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Fabulous Fashion Digital Distinction Powerful Portraits



# dubler does olympus

*The Masterful Debut  
of the E-1*

Introducing a new camera into an already overcrowded marketplace can be viewed as somewhat dicey at best. Introducing a new format into an overcrowded marketplace is downright nutty. Or is it?

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The folks at Olympus looked at the competition—read 35mm D-SLRs—and decided it was time to start from scratch. The thought process behind the new Olympus E-1 Digital SLR System is that 35mm film cameras may not be the best vehicles for digital imaging. Modern 35mm cameras are derivatives of cameras that were designed to shoot short spools of 35mm motion picture film. As alternatives to the contemporary larger roll-and-sheet film cameras, they introduced mobility, spontaneity, and speed as part and parcel of the photographic process. The success of the 35mm format carries through to this day.

But is a 35mm film chassis the best vehicle for digital capture? Not really, some would say. The digital sensors found in the majority of current D-SLRs are smaller than a standard 35mm frame. The result is having to use optics that are out of sync with the job at hand, as well as camera chassis that are, size-wise, overkill.

#### **DIGITAL-SPECIFIC INNOVATIONS**

Olympus' solution to this problem is the all-new Olympus E-1 Digital SLR system. Starting with a new 'Four Thirds' format, Olympus engineers designed an entire camera/sensor/optic system that delivers pro-quality imagery from a non-derivative camera platform. The entire camera and optical system is built around the sensor as opposed to the let's-just-jam-it-in-the-SLR school of thought.

For glass, Olympus introduced a new line of Zuiko Digital optics, specifically designed to

deliver high levels of resolving power in focal lengths matched to the dimensions of the Olympus E-1 sensor. To minimize optical aberrations and sharpness issues often found when using conventional optics on D-SLRs, the new Zuiko Digital lenses are designed to match the imager so light strikes the sensor directly.

Many of the technical innovations incorporated into this new camera are digital specific.

Among them, the use of ultrasound to keep dust from settling on the E-1's Full-Frame Transfer CCD (FT-CCD) chip. Anyone who has opened digital files only to find a speck of fuzzy schmutz smack dab in the middle of each and every picture will surely appreciate this feature. To further ensure the outside world stays outside the camera, all body and switch panels on the Olympus E-1's magnesium alloy body are sealed and reinforced with gaskets. Fast image transfer is accomplished via Firewire IEEE 1394, USB 2.0, or USB1.1 connectors.

#### **ENTER DUBLER**

To ensure their new baby received maximum amps for its media launch, the folks at Olympus hired fashion and beauty photographer Douglas Dubler to create the signature images for



advertising and promotional purposes. The goal was to create images that would grab the viewer's eye, as well as demonstrate the high calibre of imaging quality the new Olympus E-1 is capable of producing.

Dubler is an old hand when it comes to test-driving beta products before they hit the streets and has worked extensively with many of the heavy-hitter camera and lighting manufacturers during the course of his career.

Aside from an exceptional eye for design and concept, the guy knows his stuff when it comes to the technical side of the job, film or digital. His pull-no-punches approach to pushing new equipment to the limits in real-world shooting situations has made him a valued partner in the world of product development.

Dubler's approach to the new Olympus E-1 digital camera was no exception. Working in concert with John Knaur, senior marketing manager of Olympus America, and Chris Sluka, senior manager, public relations for Olympus, he set up a program to showcase the performance and style of this newbie.

Their goal was two-fold. First, come up with eye-popping images for advertising and promotional purposes. Second, produce an attention-grabbing event to

be staged at a media debut/dinner bash in New York's Bryant Park.

### THE PLAN COMES TOGETHER

The event had to be loaded with eye appeal, which meant an unusually stunning model and all the trappings of a high-end fashion shoot. Most important was to have all elements associated with the shoot be the best the industry could offer.

"The original concept was to do a fashion shoot and output images for the press," says Dubler. But testing and shooting images using pre-production product under tight time-frames can rattle the best of them.

"After thinking about it for a while, I realized I would be working with a beta camera and with the whole world breathing down my neck. The last thing I wanted was unanticipated problems." Back to the drawing board.

"We came up with an alternative plan: do a studio shoot several weeks in advance of the press event and have enough time to resolve problems and do quality retouching." Dubler and company wisely chose Plan B.

Dubler's 25 years of shooting experience came into play on all fronts—logistical, technological, and otherwise.

"When I shoot in the studio I have control of the light. I put it exactly where I want it. I control the quality, color, direction, and intensity. In the Bryant Park location, just before darkness, I knew I wouldn't be able to control adequately for any of those variables."

To minimize surprises, Dubler assembled a top creative support group, many of whom he had worked with previously. The group provided a smooth workflow during the course of this complex, demanding project.

Heading up the team was Ise White, who served as lead stylist and co-creative director; Sylvia Pichler, a makeup artist responsible for many of Dubler's trademark fashion & beauty





looks; Reiko Love, hair stylist extraordinaire; and Willie Williamson, Dubler's Photoshop retoucher and digital co-pilot.

In typical Dubler fashion, quality was key to the whole operation.

Finding the right high-fashion model was essential. Some 200 headshots and 50 interviews later, Dubler and company decided on Katja Hilgendorff as the model of choice. Of all the candidates, she displayed the best balance of looks and attitude. Her hair, makeup, clothing, and props were specifically chosen and tailored to showcase the capture and output capabilities of Olympus' new E-1 SLR system.

"After all this time in the business, I try to make a shoot like this appear easy to the untrained eye. For me it's like performing a piece of sheet music with which I am very familiar with the score and bringing something exciting and unique to the performance . . . visual alchemy if you will."

All the elements gelled and fell into place. "The concept Ise and I arrived at was to combine haute couture fashion—typically impossible to come by for these events—with impeccable styling and an incredible model, Katja, in a mix that conveyed spontaneity and that

#### DOUGLAS DUBLER'S GEAR BOX

##### DIGITAL CAMERA

Olympus E-1 with 50mm f/2 macro lens and 1.4x Teleconverter (EC14)

##### LIGHTING

Broncolor Grafit A4 wt/sec generators with Lightbar Evolution 120 heads  
Broncolor Para 330 Umbrella

##### LIGHT METERS

Sekonic L608  
Minolta ColorMeter III

##### COMPUTERS

Apple 1.4 Ghz Dual Processor with 2GB RAM  
Apple G4 17" PowerBook with 1Ghz RAM

##### MONITORS

Sony Artisan 21" monitor  
Sony 23" LCD P232  
Sony 17" LCD V72W

MONITOR CALIBRATION  
GretagMacbeth EyeOne Publish

PORTABLE HARD DRIVE  
LaCie 20GB Data Bank

PRINTERS  
Epson 9600, 2200, 960

COLOR VIEWER  
GTI Soft-view 2E

SOFTWARE  
Adobe Photoshop 7.0, GretagMacbeth Profilemaker 4.0, nikk multimedia Dfine & Sharpener Pro, Roxio Toast 5 Titanium, ColorByte Imageprint 56

ever-present fashion attitude.

"For the beauty shots, we chose elements that are very graphic; hats by the famous Phillip Treacy and sumptuous jewelry by Ella Gafter. A more subdued attitude for these seemed to work best. For the full-length fashion, lots of movement and a more playful/sexy attitude, Katja performed like a chameleon, changing with each outfit into another beautiful manifestation of herself."

#### INDUSTRY BUZZ

As we go to press, Dubler and company's efforts already seem to be paying off. Although production cameras have yet to hit dealer shelves, the buzz in the photographic community, pro and otherwise, is quite audible and positive.

Those who have had an opportunity to shoot with the E-1 are impressed with the look, feel, and image quality they're getting from the new kid on the block. Olympus seems to have struck the right cord with the new 4/3 format.

Who knows. Maybe you can reinvent the wheel. Only time will tell. Stay tuned. ♦

*For more Dubler images, visit [www.douglasdubler3.com](http://www.douglasdubler3.com). For more on the Olympus E-1, visit [www.olympusamerica.com](http://www.olympusamerica.com)*