27.05.2015

STORY BEHIND THE IMAGE: PAINT EXPLOSION

© tiero - Fotolia.com #61406467

This week's 'Story Behind the Image' is from Fotolia Contributor Gualtiero Boffi entitled 'Paint Explosion'. We asked him how he created this stunning, vibrant and detailed photo:

"The creation of this image is not accidental, I've seen already something similar and the possibility of turning mere drops of color in a complex and dynamic sculpture was absolutely a challenge I wanted to grasp.

I had in mind what I wanted to achieve but did not know exactly how to do it, at the very least, I had a rough idea.

The parameters to be considered are many colours, timings, light, support and sound …! Each of these plays a vital role in ensuring the success of the shot.

The theory was quite simple, the colour drops must be ordered on a vibrating membrane shaken by a speaker's sound wave, then once in motion must be frozen by a high speed flash. Maybe not so simple after all!

First step is to create the setup. A dark studio in order to have the scene illuminated only by the flash, a speaker with an elastic plastic dark cover, paint colours and the right sound to create the 'explosion'. The first test was a disaster, timing being the main problem, it was virtually impossible to sync the shoot with

the action. The use of a sound trigger that could allow me to make the shot precise and repeatable was indispensable.

Even the speaker was not right, it was too big and the vibrating surface too broad, influencing too much the motion and the shape of the paint, each shot was different from the previous.

After changing the speaker's membrane things were better but I still was far from the result … the problem now was the density of the color! I tried different kind of colours and finally decided upon acrylic paints which seemed to have the right behaviour; not too fluid, not too dense and it mixed only during movement.

At this point I wanted to understand how big will my sculpture be and I realized that it was smaller than I had imagined! The drops of colour must be really tiny too, otherwise the form assumed during the movement is not harmonic and becomes unusable.

Now we are entering into the macro world photography. In fact the subject is only about 2cm tall and this brings new problems such as the short distance from the camera and the colour's explosion…it is complex to illuminate too … the flash that freezes the movement has to work at the maximum speed that corresponds to the minimum power!

The flash must be positioned very close to the colours, so as to be visible in the shot!

I'm not going to tell about the camera setup and the search of proper sound to get the correct colour explosion … finally after two days of testing I managed to get the right image!

I had fun?

Sometimes and sometimes not. But satisfaction given by the final result despite the many difficulties has paid off for everything!

Remember that we are just mere drops of color!"