

Guest Speaker: Curtis Comeau

International Commercial and Editorial Photographer

By Heather Kuchma, IACC Program Chair

What a coincidence as the Club celebrates its 40th anniversary this spring, that our guest speaker for March, Curtis Comeau, international commercial and editorial photographer, recently celebrated his receipt of *Avenue Magazine's* Top 40 Under 40 award. Not only did he receive recognition for his contribution to the photography trade in Edmonton and the community, but also for the feature, including the cover image of the November issue.



Curtis's dynamic and high energy presentation was, due to time constraints, way too short, so we will have to see if we can invite him back for a longer presentation in the future as he does have a lot of valuable information and insights to share. In his presentation, he mentioned he felt his success in the industry is based on a few key principles—he delivers, he is fast (respects everyone's time), he owns the necessary gear and he knows how to use it to his advantage, and most importantly he is able to adapt to any situation (for some of us this would translate into keeping up the calm, cool and collected façade even when everything else is spiraling out of control). He also emphasized the importance of being prepared for the shoot, not just in terms of equipment but knowing as much information about the subject(s) and all the other relevant variables in advance. I would also suggest that his continued success (beyond his exceptional abilities) is because of his humility; he recognizes his success is shared with the contributions of the individuals and teams involved either behind the scenes and/or during the shoot.



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Even as he walked through the Hollywood shoot with Keltie Knight for *Avenue Magazine*, he commented on the fact that, yes, he snapped the pictures but it took an entire crew to make it happen—art director, make-up artist, hair stylist, his associate Kevin, and the list goes on and on.

On the topic of travel photography, Curtis mentioned one way to make a photograph different from what has been shot a 100 million times before at the iconic locations is to consider adding a human element, as this a factor that can never be exactly recreated. And when shooting on assignment, make sure your information is accurate; for example, if you are saying this is a photograph of a typical worker riding his bike to the factory in China, ensure that this is the case and that the individual is not a manager or owner of that factory.

To conclude the presentation Curtis walked through his basic kit and made sure to flag the life saving 8mb compact flash card (also known as, the 'OH SH**!' Always there in Reserve flash card).

To see some of Curtis's more recent, and very local, work be sure to pick-up a copy or go online to view the March/April issue of *The Tomato*, featuring the 3rd annual top 100 best things to eat and drink in Edmonton, and the March issue of *Avenue Magazine*, the annual best restaurants issue. Or visit his website at <http://www.curtiscomeau.com> or follow him at <https://instagram.com/curtiscomeaphoto/>.

