KODAK'S HOT NEW X FILMS

Ektachrome 64X and 100X

By Jack and Sue Drafahl



O.K., Kodak. You opened the door this time. You introduced two new films with a

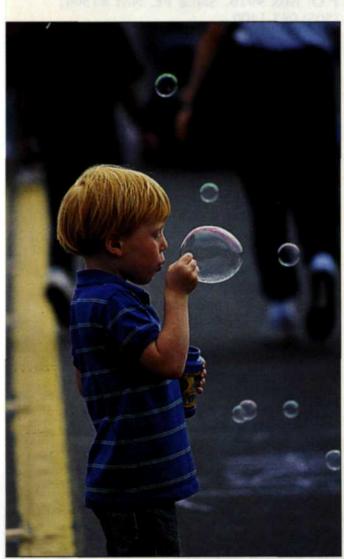
trademark that lets us take a few potshots. We are talking about Kodak's new Ektachrome 64X and Ektachrome 100X slide films. We couldn't decide whether to start this article by stating that it was our first review of two brand-X films, or that it was our first look at two X-rated films. Either way, we decided that if we wanted to keep on reviewing films, we probably should stick to the facts. We feel that the introduction of these two films will serve the needs of photographers who have wanted a warmer-looking Ektachrome without using filters to enhance their final shots.

WARMER EMULSIONS

Ektachrome 64X and 100X are both daylight-balanced films designed for the professional slide shooter. Each film



Ektachrome 100X



Ektachrome 100X



Ektachrome 100X

batch is aged until specific criteria are met so that each roll has similar color characteristics. This is very critical to the photographer who must shoot scenes in the studio and on location, yet maintain the same color balance from one slide to the next. Both films require E-6 processing, and should be processed as soon as possible after exposure. These professional films can be used under tungsten light with the addition of a No. 80A filter and proper exposure compensation for the filter.

Basically, Kodak's two new X-films should be considered the "New and Improved" versions of two excellent Ektachrome films already on the market-EPR and EPN-but with two basic differences. First, and most obvious, is the packaging. Both X films are in the standard professional Ektachrome film box, except that each ISO rating is followed by a large red X that has one short leg. This red X indicates the second change—the new X films are warmer versions of the film with the same name. But just how much warmer is difficult to say. If you were to compare the X films' color balance to the older Ektachromes and similar emul-



ALL PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

In our parade test, we photographed backlit, action, and high-contrast scenes, using normal, wide-angle, and telephoto lenses, thus providing us (and our test films) with problems of motion, lighting, depth of field, and composition, as well as many people and obstacles to

overcome. We especially liked the 1/1000 shutter speeds we achieved as the parade moved past our location. The

Ektachrome 64X

sions made by Kodak's major competitor, we would say that the new X emulsions lie a little less than halfway between the two. Data sheets from the older Ektachromes and the new X films were so close that only through extensive field testing did the differences appear.

FIELD TESTS

Sometimes a film test really comes together. In the case of the X films, we were very fortunate. Armed with 20 rolls of each emulsion and an excellent weather forecast, we headed off to capture the excitement of the Portland Rose Festival. The next few days would include parades, carnivals, boat races, the arrival of 17 Navy ships, and a variety of other exciting events.

Our first test was on the Grand Floral Parade, the second largest floral parade in the United States, held in downtown Portland. Again, luck was with us, as the sun poked in and out of the clouds, giving us both full sun and overcast situations with which to test the films. We had filled our camera bag with both films, and used both films on a variety of subjects.



Ektachrome 64X

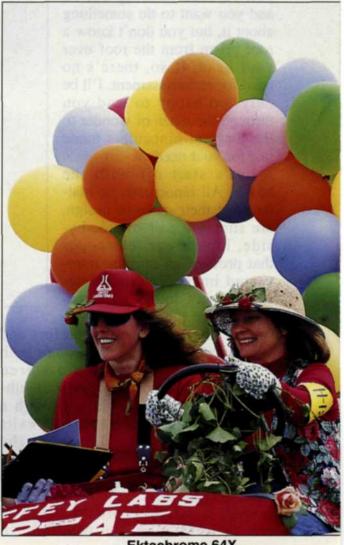
exposure latitude of the film helped control the scene range, depth of field, contrast, and lighting; and we were left to control the composition.

From the parade we moved to the boat races. Here we were presented with high-speed action and constantly varying lighting conditions. The distant scenes were low contrast, with little motion, flat lighting, and full sun. As the boats neared, the action increased, the darker water produced higher contrast, and the lighting decreased as they fell under the shadow of the bridge. But the films' exposure latitude controlled all the variables.

Our best test turned out to be a scene with very little color. To determine how well the film responded to neutral gray subjects, we selected a 400-foot-long gray card; namely, a Navy ship docked next to the waterfront. This scene offered everything from sailors in dress whites to black ship parts, and the everpresent gray paint. We wonder if it might have been a photographer who discovered the 18% Navy-gray paint?

Upon our return to the lab, we rotated through the darkroom roto-door and fired up the E-6 machine. In about an hour we had our first rolls of X film laying out on the light box. The first two rolls of 64X and 100X were almost colorless. As a matter of fact, they were extremely neutral shots of the Navy gray ship. We had only seen such truthful color rendition of grays once before, and that was with Kodachrome. Using a

(Continued on page 99)



Ektachrome 64X

KODAK'S HOT **NEW X FILMS**

loupe, we found the grain structure and sharpness to be excellent, with the 64X slightly better than the 100X, which is

to be expected.

On rolls three and four, we examined sequential scenes of the boat races. We were extremely impressed with several shots taken from the bridge, where the scene range was extreme. The highlights were very clean, while maintaining a neutral D-Max in the deep shadows. We also noticed an increase in contrast over the previous Ektachrome films. Examining the remainder of the rolls, we concluded that the X-films were extremely well balanced. They should be considered the best Ektachrome films yet.

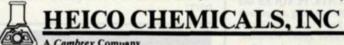
INDOOR FLASH AND TUNGSTEN

In order to clearly see just how much the new films had been shifted, we shot color-chart comparison rolls of the old Ektachromes against their newer X counterparts under both tungsten and flash illumination. After initial testing, we preferred the 80B filter for tungsten correction, even though Kodak recommends the 80A filter. We found the

THE HEICO SOLUTION ...



Try the Heico Solution ... you'll be glad you did.



P.O. Box 160 • Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327-0160 • (800) 34-HEICO • FAX: (717) 421-9012

circle #319 on Reader Service Card

SPECIFICATIONS

Professional TYPE: Color-slide **BALANCE: Daylight** PROCESS: Kodak E-6 ISO: 64 FILM BASE (35mm): 5-mil acetate FILM BASE (120): 3.6-mil acetate FILM-EDGE CODE (35mm): EPX/5025 FILM-EDGE CODE (120): EPX/6025 EXPOSURE-TIME RANGE: 1/0,000 to 1/10 FLUORESCENT FILTRATION: CC30M, **TUNGSTEN FILTRATION: 80A, +2 DIFFUSE RMS GRANULARITY: 11 RESOLVING POWER (1.6:1 TEST OBJECT): 50 lpm**

FILM: Kodak Ektachrome 64X

FILM: Kodak Ektachrome 100X **Professional**

OBJECT): 125 lpm

RESOLVING POWER (1000:1 TEST

TYPE: Color-slide film **BALANCE:** Daylight PROCESS: Kodak E-6 ISO: 100 FILM BASE (35mm): 5-mil acetate FILM BASE (120): 3.6-mil acetate FILM-EDGE CODE (35mm): EPZ/5024 FILM-EDGE CODE (120): EPZ/6024 EXPOSURE-TIME RANGE: 1/0,000 to 1/10 FLUORESCENT FILTRATION: CC30M, **TUNGSTEN FILTRATION: 80A, +2** stops **DIFFUSE RMS GRANULARITY: 11 RESOLVING POWER (1.6:1 TEST** OBJECT): 50 lpm **RESOLVING POWER (1000:1 TEST** OBJECT): 100 lpm

DISTRIBUTOR: Eastman Kodak Co., 343 State St., Rochester, NY 14650; telephone 1-800-242-2424

80A filter to be too cool for this film. In the flash tests, we used no filtration and no ISO compensation.

When we compared the results, we found the most apparent color change to be in the gray scale. The X-films were definitely warmer than the older films, but closer to neutral. In fact, once we compared the old to the new, the older films started to look much cooler than

when we had initially viewed them. But just how much of a color shift is there between them? As best as we can tell, we saw a 5-7-point shift towards the red. That may not seem like a lot, but as you look at the dark gray tones, the shift becomes more and more evident. We firmly believe that these new X-films are ideal for situations where color and neutral gray tones are mixed together.

WHICH OF THE TWO FILMS SHOULD YOU USE?

You may wonder why there are two films with such similar ISO values. It's our feeling that many of the old-time photographers who learned exposure using the "Sunny 16" rule prefer colorfilm ISOs close to shutter-speed values. Example: ISO $64 = \frac{1}{100}$ second at $\frac{1}{100}$ in sunlight. Even though many of these photographers use fancy exposure systems today, they still like to confirm the correct exposure in their minds. It's our feeling that if you don't need the film speed of the 100X, the extra sharpness found in the 64X is to your benefit. At present, Kodak plans on keeping all four professional films in their inventory, at least until one type becomes the overwhelming choice.

We did have a bit of difficulty telling the X-films apart, as both have large red Xs on the sides of the box, with small film IDs under the Xs. That's where it becomes a little confusing, as both are X films, yet the 64 is coded X and the 100 is coded Z.

CONCLUSION

Every time a film manufacturer makes an improvement, photographers benefit. When the film looks better, we look better! We give Kodak the thumbs up on their two new Xcellent films.