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LEVI'S® WORKSHOPS 10-12 NY2010

Open Studio: Stephanie Crousillat

Posted By: *Photo Workshop*

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Of late, the Workshop has been fairly packed with people shooting their own projects, and one of the more interesting happened right before Thanksgiving. We had seen Stephanie Crousillat around the Workshop before, but now she was using our facilities and Profoto's peerless lighting equipment to great effect with a shoot involving a troop of spinning dancers. We spoke to Stephanie about her Workshop experience, and the similarities between dancers and ninjas.

Tell me a little about the shoot: Well this shoot was probably the most stressful and exciting shoot I have ever done. It took me a few weeks to gather up the most dancers I could find,

and come up with some sort of theme and sketch out what I envisioned. We started around 11:30 or so and quickly got to work. I am one of those people who do not handle things well under stress, but to be honest I really enjoyed the rushed and high energy of the studio. It was a different feeling I had with knowing that the studio was completely packed with people waiting in line for their prints, other sets being photographed, or people just hanging out. It was a really cool environment to work in. Anyways, this shoot was inspired by these two musical groups called The Album Leaf and Sigur Ros. Their music is great, it's very ethereal, delicate, fantasy like, and I wanted to, in some way, translate that through dance. I had eight girls, who wore white halter bodysuits with long, sheer wraparound skirts, and I had two guys wearing

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simple, tan spandex shorts. The music has a certain sense of tenderness to it, so I used neutral, unsaturated colors. And I tried to have my dancers create an effortless feeling to their movement.



Seems like you know your way around a dance studio as well as a photo studio. Is it cool to have what I assume are two major interests for you intersect?: Yes. Art has always been a large part of my life, and dance

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The Workshop shakes off some turkey-induced lethargy tomorrow when we reopen at noon and host a class taught by our friends at Leica. - about 6 hours ago via the web

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is something I have done for the past 18 years. Photography didn't come until later in my life, but it's pretty great to know that there aren't too many people who are able to speak both languages of dance and photography.

Was everyone a ballet practitioner, or some other kind of dancer?: All of the dancers involved are friends of mine who come from the dance programs of Marymount Manhattan College, University of the Arts, and Montclair State University; and they are all trained in everything from ballet to hip hop, so it's nice to know they have the ability to do mostly anything.

Do you think ballet dancers would make for good ninjas?: *[Laughs]* Yes! They would make quite graceful and kickass ninjas, for sure.

How'd you get into photography?: In my sophomore year of high school I took a printmaking and photography class, even though we only spent a couple months in the darkroom, it was my first exposure to the world of photography. The summer before my senior year, I enrolled in a class at the [International Center of Photography in New York](#), and that's when I knew that this was something that was going to be a huge part of my life.

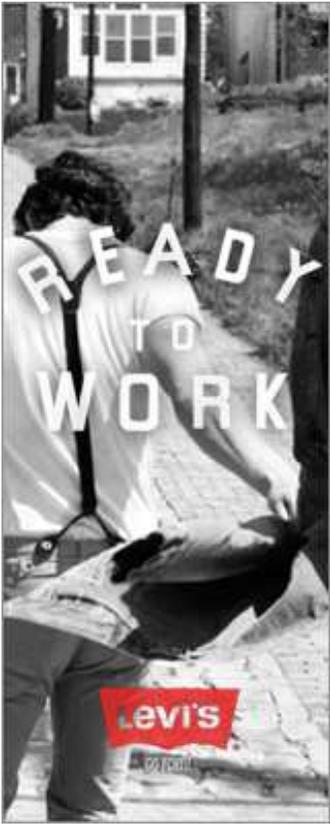
What do you normally shoot with?: I normally shoot with my Canon 50D. But for this shoot I had the privilege to shoot with the [Leica S2](#), which I must say was an incredible piece of equipment.

The lighting for your shoot was pretty kick ass. Mind walking us through how you set that up?: Well I had a great amount of help from everyone from the Workshop and learned a whole lot about different lighting techniques. As a large fill light we used [Profoto's Giant 240 reflector](#) diffused with a silk fabric. This light was raised up high on the left side and angled down towards the subject. The main light was a small beauty dish raised high over camera. And coming from the right side was a tree setup, where two open strobes are mounted on one c-stand with small reflectors. This light source created a nice, dramatic highlight on one side of the subject. The result was better than I envisioned.

How'd you end up shooting here?: Well, a good friend of mine showed me this place about three or four weeks ago, and I couldn't believe it, this place was something I have imagined for years. The fact that The Workshop is only here until December, I needed to take advantage while I could. So, I scheduled a time frame to work, and had a bunch of friends help me out. Everything about this day had fulfilled my expectations and then some.

Would I be able to thank a bunch of people?

Sure! I would like to thank everyone from the Workshop, Cliff Hausner, Curtis Willocks, and my dancers: Kristy Hall, Emily Marti, Kelly Carroll, Jenna Saraceno, Autumn Perez, Chelsea Reichert, Jennifer Jones, Sam Smith, Marc Crousillat, and David Escoto.



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