

Friday, June 30, 2006

2006.06.30: Grandma's stroke

My paternal grandmother, my last surviving grandparent, suffered a stroke at about 2:30am. It was her second stroke. She ruptured a blood vessel deep within her brain and the damage was deemed unoperable by the intensivist who was handling her file. Last I heard she was unconscious and on life support at the University of Alberta Hospital. My uncle from Toronto arrived in Edmonton June 30th at 11pm. The other two siblings were in some way or another "uninterested" in visiting their mother. It would very likely be the last time they get to see her alive . . . in some form or another.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Personal at 21:35

Saturday, June 24. 2006

2006.06.23: Improvaganza Day 09

Posted by Klyment Tan in Events at 13:56

2006.06.24: Workflow

02:26 - The Chinese English teacher next door that doesn't speak English isn't in; I'm turning up my music.02:36 - Nice work, Klyment . . . plugged adapter into laptop . . . didn't plug adapter into mains and laptop batteries died mid-transfer.02:44 - C1 Pro preview generation is taking forever . . . I'm going to start from the bottom of the pile and batch images upwards.03:03 - Ahhh . . . that was the most satisfying dump I took today.03:15 - Some of these improvisors have the worst skin I have ever seen.03:33 - This is taking forever.03:46 - I wonder what Steven in Beveren-Leie, Belgium is up to.04:17 - Steven suggests that if I call the 17-55/2.8 my ugly lens, perhaps I should call the 10.5/2.8 fish eye my busty lens. Hmmm . . .04:46 - The sun is coming up. Steven and I are talking about firearms in Belgium.04:48 - Photos for Improvaganza's Day 9 jam session are done and uploaded here. Hahah . . . normally it doesn't take so long to process under a hundred photos.05:09 - Shit . . . I didn't sort between full res and web-sized images from the queue . . . deleting all from Gallery and starting over.05:11 - Sent Bill Minsky something he's looking for.05:14 - Wooo . . . I'm getting dizzy . . . but now it's done. Going to bed - Chad's returning a Hasselblad 500C/M later this morning.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Personal at 04:33

Friday, June 16. 2006

2006.06.16: Rare optic

Any moment now I expect jizzum to fill the comments area for this entry . . . or questions asking what's the significance of defocus. Same difference. I have yet to make an image with this lens. Tonight I use it when I shoot Improvaganza Day 3. Update: Here's a sample taken off-stage just before the show. Thanks for growing that beard, Graham.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Equipment at 22:58

2006.06.15: Improvaganza Day 2

The festival continues. If you haven't dropped by the theatre already you're missing out. Part of RFT's Belindameer showcase . . . except Belinda isn't visible in this shot. And Lee isn't usually part of the troop. :-) Part of Seattle's rock opera where little kids are getting shit on by a rhino . . . crowd goes wild. Feces never fails to amuse. Iron Cobra's stereotypes scene. Someone in the audience thought Graham looks like a stereotypical hippie. I think he looks like Santa Claus . . . a very skinny Santa Claus. Full gallery. It's been a while since I've laughed uncontrollable during an improv theatre night. It's not that any of the improv I've seen recently was bad . . . just that I've seen a lot of improv . . . possibly more than some players. But both Iron Cobra's scenes reminded me of how I could laugh until my sides hurt. I laughed so hard that my stomach was sore this morning.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Events at 17:09

2006.06.16: Honk if you love the . . . WTF?!

Are you fucking kidding me?

Posted by Klyment Tan in General at 14:01

Thursday, June 15, 2006

2006.06.14: IMPROVAGANZA!!!!!!!!!!

It's that time of the year again - ten days of some of the best improv you'll see. More information at Rapid Fire Theatre's website. But in short, it runs from June 14 until June 24 8pm every night except for Sunday and Monday. Friday's and Saturday's there will also be 11pm shows. There's also a puppet improv matinee somewhere in there. Check it out! Here are a few photos from the opener. You can see the full gallery here. Michael Phair cutting the red ribbon to "open" Canada's largest improv comedy festival while Crad looks on. Phair's far from my favourite city councillor and councillors are far from my favourite people. But that's just my opinion . . . coming from a family that pays a significant amount of property tax which, coincidentally, contributes to councillor salaries. Seattle, WA. The same scene in three different genre's. RFT . . . Edmonton. Kevin playing an elephant in an animal allegory explaining how elephants, specifically African elephants, got their big ears. Quiksilver, Antwerp, Belgium. I think some of the team hasn't yet arrived so to form the two other sides of the square the team created some instant Belgians. Tonto's Nephews, Toronto, ON. An interesting open scene. Impro Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia. Replace Mark with Patti Stiles . . . there's a shot of both team members but this team's opening game involved other teams and I felt this photo gives a better idea of what the game involved. The person sitting on the box plays the "guru" and the other players ask questions to stump the guru. If the audience calls bullshit on the guru, the question's poser becomes the new guru. Dad's Garage, Atlanta, GA. Improv ballet? Becky (Toronto) licking a frozen chicken pot pie that Lee (Regina) just gave her. Kurt (Toronto) playing the most enthusiastic abused child I have ever seen. The commencement of this festival roughly marks my one year anniversary being seriously involved with Rapid Fire Theatre as a photographer. Not a whole lot has changed - same blog system, same but updated gallery system, same cameras, mostly same lenses with the addition of a few specialized optics. Perhaps the biggest change is the workflow and the software driving it - all photos will now be processed in Phase One Capture One Pro on a dual-core PC. Significantly improved exposure latitude from last year when using Rawshooter Essentials 2005 plus much better noise control, sharpening, and colour rendition.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Events at 02:53

Monday, June 12. 2006

2006.06.02: Promo for Scratch

I rarely pass up an opportunity to work with performers from Rapid Fire Theatre but this shoot nearly failed to materialize because of several past issues with shoots related to Rapid Fire Theatre players (not the two in these photos). Fortunately, we decided to continue with the shoot as planned and I am reasonably pleased with the results. The shoot was certainly enjoyable being the funniest formal shoot that I have ever done. The photographs will be used to promote Kevin Gillese's and Arlen Konopaki's new improvised show "Scratch". The troupe will be performing in the 2006 Toronto Fringe Festival and at something in Vancouver which I'm guessing is their Fringe festival. Showtimes for the Toronto show are in the extended body of this entry. Concepts for the photos by Kevin and Arlen (and Chris Craddock? . . . confirming this). The evening following this shoot, a McBain Camera employee found himself with a model and without the studio that he normally borrowed/rented from another McBain Camera employee. Jonathan made the request on behalf of this McBain Camera and I made my studio available. The meeting with this photographer keynoted what I feel as popular aversion towards improvised theatre. Kevin seems to be aware of people that don't like improv as well but attributes it to the fact that there is a lot of bad improv out there. Rapid Fire Theatre improv is some of the finest live theatre that I have ever watched. Come see for yourself. If you pay for a show after seeing this entry and were not entertained and you speak English I will gladly pay for your ticket. All photos shot with the Nikon D2X. Gallery with some other photos from the shoot are viewable here along with full EXIF metadata. I have a friend in Florida selling a package containing all of the lighting gear used to shoot the two outdoor photos. Please contact me if interested. We began in the studio. The original photos were rather sterile with just Kevin (left) and Arlen and the empty birthday present box on a grey backdrop tinted with a flamouyantly-coloured gel. We rooted around the studio and found some packing peanuts along with some blue metallic balloons which were originally picked up for Meags' balloon shoot a while back. Bowers QuadX w/ two Quad heads. Key (above) controlled with a Lightreign 36" octagon and grided with a Lighttools 50degree Soft Egg Crate. Fill (left, 45degree ish) was a Plume Wafer 140 level with Kevin's chest. Tarantula found from online stock and added by Mike Robertson, also of Rapid Fire Theatre. 60/2.8 Micro-Nikkor AF-DWe proceeded to a grassy hill in a park near Kevin's home. That's supposed to be "blood" on Kevin's knife but sense that the actors failed to realize that blood is more of an aqueous compound containing tiny particle of undissolved solids whereas corn syrup and food coloring will form a completely dissolved solution that is translucent and not opaque like real blood. Balcar AQ Pack powering a single Iris head with the FX60 reflector focused wide and close was fired at 1/3 of a stop over ambient light slightly off lense axis to light the scene. 17-55/2.8 AF-S DX Nikkor. Photo lit similarly to the first but with the subjects closer together I was able to move the Iris head closer to allow for a softer fill. The extremely short flash duration and rapid recycle of the battery-powered AQ Pack allowed me to capture a wide range of photos without needing to wash up and refill on red syrup. This image was cropped from its original composition. It was shot wider to allow for space for a magazine or newspaper title if it was considered for a cover. 17-55/2.8 AF-S DX Nikkor. SCRATCH - 2006 Toronto Fringe Festival Helen Gardiner Phelan Playhouse, 79A St. George Street Wed, July 5 10:30PM Sat, July 8 11:00PM Mon, July 10 4:45 PM Wed, July 12 9:15 PM Thu, July 13 1:45 PM Fri, July 14 Noon Sat, July 15 7:30 PM Tickets: \$10 The Fringe Hotline (416) 966-1062 ABSOLUTELY NO LATECOMERS Cure the itch. Scratch.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 02:07

Thursday, June 8, 2006

2006.05.26: Derks Fashion Party

Here are a few samples from one of the first three galleries to enter into the new gallery system. I won't be writing about the other two until a bit later but you can dig around the gallery and find them for yourself. You can see the rest of the photos here. Fashions by Nazila Couture. They have some really, really awesome women's stuff. I have absolutely NOTHING to do with any of their photographic advertising. It's all by the dude with the puffy hair in the black shirt holding the camera that's staring at one model's ass. Red velvet jacket by 4you. No idea who designs the rest of the stuff but all but the sunglasses are available at Derks. A university friend . . . and his mom. Hahah, Chuck, your mom's hot. If you see this, tell her to reply her e-mail. The last sentence and the sentence before it are completely unrelated. Jasmine, there's no way you're finishing even half of one of those by yourself. All runway shots were made with existing light using the Nikon D2X and the 70-200/2.8 VR Nikkor. Most were shot at ISO 640 (?) or 800 using continuous auto focus and metered with spot metering and exposure lock via shutter release. The camera nailed exposure and focus on over 90% of the runway shots.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Events at 00:45

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

2006.06.04: Touching up Mona's portfolio, adding to Elecia's

I spent most of Sunday with Mona and Elecia. I feel that we went into the shoot unconsciously hoping that Elecia's makeup would inspire us. It had to; we had no solid concepts to work with. I derived one shot from the shoot which I'll be adding to my portfolio and Mona found several shots that she (and her fiance) loved. It's hard getting a concrete opinion out of Elecia - speak your mind, woman! Anyhow, here are some of the photos from the shoot. This shot is far from technically excellent but it was one of the best shots from this part of the shoot. I wasn't confident in some of my beauty-dish lit shots off the Balcar AQ Pack but at the studio I discovered that the lighting was actually very good but the overall composites weren't very strong. Elecia pimping her bitch. Elecia's makeup application glows . . . literally. Setting up the shot was a bit touchy at first but after finding optimal light the makeup and model did all of the work. We also discovered that Mona shoots rather peculiarly head on. Four lights - two symmetrically driven bare 7" reflector shots from behind to highlight the edges of the shot, one 36" octagonal softbox boomed from above with light controlled by a 50 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crate, one fill light feathered into the shot by a Plume Wafer 140 controlled with a 30degree Soft Egg Crate. Rear lights driven by the Balcar AQ pack powering two Iris head. Front two lights driven by the Bowens QuadX 3000 with QuadX heads.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 23:54

Digital cheaper than film?

This entry isn't another look at what's cheaper but more of a personal revelation. Say you were shooting with a 10MP Nikon D200. You can fit about 240 raw photos on a 2gigabyte compact flash card. A good middle-of-the-road 2gig card from Kingston (Dong may say otherwise after his recent experience with such a card and his D200) would run you about \$70. A set of 4x6 prints from the 240 digital files would cost you about \$50. \$120 total assuming you don't reuse your card for whatever reason. At about \$3.50 a roll for really cheap colour print film plus processing of ten rolls of 24exp film with a print of each shot at the same pro lab would cost you about \$120 total. So in a way they are the same price on the "consumable" side. Suddenly, even if the memory card were disposable, save for the [slightly] higher cost of the camera, shooting film or digital would cost the same. Of course you'd need a computer to process the RAW files so say that you were happy shooting JPEGs and letting the lab correct the files for you. That same card would now fit about 500 photos. \$70 card plus about \$100 of processing for \$170 with the dSLR vs. about \$250 for film, again assuming that you throw away your memory card after using it only once instead of erasing the images/formatting and reusing the card.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Photography at 22:11

Thursday, June 1, 2006

Wasting time

When monitoring print jobs or waiting waiting for photos to finish processing at the studio I try to find things to keep me occupied. Over the past two weeks, this artificially-created leisure time can be summarized into a few short statements: I spent three hours watching the movie Alexander and wondered why Brad Pitt had this dumb look on his face the entire time. Then I realized Alexander was played by Colin Farrel. After the first two days of storing fresh bananas in a plastic shopping bag on top of the studio refrigerator, an unblemished banana's peel will develop an average of fifteen black spots per day until moldy. I recently acquired cleavage-enhancing elite aeromancer armor for my female elemental in Guild Wars: Factions. And she's Jonathan's type - light skin, light eyes, black hair, long legs. After reading about a dozen broadsheets as I printed them for U of A Visual Communications Design students I have concluded that an individual's competence in graphic design is inversely proportional to this individual's grammar. I have a stockpile of nearly six gigabytes in MP3 players and flash memory drives from people bringing stuff to print and leaving them here. If you're missing one such device please schedule a time to drop by and claim them.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Personal at 05:41