

Tuesday, August 14. 2012

2011.12.16: Telus World of Science Discoveryland Opening

As I sift through the day's photos I realize that this shoot provides a fairytale-like close to a major chapter of my childhood. I began as a volunteer when this science centre was named the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, before it was named the Telus World of Science and even before it was called the Odysium. I was a science camp volunteer beginning when I was in grade 8. I spent a lot of my time here especially in the summer. It was almost a second home to me and the staff almost a second family. Over the years I had learned so much through my experiences here.

As time past we grew apart. High school and, eventually, university and other extra-curricular activities would fill the time once allocated to the science centre but I always reserved a place for it in my heart. These photos may seem merely an example of commercial documentary of common subject matter but they helped me realize once again how important this establishment was and will continue to be for countless individuals.

The Telus World of Science also needed an update to their image library with shots of their permanent galleries including the opening of the new children's gallery, Discoveryland. These images were all shot on 4x5 film and cropped to 2:1 aspect ratios with the expectation that they would be used as web site banners. All architectural-oriented shots taken on a jade green Toyo VX125 4x5 collapsible monorail on various negative films with various lenses and scanned with an Aztek Digital Photo Lab Professional-driven Howtek Scanmaster 4500. Gillian Crichton served as my art director and point of contact.

A selection of photographs of the first group of young visitors exploring the new Discoveryland. Some of the highlights of the new children's gallery include a water exhibit and an airport security simulator. All shots taken with the 35mm F/1.4 AF-S Nikkor mounted on a Nikon D3.

A shot of the waterworks exhibit. Existing light, 72mm Schneider Super-Angulon XL F/5.6 on Portra 400 metered at ISO 320. Shutter speed was approximately 1/2s and shot at F/11. I chose a faster film for this shot as I wanted some motion blur but I didn't want all of the floating balls to become blurred streaks.

A photo of the southern half of Discoveryland. Schneider Symmar-S 210mm F/5.6 @ F/5.6 on the new Kodak Portra 160.

The Forensics exhibit. Schneider 72mm Super-Angulon XL.

I believe the Challenger Learning Centre used to be in this area. 72mm.

Part of the Space exhibit.

The Environment exhibit. This photo took the longest to set up. Schneider 135mm F/5.6 Symmar-S on Kodak Portra 400.

The Body Fantastic health gallery. Schneider 72mm Super-Angulon XL.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 14:39

Saturday, August 11. 2012

2011.12.18: Elizabeth H

Elizabeth, like Jenna, was a high priority upcoming model with whom I wished to work. I first encountered her when going through some of Next Models scout Brenda's archive of snapshots of models whom she'd scouted recently. Her look caught my attention immediately and in spite of Brenda's assertions that she wasn't yet ready I expressed my eagerness to work with her as soon as Brenda felt she was. I met Elizabeth for the first time during a practice for Beverly Gan's spring/summer 2012 ready-to-wear collection. I had some time with her after the practice and I made a few haphazard digital and silver halide stills. These first few shots with Elizabeth offered a glimpse into the profundity of the understated; the slightest change in head angle or what could have been going through her mind would result in a thousand little changes that when evaluated individually would be barely noticeable but together created something so subtle and so beautiful. These photos weren't even supposed to have been shot yet I found a few casual keepers that I've shared below.

It wouldn't be another two seasons before we would have a chance to work together and with a crew. And while this crew was just Nikolas doing hair, makeup, and fashion styling, the "crew" transformed Elizabeth into many interesting contradictions.

Two of the first dozen frames I shot of Elizabeth. Taken with the Leica M7 through the Zeiss Biogon 35/2 ZM onto Ilford Delta 400 pushed to ISO 1600 in Kodak XTOL at stock strength.

Nikolas pulled some pieces from Thread Hill which he used to style all of the photos other than those involving rope and burlap. We shot in a private nature preserve west of Edmonton. We were walking to the wooded area I originally wanted to shoot in but the light and the snow that had stuck to the branches from the wet snow fall made us stop for a few photos.

These two frames shot with the Toyo VX125 collapsible 4x5 monorail camera through a Schneider 210mm F/5.6 at F/5.6 onto FP4+ 125 processed at rated speed in XTOL. All large format film scanned with an Aztek DPL Pro-driven Howtek Scanmaster 4500. I left the original colour cast from these two drum scans.

I pulled out the M7 and the 90mm Summicron for a few snaps with Elizabeth's coat on.

We stopped in two spots in the forested part of the nature reserve. A few from the first spot.

Some of what I felt were the stronger shots from from this set. It took us a while to figure out what the light coloured lines crossing the frames laterally from the left. I believe the hypo clearing agent was near exhaustion and some of the fixer had remained after a shortened rinse step as normally prescribed when using a hypo eliminator. When hung in the film dryer, the residual fixer flowed down the strip of film and branched out, darkening parts of the film resulting in light areas in the reversal of the negative.

Another two favourites.

Considering it was -24 degrees C and colder with the humidity, Elizabeth remained convincing in all of her photos. This photo was one of two shot with the VX125 and the 135mm F/5.6 Schneider Symmar-S onto FP4+ pushed to ISO 400.

Past sundown and without direct sky access I needed to switch to the Panasonic GH2 and the 20mm F/1.7 that I had packed as backup. The digital combination gave a two stop advantage over my two available film systems. Revisiting these images I'm not sure what we created. I wish I could locate my notes about this idea. Bottom left image was a digital snap to help Nikolas evaluate makeup at the beginning of the shoot.

We returned to the studio to try out some ideas. I wasn't happy with the images but the left image was received well by some of the people who had viewed them. Right image was the last exposure of the evening.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 01:02

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

2011.07.29: Livestock Gentec

I make no apologies for how long it has taken to blog about this shoot; I've needed some time away from the blog to prepare for some projects and to sort out some things. That said, blogging some of these shoots aren't as tedious as I had somehow convinced myself that they were so I'm trying to catch up and stay up to date with things. A new website and new blog design are on their way but I have no promises for delivery dates. Photokina and Cinec 2012 are coming up in Cologne and Munich, respectively and there are things I am preparing for my month-long absence from Canada. There are few projects that have gotten me as excited as this image library development project I have had the privilege of working on with Livestock Gentec. We're working with a flexible ad agency-type entity collaborating closely with an executive-level manager on the client side and we are working with subject matter that often finds itself in cliché stock photography or in very literal and sometimes "cute" but otherwise intellectually stale imagery. The spaces that we have to work with are generic-looking for science laboratories so we needed to think implicitly and interpret art direction's concepts not as any stock or commercial photographer would but, in my case, as a photographer with a fashion and architecture background would. Many of the more directed shots are shot on 4x5" negative sheet film and then drum scanned in-house. The format allows me to shoot at apertures that will easily allow for motion blur while retaining depth of field control without the use of neutral density filtration. Using the Toyo VX124 also allows for generous perspective control movement to maintain parallel lines and geometric accuracy as an architectural photographer would while selective focus movements allow for an extra degree of subject separation as a fashion or portrait photographer would. Shooting onto film increases the image capturing system's resistance to chromatic aberration even with large degrees of image circle and lens axis offset. Furthermore, some photographs would need to be shot with an ultra-wide angle lens but without tolerance for wide angle-related perspective distortion. The Schneider 72mm Super-Angulon XL functioning as an ultra-wide ensures that while object placement will be characteristically exaggerated the rendition will be much like what we'd be used to seeing from a short telephoto lens in the 135 format that is more commonly shot.

A rough draft of part of the quotation that I sent my art director.

A small handful of the headshot we shot in one of the labs during one of the shoot days. In this panel we're probably looking at a combined total of over a century of post secondary education and related research. Even business managers working with this client are double-PhD's with MBA's. I was officially the least educated person on site during the shoot! Nikon D3, 135/2 Defocus Control Nikkor and with some fill from an LED panel or two with light colour temperatures set to match ambient light.

Livestock Gentec's Edmonton operations are divided between two buildings: one in downtown Edmonton and the other in the Agriculture and Forestry Building on the University of Alberta campus. These were some of the more spontaneous images we decided to create with individuals using pieces of equipment. The photographs were LED lit with my own design of lighting instrument and Corey acting as a human light stand for many of the shots. All taken with the 24-70/2.8 AF-S Nikkor and the Nikon D3.

We wanted a few shots with visible faces working at the benches. These were shot with the D3, 135mm F/2 Defocus Control Nikkor and existing light only.

We needed some creative images of the laboratory space in use but we also didn't want recognizable faces in the photos so we worked a lot with motion blur and slower shutter speeds. All taken with the Toyo VX125 and the Schneider 72mm Super-Angulon XL. The frame on the right is available in both colour and black and white but this particular drum scan was taken off a sheet of Ektar that was mistakenly processed with Kodak XTOL at HP5+/400 timings. The resulting image was interesting.

At Livestock Gentech's downtown laboratory location we took advantage of the common spaces to the library with architecturally-interesting backgrounds. The existing light was challenging as a lot of light entered from above in the centre of the building and most of the catwalks do not receive side window light. The combination of large, battery-powerable, colour temperature adjustable LED light, the highlight-compressing characteristics of negative film combined with the density decompressing capabilities of a drum scanner allow a photographer to efficiently address these challenges.

Posted by Klyment Tan in Shoots at 19:19