

KEEPING PACE

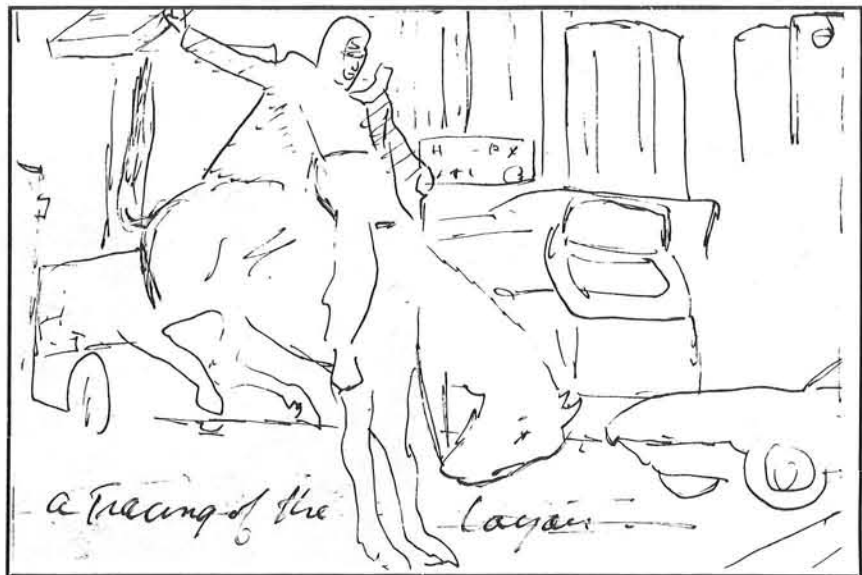
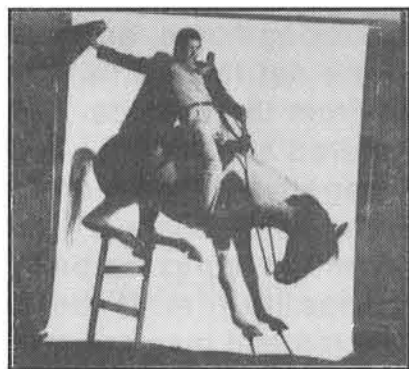
A Newsletter Devoted to the art of Darkroom Photography

Volume 3 Sept. 1987

The Anatomy of a Strip-in

The anatomy of a strip-in. It almost sounds as if I were to do an autopsy instead of describing just what steps are needed to make a composite photographic layout. However, that's about what I will be doing. Our client wanted a Dye Transfer color print.

There are many kinds of strip-ins. This is just an example of one of them.



In this case, our client wanted to show what a business man has to go through in his quest for business in a big town. The frenzy and excitement and the danger of being in business, whether for yourself or working for someone else. So, naturally, why not show a business man in his business apparel on a bucking horse in the middle of Los Angeles traffic. This tells the whole story. You have to be a little daring to be out in this modern business jungle and try to make it.

In this case, we were supplied with 2 1/4 transparencies. The first one is a shot of Los Angeles traffic at noon, and the second was the shot of our hero on a bucking bronco. The second shot



AUGUST

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**CROWN
 PRINTERS**

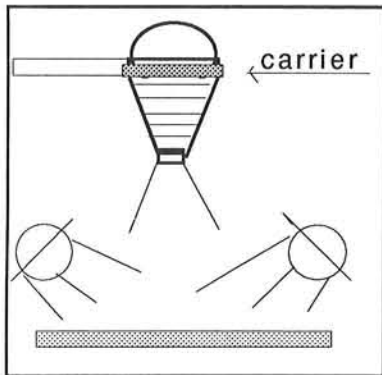
250 West Rialto Avenue
 San Bernardino, CA 92408
 (714) 888-7531 / 824-0785

Photograph: Arthur Montes De Oca
 Dye Transfer: Bob Pace
 Retouching: Gene Allison
 Horse: Bob's Taxidermy
 Separations: Augustin Graphics
 Stock: Butler Paper Co., Image Gloss Book, 81#
 Ink: Gans, Offset L/T Sunrise Process

was made on a taxidermists stuffed horse. A fan gave us the flying tie and coat. But the tail was going in the wrong direction to look authentic.

Here are the steps used to produce this final image.

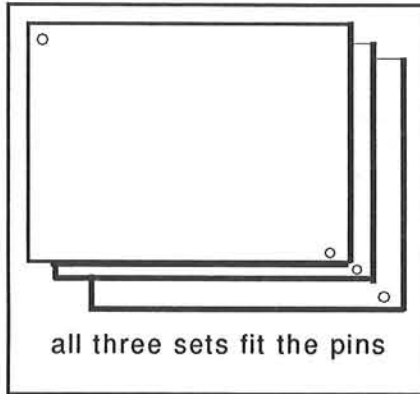
1. Copy the layout. Then print it on a sheet of Kodalith film to the size of the separation negative film you plan to use. Fill up the Kodalith sheet



with the entire layout, plus some bleed. Soft process this sheet so that all of the image is visible.

2. Use this layout as the "master" image. With this "master" image placed on an 8x10 vacuum easel and using diagonal

registration pins, you will be able to make enlarged separation negatives to the exact size and position to the layout. In this case, we will make three sets of



separations negatives. One for the city, one for the bucking horse, and one set for the tail.

3. From the best detailed separation negative of the man and horse, make a contact exposure on Kodalith film. If the horse and man are rich enough and have plenty of separation against the background then process the sheet of Kodalith in D11 developer. If it is a soft and delicate image then soft develop the image and use Rubylith material to cut it out. Don't forget, you will be using register pins during every step.

4. Once you have silhouetted the man and horse, do the same with the tail. Reverse them on separate sheets of Kodalith so that you can produce the "print through" masks. **Using the original silhouettes of the horse and man,** Expose them one a



time on Kodak's LPD4 (a reversal material) and you will have the "hold out" mask.

These masks will fit the negatives and therefore will be used in the carrier. In the event that the client should change his mind





The finished product

about the final size of the print, all will not be lost as everything will still fit.

At this point, you may simply place the hold out masks and burn in masks directly on the negative in the carrier, or you may elect to place **clear film** spacers between the masks and negatives or even use **diffusion sheets** to even further **soften the edge effect**. You are in total charge, and are only using one enlarger to do a three piece strip-in. If you have a busy commercial lab and enlargers are at a premium, this will save you time and space.

This print was re-touched in order to

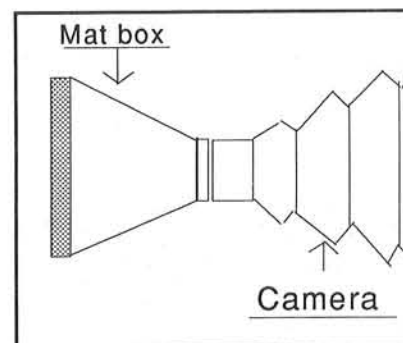
place a shadow where it should be and eliminate any possible edges that didn't look real, and make the job look plausible.

Buster Keaton in 1921 did this !

Many years ago, in the early 1920's, the great comedian, Buster Keaton, made a film in which he played all the parts. The opening scene depicted a music hall. The conductor turns and faces the camera, and it's Buster. To the right of the conductor is the first violinist, again, it's Buster. In fact every one in the orchestra is Buster Keaton.

On the stage appears a ballet dancer, again, Buster. Her partner comes out, and guess who?, Buster. Up in the balcony sits a mother with her baby and her husband, all of whom are Buster Keaton. An amazing feat for anyone in the film business, especially in the early days of motion pictures. How did he do it?

First of all, the camera was really locked in an immovable position. A rather large mat box was placed in front of the lens, and this too, was locked in position.



A mat Box

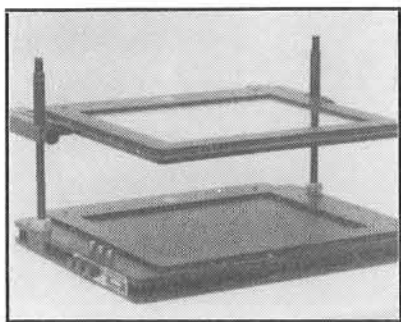
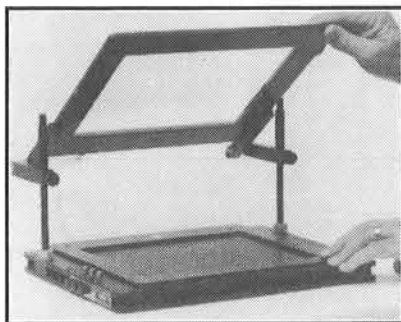
Register pins or some similar devices were attached to the front of this mat box, and by carefully cutting friskets that would follow some actual designs of the sets by looking through the viewfinder, he would be able to photograph one of the sequences and

then carefully rewind the film to the exact frame, replace the frisket with its exact opposite, and re-shoot the rest of the sequence. You could not see where the two images were "spliced". The reason for this accuracy was the fact that the friskets were out of focus just enough, and that both halves fit perfectly. And this was done in the early 1920's. Today's computerized images are even more incredible, but for anyone still working with his hands and brains, don't despair.

Condit does it again

Here is a great idea from the mind of Warren Condit. An Aerial masking easel. The main question that I can almost hear is "What do I need this for.?"

First of all, let me assure you, that this is not a commercial for the Condit Company, but when I see a great device, I will speak up. This special easel is really two easels in one. The bottom easel, of course, takes the sheet you plan to expose.



The Condit Aerial Easel

The top easel will hold your friskets (hold out or burn in masks) in the exact position so that they can be placed repeatedly in the exact spot. The top easel is a vacuum easel and is hinged so that it can be raised and make placing film on the bottom easel a simple chore. The top easel is also able to be raised or lowered so that you can place the friskets closer or further from the bottom easel. Here what can be done with this easel. A multiple strip in or a silhouetted print with a soft edge is very possible. The fact that you will be exposing through a piece of glass is one drawback, but if you

carefully focus on the bottom easel while the top easel is in position, you should eliminate any real problem.

The only drawback to this clever piece of equipment is that all of the images you plan to print on this sheet of film on the bottom easel, **must** be in the exact size and position in the carrier. So if you plan things carefully, this is the way to do it.

If you are making a dupe transparency, this will give you virtually edge free strip-ins. If your originals are not the same size, you have the option of first making dupes to size and position and making your final from these. However, you may experience some loss of quality using this procedure.

But if everything fits, you will be pleased at the results.



A soft edged strip-in

A word about the Jobo Processor

Have you experienced making a Cibachrome or Type C print and getting streaks along one end or side? Well, I have, and was having difficulty in determining just why this was happening. It really wasn't the fault of the Jobo tubes, but what the accumulation of hard water and mineral deposits can do to the tight fit you must have between the tube and the top.

I wasn't getting a tight fit and the end of the tube that sits in the tempered water was leaking. Moisture was getting into the tube and chemistry was getting out. After a short while I realized that the color of the tempered water was changing color. I finally figured out how to check this problem. Simply place your lips over the entrance hole in the cap after you have loaded the tube and are ready for processing, and BLOW. If you hear air escaping from around the tube cap, then you will get a leak. However if you get

stiff resistance to your air pressure, then you have a tight fit.

If you rub some wax or Vaseline around the end of the tube and the cap, you will have an easier time of seating the cap properly.

The Importance of Registration Carriers

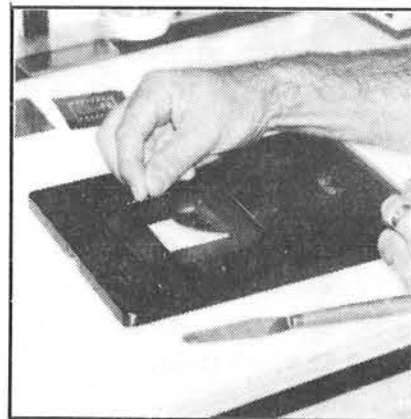
The carriers are very important if you plan to spend your time making prints and not worrying about how to get them in register. If you can devise a method of placing the carrier in exact location in the enlarger every time, then by all means do so, But if you can't, then you should know by now who makes what you need.

The Durst enlarger can be purchased with a registration carrier, but the pin system should be small enough not to make big holes in the clients priceless original. A good pin system in the carrier will make

small holes in the diagonal corners and never interfere with the image at all.

The carrier should be able to be positioned in the enlarger as often as you wish, without the image going out of register. It should enter and leave the housing **without friction or sticking** of any kind.

With a proper carrier, you can make an exposure with a certain kind of mask in the carrier, and after exposing it, remove it and replace it with another piece of film and make another exposure. (such as a mask to hold out lettering)



A registration carrier

The importance of Vacuum Easels

The Vacuum easel is one of the most useful tools in making Dye Transfer color prints, or any other kind of application where absolute positioning is required. In the old days of **wash off** printing I remember placing a sheet of glass over the matrix film to keep it flat during the exposure. The idea of a vacuum easel didn't take long to develop. Printers got tired of seeing dust marks and out of focus images caused by the refraction of the glass and that it would distort the image.

A good vacuum easel is the **BY-CHROME EASEL**. They are made in California and distributed by Royce Photo, in Glendale, CA.

The beauty of this simple easel is that it will accept any size film or paper from 4x5 to 20x24. The entire surface of the easel is covered with thousands of little holes and since the easel is center loaded, there is no problem with film

being pulled down tightly. Another version is an easel that has lines scored into its top flat surface and can be made to accept different sized sheets of film by simply pushing a button. This requires less vacuum to operate properly and is made so that it can be fastened to any table with a clamping system. They can be equipped with any kind of pin system that you desire. These easels are made by Condit Mfg. in Sandy Hook, Conn.

Trying to make professional prints that require different exposures and positions without professional easels will end up being an exercise in futility. If you want to make your own easels and pin systems, remember this. The professional machinist has the finest tools and the most experience. Don't short cut your clients.

Enlarger facts

There are many kinds of enlargers. They break down into 4 basic types. The reason why so many kinds of enlargers

exist is because of the kinds of images that are possible to get from them. They are as follows;

1. The condenser enlarger
2. The point source condenser enlarger
3. The diffusion enlarger (3200 Kelvin bulbs)
4. The diffusion enlarger (cold light)

The kind of enlarger you want to use should be decided on after very careful thinking. If you want images that are fairly smooth and clean and don't want to be bothered with thinking of dust or possible unevenness of the light source, then the diffusion system is for you. Especially if you work from fairly large sized negatives. Most of the large Dye Transfer labs make all of their formats fit the 8x10 size and then use diffusion enlargers. Most of the negatives that are made from small original transparencies, however, are made with point

source systems so that the fact that they are only blowing up the image to a relatively small amount after the negatives are made, they will still produce a very sharp image.

You now have a choice of incandescent bulbs (around 3200 K or a cold light. The simple fact is that even though the cold light source is much faster than the 3200 bulbs it is also very flat. Matrix film is very sensitive to blue light. If a negative were printed with a cold light the image would be very soft so you would have to adjust your negative contrast accordingly.

How to find the density range limits of any enlarger for any type of final material is a simple chore. You could easily find which enlarger would produce which results. If you chose an incandescent type of enlarger, the speed would be lower than that of a cold light source, however the contrast would be

highly improved and actually give you less concern for aerial fog. If the size of the enlarger is 8x10 there are just a few choices around. But if you are considering a 4x5 system then there are many models to choose from. If you are considering a condenser enlarger you will find them much more difficult to keep your work clean. You will be fighting dust and scratches and abrasions and a lot of gremlins that you didn't know existed. But once you have mastered the secrets of cleanliness and have learned how to make negatives that are scratch free, and are clean and smooth, then you will discover sharpness and crisp edges and be able to make prints with details within the details. Again, what kind of prints do you want to make. You actually can make soft prints with a condenser and you can make contrasty prints with a diffusion system. But I'm sure you know what I mean.

Each system has its good and bad points. Remember, once you choose an enlarger or enlargers, you should find out what the DENSITY RANGE LIMITS are for each enlarger and the material you plan to use.

Using an oil carrier (silicon) will reduce the scratches and abrasions from showing up in your prints. This will enable you to use a condenser enlarger that will give you more accutance instead of a diffusion enlarger that will give you a smooth finish at the expense of grain sharpness.

How to evaluate the contrast of any Enlarger

As I said earlier, all enlargers will produce different contrast levels because of the kind of enlarger that it is and the kind of light source that it has. If you plan to make Cibachrome color prints and have not considered making masks to control the over abundance of contrast that the

material consistently produces, then you are in for many unhappy occasions.

Cibachrome and other "fixed" materials that are produced with the intention that they can be used without masking is somewhat incorrect. For an example, Kodak's Duplicating Film 6121 is supposed to be used without making any kind of mask to control its contrast. But, if you make one dupe on a very sharp condenser enlarger and another one on a very soft diffusion enlarger, I can assure you that the difference will be obvious.

The contrast will not be the same.

The solution to this major problem is fairly simple to achieve. You must have access to a densitometer. And you must have a 21 step film grey scale. Kodak makes one and so does Stouffers. They need not be calibrated.

The procedure is to place the 21 step grey scale in the enlarger (mounted in an opaque sheet of film or paper). Make sure that no light escapes from the enlarger except for the lens.

Enlarge the grey scale

image so that you can expose a few of them on a sheet of film (or paper). Make a few different exposures so that you can be assured that one of them will fit comfortably on the sheet.

Now, all that you need to do is to **use your eyes** and find where the top of the scale just **begins to show detail**, and at the bottom of the scale, just where it also **begins to show detail**.

Mark these two sections of the grey scale, and remove the **original** grey scale from the enlarger and, using the densitometer, read the same two exact steps. Subtract the lower reading from the higher reading and you will now have a **DENSITY RANGE**. Whatever that range is, you should have that reading in your transparencies in order to have detail in the high and low end of your photograph.

If your transparencies do not fit the required range, then it will be necessary to make a contrast reducing mask and add it to the transparency when you make your print.

Here is an example; If your enlarger range

for making a Cibachrome color print is 1.90 and the range of your transparency is 2.20, all you need to do is, Subtract 1.90 from your transparency range of 2.20, and the difference is 0.3.

Divide 0.3 by the original range of 2.20 and the result is 0.136 or 14 % Make a mask of the transparency to a (gamma) of 14%. Add it to the transparency.

The quality of the print will be quite obvious. In the next issue I will explain just how to achieve any gamma that you may need.

If you would like a 1 year subscription to this newsletter, send \$60 to Pace Color 13900 Trinidad Dr Victorville, CA 92392 The book "The Art of Photo Composition" is also available for \$50.

If you are looking for a bargain, Dodge Color Labs at 1144 18th St. Wash. DC 20009. Ask for Alan Glotzer. 202-785-1010

He has a Condit Diagonal punch and sep. light source, vacuum gasket easels, Vac. pumps and other equipment needed for accurate strip-ins.