

Thursday, December 1, 2005

2005.11.30: Jumbrella!

I spoke with Gary Regester, photographer and designer of the Plume Wafer line of soft boxes, regarding a Canadian dealer for his Jumbrella product. He directed me to the owners of Vistek Toronto and Lighttools in . . . Edmonton (*gasp*). The same day, I scheduled a visit to Light Tools in the south side of Edmonton. Stephen Pilby, owner of Lighttools, was a bit under the weather Tuesday so we met Wednesday. We spent about four hours together. I spirited Leanna away from work in part because I didn't want to go alone and I enjoy her company and in part because I wanted a model and a second eye to take snapshots of us playing around with this gigantic umbrella. Almost all photos taken with Fuji F10. The three sample photos were shot with the Nikon D2X and 17-55/2.8 lens. A big thank you to Stephen Pilby for his generous donation of time and knowledge. I still can't believe that I had been oblivious to this place's existence until two days ago. Picked Leanna up from her lab via the U of A Hospital. Her lab is in the Med Sci building. Heheh . . . cute hat. Stephen Pilby shows off some soft Egg Crates which have become essential gear for cinematographers around the world. Stephen offered to loan me an Egg Crate and a compatible softbox and let me review it for a while with my Balcar equipment. I'll take him up on his offer once I understand how (and why) the egg crates do what they do. An architectural adaptation of the Egg Crate design called "Lighttux". These were manufactured to the specifications of an architect that will be picking these up later to install in a commercial building. One of Stephen's octagonal low profile soft boxes, compatible with a Light Tools Egg Crate. This one is 2m in diameter and has similar area to depth proportions as many of Plume's "Wafer" products. Yeah . . . I really have no idea what I'm doing and the instructions aren't helping. Luckily Stephen knows what to do. We're putting together the 3m one first. There was supposed to be a 2m and 3m Jumbrella. Turns out that the 2m package contained a 3m and the 3m package contained a 4m. So the boom that came with the 3m was missing a pressure plate under a set screw. We ended up opening the other one up and hoping that it was another 3m with a complete boom. Standing back holding up some splines and pretending to be useful while Stephen does all of the hard work. One of the splines in what we thought was a second 3m had a broken joint so we are replacing it on the fly with a spare. One of the set screws locking one of the two spline bases to the hubs was missing so we're screwing it back in here. Here we realized that though the 3m Jumbrella was gigantic, this Jumbrella was obviously larger than the first and downright ridiculous. Locking the hubs into place is a two person job for the 4m. Adding a Balcar PowerZ 3200W/s head onto the boom. The 4m Jumbrella from behind without the black/silver liner. The black and silver liner is included with every Jumbrella and can be used to give a more specular lighting effect and increase efficiency of the light modifier. Experimenting with an umbrella to reflect light back into the the Jumbrella for more coverage. For comparison, I'm 6feet tall so you can see just how silly-big this thing is. Shot of me taking a shot. Hahah . . . makes a pretty cool-looking background, too. Shot of a broken spline hinge. It was believed to have been damaged while someone else handled it. It appears to be made of a tough nylon. Not sure how it broke like this. One of Stephen's puppies. This guy's four months old. His wife took this little guy's brother home. He stayed around and ate velcro once we finished playing with the Jumbrella. Leanna with boom at full extension and Balcar FX60 reflector pointed upwards into the top of the Jumbrella. Very smooth, even light. F/11 at ISO 100 from about 10feet away. The Balcar Nexus A3200 is pumping the full 3200W/s through the head for this shot to achieve this exposure value. The silver liner was not on but would have improved efficiency. Me . . . modeling with a can of Five Alive (Passionate Peach Citrus flavour) graciously provided by Stephen. A hard light example. This photo wasn't edited and I have the full-size photo available if anyone wants to see the effect. I could take a comparison photo with a regular umbrella or a soft box and pass it along as well. My skin is far from smooth and this is probably the smoothest I've ever seen my face with anything short of full frontal flash.

MSRP for the 3m Jumbrella is about \$1000US plus shipping. I think that I would like to have one but I have to figure out how to justify the purchase. Furthermore, I don't have a studio tall enough to even open it up properly, let alone elevate it off the ground. I'd have to use it in public places like City Hall and maybe the Muttart Conservatory and Citadel Theatre just to have enough room. Huy mentioned that his former drama teacher may be able to lend space to me to use this thing as his old high school. I'm hoping Jonathan takes interest because his studio has a 20foot plus ceiling. The quality of light from this light modifier is incredible. Controlled and soft, contrasty and flattering. It's so many lights in one just with the adjustment of focus and direction of the output of the flash. Not what I had expected but I can think of so many uses for this light. It's also easily large enough to handle full length fashion even at 2 or 3m. If I pick one up, it'll be the 3m or maybe a 2m. That means that the 4m will be left. A notable photographer from St. Albert with a very large set of studios (that should narrow it down a bit) is looking at getting a Jumbrella. If you think that you need a big light mod like this one, drop me a line and I could send you more sample photos or take some for you if you have a specific request. The 4m Jumbrella requires about a 17' ceiling so be warned.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Lighting at 04:22

hhmmm.. any chance I can go parachuting with that jumbrella?! Damn that's huge! LOL
Anonymous on Dec 1 2005, 08:17

"The quality of light from this light modifier is incredible"
Looks like, holy shit.

http://klyment.com/serendipity/uploads/equipment/jumbrella_sample_Leanna.jpg

Is a small image, but it looks so clean. I would like to try a 2m one in the studio, but I want to pick up the new lights first, dump my lights, then work on the Jumbrella.

Great Quality Post. Keep up the good work.
Anonymous on Dec 1 2005, 10:27

Hahah . . . that's what someone in the upstairs office yelled when she saw the 3m partly opened. She was like "hey, where'd you get the parachute?!"

Anonymous on Dec 1 2005, 15:15

Yeah . . . with the white 3D silk backing the Jumbrella makes it really easy to give a soft outdoor light simulation. I originally wanted to try the 2m but when you think about it, one of the beauties of the 3m and 4m is that you can do full length fashion with this one light with an 80mm or longer lens even with a DX crop factor and still have soft light. I think that the 2m may be a bit too small unfortunately. They won't be bringing one in to demo and there are no 2m in stock in the world right now and they are still awaiting a new shipment. If you want to try it out you're welcome to borrow some of my lights and try them out at Lighttools. Steven left the 4m one up for that purpose. He'll collapse it in a couple of days.

Anonymous on Dec 1 2005, 15:18

This entry must be endorsed by Five Alive! The can is positioned perfectly to show off all the important, catchy product information with a lively, quirky face in the background! Coincidence? I think not!!!!

Anonymous on Dec 2 2005, 15:06

SWEET! That's wicked that place is in Edmonton!

I can't believe how lovely and soft that light is, and how f*cking ridiculously HUGE that Jumbrella... Would the two meter be set-up-able for a little person?

Anonymous on Dec 3 2005, 02:39

Hahah . . . I think I'm going to get some of this Five Alive stuff. It's really good, hey?

Anonymous on Dec 3 2005, 02:59

Hmmm . . . the 2m may be okay to be set up by one little person but I'm not sure . . . either way you'll probably need a ladder to throw the outside stages of the splines forward. There's also a lot of force required to tension the two hubs. Steven was assuming that I always had an assistant on hand to set this stuff up . . . though he seemed to very easily set up the 3m by himself. Come on guys . . . 3m. It's a couple hundred bucks cheaper than the 2m would be and it's in town. Plus you get a lot more working room . . . you don't even have a lens that will allow your model to be close enough to the light to be very soft and still get a full body shot in if you were using just the 2m. =P

Anonymous on Dec 3 2005, 03:03

BTW, all sample photos were taken with the 4m JumBrella. I think that the 4m is too big for one normal-sized person to handle. The 3m is as big a normal-sized person could handle. And the 2m maybe small enough for a Jackie-sized person to handle alone but realistically, whatever you're using it for you'll probably have someone to help you and even the 2m may be too heavy for you get move up and down on a stand by yourself anyway. There are some 2m + straight umbrellas that you can get. Vistek sells them. They are about \$500. But they are just big umbrellas . . . no boom in the centre to redirect light to create a graduated ring light to use other light modifiers in combination to create other effects. The JumBrella really is something else and in this case, the bigger the better. If you want something that's 2m, the 2m octabox that's made by Lighttools may be a better choice. Plus it already has support for Egg Crates. Jackie, I think that your applications could probably benefit from using Egg Crates.

Anonymous on Dec 3 2005, 03:12