the poetry of the image becomes so strong, the brand message risks being diluted. This is precisely where its academic relevance lies – at the intersection between communication efficiency and visual ambition.

Comparatively, the three projects share an aesthetic of sensory realism and immersion: small crews, hand-held filming for realism, refusal of conventional artificial light in favour of diegetic or natural sources, and trust in real space as a generator of meaning. The presence of children in the cast, in the fiction films, adds a layer of relational authenticity and reorients the camera's gaze towards fragility and initiation. The differences lie in rhythm and the "time" of the environment: under water everything slows and becomes contemplative; on the mountain the tension is alert; and in advertising rhythm obeys formal musicality. Together, they prove that the same author can build a coherent voice across genres and media, provided the principles remain clear: visual honesty, technical discipline, controlled risk and a living relationship with the characters. In this key, water, stone and the body – guided by light – are no longer simple settings but narrative instruments that shape emotion and give the film its own breathing.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS AND ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In conclusion, this research has become a complex undertaking at the boundary between theory and practice, aimed equally at rediscovering the tradition of underwater filming in Romanian cinema and formulating a contemporary working methodology applicable to current productions. Starting from the historical analysis of films such as *Scoicile n-au vorbit niciodată (The Shells Never Spoke), Brațele Afroditei (The Arms of Aphrodite)* and *Întunecare (Darkening),* we identified ingenious technical solutions and the empirical approach of Romanian operators of that period, whose experiences constituted an important starting point for defining our own methodology. Interviews with Dinu Lazăr and Cristian Comeagă provided direct insight into the difficult conditions under which underwater filming was carried out in Romania, thus complementing the theoretical dimension of the work with highly relevant practical data.

On the applied level, the thesis materialized in a series of systematic experiments designed to evaluate the behavior of light and color in various aquatic environments. We conducted successive tests on spectral absorption in the Red Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea, documenting the significant differences among them in terms of transparency, density and chromatic fidelity. The results confirmed that the choice of filming location must be based not only on logistics but also on the optical characteristics of the water, which directly influence image aesthetics. For example, we found that the Red Sea offers superior clarity but with an accelerated loss of the warm spectrum, while the Aegean Sea maintains chromatic balance in the upper layer, and the Black Sea imposes a more diffuse visual atmosphere, suited to films with dramatic intention.

The practical research also included a comparative analysis of the use of dome ports and flat ports, demonstrating the superiority of dome ports for wide shots and of flat ports for macro shots. We also evaluated the efficiency of standard and professional optical filters, concluding that ordinary photographic filters do not provide satisfactory chromatic correction under water and that dedicated underwater lighting is preferable when faithful rendering of skin tones and overall contrast is desired.

The experience gained from filming in submerged caves added a perspective on the technical and psychological limits of underwater cinematography. These extreme environments impose strict safety rules, equipment redundancy and careful lighting management. The observations showed that minimal lighting directed by divers can create a chiaroscuro visual effect with high aesthetic potential when treated as diegetic light and not as decorative intervention.

Through all these stages, the research led to the formulation of our own methodology for independent underwater filming. The resulting protocol – based on prior testing of the colour spectrum, choosing the optical port according to the lens and the scene's purpose, using a colour chart in the frame, redundancy of light sources and correlating aesthetic intention with the environment's particularities – can serve as a practical reference for future Romanian underwater productions.

Looking ahead, the research directions extend through developing the film *Înainte dinapoi (Forward Backward)*, an artistic project that puts into practice the principles formulated

throughout this thesis. Filming at depths of 50 meters in the Red Sea offers the possibility of integrating the underwater environment not just as a backdrop but as an active narrative element whose chromatic and textural qualities become expressions of the character's psychological state. Thus, the research gains organic continuity: theoretical and technical conclusions are transformed into concrete directorial decisions, confirming that the aesthetics of underwater filming are defined not by effect but by the profound relationship between light, space, perception and meaning.

Through its contributions, the thesis offers a frame of reference for the study and practice of underwater cinematography in Romania, proposing a balanced combination of technical rigor, artistic reflection and direct applicability to the creative process.

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