



TEXT SUPPORT

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In conversation with
Chris Tarantino and Ken Tan

DIGITAL FASHION
PHOTOGRAPHY

RATING: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DIGITAL FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY captures the impact that technology has had on the world of fashion, while giving very good advice to those interested in the industry and want to expand their own passion for photography. Filled with stunning images this book reminds the reader that technological changes are the driving force in the ever expanding tool kit of the photographers who capture the creative expression of today's fashion designers in breathtaking ways.

In 1911 when Edward Stichen began taking shots for Art de Decoration the world of fashion photography came to be. What year do you tie to the birth of digital fashion photography and how was the introduction of digital viewed by the fashion industry?

I believe the year that digital cameras got traction in fashion was 2003 — when an adequate supply of the Canon 1Ds hit the market. At 11.1Mp and with low noise, this was adequate for a two page spread for glossy magazines.

There were other cameras such as the Canon 10D, the Nikon D1x and a number of expensive, but poorly featured medium format digital backs that fashion photographers used. However, most of my colleagues at the time would have said that they still shot primarily (medium format) film and were “experimenting” with digital as back-up equipment or to learn the new digital workflow.

In 1990 the Kodak DCS-100 with 1.3 megapixels and 1024x1280 resolution weighed 55 pounds and cost \$30,000. What sort of costs are involved today?

Firstly, I would say that your equipment budget does not limit nor guarantee a level of “seriousness.” I suspect the average Vogue photographer with a point and shoot can produce better images than the average

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Favourite author
Bill Bryson and Dan Brown

Favourite Web site
www.luminouslandscape.com and
www.gizmodo.com

A good book...
The Devil Wears Prada

Guilty pleasure
Belgian chocolate and Canadian Vidal
dessert wine

weekend shooter with a 1Ds.

To be able to provide adequate images to Tier 1 print clients, a minimum today would be a 11+ megapixel file — so you are looking at a \$6,000 (all prices in U.S. dollars) to \$8000 camera, a few lenses at \$1,500 each, a basic studio flash set up with two monoblocks with stands and softboxes at around \$2,000 to \$3,000, a background system at \$1000, a good carbon fiber tripod at \$1,000 and a wireless trigger, and some compact flash cards for another \$1,000. On the

computer side, you need at least a powerful laptop and a few portable hard drives) for around \$5,000, totalling around \$20,000.

What two goals does a winning photograph have to achieve to make a fashion designer happy with the presentation of his or her line?

To properly communicate the designer's vision for the specific collection in a fun and attractive way that induces customers to buy their wares. Also, to continue to develop and reinforce the designer's overall brand image and the emotional associations they are trying to achieve.

Has digital made it easier to correct photographs on the computer? What software do you use when working with your shots?

Absolutely — I continue to be amazed what my co-author Chris Tarantino and my friend Katrin Eismann can do with Photoshop. In the book, there is one example where there were over 30 layers used to correct a single image — not major surgery which I don't agree with due to my belief in the

“shoot it right the first time” approach described in the book, but subtle corrections to blemishes, inconsiderate creasing of clothing etc. For my work, I only use Photoshop but I have occasionally used a few specialist tools like Noise Ninja, Mystical Lighting etc. — for significant post work, I always leave it to the pros.

If technology has made it easier for more hobbyists to consider a serious career in photography does it become more competitive and thus harder to establish a name?

The technology has definitely reached a level of performance at a low enough price point for many more photographers to enter, but the relationships with editors, stylists, agencies and designers are not for sale. They require years of personal investment by successful photographers and a history of on-time, on-budget delivery, which invites repeat business. The other thing that you find harder to buy is an eye for fashion, and the artistic side of creating an emotive, compelling image.



INSIDER

Fried eggs and SPAMIS

BEFORE TODAY'S SCREED, LET'S SPARE A THOUGHT for the well-meaning, hard-working people at Hormel Foods who bring us Spam.

As food products go, we're down with Spam here. I always keep a can of it in my carry-on luggage, just in case my plane crashes in the Andes — I won't have to eat a Uruguayan rugby team to survive. (Ah, that joke never gets old.) But it's not just The Food Product of Last Resort. There are many pages on the Web devoted to Spam recipes (not that having a page on the Web devoted to you is a ringing endorsement).

For example, there's plethora.net's Spam recipe page, which boasts such culinary gems as this:

Jesse's Spam Recipe

Ingredients: Spam, eggs, salt and pepper

Instructions: Cut spam into cubes. Put the cubes into a frying pan. Fry them for a while, then shove the spam over to one side, and crack the eggs into the other side of the pan. Fry all that stuff until it's done. Salt and pepper it. Makes eggs taste like eggs-fried-with-bacon, makes

the spam taste like spam. (A lot of people doubt the utility of this latter effect, but it's undeniable that it works.)

The good people at Hormel are justly frustrated with their flagship product's unfortunate association with its namesake, unsolicited commercial e-mail. So I just thought I'd be kind to them first, before launching into another tired diatribe on lower-case-s spam.

This week's commentary is courtesy of SPAMIS (Strategic Partnership Against Microsoft Illegal Spam — one part acronym, one part acrimony), who released a quote from California legislator Debora Bowen, which read: “Trusting Microsoft to protect computer users from spam is like putting telemarketers in charge of the do-not-call list.” Ouch.

The press release then notes 25 other comments from the news.admin.net.abuse.e-mail newsgroup on Google, most of which mock Microsoft's master suppression list, implicate the BCentral ListBuilder Service and question how Microsoft garners e-mail addresses. All bad stuff.



Question: Since nobody here recalls subscribing to any SPAMIS list . . . complete the sentence yourself.

The (properly formatted) e-mail address was likely harvested from one of many stateside services that collect media contact information. But let us run down the checklist: Unsolicited? Check. Commercial? Hmm . . . designed to get press for an organization, and attract readers to its membership, so, yes, IMHO. E-mail? Decidedly so. Verdict? Sorry, my friends, but you're spamming us.

PSST! Got an inside scoop? Email us at insider@itbusiness.ca