

## **Albany Studios tested the expodisc, a short review of the main impressions.**

Correct Colour Balance can be a problem with digital capture, now at last I have found a solution to it before I open the raw file in Photoshop to correct it.... A few months ago I heard and read some articles on an "Expodisc", a new "gadget" for digital photographers. As with so many new gadgets available I was a little skeptic to buy before you try, but now it is available in NZ so I could test it.

### **My old CB method in studio:**

I use a colour temperature meter and set white balance. Auto white balance is an option, but you need a grey or white reference in your shot to make the auto white balance work. To put a greycard in the shot is not always possible, most of the times I ended up in Photoshop to find a white balance. The white balance eyedropper selects 3x3 pixels of white or grey pixels, but even this method is not always very accurate, you can easily miss.

Expodisc changes all of this and more.



Photo © Albany Studios 2006: Expodisc mounted on camera lens.

### **The Expodisc method:**

The disc itself is made of quality optics and clips firmly on your lens. A personal handwritten calibration certification confirms the neutrality of the disc (Note: 18% greycard reference!) – very encouraging! A comprehensive booklet gives full instructions on how to work it, including on how to set your one shot white balance on Nikon, Canon, Fuji, Konica Minolta, Olympus and Sony D-SLR's. In short, aim the camera with the expodisc mounted on lens at your main light source. When using flash, manually set the correct exposure level (as indicated by your flashmeter) when you look through the lens towards the main light source. Then click the one shot White Balance button on camera. White balance is set! And WOW, is it "bloody" accurate! Photoshop CS and Capture Pro both could not find a deviation! 5500 Kelvin exact. This is fast and accurate...Even bounce flash works – it neutralized the ceiling paint....

If you use different light sources, aim the expodisc from subject matter towards the light sources to obtain the average color temperature. This method works fast, is foolproof and if you change lightsource or power output, you quickly take another one shot balance. So much easier and accurate than fiddling with white or grey cards in front of your lens.....



Photo © Albany Studios 2006: Laura – captured with "Expodisc"

### **Capture true colours outside:**

Outdoors you follow the same method. Aim camera lens towards the sun with the expodisc to take your custom white balance from the position of your subject, just like an incident lightmeter reading.... if you use a polarizer or skylight filter, the expodisc sits on top of all of them so it neutralizes any colour cast. While looking at the sun with the expodisc over the lens set aperture and shutter speed to the correct light level and take your custom white balance. NEVER point the lens towards the sun without the expodisc on, you will ruin the lightmeter.

### **Conclusion:**

To create white balance as accurate and simple in any working environment must be a bonus for any photographer. Especially when working in different light conditions. Your workflow speeds up, you can rely on the results. The expodisc is well made, fits on all lenses if you have adaptor rings. You make a professional impression with a professional result. This solution offers more than just correct white balance, see the pro's, the money is well spent.

Of course the studio promptly purchased one, correct white balance is one worry less....

### **QUICK REFERENCE:**

- Manufacturer Expolmaging Inc. USA
- Model tested: Expodisc 77 mm
- RRP: From \$168.75 to \$ 212.63
- Available sizes: 62 Ø to 82 Ø
- Clip in to attach to lens
- Calibrated to exact 18% grey neutrality

### **RATINGS:**

#### **PROS:**

- Fast and easy correct white balance
- Use as an incident light meter
- Grey card reference digital file for white balance processing in Photoshop
- Functions as dust checker on sensor
- Checks for fall-off on wide angle lenses, create mask in Photoshop to counterbalance fall-off.
- Calibration of lightmeter
- Can be used on video cameras
- Replaces grey card
- Traditional film cameras can use it too, like accurate light metering or pre-flashing film to lower contrast, zone v grey reference negative etc.
- Instruction book is very comprehensive

**CONS:**

- Price increases with diameter of Expodisc
- Not having an Expodisc!

**CONTACT:**

<http://www.apix.co.nz/>

Design: 20

Features: 20

Image quality: 20

Performance: 20

Value for money: 19