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Luke Cassady-Dorion's Ram

Bangkok-based American photographer Luke Cassady-Dorion is back with his new exhibition, **Ram**, which features a series of images captured during his time as a student at Ramkhamheang University.

By **Chanun Poomsawai** | published Jun 11, 2010



Untitled

Medium and technique: Medium format photograph, giclée print

What's the story behind this image?

The public relations department of Ram [Ramkhamhaeng University] was incredibly helpful in getting this show together. During the three years that I shot the pictures, they opened up many university doors which I would have normally had trouble getting past. The day that I shot this picture, I was given a tour of their technology facility and happened on the filming of a TV show called "word-of-the-day" where different idiomatic English expressions are explained. The host would film a few five minute spots, then change her jacket and film a few more. She was gracious enough to stop for a few minutes and let me setup my equipment to get this shot.

Why did she catch your eye?

She is a professor of English at Ram who has her Phd. from a University in Texas. What struck me about her was how she retained the look common to many Texan women but was sitting in a TV studio on the outskirts of Bangkok.

What made you take this photo?

Being the only American studying the Thai-language curriculum at Ram, I felt an instant affinity for her, as if we were both charged with

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bridging these two disparate worlds.

What is your criteria as to what to take a photo of, considering that the university is a pretty big and diverse place?

The first moment that I walked onto the campus and saw how different it was from the Skytrain-centric Bangkok that had been my life previously, I knew that some sort of exhibition would come out of it. I spent a lot of time just walking around the campus with my camera and tripod, slowly capturing images. Using a Twin Lens Reflex camera with a top-down viewfinder worked out surprisingly well as many people just ignored me, not realizing what my antique camera actually was.

Your previous exhibitions seemed to deal exclusively with places and locations rather than people, how do you think that defines you as an artist?

Shooting so many people was new for me, previously my work had centered on the way that people use and create objects and spaces. The first couple of years that I shot at Ram, most of my work was void of people, I wanted the classrooms to speak for the university. When I finally met with Manit Sriwanichpoom [owner of Kathmandu Gallery], he encouraged me to go back and shoot more people. Looking at the final images selected for the show, I'm glad that I followed his advice. Ram and its democratic approach to education is unique in Thailand, and I feel that the people who I have chosen to represent the university speak to that.

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