

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

September 3, 2006

FAQ: Equipment (World's worst photo interview question)

Filed under: [FAQ's, photo tech](#) — alecsothblog @ 11:19 pm

In one of the [funniest blog posts I've ever read](#), the issue is raised about asking photographers about their equipment. It really can be annoying, but the truth is that a large percentage of the photography audience is other photographers – and a large percentage of photographers are nerds. So, lemme get it over with:

For [Sleeping by the Mississippi](#) I used an R.H. Phillips and Sons 8×10 Compact with a Nikon 300mm lens. I continued to use this equipment with *NIAGARA*, but I also added a K.B. Canham 8×10, a Nikon 800 (convertible to 1200mm), and a 210 Super-Angulon. For [Dog Days, Bogota](#) I used a Mamiya 6. For most of these projects I used Kodak Portra NC (400+160). For my editorial work, I shoot with a variety of equipment ([Making Parts](#), for example, was shot with a Phase-One Lightphase medium format back).

I don't do a ton of lighting, but sometimes have to add some strobe (inexpensive White Lightning monolights) or hotlights (Lowel).

As for printing, I still have a conventional color darkroom with a Kreonite processor. I use this for proofs or small prints. For [Sleeping by the Mississippi](#), I made traditional optical C-Prints at a lab in Minneapolis. For *NIAGARA*, I made digital C-Prints (both Lightjet and Lambda) at Laumont in New York. Whew. I hope that answers the dreaded question once and for all. One more thing. In case you want to know what computer I'm typing this blog on, it is an old 12 inch iBook:



August William Soth, 18" (on 12" iBook)

11 Comments

1. Yeah, yeah, yeah.....but what's your favorite f/stop?

Comment by Bob — September 6, 2006 @ [5:22 pm](#)

2. Forget about f/stops. I want the full rundown on shutter speeds! And also: do you think I can make pictures as good as yours on my Canon Powershot?

Comment by Richard Ehrlich — September 6, 2006 @ [5:51 pm](#)

3. oh, so that is how to download a baby.

Comment by rio — September 6, 2006 @ [7:01 pm](#)

4. Thanks for the link and all the best on your new blog – and your new baby! (My son's name is August, too, oddly enough.)

Comment by [Todd W.](#) — September 6, 2006 @ [8:47 pm](#)

5. I think that is one cute little glow worm.

Comment by [Laura](#) — September 6, 2006 @ [9:43 pm](#)

6. [New babies](#) promotes blog making. But, believe it or not eventually you will have a life again. Looking forward to reading about your trip through these uncharted waters.

Comment by [raul](#) — September 7, 2006 @ [12:45 am](#)

7. August looks so comfortable atop his new iDigs. Congratulations on finding a new assistant. Forgive those whose need to know the details, keeps them from seeing the picture. Get some rest and give everyone hugs.

Comment by Bill Hardy — September 7, 2006 @ [6:54 am](#)

8. I'm so happy you've got a blog now.
Congrats on the cameras and the babies.

Comment by [Peter Baker](#) — September 7, 2006 @ [3:56 pm](#)

9. Alec, I appreciate your naming your second child after me , but I really think you should have done it the first go round? Cheers, Wm. greiner

Comment by [William Greiner](#) — September 7, 2006 @ [4:22 pm](#)

10. [...] It's good to see photographers talking about photography online. I especially like his post about The World's Worst Photo Interview Question. I think that sometimes the technical details do get in the way of the image, but I also think his approach of just getting it out of the way upfront is an appropriate response to that problem. [...]

Pingback by [m.bever](#) - [words » Alec Soth Blog](#) — September 8, 2006 @ [12:37 pm](#)

11. Bags. Bags. Bags, that is all I ever want to know, what bag is used for which camera. That is the really important stuff. Or better yet, pen or pencil for collecting caption info?

Congratualtions on the birth of your child. Childeren are way better than any camera, or bag for that matter.

Comment by [Tom Leininger](#) — September 9, 2006 @ [10:23 pm](#)