

Focus On: Robert Grant

How did you get involved with photography with stereo?



Soon after my brother got a camera of his own (Christmas 1971), I, naturally, wanted one, too. Used 127-loading boxes were cheap, film not so! I had been experimenting the next ten years, trying to get the most “real-life” image possible, switching from fixed-focus to focusing cameras, from B&W to color print, then from color print to color slide.

One day in 1982, I walked into (long gone) Continental Camera in Warren. The owner had placed an old Revere viewer and several 1950’s Stereo Kodachromes on the counter. I looked into the viewer, pressed the button, and was hooked immediately!! This was the stunning image I had been looking for (this, I still believe, is due almost as much to the high-magnification and bright illumination directly through the slide as to the stereoscopy), and was just amazed that this technology had already been there for decades, and that I was unaware of it all those years. I then started to shoot some “cha-cha” slides with my Ricoh 500G (I actually thought that I had been the only person to have ever tried this :-))

How did you learn about the Detroit Stereographic Society?

From the fellow at Continental Camera (name forgotten). I attended two meetings in Ferndale in 1982, but did not join. In 1994 I saw a brochure for DSS at one of Sam Vinegar’s camera shows, and learned the meetings were in Livonia, close to where I lived at the time. I originally joined because acceptable commercial stereo slide mounting became unavailable, and I wanted to continue shooting stereo. After a few meetings, I also became interested in the competitions, which I had no interest in back in 1982.

What are your favorite subjects, equipment, techniques?

Subjects: Scenic overlooks, unusual buildings, buildings with 1950s-1960s style (lots of glass); people (when they aren’t running away from the camera :-). Equipment: My trusty Realist, four Pentax mount SLRs (someday, twinned top-notch MF cameras). Techniques: multiple flash; use of polarizers.

What are your favorite stereo pictures?

Tough question. I like the many pictures I shot up North, the pictures of my father (lost him in 1997). “After an Early Snow” got 27 points and “Slide of the Year” in Detroit in 2000-2001, but only got third place in Cleveland. A picture of the Whitefish Point Lighthouse in a seemingly jet black sky is one of my favorites, yet has consistently failed in competition.

Do you collect any stereo-related items?

I have a small collection of stereo cameras, viewers and mounts, and like to collect old slides (3D or 2D) from the 1950’s and 1960’s (on the rare occasions they show up at a reasonable price).

Do you have any advice or tips to pass along? Any important lessons you have learned?

- * F/8 and be there (f/14 if your camera has Cooke Triplets).
- * Don’t sell a technology short just because it’s old.
- * Indoors- use more than one flash, outdoors- use a flash for people pictures.

What are your future plans and goals in stereography?

Realistically - take high-quality images from more interesting locations and adapt to the digital revolution.
Idealistically - spread the word about stereo and bring more people into the hobby/medium, perhaps even develop a mass-market stereo-sight technology. [][]