

ARTISTS' REPRESENTATION MEETING

8:00 AM

Radisson Hotel/Detroit

May 29, 2015

MARTINE EXPLAINS MONTHLY MEETING. What we enjoy so much is bringing people together, talking about real issues in our industry, top leaders, and taking that information and disseminating it through our blogs and other social media. We're going to be taking it to Detroit for our Monthly Meeting. What you share with us, we'll share with them. We would like for all of you to chime in. We'll moderate and keep things moving. Feel free to talk freely. Nothing will be published without your approval.

Do you still believe that in order to be a professional, commercial photographer, all you need to do is work hard at making great images to stand out in today's marketplace? Does it differ from emerging photographers vs. those that are more experienced?

- I thought about it a lot. I really think even back when the guys have been doing it a while – it was never just about making great pictures. That's the cost of admission so to speak. Unless you make great pictures you're not even in the game. It's what you do beyond, whether as a marketer, an artist, personality, that's really what makes a difference. If you're not making great pictures, you're not playing. One needs to think about their businesses as a business. It needs to be multi-faceted. People have different elements. Some guys shoot film, some do fine art shoes. A variety of different things. For emerging, even us, everybody who's a veteran, you still have to continue to make great images to be considered for anything. There are so many great images out there. It has to be amped up even more.
- I agree. Staying relevant is one of the most important things. As far as the young photographers, they don't realize what it takes on the business side. I teach at UVA and UNC. I'm around them a lot. When I first started teaching a lighting course for two years – I bring up the ideas – do you know about promotion, insurance? No, we just want to make pictures. As far as the education goes, emerging photographers, I don't think they're prepared to enter the business at that level. They're not thinking about it. In the schools, they have to start thinking about the business and marketing side. All the business aspects. Being a photographer and being on that level playing field, that's the entry level. But it's something beyond that.
- The cost of entry today, since digital, is lower than it was when a lot of us started. There's an inventory of jobs sucked out by young photographers with a camera in their garbage. They take some of the jobs out of the marketplaces. You see names coming and going really fast now. The cost may be lower but staying in it is harder.
- If you go out as an emerging photographer, this is going to cost a minimum \$500 processing. Now they pay \$2500 for a camera and it's

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done. A hard drive after that. Until it's put in their face, usually in the middle of a job.

- I also teach. When I was starting out, I felt the same way. I loved how to shoot but I don't know the business. My father in law was a businessman. He sat me down and said son...that was a great learning experience. Most schools have a class or semester. It's so conceptual. They can catch a lens or light and have a little bit of experience. But – go get 10 jobs. Why do they get tripped up on this one but not that one. That's such a disconnect that experience brings you – it's hard to teach in a classroom.
- People ask me this question, how to get started. I think assist people as much as you can. That's where you'll learn a lot of business practices. everyone does it differently too.
- The younger photographers, you can be the most incredible photographer, but if you can't run a business, you're gone. You're out. It is really important to teach them about the business side, marketing information. especially in this day and time when the volume of work is down, the amount of time we spend working on the market and business is ramped up. We're working to shoot every day.
- If you're a young badass and hook up with someone like Heather – there are plenty of examples like that. People who don't know the business and someone takes them under their wing like a real hot shit.

That is a leap. If I did or Kate or Matt or some other rep took a hot shot under our wing, the amount of work in bringing that person up to speed – there would be a beginning honeymoon period, but without that level of expensive and understanding of what they need, it would be something hard to maintain. A lot of things would have to come together to make it OK for a rep to say, OK, let's try this out. First, you'd have to have money to spend. In order to have that, you have to have a good understanding of business or some money in the bank or sensitive to be able to promote yourself.

- It's the Olivia B. story.
- Chaperone-ing is important. filtering. People trust you as the rep. then you put somebody on a call and they don't perform well. It's a huge leap on everybody's part.
- That's part of the package that may be obvious to everybody here. everybody's basically a nice person. Pleasant. You have to have that as part of the package too. I don't know how to explain that in a class. If you're constantly depressed or not socially accessible, that's gonna affect your career too. I don't see how it can't.

We've all been at jobs when we're asked to cut, cut, cut. Do you think people value the level of experience now, still, as they did a while ago?

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- Less and less now. Digital photography, the cameras make it easy. The people you can hire makes it easy for you. A DP, an assistant who likes you. It seems like it's a little bit easier to get the job done and get the job done really well.

Is your level of experience expected? It's still bottom line focus?

- I call our world in the last couple of years with semi-young shooters – they're OK – it's this good enough attitude. My 27 years of experience, that's on a piece of paper, with a large discrepancy on the bottom line – a lot of times it goes to the good enough.

We discovered that the account person kept coming up. Young. Not experienced. One of our next tables, we're going to meet with the account people bringing people in. it trickles down and everybody tries to scramble.

- A rep I know was working on a \$400,000 job. The account person was 24 years old, trying to make changes at the last minute.
- It's almost on every job now. Every job.
- It happens all the time.
- That's a lack of experience. People don't realize – you can't do that.
- That's when they value people who have been on the job longer. People will less experience, sure, we'll figure it out – and they find it costs \$10,000.
- All the rules have changed. It's different for everyone. All the professions out there. You're going to be a doctor. All the rules are laid out for photography. Now there's nothing. The mentorship has changed too. We have downward pressure on budgets. I'm trying to work so many systems to squeeze efficiency on people. It creates dependency more than you want. There are less and less people in the game, at least the game we think we're playing.
- I do think we are still respected. Quite often – we're in a period of transition where print is moving into content. Most people are still trying to work out where we're going, on our side and the agency side. There's not a tremendous amount of creative work being done in print. You don't need someone with 20, 235 years of experience. When this works out, we'll go back to a better place, when they start to tell stories in print, they'll need out skill set. Now we know everybody doing it can do the job. When it's a skill set not everybody has, they'll respect you. I'm beginning to see glimpses. As the economy stabilizes – you can make a boring or interesting poster. I think you'll start seeing more demand for us. 8 years ago car photography was dead because of CGI. Now it's one of the more dynamic parts of our business. As the agencies become more confident, they'll need us again.

How did you define success

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- (JOANNE) Success for me, not matter what year it is, has always been about client growth – these huge marketing plans we implement throughout the year. We have that and our target audience. Every year we have a very short list – agencies with clients – maybe the agency is in a little bit more of a boutique market and they're going to travel no matter what. We target those clients really aggressively and do marketing, everything. It's great to look back and say we had a hot list of 25 and we pulled in 3 of those clients, established a relationship and have ongoing work with them. That drives all the other growth we have in our business. That's the icing on the cake so to speak. That to me is success, reach out to new clients, work with new people, and keep that going on in the next year, adding more. There's people who are sucking these jobs who maybe would have gone to us. The volume has declined so it's important to be successful and have client growth. The only thing we'd do differently is narrow that hot list down even more and be more aggressive with 15 clients that would be perfect for us.
- Sometimes the efforts we make for growth and the success measurable aren't always able to start and stop at the end of the year. How many jobs did we bid, how many treatments did I do? How many jobs? Pictures? It's really tough. Numbers is very tough. Some of the consistency of trying to have your own personal in your vacuum standards and hit those things, that's the best thing to do, and be open to what we talked about, how everyone else is adapting and changing. We're not all playing by the same set of rules and the same games. Sometimes if I can keep open to those ideas, there's success besides numbers and wins – moral, personal successes that have to be populated.

Did they get more refined and clear?

- It's not clear. It's completely – every day we have to grab a surfboard for this. It really not cut and dry. As much as we can stay visible, as much as we can be out there – hopefully we're more than what we can be for ourselves, it's important to be out there. I'm just trying to compete with myself. So many of these outside factors, I can't handle them all.
- If you have work you're proud of at the end of a year. If you really shot some great stuff and you have a pocket full of cash, that's a good year. Next year you want better work and more money.
- The quality of the clients is a measure of success for me. when we started we did littler and smaller jobs. As we've grown, we want the bigger clients with the bigger campaigns. I measure those kind of jobs to the success I'm having per year. The why we go about getting those jobs – the marketing has a lot to do with that part of the success. That's a really good business model for a photographer to have in this day and age.

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- That hot list we have, there are clients I personally want to work for, they do really nice work. At the end of the year, it's very gratifying if we reel one or two of them in. we did it. We made it happen.
- It's less financial. It's more about the work.
- Absolutely. I really want to work on this.
- You get hot lists of people. You can become friends of them. They might not have a job in your house for 4 years.
- You're right. It doesn't end on a yearend basis. That client or agency, they might be on the hot list for 5 years. You've been doing it for 3 years. One day the phone rings. Here we go. It can take a long time to pay off. I used to keep these crazy immaculate records. I deciphered, it takes two years marketing to somebody to ever get any kind of phone call or contact from them.

What's top of mind when you wake up in the morning? A great picture or what's my marketing?

- Different things. You've got your to do list. You're constantly working on marketing. That never goes away. I have a lot of help with that. Some weeks if it's slow, I'm gonna be in the studio creating. Top of mind, I'm excited about going to work in the morning. I still go to the studio five days a week whether I need to or not.
- It gets back to the hot shots. If you're not getting up and driven by images, at the end of the year I made a great project I wanted to make, then if you're just thinking about business, your work is quickly becoming irrelevant. Those young people might not know the business side, but they're driven by that.
- Also, styles change. Young people have a style all to their own which translates into their photo style. We may think we're kicking ass without photography, but it could be irrelevant. The way we look at the world is not what they're looking at. I have kids who hate my photography. My iPhone is better than your photography.
- Looking back at the years, certain years get defined by personal projects. I start a shit ton of personal projects. That's all you remember from the year 5 years later. That's the work that propelled you.
- That's what gets us out of bed every day. The work we're trying to pursue.
- There's a lot to talk about young vs. old. everyone's got a different vision. Different way of interacting with people. I don't think it's so much young vs. old. Someone's outlook, someone appreciates that – that's a relevant as young vs. old.

Thinking ahead ten years, what one thing do you think will be the most important thing you will have done for your business to stay relevant?

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- (CRHIS) The last question was on it. How did we get started? How did we get the ball rolling? Not forgetting about that, a song called LITTLE ROOM. It's what we were doing then. We end up in a bigger room with bigger easels so to speak. As I'm going through a certain set of life changes, keeping that balance, keeping perspective on those things, knowing what got me to this table, I just never forget that. To refer back to Question 1, at no point for me was it ever – that was the last time “I want pretty pictures” happened. Maybe it was my upbringing and mentorship. That's the biggest reason I'm here. Someone pounding specific set of ideas into my head. everyone has select ideas. When people, there's so much turnover, I hope I'm still here in 10 years. To stay relevant it's cultivating taste, creating a balance in your life, how you got there. That certain amount of focus. Some people get certain amount of burnout and take these big leaps away from things and lose that itch so to speak.

How do you keep it in balance? Do you think 10 years ahead?

- I think 10 years ahead every day. The surfboard thing. Sometimes I think people on the outside might think there's a lack of engagement. I'm waking up to work, going to bed with work, I dream of work. Even though I have a 3 yr. old. I'm trying to keep that balance.
- I agree. It was almost like a fear of failure that has driven me all these years. I wouldn't allow myself to fail. I definitely don't feel burnout. I've had my focus so focused on the business I haven't thought about that. All these things that happen, the marketing and taking great pictures, you still have to balance your life with other things like your family. That's the hard part. Having children. 10 years ahead, one of my things is to stay healthy. I eat better, take care of my body, I run, make sure I'm around for the next 10 years. I'm trying to do all the good things. On top of that to stay relevant, you have to look at pictures and be part of a community. You have to be going to museums. photography is a license to get into everywhere in life. That's what photography is and what you have to use it for. You translate it to taking pictures.
- That's the foundation of everyone's business here. A wild guess of how you stay relevant – keeping your finger on the pulse of contemporary society. Also take better pictures. A Woody Allen movie where he asks the alien how he can do better? Make better movies. It drives everybody. It does me. I don't often succeed. But try.
- The idea for me, the mantra, is being my best. Starting out, the new hot photographer. You're starting with nothing. Those first pictures have a cohesive nature about them. A year, that does seem like a recipe for failure. I'm trying to replace the portfolio as much as possible every year. There might be some pictures in the last 5 years. but going out for that goal, it's a thing about personal competition. It's healthy for me.

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- If you want to be around in 10 years, you have to continue having fun. That's the most important part. One of the advantages when you begin photography is that you're excited about everything. If you're not excited, somebody else deserves the job. If you're not waking up every morning interested in taking excited images, the question is, what's an interesting photo today – it's an interesting question but a difficult question as well. You simply have to have fun. If you're not having fun, it's difficult to be creative. You don't have to work with everybody. You don't need to capture the whole market out there. I started in France. I've seen photographers like John Paul Goode. He's working more now because he never changed. everybody's following every trend and he continued doing John Paul Goode photos. everybody else is doing what everybody else is doing. It's good to be aware of what's going on around you. It's kind of good to ignore it too. You may have a couple of years where you're irrelevant to the market. but if you're chasing the market...
- There are going to be years when you fall out of favors. Like movie stars, there are years they're on every magazine cover, then you don't see their name for years. You can be hot, hot, hot, then you're not, not, not. It's natural. The first time, it's a year later, you realize, I didn't have that great a year. But you still have fun. That's just the ebb and flow of any career and any artist.
- Keeping your finger on the pulse of contemporary society. It's absorbing all that stuff. Even John Paul Goode, I should shoot this today. He's watching what's going on today and seeing how that focuses in the world.
- It's a very strange business. You have the impression that everyone wants to work with you. Then no one wants to work with you for 6 months. You have to prepare for that or you're going to be very panicked. Today is a very difficult period. We had the introduction of digital. Then we had replacing paper media with digital which has completely changed all the rules. Then the economic downturn. We're trying to figure out how to negotiate this. I would argue marketing is much more difficult. In France you send out 3 postcards a year. I met a photographer who printed up 12 5x6 postcards. He said I had to stop sending them out. I was getting too much work. You can spend all your time on marketing. I remembering Paris you sent out a postcard and bang, bang, bang, the jobs. Now you have to do multiple things all the time and 4 years later...
- Look at the side businesses that have opened up. The specialists who get jobs for photographers.
- They all draw a preference of how they want to see things. Just pdfs, just the website, they just want to meet the photographers. There's a right answer, but so many ways of doing it now. With any given person, it can be any given method that works. You have to keep trying all of them with everybody.

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- It's cheap, but difficult.
- Now it's not just do you have the money to send postcards when somebody else doesn't.
- Now you have to get them to your site.
- It's like you're throwing a stone into a pond. I used to see the ripples. You're really convinced it's going to do something and nothing happens. Say you do the best photo. How do you get that in front of everybody out there? It used to be relatively easy. Now you have to hope that...

It's not just one great image. It's a lot of great images over a long period of time. The people we're all marketing to are so used to seeing tons of content in many different ways. They're not going to hire you just because you sent them a postcard or put something online. You've got to get that image into the pipeline of a thousand different things and 20 images behind it to keep going. They're not even noticing you're not there. They're looking at the person sitting next to you.

- That applies even to people you're working with, and fans. It doesn't matter how many years you put in.
- It's like email. If you don't reply immediately, you get 40 more. It's irrelevant. You send out something you think is fantastic. It drops the week everybody's on vacation. Maybe 4 years later – as the agencies become more confident again – I don't see a lot in terms of selling radical new ideas. As that happens they'll start saying oh, I need a great photographer for this. A portrait on a plain background, we've gotten the jobs where we say, anybody could have done it. It's a really difficult marketing situation out there.
- I see the emails all the time and they promise a lot.
- They're telling you what their preference is. There's not a right or wrong answer. If you want to be heard, seen, you have to put it out there in any way possible. Some people don't like emails if you're trying to connect – multi-faceted marketing campaigns in a lot of ways, avenues, venues.
- Over a long period of time.

We started Monthly Meeting for that reason. Another party with pays in LA – seemed so cliché. So let's get people together for these issues. What do people want? Without appearing to be annoying or aggressive. This is the forum for that.

- As soon as you get in front of an art buyer, it works better than any print you ever sent. I take art buyers out to lunch and believe it or not, I get jobs from that.
- The client has to trust you. Spending time with that, they put a face with the issue. Probably not a hard sell – you're talking about it. Now they have a real idea of who you are and what you do.

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- It's a softer sell. I never really talk about the photography. You know it's underlying.
- I know a [INAUDIBLE] who says it's not mandatory to meet the photographer but it's good to know they're pleasant to be around.

What is the most challenging aspect of being a photographer, running a business that you were unprepared for?

- (PAUL) The challenging thing is finding new and fun clients to work with. That's the challenge for photographers. I had a whole prepared thing. Was I unprepared? From my experience, I came from a long line of photographers, my grandfather and father – that question is unfair to me. because of my teaching experience, I see that all these kids are unprepared for being an entrepreneur, being social, being friendly. That's so innate to me to be that kind of person. Really you have to do sales yourself. When we do a conference call, you have to sell yourself. You're selling yourself in that treatment. I was never unprepared for the business. But the challenge is getting clients for me. I think for everybody here. You want really terrific clients. You want to do some great work. you want to go on vacation, to go to Hawaii to shoot that stuff you want to shoot. I set up role playing in the studio. I have a photographer and an art director. They face back to back. Make a call to this art director you want to get art from. We go through the motions. By the end of the semester they all know how to make a phone call. It's not obvious to young photographers.
- I wasn't prepared for the fact that as I get busier, I'm struggling to find that balance of finding time to shoot. So much time is eaten up by excavating jobs, that's a few days gone working on the treatment. You're having to market more. I was not prepared for that. I thought I'd be shooting all the time and somebody else would be doing the marketing. You have to remind yourself, I don't make money, I don't do well if I'm not shooting.

A lot of photographers are surprised by their to do list. It's gotten so long. Your path to that job is not longer that linear – it isn't that anymore. There's so much more required of you. You don't have the time to do it. You get bogged down and restricted. It's a real challenge that you all have. We sit on our end and we need that new work. I also need you to do treatments and sign your contracts and help with the estimate. It's a flawed, challenging model. Every question is coming back to creating new work. You're defining your success by your personal projects. It all comes down to new work. I hope we can all walk away reminding ourselves carving out our time to keep ourselves happy. That's what gives you that pocket full of cash.

- The whole question of running a business you're unprepared for – we all started with kind of a dream and all of a sudden you had a career and it's 10 years in. now what? You kind of put that aside. When you say

unprepared for – you had a dream to get going. Then you might have a young family. Wow. Now I have to look at the career of it. I achieved my dream. I'm relevant in the marketplace. It's what you do after that. It is important. We were in Mexico and this guy had all these old workbooks going back way in the 90's. Wow. There you are. Look at you. I was looking at all the names. The names around this table are still there. But 90% of them are gone. We prepare to get to a certain level and after that, how do you figure out what's next?

Mentorship is so important. I have a business to keep me motivated. Making sure you have somebody who keeps you accountable and driving forward. There's so much you are unprepared for.

- And it's a long road. So it's all a surprise.
- It takes a certain personality. almost bipolar in a way. Right brain, doing it both successfully. obviously everybody here is that type of person because if you don't have both, I don't think you're going to succeed in this business. I see so many better photographers than me picture-wise. I also know people like to work with me because I'm nice on set. I'm not a drama person. I don't screen at people. It's a professional easy shoot. Not that I'm the greatest photographer in the world.

What is something surprising about your expenses and cost of doing business that you would want pp who hire you to understand?

- (WALTER) there's really no surprises. When it comes to doing business, I realize when we approach these projects – I get whatever information I get, talk it through with everybody. I talk to my producer. I keep the whole estimating process as friendly as possible. The same with appointments. It's a nice new book. we talk about family, where everybody's living. We talk about work. I put that mentality to the estimating process. I keep it light and friendly. I have a lot of clients who don't like surprises. It's just as fun and rewarding. They just don't want surprises. They want an easy process from beginning to finish. But you can't roll over and give everybody everything they want. I had a job, it was relatives – I had 10 phone calls with them – these guys are great, young, hungry, but they're young. They don't know what the project is. They don't have the experience to really get it done. They can't see it through. I can take your budget, let me talk to my producer. We took it all in house, had a couple lively conversations. I brought my whole crew from NY to MI. they loved the project, we stayed on budget. We're looking for the next project afterwards. I don't want surprises. If something comes up, we just put it on the table from the get go so there's nothing to worry about later. We're usually on budget. I like to keep it a friendly process. There's no surprises to it.

Do you get pushed out on certain line items?

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- I cost cutter will say why is it \$1000 for rental, why not \$100? But they won't question \$500 catering. Model feels, that's a question. My producer deals with it. When we get pushed back, we don't push it right back to them. We educate them a little bit. A large part of the estimating process is education. I actually love the estimating process. The younger and older photographers – I taught for a semester at Drexel. The younger photographers don't know how to handle or recover from rejection. As a veteran, everybody's had something go sour somewhere along the line, and experience you can learn from. The younger generation, they don't know how to move past it. They don't know how to use it. From any kind of failure, you have to find some nugget in there to grow from.

There are definitely some veteran photographers who could do better at that too.

- Ultimately they don't tend to last terribly long. I assisted photographers who didn't deal with it well 20 and 30 years ago. They didn't survive because of that. When you consider the amount of marketing we do, it's not a great result but that's the way it is. If you take it personally – it's only important if it's important to you.
- Marketing, you have to do it. I gave up the idea I'm going to get anything out of it other than educate them. I used to love to get phone calls and have the 5 minutes conversation. Now I go to Google analytics. It can be really lonely sometimes, sitting there looking at the computer. It's awful. It is ultimately, we're all here because we've done it for a long time. We re-invented it a little when we needed to. I always know when I have an up year there's going to be that downturn. Success, money, you have to take care of your financial responsibility. But I look at what did I hang up on my wall, what's living in my kitchen. Those are the kind of successes I measure. If I spend any more time trying to measure business success, I'd never leave the house. No one ever talks about rejecting or that job that goes bad. everybody's had some form of it but no one ever talks about it.
- We have to own that rejection.

Our producer and our buyer, they don't understand what rejection can feel like. They don't communicate – do you want it to be filtered?

- You gotta take it as the real truth. Via email, whatever, face to face. You have to take it from where it's coming from, look at the big picture. What was amiss here?

How do you process it?

- I think about it. I talk to the folks about it. Susan, my wife, I'll go for a walk. Ultimately, this is gonna sound wrong. I love my career, been making pictures since I was 12. What's really important is who you surround yourself with, assistants, family, kids, animals. photography is

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awesome and my life. I had dreams about Annie Liebowitz last night. If you don't have a life outside of your work – when I was in school I had a burnout period. I called Duane Michaels. I'd shown him some of my books. He loved one picture and the rest he said, I can see you were just trying, but the rest is really meaningful. He said go see a movie, go hang out, don't take pictures for a while. We're hired people. I have to perform. You have to perform all day long and really do something interesting. I always look for some kind of personal imagery in those jobs. If you're having a down moment in life...we're all performers.

I represent 8 photographers so I'm getting lots of emails, sorry, you didn't get the job. I have to communicate it a lot. It's interesting communicating how or why you didn't get a job or why something didn't work out. From a point of view with art producers, it's important to explain that that information is really helpful for you. If you're being you're rejected, it's so helpful to know more rather than I'm so sorry, thank you for your effort and time, even if you get that. People avoid it.

- It's either style, money, or you blew the call.

Sometimes it's deeper than that. Sometimes they can offer more information.

- Here's 3 options. Check which one...
- Maybe you can communicate it's helpful for them. Maybe not the art producer but the creative director. If they can give you that information, the next time you or your rep can do something better.

All I need is one sentence.

- It's really uncomfortable for them to call somebody and say you didn't get the job. It may be different with agents. From a photographer standpoint, an art buyer says you didn't get it. If I say any more than that, why doesn't this guy leave me the fuck alone?
- When I did broadcast years ago, they all got a call and wanted to know why. The broadcasters would always tell the agents why. You're still a great resource to them and they need you next time.

As a photographer or a rep, we have to learn how to take rejection.

- The why is incredibly valuable information.

I think it's evolved. Email makes you anonymous. I would be having conversations. Now everything is email. The phone hardly rings.

- It's easier for the art producer to do it face to face. Now the email allows the art producer to be encouraged by everybody, to offer why.

When I send that rely later, if you can give me any insight, that would be helpful. They've moved on or don't know how to write that.

- The inexperience of some art producers, oh, I just don't want to tell them why.

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Or a thank you.

- Do you think they always know why?
- Yes. There's always a discussion.

Or, you were the third bid. Thanks. That's all I need.

- They'll never say that. Ever. Ever.

Sometimes I don't want to know that. They learn who you are for the next time.

- everyone now has to put a lot more effort into any bidding. Sometimes it's multiple phone calls and can you follow up on your treatment? If you spend 5-6 hours working on the treatment and estimate – if you do get that no, it's a little harder. My heart and mind back on paper. You know that going in, there's a chance you're not going to get that job.

Maybe it's not the reason, but the respectful explanation – wow, you worked really hard.

- The acknowledgement.
- It would be nice for them to know you're spending a lot of time doing that estimate.

everyone's sending emails now because they want something. It would be great if everyone realized that email doesn't make your time free. They want something really quickly and they assume your time is free.

How do you feel about treatments? What criteria do you use to determine if you will create one for a project? And, what would you like the people who receive them to know about what is involved in creating one?

- (PAUL) I get requests for treatments on almost every job nowadays. It takes 3-4 hours. Pdf, mood board, stylistic board. It takes a long time to do these things. I now send it to the art director and make sure they get the treatment. A lot of times the art producer doesn't pass it along to the art director. Conference calls sometimes follow up after. Did you check out my treatment? No. now I know, art directors have to get the treatments. I asked that specifically. My rep is like, awesome question. I knew they weren't getting it. All these clues I got.
- A lot of times we don't have their emails.
- It's hard to get art directors' emails.
- Agencies have it.
- It's a combination of asking for it, research.

If you reply and reach out to the creative director like equals, whatever the question is, that's an important step.

- It makes the playing field a lot in your favor because now you're an equal player. Say you're brought in as a third bid. You might be the best

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photographer but they're looking at a photographer they've worked with before. So you do the treatment, spend a lot of hours, you are the right photographer and they never get to see that.

Are people asking for treatments just to add stuff to give to the client or like it should be, an appropriate request?

- It's 50/50.
- When I started doing films, that's where I learned about treatments. It was the bane of my existence. It wasn't being done at all in the print world. The first time, I did it unasked because I really wanted that job. But I knew the second I turned it in, it would ruin my life forever. I don't know how deep they need to go in print unless it's some giant post-production thing.
- It's not just board creative. They want help selling their choice. A lot of clients are making a different choice than what clients recommend.
- If an art director comes up with a concept of what a job is, what's the difference between the treatment...?
- It could be a stylistic location, what lens or location you intend to you.

Sometimes they're being used in client meetings as the presentation. We're doing their work. I'm not sure the creative are really going through your treatment. They're probably doing that. They're using them in their client meetings to help sell that person in.

- Or to use it as their vision.
- I had a meeting yesterday with clients we got this job for – they had the presentation of their job on this big screen. Every photo they had there was my picture. Wow, you guys were really super prepared of what shots you wanted to use. But they were super prepared, just as a counterpoint.
- Sometimes they will only want to show 5 images from you. There might be something irrelevant on your site so they want to curate. Sometimes the creative can easily get distracted if something isn't exactly what they're looking for.
- When you do treatments – we try to keep the images relatively small for that specific reason. If you have an image that's large and it's not where their head is, it kicks you out right there.
- I've learned after hundreds of these treatments not to be that specific too. We keep it very general. Which seems counterproductive to the whole treatment.
- I'm still a life and food shooter. Your vision for this – I already heard what the art director's looking for. I'm kind of regurgitating what you already told me. I'm putting information together about the production or stylist team.

I've had photographers say, why am I doing a treatment for this? How do I know they're not going to take my specific ideas and have somebody else shoot them?

- They do.

It's a very specific way you're going to approach it, like a technical issue. In that case you have to show examples of your work that show how you'd do something without explaining how you're going to do it.

- We've all been on both sides of it. They use ours for somebody else or hey, this other guy was thinking, can we do that too...?

We have a photographer who hires a copywriter every time he does his treatments.

- I deal with a lot of directors. Directors don't write their own treatments. They have professional writers that do these treatments for them.

I write plenty of treatments.

- The big production houses have writers that help.
- It's always been about the description of our visual approach. I write my own treatments and it works really well for me. it is really valuable.
- That's a surprising expense. Hiring a copywriter.
- Make sure your interns know how to write.
- It would be great to know their expectations.
- It's great to talk to the art buyer first, then you get on the same page a little bit. I'll send it to the second art buyer, well, it's a little too warm...it would be nice to have that conversation. That way, you pick up on the nuances. Like an earlier creative call. This guy's not feeling me. I'll spend a couple hours but I'm not going to give you my life for this.

(QUESTIN AVBOUT SOLUTIONS.)

- it's like wearing multiple hats. You have to come up with solutions to jobs. There's the technical side, the written side. We have to do treatments, retouching it. Then you have emotion, technologies, you're jumping from one thing to the next.

How do you handle that so you're not overwhelmed?

- Kind of like delegate. In terms of shooting personal work, I have producers now that help find talent and locations, hire people to come in and help you so you don't have to deal with billing. Kind of learning to let go a little bit of certain things to concentrate on others. Jumping form one thing to another. retouching some images you just shot, you have to go back to your archive for some images they need you don't have on hand.
-

If film made a resurgence would that interest you?

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- (VINCENT) I went digital in 2004. I don't think film is going to come back. Would I like it if the internet didn't exist? Maybe, maybe not. In the context of the way we work, it's really reassuring to work on a big screen and see what we're doing. I thought in 2003, shoot digital – well, I can. I thought it would be a slow transition. It happened like that. As soon as people could oversee on a screen and see their layouts. From a professional point, no, I don't see the advantage. digital has evolved so quickly. I used to shoot only 4x5. Digital backs are amazing. In 4x5 we had 90 scans. That was an enormous expense. The expense of going back to film – the only place – there's a few things film can do that doesn't really exist. For our commercial work, unless it's something that they want to make a point that it's film – sometimes that can be more relevant than what we're doing.
- Then the creative. He's never been in the industry when film was in the industry. So they think that's something.
- But time hasn't been lost. Like all the old world conventions they had, this is how we're going to live in the future. We'll have all this leisure time. With digital we have the same amount of time, we're just being asked to fill it with other things. Art directors are doing 18 layouts, second round of responses. Their time is jammed. Time has always been the same. Work expands to fill the time. I remember exactly when it went from film to digital. One client couldn't wait. If we shot digital you'd have it back now. It was like THAT.
- Even if they were to ask for it now, I can't imagine an agency to go backward. You'll see it tomorrow. But we're saying it's going to be great.
- Here's the Polaroid.
- I can't see clients going back to that.
- Does everybody still like what they do?
- Yeah, but I want to hear what they say about usage.
- Film's a little like vinyl. It's analog. It does have aspects that digital hasn't captured. But within the context of advertising, within the context of the gallery where you're making an enormous print – when you're using the big camera it did have a psychological effect on the person in front of you. I think it's a little bit like wishing for horses and carriages.
- Look at Urban Outfitters selling vinyl.
- Guardians of the Galaxy is going to release a cassette tape.

What one word would you use to describe the industry right now?

- (PAUL) Transitory.

If you had 20 art buyers, what one thing would you want to know?

- How do I reach the art buyer? What's the best way? Or creative director.

Usage is a hot topic.

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- (HUNGER) The current usage model is based on copyright law. You own the copyright at the moment of its creation. You're required to license it and allow other people to use it. That's not gonna change until it changes. Is this working for advertising? For clients? For anybody other than the photographer. It is but it's kind of a buyer's market at the moment. Unless your work is very specific or unique, the more specific and unique the more leverage you have. Your reputation. The work you've done. It increases the value of it. It's a really good question to ask art buyers. They have things to be responsible for. To be sure they've asked for the right thing. It's confusing sometimes for them. I've had art buyers say to me, I don't know what it's going to be used for. How can it be improved on or evolve? It does still protect the photographer. That's the law. Should it evolve? Personally I don't think so. If you talk to execs at Pixar and Disney, they like the licensing law in Burbank. I'd be curious to see what other people think. I'd like to ask the art buyers. They don't like the paperwork I'm sure.
- I see it being slowly eroded. The one place helping us keep it – another aspect of talent – they're just not caving. If you do a lifestyle shoot there's no way you can buy out talent.
- In France it's illegal to buy it. It's a protection for creators. It's the same for musicians, artists, writers. I think it's a really important model. We've suddenly become work for hire. There's a tendency to try to put all the legal responsibilities on us. In the editorial world, all the legal responsibility on me and if that image is sold, it all goes to...for us, one of the questions is unexpected expense. We have to do more things. We have all these expenses. People imagine our margins are quite high. If you look at our margins after studios, marketing, we ultimately need that money. It's an important model to defend. As soon as it goes, it's gone. Once you lose it, it's over.
- Not coming back.
- One client I had in France, they came back with a similar brief and 50% of the budget. They're getting more from us. It's important for us as a group to defend. Once it goes, it's gone.
- The merging of art buying and broadcast departments and agencies is important for many reasons. TV commercial guys own it outright. I never understood that. We're the creators here. These producers who'd been in broadcast, what the hell? We have a tough road and somehow we need to uphold it. We need the money. It's not about big houses. It's about running the business.
- Like explaining to an art producer, it take 4 hours to do a battery. Communicating the cost of running our business is high. If you take it all away, you'll remove the opportunity for us to be there in 10 years.

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- The whole style of user generated advertising – we don't need your talent – that's a similar conversation.
- I got something that was supposed to look like Instagram. We're in this space where there's less story telling within the context. They want it to look like it was taken by an iPhone. Everything passes. Other folks will become successful. And great.
- There's still the opportunity to be up there in 5 years when the trend comes around. We still want to be there for it.

I'm negotiating a job now all by text. This art producer, it's all text. OK. I'm adapting to text.

- The one thing we haven't touched upon, it comes back to all of our business acumen. If you want to still be here, I had to learn how to run our jobs more efficiently. Either you learn to adapt or you're over.
- Another aspects – I saw it more in France. If art buyers get clients lower and lower – it's in their interest to defend it too. There's an important place in our business now for a young nimble photographer just as there's a place for the more experienced expensive photographer who does a different thing. If you do in one direction too quickly, that experience will go. You'll lose a generation and a certain type of experience that might be relevant a couple of years down the road. Now it's a buyer's market, you can get it lower. But that might come back and bite you in 3 and 4 years. And circumstances will change again. I don't think this is the new norm. I think it's the new norm for today.
- Since the economy tanked, the clients really grabbed hold of the reins. Since 2008, everybody was very fearful. It's been a slow climb back to say to their clients, you hired us, let us do our job. Let us advise you. That budget you want to spend on this project, that's completely insufficient. You have to change the project or the budget. The agency isn't in control with the clients like they used to be. That affects the whole usage thing.
- Are the mid-size agency really questioning their own relevancy?
- Totally.
- To manage a brand now, that's a 24 hour a day job. They need a mechanism to help them do that. An agency, that model...
- Agencies, their margins have been slashed as well.

They're evolving to become more relevant. They have to be motivated by different analytics. That's all very different now.

It's becoming harder to have those educational conversations.

These smaller more nimble agencies are really affecting the changes going on out there and ultimately affecting us. We used to be more relevant in

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that old model and have to figure out how we become more relevant in that new model.

It will come around. We talk to other agencies that are doing it really well. That is accountability from the creative directors. They need to see what is going on and what is quality. If they don't expect anything from these youngers, they won't know what is quality. They'll accept whatever they get and push on that.

- So many have never even been on a photo shoot.

What two things could an art producer do to make your job easier? Is there anything that art producers do really well that you wish they would do more often?

- (TY) Constructive criticism. When I show my book, I want to know what you want to see more or less of. I want to know how to make your job easier and not waste your time. I want to show you stuff you want to see. I want to know why I didn't get a job so I can better myself next time. Hopefully you want me to be better. What was interesting here – you did this as a test to see if it's a good idea to mix art producers with photographers. obviously we don't want to scare our potential clients. It might be interesting to mix us in a debate. Get a big table and allow them to ask us questions. When you go see an art producer, you don't really ask these questions.

What word would you use to describe the industry?

- Interesting.

What factors determine how much you are willing to negotiate?

- (SCOTT) It comes back to two patterns. We all get up and go to work every day and we're all incredibly flexible within that day. That holds true to the various clients. There's not a set pattern that says this is the only way I charge for this. We always are adjusting, moving, adapting pretty much for every job. There's a flexibility – we all have to be good listeners. Sometimes that team or piece of the business is smaller. Other jobs or clients you're shooting for, in the end there's no patterns. We all have to be flexible every day.

I see patterns in our group – we're the most open to negotiations. When people are transparent with us – as opposed to not having the information and having to figure it out and be called later, would you mind cutting? That call is very different than, we should all come in around here, this is our budget level. I'd rather know as much information as I can up front. If it's transparent it feels OK.

I try to set a walk away point so you know when you're getting into dangerous territory so that you know when to fold. If you don't have a walk way point, you've lost your way or values.

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And then walk away when that happens.

- You have no power in a negotiation if you're not willing to walk away, and mean it. If you don't believe that –
- If you're doing a job, there are certain costs – the only thing getting skinnier are the fees. You're still taking on all the liability for producing this job for a lot less money. So you need that, you're right.
- You have to advise them what they can get for the budget.
- You keep your standards high so when there is a conversation, you're not bidding with an outlier.
- The treatment's a great place to say, this is why you're spending this money. I'm telling you how this is going to go. Ultimately, who's responsible? It's easier to have that conversation – not, oh, that's super expensive. Why? If we don't communicate why, we can't expect them to work up to it.

One word to describe the industry?

- Motion
- Exciting
- Changing
- Promising
- Interesting
- Interesting
- Evolving
- Changing
- Evolving
- Evolving
- Flighty
- Evolving
- Crazy
- We were all trying to use a really polite one word!
- Therapeutic
- Disloyal
- It is all those things. But we do have to look at it like it's a new game.
- Every 3 months it's a new game.

You have to be hyper aware of what's going on.

- Are there strings being pulled from above? We're downstream.
- I have a client I'm working with – the agency literally, the last 3 jobs, they shot the picture with the props we used in the shots. They pre-shot the

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job. I was stunned. They're reinventing the wheel. There's a whole new generation of people who have no idea how the wheel worked. What it would look like. They're reinventing it. I really hope that the value of the big idea will come back again. He gave a talk a long time ago – in the course of one day you'll see 722 advertising messages at you. Of those, you'll notice 60. Of those 60, you'll only remember 12. The whole point, there's 3 you'll hate. His idea for the whole agency was the value of the big idea. I really hope that people will realize that there is value in big ideas. It happens in movies. What are they worried about? Content. What makes great content? A big, exciting idea.

- There is an agency that's having trouble getting big ideas. They're joined with agencies overseas, creative teams all over the world. They think people from a different culture will look at our culture here in ways that obviously our agencies can't do. It's like a societal shift.

People are going to the brick and mortar. As human beings, we want structure. There will be this resurgence to tell me how to do my job. No socializing per se. cross-educating.

- Do you find there are less assistants coming up because they all think they can do it?
- They come and go faster.
- Philadelphia is a small market. the Urban Outfitters Group is there. So many people have slid into those \$40-\$50,000 jobs. It's growing and growing. If you don't have a full time job as an assistant or retoucher, you can't do it. There's a guy, 27, totally starting to get jobs, he almost bailed for a \$2,000 salary on 3 people. That good enough thing fights with the good enough to go out on Friday and Saturday night thing. And that I'm going to have to possibility live on the street thing – I was able to get through that one year with \$18,000. It's harder. The life line is shorter and the hourglass is burning faster.

What questions would you like us to bring to Detroit?

- Where do they see this evolving? What are they getting and where do they see it going?
- I'd say it's in its infancy.

They're struggling to say relevant inside of the agency as well.

They have producers now who produce an event for their client or a TV spot or a print ad. These people are now wearing multiple hats. We have a very tiny share of their brain now. They need room for plenty of other vendors to help them solve their problems. We're not the only voice they're listening to.

The treatment is a great one.

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- Hearing about the treatments and their feelings and their pros and cons on that. What's their perspective on it?
- What can we do to make their lives easier once we are awarded the project.
- If we're one of the 3, what can we do to make the process easier, to narrow it down?

Great. On behalf of everyone, thank you so much for participating in our first ever Monthly Meeting.