

Go Pro
Forum speak
Chat to like-minded photographers
about fashion shoots:
www.dphotographer.co.uk/forum

Check List
Equipment

- Phase One 645DF camera
- Phase One IQ180 digital back
- Schneider 80mm, 110mm lens
- 2 x Profoto Pro-7b power packs
- 1 x Profoto Pro-B Head
- 1 x Profoto ProHead
- Profoto Beauty Dish with grid
- Photek Softlighter II 46" umbrella
- Smoke and wind machine
- MacBook Pro and 30" display
- Capture One Pro 6



ANGLE
"Shooting from a low
viewpoint makes the
model appear dominant"
Shot details: Phase One
IQ180 at 80mm and f14,
1/100sec, ISO 50

On disc

Watch the behind the
scenes video on the CD



Plan the perfect shoot



BACKLIGHT
"Extravagant use of a beauty
dish with a grid to produce
a back light to highlight the
model's hair"
Shot details: Phase One
IQ180 at 80mm and f14,
1/100sec, ISO 35

Plan the perfect shoot

Pro photographer Nathan D'Amour reveals how to run a successful studio shoot and tests the Phase One IQ180 in the process

Nathan D'Amour has established himself as one of the UK's leading event photographers. He is self-taught and describes his style as cutting edge and innovative. He says, "it's all about capturing the energy and drama of a situation." Now entering a new phase of development, Nathan is applying his skills and techniques to fashion photography: "Fashion appeals to me as it's about freedom of expression, an excuse to experiment and be extravagant." He says, "it's a world where visually anything is possible and limited only by imagination."

PLANNING FOR THE SHOOT

Welcome to an insight into one of my fashion shoots. The purpose of this shoot was to put on test the IQ180, Phase One's flagship 80 megapixel digital back. I have a good working relationship with my Phase One dealer so I'm always keeping him up to date with my activities. I mentioned I was in the process of organising some fashion test shoots and he suggested I should try out the new IQ180 digital back. Well of course I jumped at this dream opportunity, while

muttering the words, "wow, are you serious?"

Prior to this project, I'd been communicating with a stylist whose work I'd seen online and been impressed with. When I mentioned this project he was instantly enthusiastic and eagerly suggested hair and makeup artists. He also had several models wanting to do tests with him. He sent me links to their work. Ideas and proposals were sent back and forth and a model was decided upon. It was agreed that everyone involved would work on a time-for-prints basis. No money was exchanged but everyone would stand to benefit from having full use of the final images. This is a great way to keep the costs down and everyone's working on equal terms and for the love of it. Working under this agreement reduces the pressure on all involved and creates a great working environment.

DIARY OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

My first consideration for any shoot is to put together a great creative team. This particular project involved a stylist, hair and makeup artists and a personal assistant, all of which were easily organised due to

prior networking. Next, I took the decision to do a studio shoot, as I'd already had the offer of using a Manchester based studio with excellent facilities. The complex has two studios, one with an infinity curve and one utilising natural daylight. Because of the nature of the shoot, I thought it was something that would be worthwhile documenting, so I involved a young talented film maker and a zealous photographer friend to record the day's activities. The day before the shoot and we were informed that our chosen model couldn't attend due to casting commitments, so we had to work quickly in order to find an alternative model. A replacement was easily found, but the styling then had to be changed to accommodate her.

10.00: It's the big day, and although I've had little sleep, I'm ready and prepared for the day's activities. All equipment has been checked and loaded up ready for my journey through to Slaughterhouse Studios in Manchester. On my journey to shoots I make sure I listen to inspiring music this helps me relax and get into a creative mood.

Words by Nathan D'Amour

The IQ180



Although you might have to re-mortgage your home to acquire one of these backs, it has to be said that the IQ180 was a dream to use. The touch screen display made light work of viewing all files. I could easily check to see if photographs were in focus or not via its intuitive controls. The IQ180 captures stunning extreme detail and the accurate and neutral colour rendition is phenomenal. Skin tones are alive and natural. Its 12.5 stops of dynamic range means you can reproduce shots with extreme tonal differences and adjust them accordingly.

▶▶ GOLD DRESS

"Light hitting the gold sequins created interesting specular highlights"
Shot details: Phase One IQ180 at 100mm and f12, 1/100sec, ISO 50

▶▶▶ BLACK DRESS

"The model and lights were moved away from the white backdrop to produce a grey graduated background"
Shot details: Phase One IQ180 at 100mm and f18, 1/125sec, ISO 50

▼ CLOSE UP

"The IQ180 captures astonishing detail"



▶▶ 11.30: I am, of course, now running late, but find that I'm first on set, giving me the opportunity to look at the space and work out how I'm going to set up my equipment. It's all about priorities, which to me is having a nice cup of tea and chatting to Ian and Sid the studio owners. I believe in good healthy working relationships so talking is good.

12.00: My team starts to arrive. I make the embarrassing mistake of introducing myself to the person I believe is our make-up artist but she turns out to be our model for the day! Not a great start, but I'm sure she saw the funny side, and it brought about the opportunity to explain the nature of the shoot and show her around the studio. My first job is to ensure everyone is introduced and feels comfortable. This is vitally important as it sets the mood for the rest of the day. So we all have a nice relaxed start and chat over coffee. It's the perfect opportunity to get to know each other and discuss ideas.

12.30: I brief Ben and Elouisa who have kindly agreed to film, photograph and document the day. They immediately set to work. I have a talk with

the stylist Taheed, discussing ideas and what we are aiming to achieve. He then briefs the rest of the team and sets about preparing our model for her first look. Always anticipate hair and make-up to take longer than expected. I like the whole shoot process to be relaxed. To create great photographs you need to listen to your team, take suggestions on board and be prepared to experiment. Everyone's contribution is important and should be considered. Encouraging the creative process leads to great inspired photographs.

15.30: After many cups of coffee and lunch we now have our first 'look' and venture upstairs to studio two. This is a glorious white-washed space flooded by natural light. I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to settle in the model. I wasn't at this point concerned about capturing a usable image, it was more about building up a rapport with the model and putting her at ease. Our model Chloe was fantastic, she didn't need much prompting and totally understood what was required. So we start shooting and this is when I started to get excited about the IQ180. It's a breeze to use and is logically

"Listen to your team, take suggestions on board and be prepared to experiment"

Plan the perfect shoot

Behind the scenes



▲ MOVEMENT
 The model was encouraged to dance and twirl around, giving rise to movement within the dress



▲ HAIR & MAKEUP
 A separate preparation area for the model is beneficial



▲ VIEWPOINT
 To get interesting angles, sit down or lie on the floor



▲ WINDOW LIGHT
 Nathan prefers to use just natural light whenever possible to create a fresh, organic look



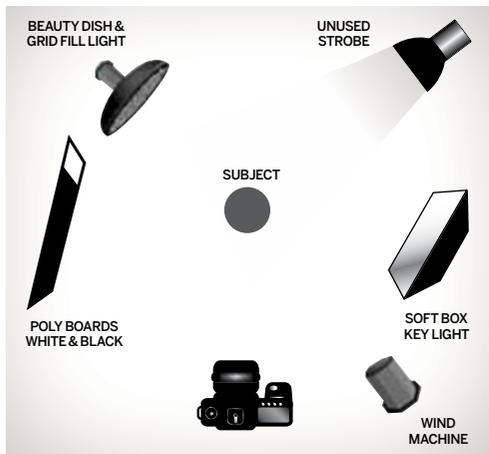
▲ CHECKING THE SHOTS
 Nathan and his team use Capture One Pro to help speed up the workflow process and check the results in detail



FANTASY

"A smoke and wind machine were used to forge a dreamy fantasy feel - check if the studio has these to hire"

Shot details: Phase One IQ180 at 80mm and f14, 1/100sec, ISO 35



THE KEY SET-UP

"Time was spent getting the lighting setup right, so that only fine adjustments were necessary during the shoot"

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DRAMA

"A single key light was used to create drama and interesting shadows"

Shot details: Phase One IQ180 at 100mm and f18, 1/125sec, ISO 50

laid out. I'm able to instantly show our model and the team the captured images via the touch-screen display. This was important as it instantly instilled confidence in everyone. Whilst shooting, we decided that the makeup was too heavy and needed adjusting. This then prompted an outfit change and a move downstairs to studio one with its infinity curve.

16.30: We are deep into the serious business of taking photographs, but also having fun. I'm shooting, tethered directly to Capture One Pro and reviewing each shot on an external monitor. I realise immediately because of the quality of the IQ180, I can distance myself from the model and get into some creative cropping. I could afford to lose up to 60% of the photograph and still retain a usable high-quality image. From here on, we introduce a wind and smoke machine. The creative cropping had brought about ideas involving the movement of the model and the flow of material in her dress.

17.30: It's time for a few rapid changes and the final shots of the day. We have already captured some great images, so it's a good chance for everyone to experiment and see what we can create in the final

minutes of our shoot. After thanks and applause all round, followed by a short interview with me for our film maker, all equipment is packed down and loaded up. I always do a final check to ensure I don't leave anything behind.

19.30: I return home, unload and place all used batteries on charge for the next shoot.

THE NEXT DAY: I start up Capture One Pro and scan through the images, selecting the best ones from the shoot. Basic adjustments are made on selected RAW files and once I'm satisfied I export them as TIFF files into Photoshop for their final treatment. On a test shoot like this with lots of contributors, I like to edit around 8-12 photographs, so everyone comes away with some useful shots for their portfolios.

When organising a shoot, make sure to get a good creative team together. Challenge yourself and push the boundaries. I'm always looking for a new approach and a new way of shooting, this way you'll gain knowledge and confidence. Communication is the key to a well-organised shoot. Any problems can be dealt with easily as long as you are communicating with your team.

SHARE YOUR SHOOT Upload your shoot experience to www.dphotographer.co.uk/forum