



**Issue #8- JQ9504**

## **User Profile: Eric Poppleton**

### **Commercial and Adventure Fine Art Photographer Based in Los Angeles**

This interview was conducted by Lynne Farris, business-to-business writer and serious novice photographer and workshop student of Eric's. She has developed film and prints in his darkroom, which, in addition to being meticulous and well-ordered, features a JOBO CPP-2 processor. Like other students of Eric's, Ms. Farris yearns for a darkroom similarly equipped. Maybe one day soon. Meantime, here's how Eric got to the City of Angels from Indianapolis, Indiana.

*Lynne:* Eric, tell our JQ readers how you came to shoot photographs professionally from an undergrad business management major in college?

*Eric:* I discovered photography when I was given a Pentax ME Super for Christmas during my junior year in college. It changed my life. I began to work immediately and took to photography like an athlete trains for his sport. I learned the craft end very quickly and applied my knowledge through making photographs as an art form. I earned two advanced degrees in Art Photography from Ball State University and California Institute of the Arts and have designed a life-style that has been quite enriching -- even exciting -- through my travels and sharing experiences with fellow image-makers.

*Lynne:* Now that you're in the Golden State, what has become your subject matter of choice?

*Eric:* My professional career has evolved over the years to a point now where it is basically divided into three segments: corporate communications, advertising, and public relations photography. Then there's the stuff that moves my spirit, what I live for. That, too, has evolved. Over the years, I've moved through several different phases, which began with environmental portraits, landscapes, and most recently, to camping/photo expeditions with fellow photographers and serious amateur shooters. My career is now firmly geared toward pursuing commercial work, my own adventure fine art photography, and teaching photographic workshops. My students from the classes I taught at UCLA Extension and Santa Monica College have initiated several kinds of experiences, ranging from advanced darkroom to location workshops in remote environments. In 1995, we've taken camping/photographic trips to Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and the southern Sierras; day trips to historical sites for architectural photography classes and urban architecture; and longer trips to Fort Hall, Idaho to document a native American powwow. That was our farthest reaching so far. Future plans are to expand the program to include trips to Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Arizona. Currently, we're in discussions with Kodak representatives regarding ways in which they can offer creative support for our 1996 efforts. Additionally, we are seeking similar support from other manufacturers in the photographic community and outdoor manufacturers so we can offer trips where photographers only need to bring clothes and their camera gear, and the rest like camping equipment and gourmet food will be completely provided.

*Lynne:* What kind of camera equipment do you favor?

*Eric:* Ninety-eight percent of the time, I use a Hasselblad 500CM. I own a variety of focal-length lenses, ranging from a 50mm to 500mm. For 35mm format, I use a Nikon N90 and an 8008. For lenses, I have a 35-70mm and 80-200mm, along with a 24mm, and a 60mm macro. I've limited myself to that because they're so portable and user-friendly.

*Lynne:* And your film of choice?

*Eric:* I'm strictly a Kodak guy. For film and paper. For black and white, I prefer the Tmax film line. And I use EPP for color, a warm-tone transparency film that works excellently with electronic flash and location settings when it's filtered appropriately. As for black-and-white paper, I now use Kodak Polymax Fine Art fiber-based paper processed with Dektol.

*Lynne:* I'm partial to your darkroom because I'm comfortable in it. From the padded floor to the efficient print drying racks, it is truly one of the most meticulous and neatly ordered technical environments I've ever been in. I understand that over the years, you have consulted, designed, and built custom darkrooms for other photographers and for student clients. What can you tell us about these darkrooms and how similar are they to yours?

*Eric:* Actually, the last two facilities I have designed are considerably more sophisticated than my own current space. The spaces are larger and have some equipment designed in place that really meets the user's need. My own darkroom has an Ilford Multigrade 500H enlarger and a JOBO CPP-2 processor, which I've had since about 1990. Previously, I had a JOBO CPE, which is a smaller and slightly less sophisticated version of what I have now. Naturally, when I'm asked, I recommend the equipment I use, if I think it will suit the user's intentions. Several of my students have used my darkroom to process their film, and, when their film processing volume built to a high enough level, two of them sought my expertise to design and build a custom darkroom facility. One client built a black-and-white lab, and the other client does an array of color processing, both film and printing. In both cases, I recommended and installed JOBO processors.

*Lynne:* What made you decide to buy the JOBO in the first place?

*Eric:* It has made it possible for me to complete commercial assignments quickly and accurately, and the process is repeatable. When I first started working commercially in 1986, I was hand-processing all my film. For about four years, I hand-processed all my film using metal tanks and metal reels. Then the volume grew to the point where I needed a processor, and the JOBO was recommended to me by several professionals. So I bought the JOBO CPE, but my volume soon outgrew its capacity, so I upgraded to my current system, the JOBO CPP-2.

*Lynne:* What is your volume capacity now?

*Eric:* I can process, oh, up to 80 rolls of film in a long day by myself. It's a modular system, and I have ten 1500 series tanks with extensions and 40 reels, which make the high-volume processing possible. In one of my first assignments after I got the JOBO CPP-2, I shot a commercial job on Thursday and Friday, and on Saturday, my assistant and I walked into the darkroom at 9am. We began mixing chemicals, started running the film, drying and proofing it. By 2am on Sunday, we staggered out with 100 finished proof sheets. It's the fastest I've ever run film. The finished job was delivered on Monday morning. The JOBO CPP-2 was paid for by one commercial job. I got a return on my investment in 17 hours. That's the key. Because it's modular, I'm always adding to it and expanding my volume capacity. With the variety of tank configurations offered, you can process numerous film formats. The JOBO processor is really infinite as far as its capabilities.

*Lynne:* You use the JOBO for black-and-white processing?

*Eric:* Yes. I'm strictly a black-and-white lab. While I do color work, I go to outside resources for that. The JOBO has made my life more efficient and more economical. It uses half the chemistry that I'd normally use for hand-processing, and it's one-shot development, which means I'm using my chemistry only one time and not reusing it, so it's fresh each time. Among other advantages, the CPP-2 system features, a water jacket that recirculates the water so that the temperature is accurately and consistently maintained within plus or minus one- or two-tenths of a degree. That translates into more consistent and repeatable results from day one which gives me confidence.

*Lynne:* What led you to purchase the JOBO over other processors?

*Eric:* Recommendations from other photographers and, almost just as important, the JOBO's reputation for reliability and low-maintenance. In the six years I've owned it, it was repaired once, and I had it back within days. It's basically a clean-and-store system so that if you don't have a permanent darkroom, the JOBO is ideal because it is also portable and lightweight. In fact, I will probably use it on the road sometime in the near future. I've custom-built a 1995 Ford Econoline 150 full-size van to use as a rolling photo facility and living space. It features a 5-foot by 12-foot roof-mounted platform for shooting, sleeping, and stargazing. Fully equipped with a kitchen and storage cabinets for camera gear, clothing, shoes, food, a built-in refrigerator and a secure spot for a Macintosh notebook computer and portable printer, this van is ideally suited for an outdoor photographic workshop. I've used it successfully on 12 photo trips in 1995, ranging from three days to five weeks on the road searching for adventures in the future.

*Lynne:* What photographic values do you seek in processed film, and how does the JOBO help you accomplish that?

*Eric:* I use Perceptol and dilute it one to three, and with that kind of dilution, my development time lengthens and I can control the tonal range accurately. Formerly, I achieved great results through hand-processing, too, but the decision to purchase the JOBO was really one of speed and repeatability. For commercial photography, speed is everything. Because if you can't deliver, you won't get another phone call. So the JOBO has added to my consistency, it is repeatable and very fast.

*Lynne:* Eric, you appear to have discovered a nice balanced life-style by interweaving a prosperous commercial career while passionately expressing yourself through your own artwork and teaching. Furthermore, the dedication and enthusiasm you express for your work is likely to generate even more new ideas and energy if that's possible that will translate into future projects and success.

*Eric Poppleton is currently working as a professional free-lance photographer in the areas of corporate communications, advertising, and public relations in the Los Angeles area. Clients include The Walt Disney Company, TriStar International, KCAL and KTTV News, among others. In addition, he teaches photographic workshops and has organized an ongoing series of landscape, event, and urban architecture workshops in California, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, and Wyoming. He earned a B.S. degree in Business Management and an M.A. in Photography from Ball State University and an M.F.A. in Fine Art Photography from California Institute of the Arts.*

*For details and further information on 1996 schedules for workshops, call (310)471-2845 or email [epop@earthlink.net](mailto:epop@earthlink.net)*

## **Feature Article: A Quick Start For The Colorstar 3000**

*by Ken Owen*

The Colorstar 3000 is an incredible analyzer, with capabilities not offered by other analyzer manufacturers. But like so many "computerized" products on the market today, sometimes the many features cause confusion. In a typical week, I will get two or three phone calls asking how to program the Colorstar. Usually these customers tried the auto-programming methods and became frustrated by having to make between 8 and 12 test strips to get a "perfect gray".

Under these circumstances, I like to recommend postponing the autoprogramming until you have become more comfortable with the Colorstar 3000, and instead program it to a "known" negative. After all, you probably made successful color prints before you bought the Colorstar. You just wanted to make your printing faster by virtually eliminating test prints.

At this point I warn you that some of the following information will get a bit tedious, because I want to cover each and every step needed. But for those of you who already own a Colorstar 3000, or those of you who are seriously considering a Colorstar 3000, this information will be useful.

To begin with, you need an image that you have successfully printed. It is helpful if in one picture, you have all the elements you will need for programming such as grey, skin color, etc. However, it is not likely that in your day-to-day photography you have taken a single shot

with a gray card, plus a flesh tone, plus a white area, plus any other colors important to you. Here at JOBO, we step outside (in warm weather) and have someone wear a white shirt and hold onto a gray card and a JOBO Color Control Card (JOBO part #6817). Then we pose the person in front of an evergreen tree in front of a neutral colored part of our building. The shot is not particularly picturesque, but it works well as a standard negative because of all the elements in the photo. I will fill the frame as much as possible to keep the elements of the picture large, so they are easy to meter with the analyzer probe. You could also use Bob Mitchell's Colorbrator negative (JOBO part #6337) since it has white, gray and Caucasian skin tone patches.

Whether you use a "standard" negative, or you simply use one you have already printed perfectly, you will need a "perfect" print of your picture today, to make sure it is balanced to all the conditions of your darkroom. A print from yesterday does not count. Your developer may have aged and changed its performance since then. The perfect print must be done today. I will be working from our "standard" negative for the purposes of this article.

I work with the clear spot probe cover with its diffuser underneath it on my probe. I have the older probe, so this is a 9 mm spot reading. (The new probes have a 6 mm standard opening.) I prefer to not use the 4mm reducer, primarily because it reduces the light entering the probe so much, that you can easily "run out" of sufficient light for color balancing.

Enough of the setup, now let's get on with the details of programming. For the purposes of this illustration, let's suppose that my "perfect" print was made with filter settings of 75Y + 45M at an exposure of 7.2 seconds at f/11. I will leave the enlarger and lens settings untouched once I have made the perfect picture today.

Now I am ready to program the analyzer to a "known" negative. Let's program channel one for a gray card. With the enlarger still set with the same filter settings and f/stop that you used for the perfect print press \* to display the channel in use and if it is not showing CH1 (Channel #1 of 8) then press the UP or DOWN keys to show CH1. Now press the LAMP key once to turn off the channel display. Press the ANALYZE key to turn on the enlarger lamp and start the analyzer. Now place the probe directly on the gray part of the negative and cosine correct it. Now press and hold the following 3 keys. \*, UP and DOWN. When you pressed the down key (while still holding the other 2) you should have heard a chirp, indicating the analyzer has just recorded the color the probe is reading. Now you can let go of the 3 buttons and push the UP or DOWN buttons to set

7.2 (seconds) on the display. When the window reads 7.2 then press LAMP 3 times to lock it into memory. You have just programmed a gray card on channel one!

Now let's program a WHITE channel (for white shirts, dresses, clouds, etc.) It's exactly the same as we just did for gray except this time pick a white area of the negative. Press the \* key to set the channel to CH2 Now press the LAMP key once to turn off the channel display. Press the ANALYZE key to turn on the enlarger lamp and activate the analyzer, and place the probe directly on the WHITE patch and cosine correct it. Now press and hold the following 3 keys. \*, UP and DOWN. When you pressed the down key (while still holding the other 2) you should have heard a chirp, indicating the analyzer has just recorded the color the probe is reading. Now you can let go of the 3 buttons and push the UP or DOWN buttons to set 7.2 (seconds) on the display. When the window reads 7.2 then press LAMP 3 times to lock it into memory. You have just programmed a WHITE channel both for color and exposure.

Now do exactly the same thing for a flesh-tone but store it in channel 3.

When you have done all this, you will now have a gray program on channel 1, a white program on channel 2 and a flesh-tone program on channel 3.

Now if you want to print a photo with a flesh-tone, use channel 3. Press ANALYZE to turn on the enlarger lamp and activate the analyzer. To take a single reading from a flesh-tone area place the probe in the projected image of flesh-tone and cosine correct it. Adjust your filters according to that single reading until you have nulled the Y-shaped star. As you change the filter settings, the analyzer is automatically adjusting the exposure time to correct for changes in filter density or changes you may make in the lens aperture.

Once you have the filters nulled, notice the exposure and f/stop you have set. If you prefer a different f/stop for its sharpness, etc., then set the lens there now and allow the analyzer to adjust its exposure time automatically. Conversely, if you prefer to work with a particular exposure time or range of times, adjust your lens aperture, until you have reached that exposure time. Now press the LAMP button one time to turn off the analyzer function, but still leaving the enlarger illuminated to adjust the easel for your final composition. Press LAMP again to turn off the enlarger. Place your paper in the easel, press EXPOSE and when the exposure is completed, process the print. It should be quite good.

Now, perhaps you have a "people" picture, but the skin tone is too small to meter. But it is a wedding photo! Go to channel 2, the white channel. Take a single reading off the wedding gown, and print the picture. It's beginning to get easy.

NOW you are ready to try channel 1 for multiple spot readings on a negative that has no flesh or white tones available for

reading. (Let's consider a scenic garden shot.) Here is the key for multi-spot readings: try to take readings from as many different colors and densities as possible, up to 8 readings. Don't worry about setting the color head filters to 0. I usually just leave the filters right where they were for my last print.

First press the ANALYZE key and place the probe in the first spot you want to measure. Let's find the most dominant color in the picture, in this case green, and measure that one first for no particular reason. Place the probe in a green area (magenta on the negative) and cosine correct the probe. Press ANALYZE; you will hear a chirp and the red LED next to the ANALYZE button begins blinking, indicating that you are in the midst of taking multiple readings of your negative.

Move the probe to another color, perhaps a dark brown tree trunk. Cosine correct and press ANALYZE again. Move the probe to another color, perhaps a light puffy cloud overhead. Cosine correct and press ANALYZE again. If you'll notice, we have just gotten readings of the most dominant color, the darkest color and the lightest color in the picture. By deliberately getting these 3 out of the way first, you can then hunt around for ANY other colors and take readings of them. Now take more readings of any other colors there. But when you take your final reading (you can take up to 8 but even if it is just your 6th or 7th reading) **DO NOT MOVE THE PROBE** or you will have to start all over again! The illumination of that last reading is **vital** to the success of this method!

Now, having taken all the readings you are planning to use (the more readings you take the better the results will be) this is the time to begin adjusting your filter settings to null out the Y-shaped star of the analyzer. When you have the color filters adjusted properly, notice the exposure time and f/stop setting. If you want a particular f/stop (for peak sharpness of the lens) or if you want a particular exposure time, now is the time to adjust the aperture to get the exposure the way you want it. The analyzer will automatically adjust the time to compensate for whatever aperture you finally select. If the yellow LED's begin blinking at this time, don't worry about it for exposure. They mean there is not enough light for color balancing. But as long as you see a numeric figure in the digital display there is enough light for exposure setting.

Press the LAMP key once to turn off the analyzer function; the enlarger will still be on. Remove the probe from the easel. Adjust your easel for final composition. Press the LAMP key to turn off the enlarger. Insert paper and expose and process it. I bet it will look great! Even on your first try.

Some customers have asked about making different magnifications of the same picture using multiple readings and the complication of trying to take exactly the same readings each time. It is unlikely that you will take exactly the same series of readings that you did before. But if you have the color right in the small print, and want a larger print, leave the filter settings just as they were for the small print, and take multiple spot readings in the photo as you normally would, but **DO NOT ADJUST THE FILTER SETTING**. Just let the exposure time reading in the Colorstar 3000 adjust itself to the new illumination level. You will probably get it right on the first try. But use a test piece of paper rather than commit a 20x24" to your first try.

How about making a proof sheet? This is pretty easy especially if all the images are under the same lighting. Pick a typical photo from the roll. Set the enlarger high enough to make an enlargement that will cover the size paper you are planning to use; 8x10 for example. (Go a little larger than needed to make life easier.) Now analyze as if you are going to make an 8x10 of that single negative. Once you have the filters set and the exposure selected, take the negative out of the enlarger and put it back in the proof page (I assume you are using negative storage pages for your contact print), position your equipment (easel etc.) for making the exposure, switch off the enlarger lamp, insert the paper, position the negatives and make the print.

Finally, if you decide you need to tweak the Density channel on your CS3000, it is easy to do. Press \* and then select the channel you want to adjust. Let's say the white channel #2. Press the \* key again and it shows the Y (for yellow) reference number. Press the \* key again and it shows the M (for magenta) reference number. Press it a 3rd time and it shows the Density reference number. Let's say it shows 485 for now. Your experience has shown that the images are coming up about 1/3 stop too light every time. Remember that changing the reference numbers by 30 points changes the exposure by 1 f/stop. (The same as Log Density.) So if you want the exposure to be 1/3 stop darker, increase the reference number by 10; now it will be 495. ( $30 \times \frac{1}{3} = 10$ ) A half stop would be 15 points.

I have given you an awful lot of information to take in at one time. Take it one step at a time just as I have listed it. You should start getting successful results right away. But remember the

phrase "garbage in, garbage out". That "perfect" print has to be just right, or all the other results will be less than perfect.

## **Article II: Why On Earth Would I Need A Nova?**

*By Robin Whetton, Nova Darkroom Equipment, England*

Q: I have a JOBO Processor. Why on earth would I need A NOVA slot processor as well?

A: There is a Rembrandt, Mick Angelo, or Picasso, somewhere in all of us, the difference is that those guys could draw a bit, and knew a little more about painting, than to start with a good undercoat before applying a gloss finish.

It's a fact of life that most of us want to produce wonderful pictures. That is why most of us go into the darkroom in the first place.

With a JOBO processor you have a wonderful film and paper processor, with accurate temperature control. It's ideal for any volume of film and a single print or very short runs.

With a NOVA you have an ultra compact, print only processor and (this *and* is very important) the chemistry LIVES in the processor. In terms of printing convenience, it has no equal.

Imagine any time you have the urge, you go to your darkroom remove the floating lids, and make as many, or as few prints as you like with no setting up or clearing away.

As the print will stay on the unique NOVA clip throughout its processing cycle, you won't get wet hands, or come in contact with the chemistry. There's no washing up either, give the clip a quick rinse, a shake, and it's ready to use again. If only the 'pots and pans' were as convenient.

Being vertical, NOVA processors fit into a very small space. The 8X10" model uses less than 1 square foot. Everyone has this sort of space, in even the smallest darkroom. But remember, we make processors up to 16x20, and they take up only 2 1/2 square feet.

The Plexiglas surfaces of each processing slot are patterned so the prints can't stick to the walls. Even the soft texture of Ilfochrome can be successfully produced.

The temperature control is via state-of-the-art Microchip Technology giving accuracy of +/- 1/3 of a degree.

Because there are no moving parts there's almost nothing to go wrong and if, at some time, the heaters "give up the ghost", they can be replaced inexpensively and easily by you, in your darkroom, in less than 5 minutes.

Chemistry is kept "refreshed" by using a replenishment system, every 10 prints or so. You just drain a little out and add a little working strength solution and the job is done. We've even gone to the trouble to fit little drain valves to make the job easier for you.

Incorporated into the design are tubular cover lids for each chemical bath. Often referred to as floating lids even though they don't actually float. They just sit on the surface of the chemicals to protect the solutions from evaporation and oxidation.

After you have concluded your highly creative printing session, all you have to do to shut down the processor is, replenish the chemistry, replace the lids, wipe the top of the processor off, unplug, and you're finished.

With a replenishment amount of 10ml per 8x10" print we regularly get over 8 weeks life from our stock solution in an 8x10" processor. This means fewer trips to the local store to buy chemicals and you don't throw so much chemistry away. This keeps print costs to a minimum.

When you want to print again, plug the unit in, simply remove the lids when it reaches the proper temperature, and away you go.

A tip for prospective Nova purchasers, DO IT NOW! The only question you will ask yourself after you have a NOVA is, "Why, oh, why didn't I buy this earlier?"

## **Article III: Chemical Problems With Fiberbase Paper**

From *Mastering Black-And-White Photography* by Bernhard J. Suess.

The main culprits are sulfur compounds that are present in all fixers. They attach themselves to the metallic silver which makes up the image, eventually attacking the silver and changing it to silver sulfate. It's ironic that fixer makes a photographic image permanent, but if left in the emulsion it will eventually cause the image to fade. Also, silver complexes formed by the fixer are unstable to light and can darken as the print ages.

Since most galleries, museums, and collectors prefer black-and-white prints made on fiber-base paper, this is the type most frequently processed archivally. RC prints can be treated similarly, but there's not a demand for archivally-processed RC prints. Because RC has not "stood the test of time" the way fiber-base prints have, collectors shy away from it. Fiber-base prints have been around for more than 140 years.

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