

Monday, April 28. 2008

2008.04.28: Updating my equipment list page soon

The equipment listing on my site is very out-of-date. I'll eventually move these items onto that page: Capture Equipment Nikon D2XD30017-55/2.8 DX Nikkor 70-200/2.8 VR Nikkor 135/2 Defocus Control Nikkor 60/2.8 Micro Nikkor 10.5/2.8 fisheye Nikkor 30/1.4 Sigma Rollei 6008 AF w/ Phase One P20 digital back Schneider 80/2.8 AF Xenotar PQS HFT Zeiss 150/4 Sonnar PQ HFT Zeiss 50/4 Distagon PQ HFT Horseman LE w/ Betterlight 6000-HS digital scan back Rodenstock Grandagon-N 75/4.5 Copal 0 Rodenstock Sironar-S 210/5.6 Copal 1 Fujinon-SW 150/5.6 Seiko 1/500s shutter Lighting Strobe 3 x Bowens Quad X 30007 x Bowens Quad head 2 x Bowens Esprit Gemini monolight Bowens Explorer 1500 battery-powered pack (can run two Quad heads and two Esprit Gemini's simultaneously off battery) Balcar Nexus S32002 x Balcar PowerZ Heads Broncolor Grafit A42 x Broncolor Pulso G2 Broncolor Hazy Light Light modifiers 2 x Calumet Illuma Large (Plume Wafer 140 size) w/ 30 and 50 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crates Calumet Illuma Medium (Plume Wafer 100 size) w/ 40 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crate Chimera Video Pro Plus medium w/ 20 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crate Chimera Video Pro Plus 22 x 84" strip w/ 40 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crate Chimera 9 x 30" strip w/ 40 degree Lighttools Soft Egg Crate 2 x Bowens 7" grid reflectors with lots of grids + barn doors and snoots Bowens Softlight 15" reflector with opal diffuser w/ 7" spot grid centre 2 x Bowens Maxilite reflector Chimera and Redwing/Calumet quick release speed rings Westcott Scrim Jim 72 x 72" Continuous light 4 x Tungsten Fresnel theatrical spot lamps 2 x older Altman ellipsoidal reflector tungsten spot lamps ETC Source Four Jr. Zoom 2 x Flolight 200W (1000W tungsten equivalent?) dimmable, high frequency ballast fluorescent panel lights w/ grids Printing Epson Stylus Pro 9800 44" Ultrachrome K3 Epson Stylus Pro 9600 44" Nanochrome failed experiment (waiting for new ink set) Modified Epson Stylus Photo 1400 6 channel dye printer (quick proofing and mass production of headshots and album-display/short term wall display prints) Ergosoft Posterprint 12 Onyx Postershop 7Q image Gretag Macbeth Profile Maker Professional 5 Gretag Macbeth/X-rite Eye-one Pro UV cut Intelicoat canvases and signage materials Moab fine art papers Epson photo papers

Posted by Klyment Tan in General at 06:25

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

2008.04.15: Damian Chao's new headshots - a reflection

Nikolas called me on Monday to book a shoot for his friend Damian for Tuesday. I booked in the late afternoon and evening thinking it would just be another fulfilling headshot session which would provide the actor with photos that would help sell them to casting directors. This Tuesday turned into so much more. It was a humbling experience for me. It was only Nikolas' third time behind a professional camera and perhaps only the second time that he was more than casually shooting the talent on set and what he produced was not only remarkable but absolutely extraordinary. Not only did he produce some amazing photographs but he produced photographs that I felt sell the actor better than the photos that I was commissioned to shoot. This shoot and the review session back at that the studio that followed, taught me so much more about the essence of people photography than almost any other individual shoot during my entire career as a photographer. After comparing Nikolas' yield to my own I found that I now have no choice but to accept that a photographer's communication with his subject and a clear understanding of the essence of the character being captured when combined with the ability to capture this essence can overcome many technical challenges. I have just witnessed how spontaneity and communication can overcome limitations in technical knowledge and how a more advanced technical knowledge can't always overcome a photographer's deficiencies in communication. Anyway, enough deliberation; have a look at the unedited photos and judge for yourself. And thank you to both Damian and Nikolas for working with me today. Damian wanted a grittier, tougher, more brooding headshot than the photos he had outgrown. I thought the location, the greenhouses south of the Alberta Legislature, was ideal for this look. Chainlink fences with barbwire at the top, broken up pavement, piles of bricks and rusted steps plus a variety of natural go-betweens to break up existing light as well as interesting background elements in a space that left enough room to allow for background separation. All of the square shots were made with the Rollei 6008AF, Schneider AF Xenotar 80/2.8 PQS HFT, and Phase One P20 digital back. This shot and the one before it were made with existing light only. This one kinda looks like an album cover. It's even the right shape and everything. Hahah! Similar to the previous shot but shot at 1/1000s and at F/2.8 and sync'ed to the Bowens Explorer 1500, Bowens Quad head with standard 7" grid reflector and barndoors for fill. Damian's and Nikolas' first killer shot of the day. In fact, the first keeper of the day regardless of who was shooting. Nikolas using the Nikon D2X and 70-200/2.8 VR. Looks like a still from a movie set with really flattering light. Citing that Damian now has lots of solid photographs selling him as a tough, stand-offish type of character he could use a shot like this to help illustrate his ability to fill a softer and more approachable role. It's hard to believe that Damian's father is allegedly 100% Chinese. Heh. :-P I believe Nikolas was still using the 70-200/2.8 VR for this photo. The headshot. Nikolas shot this with the D2X and the 135/2 Defocus Control Nikkor. Existing light only.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 03:30

Monday, April 7, 2008

2008.04.07: Tidying the studio

There's no more room left to work in so I'm forced to clean up (finally). These bins are going to help me transform -->this mess into usable space.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Studio at 23:54

Sunday, April 6, 2008

2008.04.05: Infrared Flower Photography

To break the "monotony" of my usual work I wanted to try something different with some of the newly-acquired equipment. Using the Horseman LE, a Fujinon-W 150/5.6 single-coated lens designed for 4x5 format coverage with movements and the Betterlight Super 6000-HS scanback and an old 5" Fresnel tungsten theatrical spot lamp, Leanna and I explored some of the flowers we picked up this day using mostly light that can't be seen by humans and typically isn't controlled in most types of infrared photography. While there are more photos and there will be more information coming on this blog, Bjørn Rørslett not only has a wealth of information about infrared photography on his website but even information about UV photography specifically of certain plants which I believe is one photographic discipline that he's especially famous for. While I pursue non-visible light photography for aesthetic and artistic reasons only, Mr. Rørslett goes a giant step further to pursue such photography as what appear to be scientific ends. One of the finished images. Corners from two stray petals from another flower were digitally removed from the shot. Image was extracted from the Better Light control box's hard drive as a DNG and converted in Adobe Camera RAW. The line time was very short . . . I recall it being around 1/500-1/1500 of a second so the entire exposure at full resolution took about 35 seconds. No visibly opaque filter was used. Lens was shot at about F/8 to prevent the back/right edge of the flower from becoming this uniform smear. Another completed image. Again, image was extracted as a DNG and converted in Adobe Camera RAW. No visible light filter was used for this particular shot and visible light was about four to six stops less intense than the infrared being generated by the tungsten lamp. Aperture was approximately F/11. Leanna spritzing up the models. One of the specimens. You can see that it looks very different with visible light and with a small format camera that has no selective focus movements than it does in infrared on a camera with virtually unlimited perspective control and selective focusing freedom.

There were some other noteworthy finished photographs and some process shots. A shot taken of one of the flowers but using the Hoya R72 filter which is almost visually opaque. This shot was processed to a greyscale colour space. A shot before changing light and flower direction but with otherwise similar composition. One of the biggest changes was the use of a Hoya R72 filter which is virtually opaque to visible light. Here it is processed with significant amounts of saturation boosting and that's all of the colour that one could extract. The exposure time was approximately the same as with the shot done without any visible light filtration. On the full resolution file, Leanna and I noticed that the visible light-cut photos seemed to exhibit a softer look. I'm totally including this shot because of Leanna's cleavage. This shot gives you an idea of what the composition looked like on the ground glass of the camera. Photo by Leanna. It's hard work especially for a shooter not accustomed to shooting small objects with a Fresnel and having never shot digital infrared before.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 05:19