

Tuesday, August 26. 2008

2008.08.25: Frank Grisdale's Visit

Artist Frank Grisdale started printing with me recently. I don't feel qualified to comment on his work and encourage you to see it for yourself on his website. He approached me with several sheets of gampi torinoko paper with which I had no experience. The paper was nothing short of exotic: thin and strong with subtle texture and an internal luster and characteristic long fibres that need to be seen in real life to be appreciated. I was at Colours, the art store I normally deal with to get stretcher bars to stretch canvas prints, and spoke to their paper expert in Winnipeg about gampi torinoko and I was struck by a strange sense of familiarity when expressed joy that she had found someone that sought the paper and could look past the exorbitant price because he or she could appreciate its value. It's the familiarity I experience when I meet an individual who can appreciate the difference between a file shot on a 16bit digital medium format back or when someone notices the texturing of light in my photos. I tried to create an ICC profile for the paper using GretagMacbeth's Profilemaker 5 and the Epson 9800's driver but all of my attempts to profile it with PM5 failed miserably because the paper is unbleached and quite yellow. Strangely, my first acceptable results were with just printing using somewhat generic settings and manually tweaking colour balances. I was intrigued by Mr. Grisdale's determination to print on this paper and decided to upgrade my RIP to Ergosoft Posterprint 12. After several more test prints I was ready to do my first full test with the RIP-driven printing environment when I discovered that the rolls of gampi that Mr. Grisdale had ordered in were very different than the sheet gampi. It seemed as though this new gampi was only surface sized as opposed to internally sized with the gampi torinoko. This roll gampi turned out to be a gampi/pulp (perhaps wood pulp?) blend which had a very different texture and was even more yellow than the gampi torinoko. I believe that the problems I had profiling and printing this new gampi were due mostly to the lack of internal sizing of the paper. A young photographer by the name of Landon Speers whom I met when he was working with Frank on one of his new projects suggested using spray starch as a sizing agent to prevent the paper from absorbing excessive amounts of ink which led to feathering and muddling of darker tones. Landon drew from his own experiences of alternative analog printing. I reluctantly tried to spray starch the paper with up to a half dozen coats and found little change in the paper's absorbency. At this point, the paper was very rippled and would not feed properly in my printer. The starch sizing technique is, however, interesting and I'll have to try it more later. Frank compromised and agreed to print on IntelliCoat Verona 285-Textured which is textured cold press paper manufactured by Arches of France and then coated for aqueous inkjet receptivity by IntelliCoat in the US. Despite a number of companies touting new, high tech paper bases with newly developed, proprietary coatings, the colour profiles I created for the IntelliCoat-prepared Arches proved to have noticeably deeper blacks and wider gamut than anything else I've come across and all this without optical brightening agents or an excessively fragile printing surface. While the gampi torinoko may have been ideal because of its unique texture, the bright white Arches with a well-developed inkjet-receptive coating will yield higher contrast and a wider colour gamut than I would be able to achieve with gampi torinoko with any printing technology that exists right now. A shot of what the studio looked like when the artist dropped by to sign and package his prints. For the weekend, his work made my studio look very colorful. These prints are destined for Photographers' Gallery in Los Angeles, California. The artist signing, specifying edition numbers on, and titling his work. My association with Frank so far has been rewarding and has helped reinforce that my purpose as a digital print maker has been served when I successfully remove my interpretation of the artists' original message and deliver colours and tonality as the artist had envisioned.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Clients at 01:33

Thursday, July 26, 2007

2007.06.06: West Edmonton Mall billboards

Two new West Edmonton Mall billboards are up near the Edmonton International Airport. Here are scaledowns of the two images used: Fantasyland Hotel. Art direction by West Edmonton Mall's amazing marketing manager, John Chwyl, wardrobe by Pat, makeup artistry by Susan (you can find her at the new Sephora in West Edmonton Mall), and hair by Corinne. Thank you to Jonathan, Yura, and Sarah for your awesome assist work. Two Bowens Quad X 3000 packs driving three Quad heads. One head boomed over and behind Patricia modified with a Lightrein 12x36" strip soft box and controlled with a Lighttools 40degree Soft Egg Crate, one modified with the Bowens Soft Lite 15" reflector with 7" 20degree spot grid in the centre of the diffuser to give a mixture of soft and hard light as the key light. Fill provided by a disc reflector on the ground to bounce light from a Quad head with 7" dish reflector and 10degree spot grid to give a soft, subtle light source where we couldn't put one and keep it out of the shot. D2X w/ 70-200/2.8 VR. World Waterpark. Captured in under 20minutes due to a bizarre scheduling mishap where ten school groups ended up getting booked into Waterpark before it normally opened on this day. Art direction by John Chwyl, wardrobe by Pat, hair by Corinne. Thank you to Jonathan, Ellison, and Aaron for being incredibly responsive and tolerant as assistants on this shoot. Lighting was provided by two Quad heads powered by a Bowens Explorer 1500 battery-powered flash generator about 60' away from the safety of the side of the wave pool, bare 7" deep reflectors. One flash was directed at the model and another was directed more at a custom built reflector camera right. Another reflector held camera left to add fill to the shadowed side of the model. Selected shot from the Europa Boulevard shoot that never made it to billboard. D2X and 17-55/2.8 with two Bowens Quad heads driven by a QuadX 3000 pack. One head was camera right modified by a Plume Wafer 140 raised above models' eyelines (models were platformed up about five feet off the ground so we could shoot over the railing and shop windows), other head down low and camera left, modified by a Lightrein 36" octagonal soft box for fill. All triggering performed by a Pocket Wizard Multimax system. More details in extended body - click below! Susan and Corinne working on Patricia. My favourite photo from the set. Un edited. I thought it was the most flattering shot for Patricia (though there were LOTS of others) but it was perhaps a bit too seductive for a billboard to advertise a hotel to family travellers. An environmental view of the World Waterpark shooting location. Photo by Aaron Yakem. Our art director chatting up one of the models. Waves?! Surprise!!! Quick change of plans. All of this stuff that we set up to do instant review via tether cable to the NEC LCD2690WUXi on the "beach" was cut off from the D2X so we had to shoot like, ummm . . . real photographers.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Clients at 00:32

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

2007.05.23: How do you shoot a 14 x 48' billboard?

A Pattison Superboard is 18 x 14' giving it an aspect ratio of 3.43:1. Quoting to shoot a series of photos to refresh a client's portfolio of billboards is a more complex task than I had originally imagined. Pattison's "S14 Superboards" pose a unique problem for a photographer looking to use a single frame to fully cover the entire area of the billboard as the aspect ratio of these boards is 3.43:1. Cropping a 4:3 sensor area like that from most medium format digital backs means you're left with only 39% of your camera's pixels ($4/3 \times 1/3.43 = 0.388727$). Cropping a 3:2 aspect ratio sensor leaves you with 44% of your pixels. Cropping a 1:1 aspect ratio sensor leaves you only 29% of your pixels. One may argue that there is the possibility of using a sliding digital back adapter or some other panoramic shift system to elongate the aspect ratio of a frame by doubling its width so you'd end up with 8:3 (80%), 3:1 (88%), and 2:1 (58%) aspect ratios (remaining percentage after crop). However, that makes it unfeasible to have non totally-stationary elements (like people) cross the centre of your frame. There is also the prospect of shooting film. If one were to shoot 6x17 (56 x 168mm actual size), making the controversial assumption that a typical ISO negative film (with hopes of improving on the exposure latitude of a higher resolution slide film) shot 24 x 36mm has the equivalent power to resolve about 8 megapixels worth of information, you're looking at approximately 100 pixels per linear mm. 6x17 has an aspect ratio of 2.83333 meaning that to crop to Superboard aspect ratio we'd be down to about 83% of total resolution ($56 \times 100 \times 168 \times 100 = 94,000,000$). One may also suggest shooting bigger film (17cm is just under 7" giving the cropped resolution of a 6x17cm shot very similar to that of a cropped 5x7" shot) but until you hit 8 x 10 you are not realizing much benefit, if at all and with 37% efficiency after cropping you realize that you just aren't gaining that much, you have to use significantly larger and heavier equipment, and you are paying much more for processing.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Clients at 05:24

Tuesday, November 29, 2005

2005.11.28: Visiting Optical Clients

End of last week, Anthony, owner of Baker Optical (new site to be done by Jonathan soon, hopefully) informed me that the replacement lenses for my sunglasses had arrived. End of last week, Sumant, owner of Campus Eye Center informed me that a new supply of Day and Night contact lenses in my prescription had arrived. Monday I decided to take a walking trip to visit these two clients. Here are some photos of the trip. The J.F. Rey/Boz rep was at Baker Optical when I arrived. He brought in about three hundred Boz frames. Pretty funky stuff but perhaps just a little too edgy for a lot of Baker Optical clientele. Still, some fun stuff that I would personally be interested in. Cara (sp?) of Baker Optical trying on some really weird looking Boz frames. She figures that the design was inspired by dots on a lady bug. A sign that I printed for Baker Optical. Substrate was a 6mil polypropylene to allow for light to penetrate and illuminate the sign. This sign was about 40 x 52" roughly . . . coincidentally the size of the face of some of my softboxes. I thought that this frame and this photo was a little boring but Anthony insisted that we have both a male and female model for the display box on Jasper Avenue for balance. I remembered to switch the direction of the arrow when creating the sign. Campus Eye Centre. I created the ad from a photo shot during the summer with Tara Lynn. Tara's actually fourteen until December. The sign was printed on a high tech washable polyester in two pieces to straddle the frame of the window. The "free eye exam" text is visible from about a block away. The back side of the sign. Notice that printing is visible from both sides and during the day light is allowed to enter the premises. Even perforated vinyl would look "black" to viewers from inside the store.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Clients at 14:33