Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Last Witness

Daniel Rolnik · Thursday, August 18th, 2011

Last Witness is a grime-style photographer who has taken to making his own unique street art in NYC. I first saw one of his bolted skateboard pieces while I was walking around New York City and immediately sent the artist an email asking if they'd do an interview. After admitting to Last Witness that I wasn't a cop, everything was good, and we were able to have a rad interview which includes a tutorial on how to make your own Cyanotype and perfect fake blood.

Daniel Rolnik: What's the best way to make fake blood for a photograph?

Last Witness: As nerdy as this sounds, it all depends on what part of the body you're gonna make bleed, how old you want the blood to look, and what film you're going to shoot with. But a basic quick mix if you're in a jam is 1 pint corn syrup, 1/4cup flour, 1/4cup water, some red food color, and tiny bits of blue and green color as well. If it looks too magenta, throw more green in the mix or if it's too blue, throw some yellow in there. Shake the mixture up good and use it right away, as it will rot and possibly even explode out of the bottle and on to the flour.

DR: How did you get involved with MSI [Mindless Self Indulgence]?

LW: Actually a pure fluke, my buddy called me up to work as a production assistant on their "Straight To Video" shoot and I just kept snapping all my own shots as the production went on. We got VIP passes to their show afterwards at Webster Hall, wrapped bandannas around our faces, and ran into the crowd ready to rock the only way we know how – only to get snatched up by bouncers and thrown down a few flights of stairs 'till we were on the street where we handed the backstage passes over to some pretty grimey homeless guys to go in and enjoy the show.

DR: When did you start putting your work on the street?

LW: Everyone seems to discover me as some sort of street artist, but I've always been known as and consider myself a photographer. The plaques have been an ongoing project for roughly the last 5 years. It came about out of pure frustration and anger that my work went right from a darkroom into a box for no one to experience first hand until I could gather enough resources to put together a gallery show. One day I came home from my day job reeking of sweat and was surrounded by boxes of prints…To me, the next logical step was to put them out there on the street anyway I could. I've always said I was a grime-style photographer, you'll never catch me out there wearing a vest with a million pockets shooting some wedding, a typical clean cut set, or even rocking some business plan. The street became my portfolio. I wasn't going to drop it off at some office to hope for a job, I was going to let it become apart of peoples' lives even if it's just for a

second. Prior to the plaques I took my photos and made them into 1 to 4 color stencils to spray up, but I didn't feel like they did the original prints justice. People who saw them started to think they were ripped images from movies, which was far from what I hoped to achieve. The next move was large photocopies of my pictures that I wheat pasted to the walls, but this felt like a failure once again due to a lack of image quality and how they were getting lost amongst the vast array of paste-ups already out there. Finally, I created the plaques using scrap wood and/or broken skate-decks with actual prints and image transfers on them. I bolted the first one to a traffic sign and sat across from it all night watching people stop to take a minute to look and even touch it. There it was, this small intimate moment people experience while getting to soak in my photography.. so I bolted them up all over every chance i got knowing full well they wouldn't last long out there. Some only stay bolted for a few hours, others a few months, but never the less as soon as I walk away from one I know that time is running out. I've begun to use adhesives in order to glue them straight to walls and other surfaces, which seems to add a tiny bit more longevity – either way there's no end to this project in sight.

Jump for more Last Witness photos and more of the interview ? ? ?

Re-posted with permission.

This entry was posted on Thursday, August 18th, 2011 at 5:14 am and is filed under Visual Art
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.