

AQUA NIGHT

THE WALNUT ROOM, PHILADELPHIA

JUNE 2011

Hairstylist

BETHANY BELL

MM#1560482

Makeup Artist

MICHELLE RIVERA

MM Pending

Wardrobe Stylist

CANDACE WHALEY

MM#1003509

Event Coordinator

PHILLIP STOKES

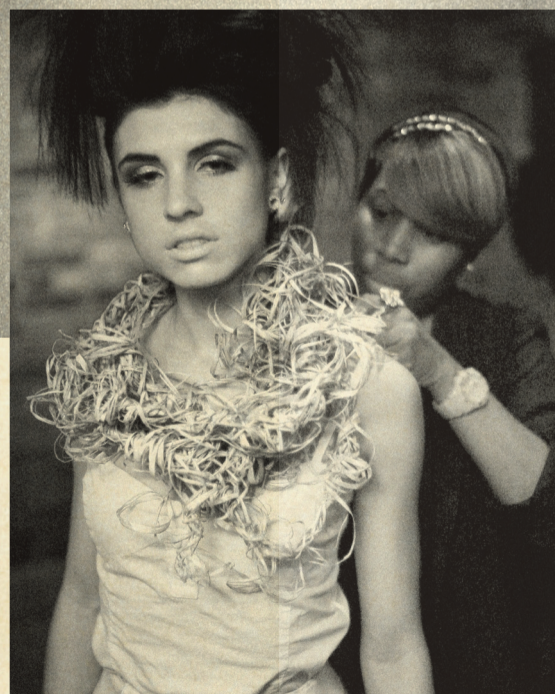
MM#2172010

Photography, Writing,
& Graphic Design

WILL STOTLER

MM#1338163





TOUCHUPS & ADJUSTMENTS

LEFT: Candace Whaley (wardrobe stylist) adjusts a design on Becca Morris (model).

ABOVE: Michelle Rivera (makeup artist) touches up lipstick for Becca Morris (model).

RIGHT: Michelle Rivera (makeup artist) finishes applying touchups for Sally Wong (model).





MODEL: AQUASIA DAVIS (MM#2222579)

ONE PHOTO: TWO VIEWS

After looking at the work of hairstylist Bethany Bell, I thought the biggest challenge would be capturing the *sculptural* aspect of Bethany's work. The weave and flow of the hair captures the light in particular ways and demonstrates interesting textures and forms. Models move—and different angles and sculptural aspects of

the hairstyle are exposed as they move. This is part of the experience of seeing a hairstyle, its interplay with the model and the environment. Certainly, Bethany considers the hairstyle from all angles and designs her work so that it can be viewed—and reveals itself in stages—from any direction. Wanting to bring this experience into

the photographs, I exploited a mirror that would show off the hair from two angles at once. The final lighting, through careful technique, appears as though it is mid-day, soft window light. This natural look accentuates the curves, soft shadows, and intricate weaving. I think Bethany's work looks great in this light—I hope you do, too.



MODEL: JASMINE BEATTY (MM# PENDING)



MODEL: SALLY WONG (MM# PENDING)



MODEL: BEKA JAYNE ARTHUR (MM# PENDING)



MODEL: JORDANA JACDEO (MM#1198372)



MODEL: BECCA MORRIS (MM#2237157)



MODEL: WHITNEY STAR (MM#1117984)



MODELS:
SELINA NICOLE CLIETTE (MM# PENDING)
AQUASIA DAVIS (MM#2222579)

WILL STOTLER

AQUA NIGHT GRAPHIC DESIGN PROJECT

I was invited to *Aqua Night*, an event that focused on fantasy, fashion hairstyles. The event was hosted at the Walnut Room, a lounge/club in Philadelphia.

I figured it would be fairly dark, so I decided to shoot with my CV 35mm f/1.2 lens—bringing my SF-24D flash (and sync cord) along, just in case it would be needed.

I arrived at the event start time—meaning two-and-a-half hours early—and took time to inventory possible shooting scenarios: Places to shoot and also lighting conditions. Ambient light was poor, averaging an EV of 2 or 3 at ISO 320.

Pre-event, the models staged in a side alcove downstairs—I shot a bit of this area and the models getting touchups and wardrobe adjustments. I also dug out the flash—even f/1.2 wasn't enough to overcome the lack of light.

The event itself, including a fast runway walk to show off the styles, happened in the main Walnut Room lounge. I elected to not shoot the runway work because I didn't like the clutter in the frame—any shots I took wouldn't convincingly look like runway.

That left post-event portraiture. However, conditions for portraiture were problematic because of

the event's guests being, well, guests—wandering in and out of frame. However, I'd scouted the unused forward lounge area. It was unoccupied, had a gigantic mirror, and was perfect for a “show the hair from the front and the back at the same time” concept. So I settled on that. (BTW, thanks, Phillip, for directing models forward to the shooting area I'd selected.)

I shot for about 25 minutes. Light was put into the scene by a hand-held, off-camera flash, which I bounced off of the bank of windows, camera left. Intensity and direction of light was controlled by pivoting the flash in my hand, shooting a test, and then refining angle. TTL mode was used to balance the scene's light. The models were patient throughout the process—I had about 120 seconds, give or take, with each model and pair of models.

This set was really screaming at me for context—so I decided to select a few key photos to get at the concept of the shooting and then make this spread.

Layout of this spread was completed via InDesign, using a custom-made Müller-Brockmann grid, which I had designed to be based on *LOOK* magazine dimensions, content ratios, and typography. It was a carry-over from my previous *LOOK* magazine project work—I'm not yet done with this kind of grid and look. One more chance to learn.

I built the vintage page background from a few different scans, creating (via Photoshop) an unbroken surface that could be used in the page spreads. The shadowing and lighting effects for the pages—which give the optical illusion of page solidity and depth—were developed on a previous project and further adapted for use here.

Black and white shots were treated using TrueGrain and Tri-X Pan grain, with filters as needed to bump intensity/density of luminosity.

Color photos were treated by using a layering effect in InDesign, compositing the color photo over Tri-X Pan treated black-and-white versions of the same photos. This layering of photos—provided the balance of the compositing is correct—emulates the tonality and “color character” of 1960s film stock, as displayed on vintage paper.

Last, this project wouldn't have been possible without the work of everyone who made the event a success—hairstylist, makeup artist, wardrobe stylist, event organizers, all the models, and a general community effort. Well done, worth shooting.

—Will Stotler, June 2011