



POV

seeing beyond the normal spectrum

Ethan Killian



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by Jen Fairchild

When I walked into the house where I was to interview photographer Ethan Killian, it was a hubbub of people all buzzing around preparing for the cover shoot of UGLY. I took a moment to say hi to all of the familiar faces and introduce myself to the unfamiliar. When it was my turn to meet Ethan he didn't shake my hand, he gave me a hug. Taking notice of this and the fact that a smile seemed to have already permanently set up camp in the corners of his mouth, my instinct that Ethan was a friendly guy was not about to be proven wrong, anytime soon.

Ethan's photographic journey began in 2005, his reason being "because I never felt that I could express myself through my hands and painting, I could never really feel that. But by finding this technical device where I could apply what I know in science and in my degree, I found a way to express myself." Though he's never had formal training he is open to it, but likes that he gets to "experience 'rules' from his own perspective." Being partial to schooling for the arts myself I found myself nodding along in agreement.

Ethan is an avid infrared photographer and I can honestly say he is the first I have ever met. He acknowledges that most people don't use infrared photography for shooting people because of its 'odd' look, stating "I am probably the most prolific infrared portrait photographer in the world. I know I have more infrared photography of people online than anyone else in the world." To Ethan, shooting infrared is not about being different; it's about taking something he finds beautiful and expressing it to the world.



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The camera Ethan shoots infrared with looked to me like your everyday Nikon D300. Not familiar with infrared myself I was confused as to how one achieved the infrared look. I came to find out that it's simply a matter of taking apart a camera, removing a piece of glass that normally blocks the infrared light, and replacing it with a piece of black glass that only lets infrared light through. Simple did I say? Perhaps. Something I could do? Not in a million years. This is when I realized that not only is Ethan an artist; he's a technologically savvy artist. Of course, when he told me he was a computer programmer on the side, I should have put two and two together.

When asked if he liked shooting people or landscapes better he told me he liked them equally in different ways. With landscape, he likes the exploration and the challenge that goes into finding just the right viewpoint. With people, it's the connection between himself and his subject and the challenge to show the true essence of the person that matters most. Ethan "only shoots people he likes" but is willing to stray from his personal style if it's a paid shoot. What was most surprising to me was the fact that he "likes all of his own work." Because I am my own worst critic when it comes to my work, this was a bit of an eye-opener.

With Burning Man behind him and a trip to India (with a friend made at Burning Man) on the horizon, it's safe to say Ethan's a man of adventure. A challenge (from a fellow photographer friend) he's currently involved in is taking a photo every single day. How many photos has he taken so far? He tells me 1500.

To say that Ethan loves what he does is an understatement. While most people in the current economy are hanging on to their jobs by tooth and nail, Ethan has forgone his day job to pursue photography full-time. He tells me he hopes to "gain a bigger audience in order to share his love of art with the world". When asked how he felt about the shoot/interview taking place on his 36th birthday, his smile widens and he says "I get to spend my birthday cre-

ating art with creative people. There's nothing I'd rather be doing." And you can't help but believe him.



*All Photographs by Ethan Killian
For inquiries visit ekillian.org*

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