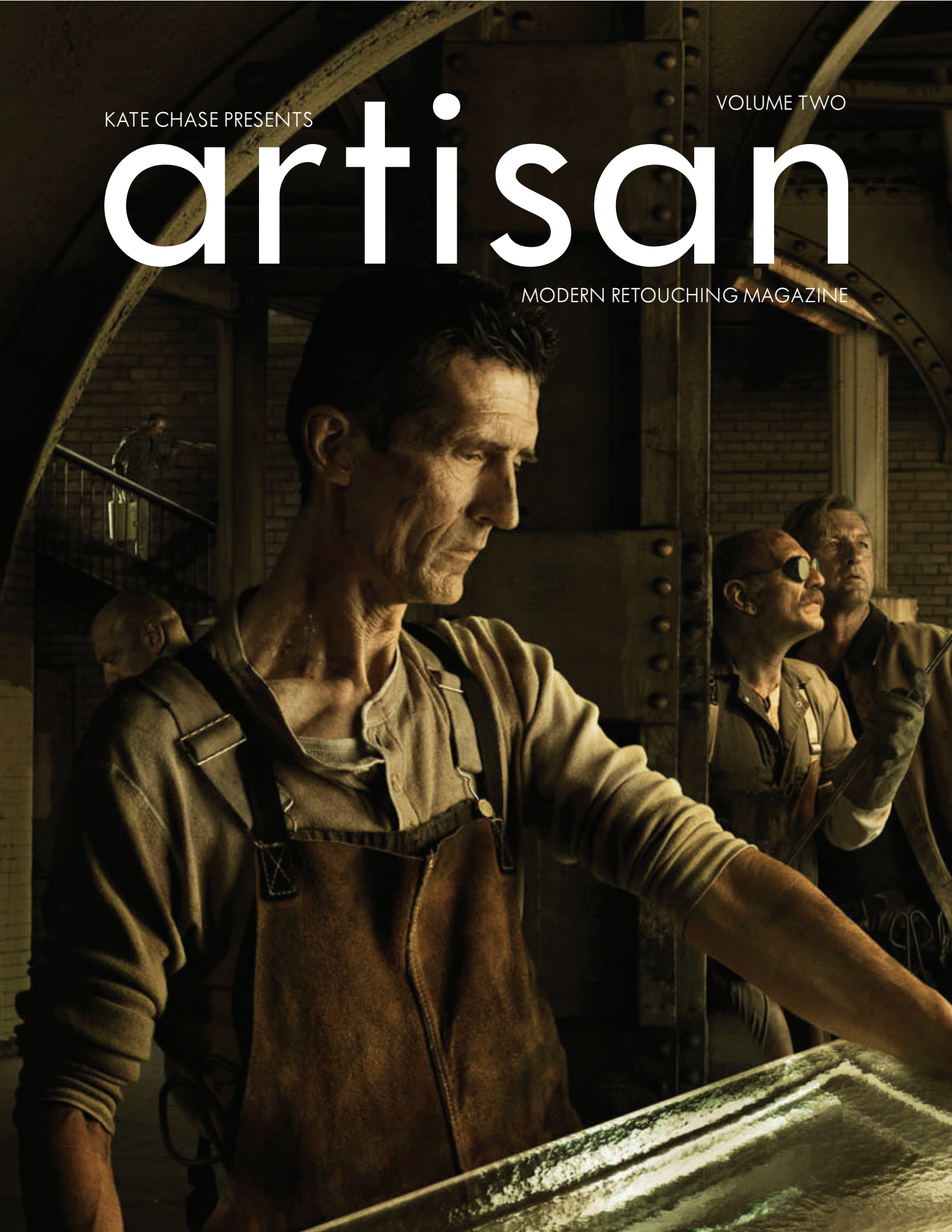


KATE CHASE PRESENTS

VOLUME TWO

artisan

MODERN RETOUCHING MAGAZINE



PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS

Welcome back to our second, online only, installment of Artisan—yes, the next version is already in the works and will be bound for the printer late summer and out to mailboxes Fall 2008.

That said, my last (and first-ever) editor's letter covered a lot of ground. It introduced the group, Artisan, a bit of my history, and started to highlight what I thought was the current state of the modern retouching industry. So it seems with my second letter, I can continue rambling from the perspective of agent-for-retouchers and thinking the best place to start is with what's happened in our world that might be worth sharing publicly.

In March, besides being invited by the APA to give a presentation at the San Francisco Apple Store on retouching—a second for me with public speaking (where's my phone relationship when I need it?)—our cooperative gathered again in-person for some beers, bowling, and business coaching. (Although, the coach was mystified over the business model of retouching and wondered why the estimate should still bear the burden of being anything more than an estimate given before seeing photography assets...but I digress on my little soapbox as that's another issue for showcasing terms & conditions down the road a ways). Anyway, beer and bowling should be obvious but suffice it to say the coaching day (hosted graciously at the headquarters of our friends at Popgun Design) covered sober subjects, from pricing and the cost of doing business to the challenges of being a small business owner, and ultimately, how to better understand the most important part of the business: our relationships.

It somehow broke down to what we could all relate to—love lessons, and then again to dating vs. marrying. While no one was quite sure what made the better relationships from our personal histories, we talked metaphorically about the analogies of professionally determining how you know when you're dating, realizing when you're married, and how to recognize various relationships along the way. Play the field, serial monogamy, married short-term, long-term, dating a few, commitment & expectation issues (yes, we stopped short of group therapy), and all the others you might care to think of yourself. And we discussed and acknowledged that these emotional metaphors do indeed cross over. In order to creatively exceed expectations, understanding these relationships was the key to post-process successes with both new and existing clients. Also, regardless of who is now involved in the buying, selling, and managing of post today—and certainly there are many to choose from: photographer, photo producer, photographer's agent, retoucher's agent, art buyer, print producer, creative director, art director, post producer, account executives or the end-client—it seemed that at the completion of our coaching day, there was still no real business formula for anyone to rely on in the world of retouching. Being conscious of some simple guidelines would have to suffice for maintaining the enjoyment of it all. And based on the love metaphors we netted out, what works and is proven time and time again is the amount that you get back is proportionate to what you put in. Certainly it was a good segue to create this Issue's topic and showcase some great retouching relationships in these stories for Artisan – Modern Retouching Magazine.

Sort of last but certainly not least, sharing that DeeDee Porter is now contracting as post producer. We welcome her history and her experiences from photo production to help achieve objectives for all on the post side of the equation.

And without further ado, I give you love in the time of retouching.

—Kate



MAKIN' IT RAIN

Sugar Digital isn't necessarily selling photography services, but when an idea calls for a smart solution, Adam Moore's willing to make an exception.

Adam's under-the-radar talent behind the camera was called into action for long-term client Campbell-Ewald, resulting in this sunshine finish. The art director, Mike Conboy, knew the power of the idea hinged on making this Tri-Vision board appear as if it were part of the actual building in downtown San Francisco. He wanted the windows on the board to look as if they were part of the building's façade. After the creative call, and taking a few to figure out the logistics of what he'd gotten himself into, Adam interpreted this concept's vision and went his usual extra mile, making sure the color matched. "In order to sell it, the stucco on the image needed to look like the building," says Adam, "so we brought in swatches from the building and went back with proofs and matched them to the paint on the walls." The sunflower was selected from a variety of farmer's market beauties, and shot in Sugar's studio, the cloud was part of his sky library, and the rain and windows were pure Sugar.

Proven creative relationships are the ones where you can pitch in from start to finish and maneuver the course with ease. Adam's familiar enough with the Kaiser brand over the years to know the team and could therefore freely exercise any sensibilities in his execution. Ultimately, another Sugar Digital beauty was produced and the agency never seemed to waiver in their confidence that Adam could make it rain.



YIN MEETS YANG

pixelrefinery.com



The friendship Michal Horevaj has with Mark Holthusen is brimming with creative histories and shared passions for fine art. Having met over some celebratory cake and pints at a mutual friend's birthday party over 15 years ago, Michal and Mark realized they had similar creative interests, and stayed in touch over the years as they pursued their crafts independently. In the late 1990s, they started their version of a retouching company together called Pixel Refinery, Chapter 1. "Back then, there weren't that many photographers involved in the retouching world," says Michal, "so we took a chance, and learned a lot by owning our own business." Eventually they folded the company, and the move more or less cemented Michal's role as an independent artisan retoucher, and Mark's as a photographer.

As time and friendship went on, they began to appreciate retouching as much more than a means to an end, and together they demystified the world of photography and how it relates to the art of retouching. And despite their original vision not taking shape, Michal and Mark spent so much time partnering on projects that they developed a kind of symbiotic shorthand that's become a natural fit for the two of them and their objectives. Now they both have fine art, photography, and retouching backgrounds, own their own businesses, and understand each other's methods. It doesn't just work. It works well.

Their first six-part Kohler campaign (their second is still in production) was another perfect job for Michal and Mark, as they seamlessly stepped into the rhythm of their workflow. Kohler's "The Way I See It" campaign celebrates creativity by letting the photographer lead the way with the vision and even giving them credit in the ads. "Kohler is great with creative freedom," explains Michal, "and the agency was open to ideas that are willing to go to the edge and make the leap."

Ultimately, the relationship between Michal and Mark is one that goes well beyond a support role to the true mastering of creative collaboration—regardless of the roles they play. The personal passions of the Yin and Yang of the retouching and photography world end up being mutually beneficial to both artists, not to mention the Kohler brand, the agency, and the viewing public.

READY. SET. RETOUCH.

Photographer Erik Almas is accustomed to having creative control of his imagery. He's discovered it's easier on all involved if he does most of his own retouching and draws on a select group of retouchers for consultation, art direction rounds, and the final beautifying. But when you have an aggressive production with compositing required in less than half the time of the normal, not-enough-time, you're going to need to loosen the creative reins a bit. Those decisions don't come easy, especially when you're deeply invested in maintaining a signature aesthetic. Good thing Scott Dorman is used to standing by with a vision, and used to Erik.

Scott and Erik had been working together for two years and had never actually met in person until this job for Hill Holliday. The three Liberty Mutual ads that needed to wrap in North Carolina were due to complete within just five days and both artists pushed their schedules and creative comfort levels to new heights.

In order to complete the project on time, everything went into motion at rapid fire. Scott knew Erik usually didn't embrace retouching on set as part of his workflow, but in this case he welcomed Scott's real-time vision and anything he could do to help elevate the imagery. Armed and traveling with monitors, Macs, and tablets, Scott worked in a hotel suite, creating composites, comps, and finishes, with the agency art director in tow. While they were holding it down over room service, Erik was out finishing the location shoot.

The best relationships are the ones that are successful even during the most trying situations. Erik's Liberty Mutual job was a large undertaking for such an accelerated time frame and all comfort zones were definitely put to the test. Yet, the power of this real-time collaboration was impressive in producing a pretty transparent experience for everyone. The photographer was able to let go a little because he was confident Scott would maintain his aesthetic, and Scott was able to move from the ever-familiar post-production feeling of awaiting retouching surprises to an on-set comfort level. In the end, the agency and client marveled at how smooth the process was and absolutely fell in love with the ads and the team Erik brought. We fell in love with how a pre-existing relationship, normally handled through the power of the World Wide Web, was fully realized in a hotel room in North Carolina.



A PERFECT 10.



amydresser.com

Sometimes the jobs worth talking about are the ones you stumble into because of fate. This time, a scheduling conflict for Scott Dorman quickly turned into an opportunity for Amy Dresser. Amy was asked to lend the Dresser technique to TYR's Multi-Sport Catalog and given a chance to make good on 11 images from photographer Steve Bonini and his client, TYR Sports.

The development of this sort of art plays into Amy's ideal creative scenario. A photographer open to fresh interpretation of their work, a client that appreciates the artistic value in imagery, and source material with lots of leeway allowed Amy to build on an already great history of imaging for this client.

Fellow colleague Scott Dorman, of smalldog imageworks, had created a pretty concrete look on the previous TYR job, yet the client gave Amy license to make these look like Amy Dresser images rather than trying to emulate Scott's work. Taking on a pretty demanding color palette, she spent a long time reviewing all the images before coming up with a specific idea for how she could push them in the direction of her specialized style. Amy then complements and elevates in her own way the prior imagery created by Scott.

A long, long, longtime photographer for TYR, Steve had developed a special relationship with the client that fully embraced his love for shooting their human element. By bringing Amy into the equation, she learned through their creative conversations that Steve's a big believer in manipulated and beautified imagery. "Steve doesn't have any preconceived notions as to the palette or control," explains Amy. "He talks about the capture and what he needs to accomplish when shooting the image." He loves to hook people up to what he sees as an incredible resource: a hands-on approach to retouching.

The Socket Rocket image, out of all other images, called out to Amy as the one with the most potential to have more of an illustrative feel. However, it's the small details that bring a sense of realism to this image. She made a conscious decision to keep things like beauty marks, body shapes, natural flares of light, and the tiny hairs on the athletes' faces that catch light. "All the athletes are real people, which in a way makes these portraits," says Amy. Completely in her element and comfortable with tight shots, Amy knew exactly where to go with this one from the start.

In this new paradigm of the independent retoucher as business owner, fate sees to it that the right projects find their way to the right retoucher at the right time. In the end, Amy swimmingly upheld her reputation as artisan retoucher, and TYR Sports was more than happy with their world-class catalog of inspiring art and product.

WATCH YOUR BACK

A great working relationship between photographer and digital tech is crucial to the success of any production.

Helping photographers, and their clients, manage assets efficiently is one of the most important aspects of a shoot, and whom that photographer chooses to manage the workflow is one of the most important decisions. That said, photographer Matt Hranek puts his faith in Mark Gordon and G10 Capture to help manage the technical side of his productions. And there's good reason for it.

For starters, Mark has a strong photography background. He knows a lot about cameras and equipment, he understands the production process, and he's committed to doing what's best for the creative at all times. From this foundation stems the connection point between Mark and Matt. Early on, Matt walks Mark through his vision of what needs to be achieved. Then Mark presents suggestions for how to best accomplish this from a workflow standpoint.

Historically it's the producers that facilitate communications between the digital techs and support networks surrounding a photographer and their production. Treading a path against the norm, Mark instead works to get involved in dialogues at the pre-shoot stage, making his digital tech process quite unique. Mark is proactive from the initial stages, working here through Matt's first assistant, and staying close to the vision throughout. He also gets to know the crew very well, speaks their language, and can engage them for answers in order to stay on top of solving any issues or surprises that might come up during the shoot. Most recently, Mark and Matt were involved in a whopper of a Wal-mart job over nine weeks, with lots of travel across three states. A lot can happen on a massive job like that, but it was made much easier through an early and open exchange of ideas and a thoroughly thought-out approach.

It's pretty normal for any digital tech to dictate the workflow but if the fit isn't right for the job, it can adversely affect the outcome. Mark Gordon describes his relationship with Matt Hranek as "ideal," one part mutual respect plus two parts clear understanding equals three parts solid creative bond.

Although photography itself has matured, it's still pushing through the transitional barriers towards digital. This is an exciting new era where Mark Gordon is setting the bar high with customized approaches and a heightened awareness of all things digital. He is an asset to any photographer looking for someone to watch their backs—and their production.

g10capture.com



GOOOOAAAALL!!!

raygunstudios.com

After having creative and photographic successes in the past, Butler, Shine, Stern and Partners once again tapped into Michael Tompert of Raygun Studio to help with their creative challenge regarding their not-so-mini client, Mini Cooper.

Impressed with the style Tompert brought to their last Mini project, easygoing but detail-driven art director Jay Lorenzini again called upon Michael to brainstorm on a concept that he had no real path for executing. It was the perfect scenario for them to witness Michael's ingenuity at the CGI drawing board.

The comp provided to Michael illustrated a perfectly manicured lawn, similar to that of a baseball field. It was very unlike the reality of a mega stadium's soccer turf and the agency was hoping the comp could be reinterpreted as a photo illustration. Yet, Michael wondered if it would be believable as anything less than a photograph since the goal of the agency was, after all, reality.

The first step was to locate the source. Michael kicked it off with a virtual quest of a bird's-eye view of a soccer stadium for reference. "When you make stuff from scrap, it never quite looks the way you thought it would when you start out. You have to take a really close look in order to recreate it photoreal," explains Michael. "There's always something to be discovered about how things really work, what their texture is, and the true quality of it." Thanks to Google Earth and the wonderwork of satellite photography, he looked at all kinds of stadiums from around the world, including Stuttgart, Manchester, and the still-under-construction World Cup 2010 stadium in South Africa. These and an assortment of stock shots were shared with Jay to generate reactions and get the creative dialogue flowing. Every little detail was exposed and discussed via e-mail. Experimenting with new software that does real-time rendering like a virtual photo studio, Michael played with all kinds of 3D models of soccer goals and ended up working with a highly detailed and realistic

model of a soccer goal that articulated every string of net and was very unlike the look and feel of the one in the original concept.

Next, it was onto the grass, which generated lengthy discussions as to what the reality of the field should look like. This wasn't the World Cup or a suburban kid-friendly stomping ground, it had to lie somewhere in between. A creative e-mail debate ensued over the texture of the grass, the color, whether or not it should have lawn mowing patterns, and whether or not it should look like a real soccer field or be sort of clean and hyper-real. The challenge was to create a delicate balance between a well-played, wear-and-tear soccer field and a state-of-the-art, lovingly manicured lawn. "You don't have to think about these types of things with photography," Tompert says, "because it is

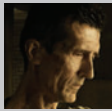


what it is. But in 3D, when you are creating it, everything matters." In-between that creative volley match sprung a knockout photorealistic CGI drawing of an imaginary Panda Cup stadium.

In a final team gesture, art buyer Maggy Lynch-Hartley sealed the relationship with an old-school gesture. Michael received a full-size copy of the poster art, right alongside a handwritten thank-you note, proving that, in this type of creative game, everyone can come out a winner.

KATE CHASE

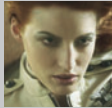
PRESENTS



COVER ART: 1 OF 6 / LOCATION DESIGNING, COMPOSITING, COLOR PALETTE EXPLORATIONS AND FINISHING W/ PHOTOGRAPHER MARK HOLTHUSEN / ART DIRECTION: WILL CHAU / AGENCY: GSDM / CLIENT: KOHLER / 2008



1 OF 1 / PHOTOGRAPHY AND FINISHING / CREATIVE DIRECTOR: MIKE CONBOY / ART PRODUCERS: CINDY KURETSKI, WOO TOM, DARLENE HODGE / AGENCY: CAMPBELL EWALD / CLIENT: KAISER PERMANENTE



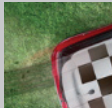
2 OF 6 / LOCATION DESIGNING, COMPOSITING, COLOR PALETTE EXPLORATIONS AND FINISHING W/ PHOTOGRAPHER MARK HOLTHUSEN / ART DIRECTION: WILL CHAU / AGENCY: GSDM / CLIENT: KOHLER / 2008



3 OF 3 / ON-SET RETOUCHING, COMPOSITING, COLOR PALETTE EXPLORATIONS WITH PHOTOGRAPHER ERIK ALMAS / ART DIRECTOR: ERIC SHI / ART PRODUCER: CAROLYN DOWD / AGENCY: HILL HOLLIDAY, BOSTON / CLIENT: LIBERTY MUTUAL



1 OF 11 / COMPOSITING AND COLOR PALETTE EXPLORATIONS WITH PHOTOGRAPHER STEVE BONINI / ART DIRECTORS: CHRIS WILMOTH, JOB HALL / AGENCY: IN-HOUSE - TYR SPORTS / CLIENT: TYR SPORTS



1 OF 1 / CGI DEVELOPMENT / ART DIRECTOR: JAY LORENZINI / ART PRODUCER: MAGGY LYNCH-HARTLEY / AGENCY: BUTLER, SHINE, STERN & PARTNERS / CLIENT: MINI COOPER

artisan retouching representation +

40 arago street san francisco ca 94112 . O 415.337.1700 M 415.987.3764 . kate@katechase.com
katechase.com