

Sunday, February 25, 2007

2007.01.18: My Grandmother - Completing the Story

January 16th through 30th of 2007 was supposed to be a retreat from the daily rigors of being a fashion/glamour photographer . . . you know, things like shooting beautiful, barely-clothed women and other similar annoyances that would plague any heterosexual guy. While I did have some shoots and administrative stuff booked, this entry, along with the few that follow this entry, will discuss subject matter that varies greatly from what I normally write about and what I normally shoot. My father's mother passed away the end of last year. Apparently my father saw a psychic reader that told him that his late mother was "doing okay" and to take his time bringing her ashes back to Malaysia. She also suggested that I accompany my father thus the family mandate for me to leave work in Edmonton for two weeks. We depart Edmonton on January 16th and arrive about midnight, the start of January 18th in Penang via Kuala Lumpur and, before that, Narita/Tokyo, Japan. Upon our arrival, we visited my grandmother's (and father's) old home in Penang which, when it was their primary home, was a well-known boarding house. #27 Goddib Road is now Carlsberg Beer's distribution office for the region though the building is now owned by my uncle in Toronto. At 7am we would make a trip to Sangai Patani, crossing Penang Bridge which connects the island of Penang to mainland Malaysia to visit my grandmother's birth place. It was my grandmother's final wish to visit the place where she was born and grew up. We carried her ashes to her old home. As the story goes, my grandmother and her siblings found a black pearl on the banks of this river. The pearl would change hues with the tides. A trader had once offered 60,000 ringgits over fifty years ago for this pearl and my grandmother's father refused the offer. At this point, the story diverges and develops two different versions. The first version is that while on his death bed, my grandmother's father realized the risk to harmony between his children and took the pearl and swallowed it. The second version is that the siblings gave their father the pearl and requested that he put it in his mouth as such pearls are believed by the locals to have some sorts of healing powers. Shortly after giving their father the pearl, their father was believed to have accidentally swallowed it and it is also believed that traces of the pearl may be in his burial urn. This bridge spanned the banks of this river. My grandmother's two sisters reminisced about how they remembered the bridge being so big and grand. I doubt that the width of the bridge is much more than six feet. Many of the boards have rotted through and with some effort one may be able to find a way to fall through the bridge and into the river. Here's a better view of the river as it crosses under the bridge. Many of the trees along the banks of this river have been cut down for fuel allowing for erosion caused by the torrential rains of South East Asia to wash a lot of the soil from the banks into the river, making it very cloudy. There are now some Malays living in the old house. The house has been upgraded from wood to brick. We left Sunai Patani and after about an hour and a half of driving arrive at the Buddhist burial temple. Behind the temple we see Penang Hill. The hill is almost like a mini mountain range that divides the island of Penang. One of the temple's caretakers arranges some of the items within my grandfather's and grandmother's "plot". A soothing wind blew gently through the area the entire time we were there. The view when you look up from where my grandparents' ashes are kept. Light streams into the temple above the balcony across from my grandparents' burial plot. At the end of the day, the main burial process is complete but we revisit the temple some time after to complete a prayer ritual and to request a blessing.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Personal at 21:21

Friday, February 23, 2007

2006.12.08: Bridal Fantasy Cover Reattempt: Julie

Julie and her mother, and this time, entourage, came up once again from Red Deer to shoot with us. By the time that hair and makeup were done and she travelled out from Edmonton to St. Albert it was already about 11pm. Julie left Jonathan's studio around 2am the next morning. Despite less than ideal timing, she was energetic and great to work with from beginning to end. If you'd like to book Julie for a shoot you may contact her through her agency (I have nothing to do with the construction of this website . . . a new site is on its way). Julie's agent selected this image over a series of other spectacular closely-composed shots that Jonathan shot this night. She loved the makeup. Nice work, Paula. Another one of Jonathan's close-ups."I know your shoulder's sore but I need you to hold that up for another . . . half hour!" Experimenting with some old leather luggage from Derk's west Edmonton location. Pose concept by Mandy Bilous. Another pose concept by Mandy. Julie's standing on a tool box and I believe one or two phone books to keep the trane off the ground. I'm starting to notice a theme here . . . My personal favourite from Jonathan's landscape-oriented close ups . . . I love the eye contact and facial expression in this shot, plus we can distinctly see the image being reflected in the catch light in the full resolution photo.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 06:03

2006.12.08: Bridal Fantasy Cover Reattempt: Rachel

After the shoot failure at Red Strap Market/my studio, the team planned a shoot which would hopefully get a shot that would be a better cover shot than what may have been used. The client's mandate was for a dark haired, light-eyed model. Yura Sklyar stepped up and with under 24 hours notice found us Rachel. Here are some photos from her first shoot ever. Photos shot at Jonathan's St. Albert studio. Lighting by Lighttools and Lightrein with a few other pieces of equipment in the mix as noted below. Hair by Jennifer Chivers of Elysium Hair Body Spirit. Makeup by Paula. What's not immediately obvious is that there is a gigantic gobo on the main soft box in the foreground in the form of a surreal scene of sky and sunflowers printed on a polyester mesh with the Epson 9800 at my studio. This gobo allowed us to cast a catch light in the model's eyes that looked a lot more natural. The cooler colour balance of the photo used in the gobo was also chosen to help separate the model's light from the neutral light cast onto the warmer-toned studio surroundings and backdrop. Away with the backdrop! A Bowens QuadX power pack was used to pump 3000J of energy through to a single flash head to texture the light on the background: the wood paneling in Jonathan's studio. Photo by Jonathan. Edited by me. This photo is one of my personal favourites that Jonathan shot. I think he has a knack for tightly-cropped shots. Nice work, bud. => Rachel showing off the details of the back of the dress. Hi, Mandy. That's just creepy . . . Gene Simmons IS your father! A fun shot in between all of the hard work that modeling is.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 05:46

2007.01.10: Bridal Fantasy Cover Selection

Which would you choose? Cale Julie Rachel

Cale photographed by Jonathan Puckrin. Other than saying that events leading up to the final cover selection could easily be classified as a series of preventable failures. Cover designs by Kurt Kowalchuk of Quality Group.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Photography at 05:28

2006.11.23: Bridal Fantasy Chinaballs

Follow up to a previous post. Our shoot was cut short due to a location booking error and, unfortunately, the resources weren't available to execute the concept as I had originally envisioned it. But here is my digital monument to failure. A quick snap of the early stages of set building. From left: me, Jonathan Puckrin, and Iraleigh Anderson. Thank you, Jonathan and Ira. 30 Chinese lanterns, a dozen light fixtures and compact fluorescent lamps, two truss systems, three 750W par lights, three 750W theatrical ellipsoidal spot lamps, two DMX controllers, one control panel, one fog generator, one Balcar Nexus A3200, two Iris heads and two Lightrein strip lights with 40 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crates later the set is almost model-worthy. Sheena giving the set a whirl . . . *sigh* Jonathan with the set, reconstructed at my studio. Model: Evan Will Photo: Evan Will's feet Julie posing for a snapshot in the doorway to the studio bubble. ASTRO IRA! Photo by Jonathan

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 05:11

Tuesday, February 6, 2007

2007.02.06: NEC LCD2690WUXi

My new proofing display arrived at my studio late Monday evening. Spec sheet highlights like 91%+ of Adobe RGB colours (compared to roughly 70% for most decent displays), 12bit lookup table, and factory profiling of the surface of the entire LCD to map out imperfections and eliminate them plus soon to be released updated Spectraview software to work with existing spectrophotometers to directly calibrate the colour lookup table through hardware only hint at the beauty beneath the boxy shell of the winner of 2007's MacWorld Best of the Show award. Mere moments after software profiling the display with the Eye One Pro and ProfileMaker 5 my spine began to tingle. I whisped through some new photos from my trip to South East Asia and the display met me with colours that I had never seen before outside of real life. In fact, many of these colours were out of reach of most of the media combinations for the Epson 9800 or even the Epson 9600 w/ the unstable Nanochrome inkset. I'll have a full review up in a few days. Check back soon.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Equipment at 03:39