

Libor Spacek

by Sabina Casarova

Libor Spacek was born in 1966 in Czech Republic. As a diving instructor and professional photographer he came up with an interesting idea of bringing studio methods down under the water's surface. The result is a unique photo collection of "Underwater Fine Art Nudes" which has been exhibited and published worldwide to great acclaim.

Watching the gorgeous female figures levitating in space, dressed in moonlight, you may be wondering, how did these breathtaking photographs come into existence, especially considering that this all had happened at a sort of weird location, which is a public swimming pool (you could never tell). Well, let's see how such a fine art nude underwater session works...

As with every other ambitious photographer, Libor gets kind of discomposed before the shooting. He has a lot of things to do and forgetting just one of them could spoil the whole event. And Libor is not that kind of person, who needs a crew of assistants around him. So everything is up to him.

First he gets his diving gear ready, so that he can spend more than three hours underwater... Then the photo equipment comes in order. Libor usually works with two cameras; Canon 10D digital reflex camera "instead of polaroid", as he says smiling, yet nearly one fifth of the exhibited images were shot digitally. The undeniable advantage of digital cameras underwater is that you can check the results immediately. The second camera is a 35mm Canon EOS 3. Both cameras have custom BS Kinetics underwater housings. And there comes the dilemma: which photographic material to use? Black&white or colour? Negative or slide? Sometimes Libor even considers medium format, but he hasn't chosen his type yet.

Let's not forget the lights please. Taking a good look at Libor's photos, you'll probably understand their special importance. One good guy invented fantastic 1000W lamps for Libor's use underwater. Don't worry, they work safely. But still they add some feeling of adventure.

Some props like costumes or other requisities are to be used, too. Libor's favourite thing to do except shooting nudes is fashion underwater.

A substantial element of Libor's shooting are the models. But these models have to have a very special relation to water plus swimming





skills and endurance (and fantasy as well). A three hour long session in the cold water is not easy. For the photographer, even though he keeps his body warm in a neoprene suit, the shooting is incredibly exhausting as well. So they all try to eat something to accumulate energy, but mostly there's no time nor appetite for it.

Transporting all the heavy gear to the location is hard work but if you ask Libor, why doesn't he ask another strong guy to help him, he will probably answer, "Me and my Sabi can manage, we don't



need anybody else to disturb us." These photos are so magic because everybody is alone while creating one joint thing. The photographer is alone with his lights and camera, the model is alone in the swimming pool - without goggles she can't see anything but contours, half blinded by the chlorine water.

Now comes the last lap of double or triplechecking if everything works, fits and is in the right place. It is very important is to close the housings VERY CAREFULLY, well sometimes you



need a seriously bad experience to realize this...

Libor starts to install the lights on the bottom of the swimming pool. Each time there is a different illustration, the lights are relocated during the shoot.

Models are getting ready for the shoot. They put on their makeup and dress up (depending on the shot). They try to concentrate on the posing underwater which is totally different from dry studio shooting.

Not much time is spent with conversation between the model and the photographer. Newcoming models are mostly asked to "try to do what they saw at the pictures". Of course it can never be the same. There are other powers taking effect in the water and that makes the model move even when she doesn't try to make any move.

And now that everybody's ready... Jump! Libor takes his place on the bottom and the model begins to rotate in this same old rhythm: Dive - pose and smile - click - up - breath - dive... Repeating over and over again but mostly without that click sound. Every now and then Libor breaks the surface to say what's wrong with the posing. The poor



Cameras:

35mm - Canon EOS 3 in a BS Kinetics housing
Digital - Before: Olympus C5050 with its own PT015 housing

Later: Canon 10D with another BS Kinetics housing

Lenses: Canon, Tokina

Materials: Kodak (both bw and color, various types) 400 ISO

Lights: Specially made UW lights 230/110V, 1000W

Plus additional UW lights

Diving equipment: Sopras Sub

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All uw prints are now for sale. Format 23x16 inches (58x41cm, glued on a 62x45cm blackboard). The image is signed, dated and numbered on the front. Edition #... of Limited edition of 12.

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model swallows some water and nods her head. And they go on.

There are mostly two or three models alternating as they get cold and hungry quickly. And what about poor Libor! He's staying down there all the time, except the necessary film changes.

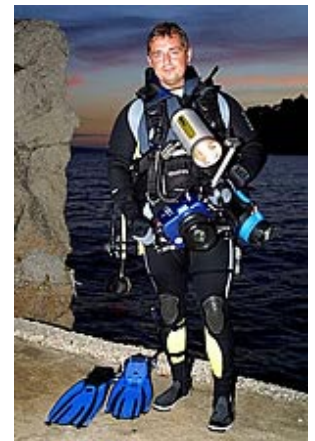
At the end of the session the models are free to go home but the ghost of Libor has to get all that wet stuff out and then, instead of sleeping, he cares about his equipment. After a little nap a new adventure of lab work begins.

Recently Libor's been working on commercial

work and planning his next exhibition project. In the near future you can meet him and his naiads somewhere under the sea, using fish and sealife as extras.

Sabina Casarova

Sabina Casarova is a journalist, stylist and key model of the Underwater Fine Art Nudes project.



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