

STUDIO

LIGHTING

WORKBOOK

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Introduction to Studio Lighting

Photography is all about light. When you are outside shooting you are at the mercy of the ambient or existing light, typically sunlight and whatever source that reflects sunlight. Studio lighting on the other hand will let the photographer control the light, its source, and the objects that reflect light on a set. This book covers the ins and outs of strobe lights, how to use them and how to control them on a set. It also covers how and why advertising images are created, stylized, and designed, as well as set construction.

What you will learn:

- 1. The power of strobe lights**
- 2. Control with strobe lights**
- 3. Advertising affects using strobe lights**
- 4. Concept designs created for use in advertising**
- 5. Lighting glass objects**
- 6. Manipulation of reflective surfaces to enhance the image style like in a professional studio**

Using many different types of strobe lights, you will recreate lighting effects that other photographers have used.

There are many factors that affect the final images you will create. The type of light you use, the direction, the distance of light to subject, fill lights and reflectors, lens depth-of-field, and product position all play an important role in creating an image style. These are only a few factors that will affect your final image. Experience will teach you how to see light and how the subject responds. In the studio there are so many choices for lighting objects. Mastering how the strobes light objects will be the first objective. The power of the lights, their height and the angle of the lights are only a few things to consider in the studio.

After your idea is developed and sketched you will position your subject on the set that you have created. This all happens before you touch any lights. Studio Lighting is far more complex than shooting outside because you have many more opportunities. Using the studio lights you will emphasize some areas of the subject while downplaying other areas. For example, in a portrait shot ask yourself which is the best side of the face? Is shallow depth-of-field required for this product shot? What will my background do if it is in or out of focus in this photograph? You should be aware of how light can set a mood and portray a unique emotion. Using colored gels over the lights or different color balanced lights such as tungsten lights using daylight film you can manipulate the mood of the image by making it warmer or cooler. By paying attention to your subject's positioning, personal interpretation of your subject whether it is human or inanimate will help you create your own unique vision.

After each setup you should tear down the set and pack away the lights. This should force you to think fresh when you go back into the studio.

Learn about Light

Recognizing how light affects subjects on a set is how photographers train their eye to create light and its different effects.

The best way to train your eye is to look at other photographer's work. Look at magazines, photo books, and any other source that include photographs. You will be keeping a record of images that you glean from magazines.

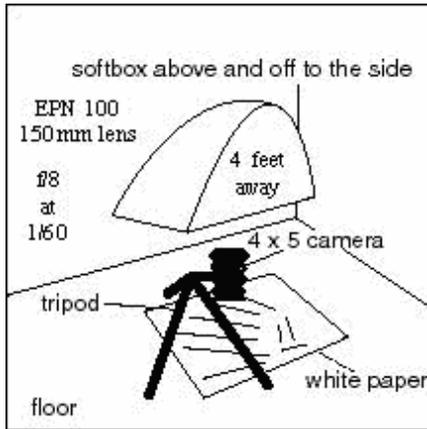
After finding an image you like and one that suits the assignment ask yourself why a particular lighting style was used and why a position and vantage point was chosen. Take notes that indicate what you like about the photographs and draw diagrams that indicate the lighting direction including the type of light used. (i.e. direct, diffused, backlight, direct diffused) This will not only help you learn to see light and its effects but also help you as a reference for any future assignments. (See examples below and in later pages of this book)

You will be keeping the same notes and diagrams when creating your own work. One sketch will be topographical and the other a side view. (See below) In fact we will be working on these diagrams during class. These will all be included and displayed for critique when you hand in an assignment. Keep records of what your meter readings are as well as your used f/stops and speeds. The distances of the lights, filters, diffusion materials the film used, lens used, position and height of the lights, and any other tools that you used are also to be recorded.

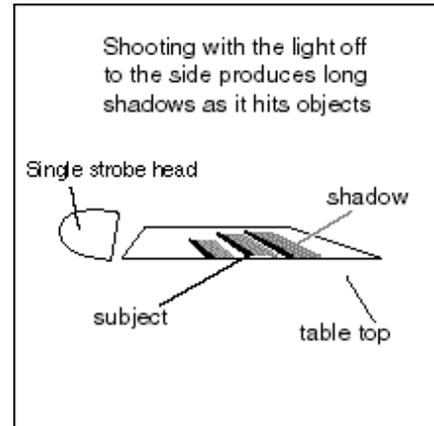
When you are shooting use the record-keeping sheet in the “Photo Tips and Tricks” book to record the above.

Below are examples of diagrams, topographical, side views, and camera position views that you will be creating from gleaned magazine images. You will follow the same style of drawing when creating your own

Topographical from a topographical shot

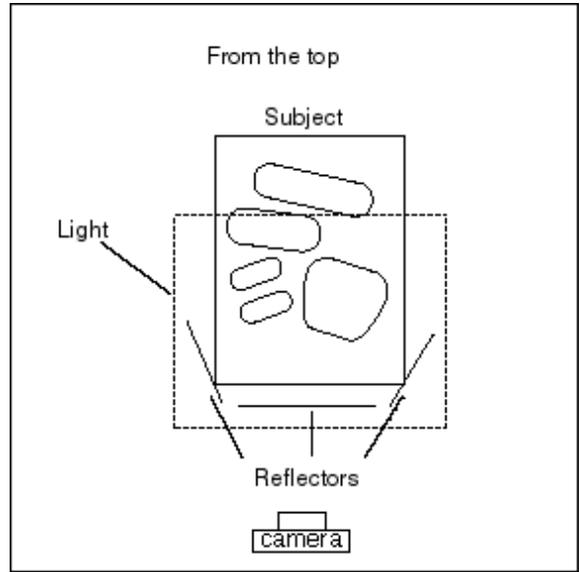
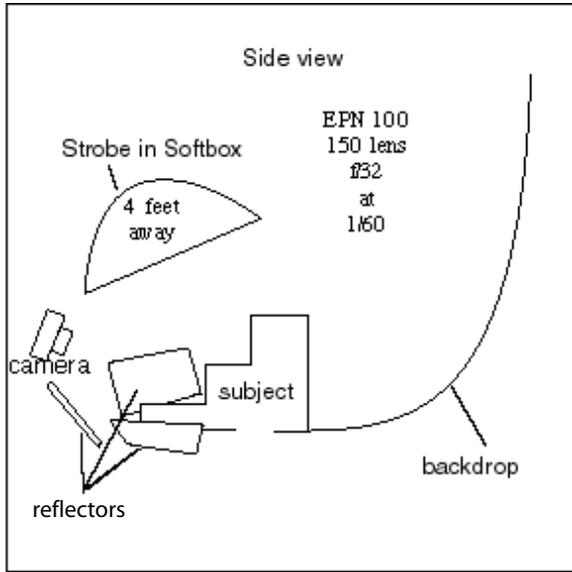


Side View



Final Image from the above diagrams





Types of Lights

There are many different types of lights that can be used in the studio.

The type of fixture that the light source emanates from will effect the style of lighting it creates. There are materials used to soften light, reflect the light, and cones used to direct light.

Color balances are typically daylight or tungstun.

Below you will find images that show and describe the kind of light produced.

Image 1

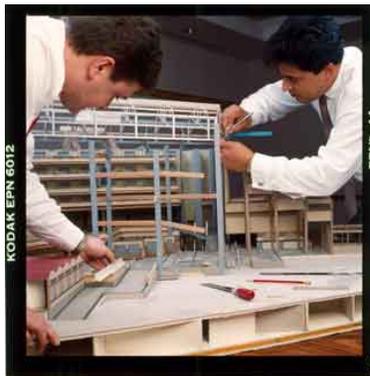
Notice the soft light under the chins and on the right side. The main light is high and frontal with a small fill on the right for the shadow areas. The background is out of focus.



#1 Frontal Direct/ Diffused ILight

Image 2

This image has been light on all side to remove any chance of a shadow. It was used for a company brochure. The props in this shot give the viewer a peak into the company's building process.



#2 Diffused Light

Image 3

A strong light on the left side of the frame set the mood for this shot. A small spotlight brought out his back shoulder revealing his shape against the black background. The lighting is very theatrical.



#3 Direct Light with Spot

Image 4

A direct light in a softbox was positioned on the right and close to the model. A soft fill on the left dramatizes the mood in this image and emphasizes the model's positioning. The dark background helps emphasize the model's dramatic mood.



#4 Side Direct/Diffused Light

Image 5

A soft box is positioned about 4 feet from the products and was used to evenly light the glass. One light was used with several fill cards. A grey background was chosen to minimize any distraction.



#5 Frontal Overhead/ Softbox

Image 6

Three small strobe heads with cones were positioned to push light through the multicolored glasses. The blue background helps separate the subject's color from the background.



#6 Multiple Cone Lights

In addition to these lighting types and styles, white, colored reflectors may be added to reflect a touch of light. Black paper may be added to a light to cut back hot spots that reflect into highly reflective objects.

Camera Position Styles

Camera positioning can change the entire feel of the image you are creating. Study the image below and start to think about how you can change your camera positions to help your photograph. Think about the message you are conveying. Make associations using camera positioning.

Image 1

The bike was a high-end racing bike. It had a specialized back wheel. Therefore it needed to be the main subject in the image. The entire bike was included in the shot yet the back wheel is the main focus. A wide-angle lens provided the perfect solution by accenting the back wheel. A small aperture was used to maintain depth-of-field.

Image 2

This add was shot on a table top. The camera was positioned approximately 2 feet higher than the table level. The angle and position were chosen to include the product reflections. Products are separated from the background that was used.

Image 3

This image was shot at a low angle and close-up. It invites the viewer into the scene of this intimate event. Observe the close cropping done in the camera eyepiece.

Image 4

Shot straight down on top of the set (topographical) this image boxes in the products by framing definitive edges. A black background separates the products and pronounces their colors. The set has a geometric flair that is contradicted by soft flowing ribbons and a circular hat.



#1 Low angle, right



#2 Frontal medium height



#3 Low angle, Close-up



#4 Topographical

Your Subject

When choosing your subject (perhaps a client has supplied a product) look at its characteristics. The list below is a jumping-off-place. Start by looking for those things in your products.

1. Shape: Oddly shaped subjects may need a dark or subdued background to distract the viewer from the subject's shape.

2. Texture: Is the surface smooth or coarse? What type of lighting will accent or tone-down the texture? Think about using a low scraping light to accent texture. A broad soft light will minimize unwanted texture.

3. Color: Are the colors demanding subtle or strong backgrounds and props to minimize the color? Consider using complimentary colors to help accent your subject's color. Be careful not to use complimentary colors that overpower your subject taking away its attention.

4. Tone: Study your subject for its tonal values. Lighter subjects may work well against darker backdrops where darker subjects work well against lighter backdrops. Contrast may not be needed in your set. Try making a high key photograph or low key photograph if your subject calls for it.

How will this subject fall against the background you have chosen? If you are shooting more than one subject together on a set consider how these work together using the same observations listed above. Swinging your main light from foreground to the right side or left side and to the back of your subject will reveal an entirely different texture, color, and shape as you pan around the subject. Try doing this before you make your final lighting decision.

The subjects in the images below were shot to contradict and accentuate their unique characteristics.

Image 1

The soft large shapes of the bowling balls have been broken up by a strong perspective of the straight piece of oak wood that stretches to the horizon line. The oak wood piece emulates the distance and texture of a bowling lane. The background has a magenta color that fades into blue which helps pull out the colors of the bowling balls and pins.



Image 2

The bottles needed to be shot with the packaging, which contradict both the texture and shape of each other. In this image the background creates the mood. We see the bottles on the floor with ribbons and bows. The viewer is meant to think they have entered the scene of a birthday party. The product's shapes are fanning outward in an open expression of fun and excitement.



Image 3

Shallow depth-of-field was used in this image to help pronounce the texture of both the onion and the broccoli. They were placed on a flat high gloss black piece of formica to contradict the edible factor of the vegetables. It is a slick image meant to stop the viewer's eye. Water sprayed on the formica connects the background with the product. Not suitable for a food magazine, this image displays an artistic view.



Your Background

When choosing a background think about how it will help your subject. You may want a distinct separation between the background and foreground. The lightness and or darkness of your background will change the feel of your subject. A darkly lit background will force the viewer's eye to look at a well-lit subject. Conversely a well lit background and under-lit subject will create a silhouette and show the shape of the subject.



Black drops out to float

Imagine your background choice as an aid in conveying your message. For example an ad that is shot on sand will help sell sunglasses or beach towels in an advertisement.

Consider creating a shadow by pushing a light through a solid object onto a background. This will help identify the kind of product you are shooting. For example, imagine a shadow of a company logo on the background and a selective part of the subject in the foreground of the image. Brand identity is used here to convey the message.

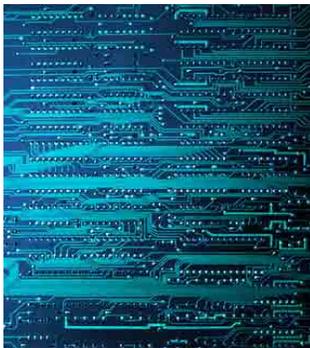


Colors for environmental placement

Although not considered part of the background, the foreground material you use to place your product or subject on is also to be thought of with the same purpose as backgrounds. See the computer chip below as an example of this.



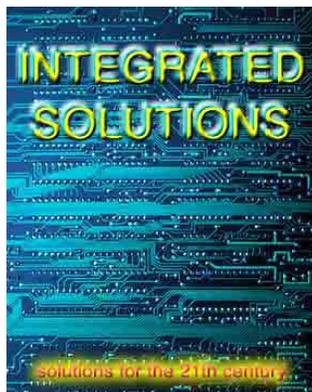
Textured formica



Products can be used as backgrounds



White makes black products pop



Highly-reflective lined material

Props

Props are accent items that help convey the message you are portraying in your image. They are meant to help the subject speak. For example, if you are producing an ad for silverware, a plate would be a perfect accent for the product. Be careful not to lose the focus of your product. Showing a small part of a prop is sometimes all that is necessary to convey the message. You must not allow a prop to distract the viewer from what you are selling in the advertisement.

Image #1

Below the old-fashioned photos give the viewer an idea of the type of image that is produced from this camera.



#1 Old-fashioned Photos

Image 2

The roses placed diagonally and at different levels add a touch of sensitivity to this image. The wood adds contrast from that of the Bible and roses. The wood and roses also add a warmth to the image because of their color.



#2 Roses with Bible

Image 3

The boots are the prop in this ad and help sell the intimate apparel to a specific target market.



Cowboy Boots

Image 4

The lace in this shot gives the glass products in baskets a homemade look.



Lace

Building a Studio

Lessons in this section:

Building a Scrim Soft Box and White Tent

Building a Backdrop and Table

Building a Studio Flat-Reflector

The photographs on the right portray an advertising studio. The photographer is in the middle of a shoot, working with a model on a skiing shot.

In the images you will see five different lights. The two with umbrellas are lighting the background, washing it out to a bright white.

Two more lights are working in conjunction with props that are on a stand in front of the lights. The props throw a shadow onto the set to emulate the skier passing trees. The main light is a broad soft box overhead and in front of the photographer. Finally, you will see the photographer's assistant on the ladder with a bag of styrofoam peanuts to drop at command.

The photographer is using a large format 4 x 5 view camera on a studio tripod. Two power pack batteries are serving as a light source, each supplying different wattage levels to the strobes. The background is created with seamless paper. It hangs from a set of poles and produces a flawless, smooth background to shoot



against. Building this backdrop is described in the lesson "Building a Backdrop and Table."

Whether you are using a small or large format camera, setting up a photo studio will be the same procedure. You can either buy these items listed below or you can follow the lessons in this section and make your own.

Most photographers end up making some things in their studio so this will be a good place to start.

The building projects that follow are easy to do and require very few tools. A drill of some sort may be the only expensive tool you will need for building. Making these projects will save you a lot of money and get you started right away.

Depending on the kind of room you have, you may need to be more creative with your studio design.

The following is a list of things you will want in your studio:

- 1. Table Top or Drafting Table**
- 2. Workhorses**
- 3. Backdrops ~ Seamless paper, cloth materials, painted backdrops.**
- 4. Stands and Tripods**
- 5. Light Table, loop, croppers, hot glue, puddy, reflectors**
- 6. Lights ~ strobes or tungsten**



Building a Scrim, Soft Box and White Tent

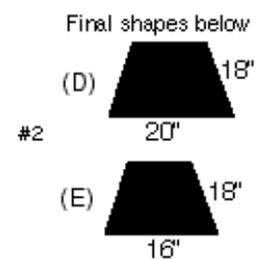
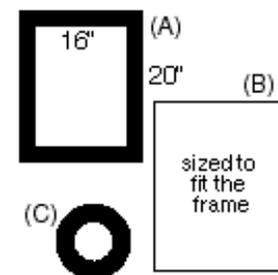
Materials Needed:

- (A) Frame 16" x 20"
- (B) White Acetate can be purchased at any glass company
- (C) Black Photographer's Tape
- (D) Two Matte Boards 18" x 20" each (black on one side, white on the other)
- (E) Matte Boards 18" x 16" (black on one side, white on the other) Fig. 1

A Scrim, Soft Box, and White Tent are used to scatter diffused light onto your subject. The professional version of this is costly and not as versatile as the design described in this lesson.

This lesson will show you how to construct a scrim or diffusion system, a soft box and a white tent.

Fig. 1



Making the Scrim:

A scrim is used to soften the light source. It can also be used to add shadows on any subject after light is pushed through it. Fig. 3

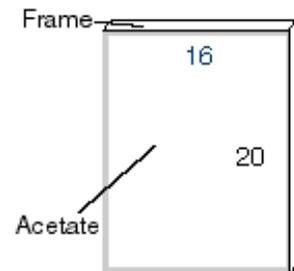
Build or buy a simple 16" x 20" frame (A) (an artist canvas frame made of wood will work fine). Get one that is big enough so light can't spill around the edges creating shadows from the frame itself. A 16" x 20" frame (A) will be a good place to start.

The frame size used here is 16 x 20. It is only used to give you an idea of how to make a scrim. You can make your scrim any size you like and then cut the acetate to fit the frame, and adjust all the other materials to fit the size of the scrim you are making.

Measure the acetate (B) by placing the frame down on top of it and then draw a line to mark out your exact dimensions. Now attach the white acetate (B) to the frame using photographer's black tape (C) not staples. Staples may tear the acetate.

Make sure to conceal the edges of the frame with the acetate.

Fig. 2



This will prevent dark shadow lines from reflecting onto your subject's highly reflective surfaces. Fig. 2

TIP ~

In place of acetate, try using a white sheet.

TRICK ~

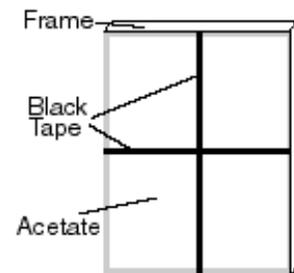
To have a window shape appear in your subject's reflective surface, place two pieces of black tape (C) across both center axis. This will reflect into your subject and look like a window. Fig. 3

Making the Soft Box:

A soft box will emulate the same kind of lighting used in a big studio and it softens the light from a strobe supplying a diffused light source. Image colors will be saturated and rich in appearance.

A soft box is made up of one scrim and the black matte board box. To make the box, cut the matte board at an angle so when taped together, it forms the shape of a cone. Fig. 4 White sides should face in. Tape the four pieces of matte board to the edges of the scrim with photographer's black tape; two pieces, (D) 20" x 18", are taped to the 20" lengths and the other two pieces, (E) 18" x 16", are taped to the 16" length of the scrim.

Fig. 3



Face the white side of the matte board in toward the center. Make the shape of the box cone inward. Fig. 5 These flaps will scatter light all around the inside, softening the light as it comes through the scrim.

Both the light and the soft box should be attached to a light stand to hold them up in place.

Making a White Tent ~

A white tent is used to photograph highly reflective objects by revealing only white in its reflected areas. To make a white tent for shooting reflective objects, make five scrims, not the soft box, as described above. Tape them together in a box shape, hiding any and all edges of the frames. This is because they will reflect in the object you are photographing. All reflections must be white.

You will end up with a box with no bottom. It will be placed on top of your subject on a table top, in effect covering it. You will be lighting the subject by pushing light through all five scrims. Position your lights so they do not cast any shadows onto your subject by placing them at a distance from the white tent. You will need to cut

Fig. 4

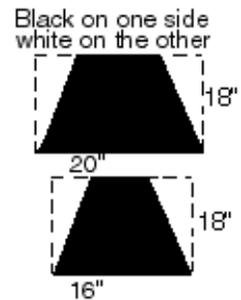
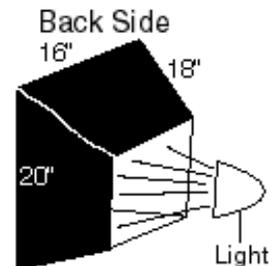


Fig. 5

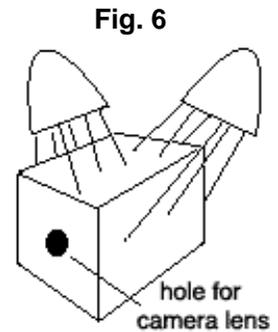


a small hole into one of the
scrims to put your lens
through. Make sure your
product is placed properly or
you will be moving the tent
several times to get it right. Fig.6

TIP ~
Another way to approach this
is to make one of the scrims
freely swing open so you can
easily access the subject for
rearranging. Hinge one of the
connecting joints.

TIP ~
You may need to make color
tests because the acetate can
fade over time giving a yellow
cast.

TRICK ~
The scrim can be covered with
a colored sheet of acetate. Try
using different colors on
opposite sides of the tent.



Building a Backdrop and Table

A backdrop is essential for most photographs taken in a studio. This lesson will show you how to make one. The ceiling must be solid, not a drop ceiling.

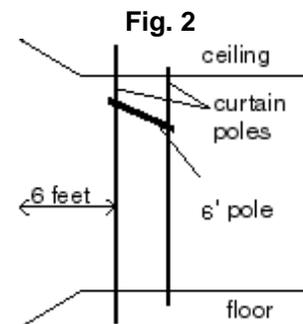
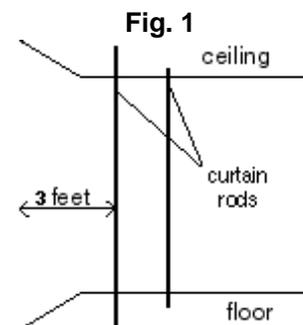
Materials Needed:

- (A) Two- curtain rods (height of your ceiling)
- (B) One- 7' pole 2" diameter
- (C) two sets of workhorses

The curtain rods you buy must be high enough to reach between your floor and ceiling. They must have enough spring tension to stay in place from floor to ceiling.

Set the curtain rods up between floor and ceiling and about 6 feet apart, and 3 feet from the wall. Fig.1

Stretch the 7 foot pole between the two curtain rods and attach with clamps or duct tape in place. Fig. 2



At this point you can hang any kind of material on the pole by draping it over the top and attaching it with clamps. If you want to use seamless paper (large rolls of paper on long cylinders) you will need to leave one end of the pole accessible to load the seamless.

TIP ~

Seamless paper comes in 4 foot and 9 foot rolls. You can use this paper over and over again depending on how well you take care of it, avoiding creases and soiling.

TIP ~

Light stands can be used in place of the curtain rods if you have a drop ceiling.

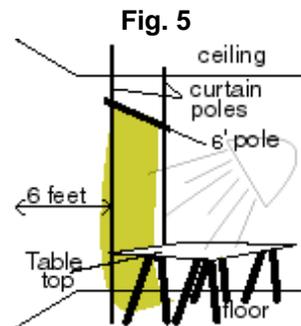
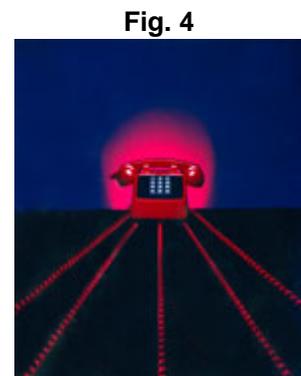
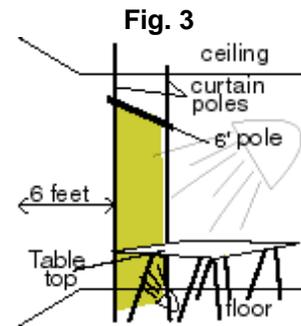
This backdrop can be used in many different situations as seen in Figs. 3-8. All three setups are top lit.

TRICK ~

Fig.3 has a backdrop hanging to the floor and a light on the floor that flashes upwards onto the white background paper. The table is pulled away from the backdrop. Hint: Place an interesting material on the table top; this can achieve the look of a sunset.

The shot of the phone in Fig. 4 was done using this kind of set-up. The difference between the table top material and the backdrop has left a hard line at the horizon. The spotlight with a red acetate on it is set on the floor below and facing up at the seamless paper leaving the magenta color behind the phone.

Fig. 5 leaves a hard horizon line where your table top meets the backdrop.



TIP ~

Put an interesting material on the table top; this will increase the contrast between the foreground and background.

Fig. 6 is an example of a hard line horizon line. The table top in this shot is a marble table top. The background is a piece of black velvet.



Fig. 6

Fig. 7 is a traditional set for product photography. When the backdrop swoops down onto the tabletop in this fashion, it leaves a beautiful gradation on the backdrop.

Fig. 8 is a shot of a live set using this style of backdrop. The final image was cropped to exclude all traces of the set.

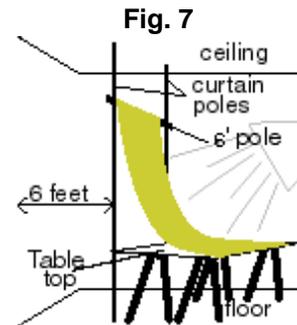


Fig. 7

Fig. 8



Building a Studio Flat- Reflector

Materials Needed:

One- 4' x 6' piece of foam core (1/4 " thick)

(Plumbing department)

(A) Two (6' x 1.5" lengths of PVC tubing

(B) Four (1' x 1.5" lengths of PVC tubing

(C) Three (44" x 1.5" lengths of PVC tubing

(D) Six right-angle PVC tubing pieces (red in Fig. 2) to fit into lengths of tubing above

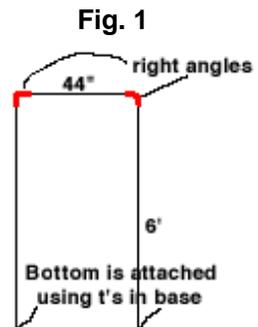
(E) Two T's (blue in Fig. 2) to fit into lengths of tubing above

Double sided foam tape

Plumber's cement and purple pvc preparation fluid

Saw (ask the hardware store to make the cuts required)

This lesson will show you how to build a studio flat that can be used as a reflector as well as some other things that are shown below.



You can make this flat any size you like. Ours is designed as a 4' x 6'. Just follow the simple construction plan below.

Once you get all the things that are listed in the materials listed above, read all of the directions before continuing.

**TIP ~
PLUMBER'S CEMENT DOES NOT
SEPARATE ONCE IT IS
CONNECTED TO TUBING**

FRAME:

1. Using the plumber's cement, attach two of the right-angled tubes to the ends of the 6 foot tubing. Once these are secure, attach the 44" tube at the top of the frame. See Fig. 1 Be sure the two 6' tubing sections are parallel to each other, front to back and side to side.

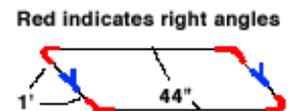
BASE:

2. Using the plumber's cement, attach the T's to the one foot sections of tubing. Fig. 2

3. Using the plumber's cement, attach the four right angles to the opposite ends of the 4 foot sections. Before you do this, make sure that the two T's are pointing up and at right angles to the corners.

Fig. 2

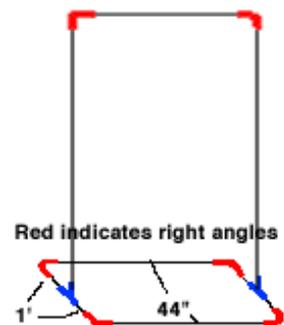
Fig. 2



Blue indicates t's



Fig. 3



Blue indicates t's

4. Using the plumber's cement, attach the final 44" pieces of the base to the right angles. Fig. 2

5. Using the plumber's cement, attach the frame to the base at the T's. Fig. 3

Finally, attach the foam core to the frame using the double sided foam tape. Position the foam core so it fits against the frame tightly.

TIP ~

You can use this flat for many things besides a reflector. It will be sturdy enough to hang things from it and can even be useful as a backdrop. Fig.4

TRICK ~

Drape material over it for close-up photography or simply use it to block light from an area on your set. Fig. 5

Fig. 4

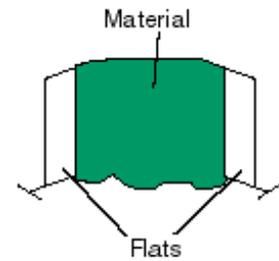
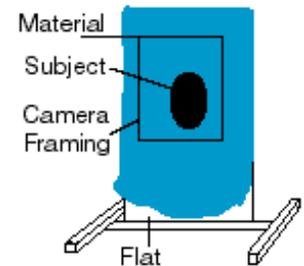


Fig. 5



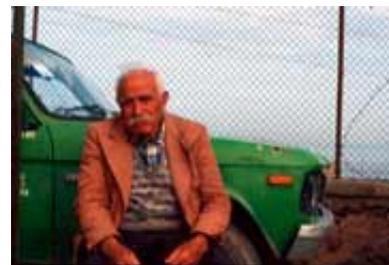
People Photography

Lessons in this section:
Emotional Power Portrait
Creating a Sullen Emotion
Staging People

Some photographers have a real gift for photographing people. They are able to embrace humanity and capture on film the very essence of life. They reveal the person's emotions without saying a word. They seem to understand the unspoken word of the heart and are able to record it without the distraction of camera and technique.

If you have clicked on to this page chances are you are one of those people. Perhaps you just need a bit more help or information to push your images to a new level of success. These lessons are aimed at doing just that.

In these lessons you will learn how to make your subject comfortable and to reveal the subject's true feelings. It is true not all people are comfortable enough with themselves to trust and let go and you will discover who is easy to shoot and who is not easy to shoot. There are ways to help people become comfortable in front of a camera.



The best way to shoot people is from a distance. Give them personal space and shoot with a long lens. Pretend you are shooting a couple of rolls to get them familiar with being photographed. Try not to give much direction or you will find yourself with very staged and stiff subjects. Follow them around if they will permit it. At some time they will be relaxed, this is when you will get the best shot.

Let the people be themselves until they are comfortable, then direct them with very simple suggestions. Many factors come into play when photographing people, like the texture of their skin, what areas the light hits their face, their posture and the gait of their walk. Remember your basic [visual design](#) elements when positioning a person in the frame. Colors will also play a large role in the emotion you portray about the person. See [visual design](#).

Below are some successful photographs of people. Some of the people the photographer knew and some of the people were just shot on the street.



Emotional Power Portrait

Film:
Ektachrome 100 / Daylight
Film

Camera Format:
35mm - Nikon
Small Format

Lens:
28mm / Wide

Light Source:
Strobe with softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
No

Filters:
None

Polaroids
No



The photograph was shot for a portfolio. Our photographer included this image in his portfolio in an attempt to get jobs of this nature. This image reveals the ability to direct the subject.

Understanding body posture is very important when taking these kinds of photographs. Knowing the right moment to record the image, as the model stares into the photographer's lens, may take some time to learn. Study people and record in your mind their posture and movements, notice their emotions and how they display them in their bodies. By studying people, you will learn to communicate and capture people's emotion in your images.

Use props to direct your viewer's eyes in your images. In the above image, the model holds a barbell that breaks into the lower part of the image frame which leads the viewer's eyes to the model's eyes. The barbell was counterbalanced with her face in the background. Cropping is the key here. Don't be afraid to get in close. It will help convey the message of intimacy. When the above image was shot, our photographer had to invade the model's personal space. However, our photographer was able to capture something unique in his image. As a photographer you must understand what effect and subtle nuances you want to provoke and get in your images and then know how to achieve them using your camera through our lessons.

Now ask yourself, how was the light created in the above image? Where were the lights positioned? What type of light was used?

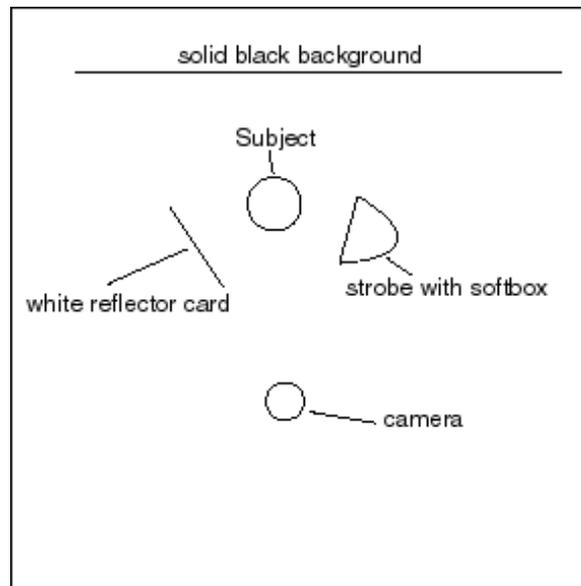
The light was created by a strobe in a softbox. (See [Building a Studio](#) to learn how to build this kind of lighting system.) The lighting was direct/diffused. A small fill on the left side added a soft diffused fill light. This diffused light was created by bouncing light from the main light and was placed close to

the model's face. It was positioned approximately 3 feet from her and powered by a large power pack of about 2000 watts.

The background was intentionally dropped off into black, leaving no more detail than necessary or desired. It was placed about 5 feet behind the model.

The model applied baby oil to her face for the shot. A spray bottle filled with water was used to add the illusion of sweat. She shook her head about to provide the work-out like appearance. After all that, the photographer was able to achieve the image he wanted after paying close attention to the small details and knowing how to use his camera.

A wide-angle lens was used to take this shot. It helped to accentuate the barbell and hand of the model. The exposure was taken with a handheld incident meter facing the camera. Several frames were shot bracketing the image and the final image was chosen in editing. Study your brackets carefully on a good light table to pick a final photograph.



Creating a Sullen Emotion

Film:
Tmax 100 / Black and White Film

Camera Format:
2 1/4square - Hasselblad
Medium Format

Lens:
80mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with softbox and spot
strobe

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

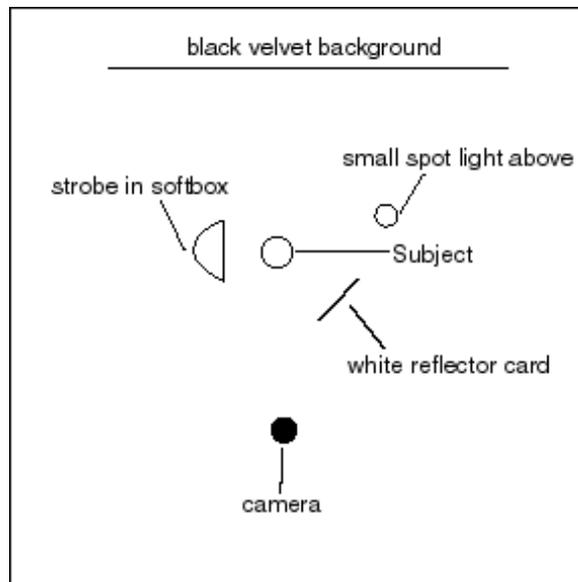
Polaroids
Yes



Capturing a mood or creating a mood can be done using dramatic light. You should also direct your subject into positions that convey the emotion you are after. Be careful not to over direct your subject. This can make the image look contrived and fake. Professional models are great actors and will understand your direction very well. If you are not photographing a professional model you should do a couple of things to help your model. Use a long lens. Keeping a distance between you and the model will give them room to relax. Secondly, pretend to shoot a couple of rolls of film. This should give them enough time to get comfortable with the flashing lights and shutter clicks. Next, shoot a lot of film. Be clear with your directions. Design your set so you can move around freely and shoot from different vantage points. During the shoot your model will become more relaxed and the images will turn from stiff to candid.

In the image above, a softbox was positioned close to the subject and was the main light. The light was intentionally overexposed. This was done by taking a meter reading from the subject's left side where the fill light fell off. This technique slightly overexposed the light on his right side and forehead. Now you can see how a slight change in metering placement can change the entire feeling of an image. A white reflector card was used to bounce a diffused fill light into the subject's right side. This style is meant to emulate the lighting found in a theatre ~ high contrast and a dramatic mood. A spotlight lights the back part of his neck. It is raised high above and pointed down at the subject.

With a little direction, we found the emotion we were looking for. The subject was told to rest his elbows on his knees as he clutched his drumsticks. The position of his head relative to his body turns his face toward the viewer. This position is natural and comfortable for him. His eyes are looking downward as though in reflection of another time. It is a moody image because of the lighting and his expression. Practice photographing your friends by directing them with posture poses and physical appearance changes.



Staging People

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight

Camera Format:
2 1/4 square - Hasselblad
Medium Format

Lens:
80mm / Normal

Light source:
Two Umbrellas with
Strobes

Meter:
Handheld Incident

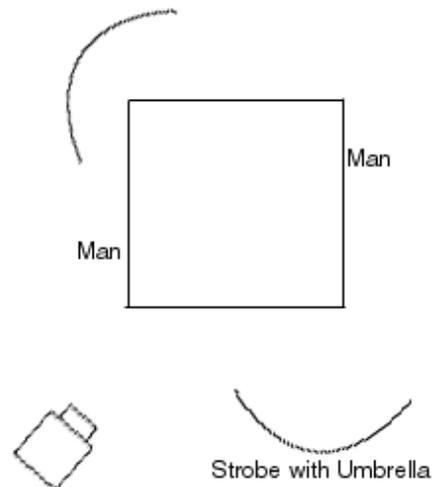
Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

Polaroids
Yes



Strobe with Umbrella (high facing downward)



When staging people you need to create a natural appearance. The same principle holds true when photographing people. If you hire professional models it will make your job much easier. Professional models will know exactly what to do with very little direction. More importantly, they are completely comfortable in front of the lens.

The image above was shot for an architectural firm catalog. The company wanted to save money by using their own employees as models. We wanted to use professional models but made the concession in order to secure the job. We used familiar icons to help the employees feel comfortable in front of the camera. Once we had them working on the architectural model, they had forgotten about the camera and lights in the room. We were able to get the tools of their trade in the scene, the employees comfortable, and then able to capture several successful images for our client.

We used two lights with umbrellas to light the scene. One strobe was placed to the right of the camera and pointed at the set and the other strobe was positioned behind the left side of the camera and was high in the air and pointed downward towards the set. See the diagram below.

The two strobes were balanced and their meter readings were the same. When photographing people, use a shutter speed that stops any possible movement. Do not shoot at a shutter speed below the millimeter of the lens you are using. For example, if the lens you are using is a 90mm lens, your shutter speed will be 1/125th or faster. Use 1/60th of a second if you have a focal plane shutter. Cameras with a leaf shutter do not hold to the same constraints as a focal shutter. Leaf shutter lens also sync at any speed. Review your camera manual to see if there are any limitations with your lens and camera.

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
2 1/4 square -
Hasselblad
Medium Format

Lens:
80mm / Normal

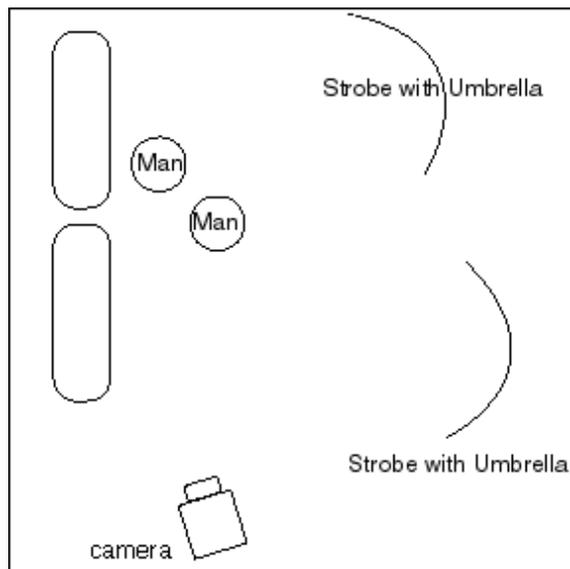
Light Source:
Strobes with Two
umbrellas

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

Polaroids
Yes



The second image was shot in a compressor room. It portrays the inspection division of the same company. These men are not models and have a very realistic appearance. One man poses as manager and the other as an inspector. Again, we used props to set the stage and asked the men to talk with each other.

Cleaning the compressors was an important part of making the statement the client desired. The client portrays a clean and safe environment. Cleaning a set before shooting is sometimes the most important thing you can do. Paying attention to the small details will get you repeat business. This can't be stressed enough. If you need to paint something in the scene before you shoot it to make sure it looks right, do it. It may make all the difference in the world. Your client will take notice of your attention to detail. This is why previewing a location before you shoot it is very important. It gives you a chance to hire someone or ask the client to clean these areas for the shot.

The image above was shot with two strobes, both using umbrellas. Both strobes were placed to the right of the camera. One of the strobes was positioned somewhat behind the men and set high in the air. This pushed light onto the compressors behind the men. The second strobe lights the men and the foreground parts of the compressors.

Product Photography

Lessons in this section:
Lighting Multiple Glass Products
Using Props with Products
Multiple Exposures
Making Reflections Work for You
Using a Product for a Background
Floating a Product
Boring Product - Interesting Design

The advertising field is very competitive, yet the potential for increased income is great. Photographers who are doing advertising work tend to specialize depending on the area they live in. For example, someone living in a small city may need to have several specialties. On the other hand, someone in New York could specialize in one thing, ie: children's fashions or motorcycles. An advertising photographer will, most of the time, be working with an art director from a design or advertising firm. Clients rarely hire photographers directly unless they have established a rapport with them. It is generally the AD (art director) working on the job that will hire for the client.

Ask yourself this question: What is the one thing that I like and feel comfortable with? Your answer is the area you should be specializing in. In reality, most people go through life and their likes and dislikes change. A photographer sometimes follows a specialty. For instance, someone who assisted a commercial photographer shooting children's clothes and liked it, decided to pursue that field. The ideal situation is to make a living doing what you really like.



The lessons in this section assume you have a good working knowledge of camera tools, visual basics and lighting. If not, go back to these sections and learn these things first. Also some of the studio setups can be built. Those designs are described in "Building a Studio."

The lessons in this section go into extensive details showing you where to position your lights and reflectors, etc. in order to achieve a certain look and feel in an image. They include descriptive diagrams for you to duplicate.



Lighting Multiple Glass Products

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
150mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox and
Reflectors

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



The image above was an inset photograph for a brochure cover. The company sold gift baskets and products. The brochure was used to help their growing marketing requirements. The brochure had three different images similar to this one, along with accompanying text. The client was in the studio when this was taken and was the acting art director. So all proofs were finalized at the time of shooting. This eliminates any questionable fees for reshooting. Polaroids are used for the same reason. An instant image of lesser quality than film will serve as great representations of the final photograph. Polaroids are sometimes faxed or scanned and emailed to the client for approval. Asking your client to sign off on a photograph will give you the assurance that all is okay and you can record the image on film.

Shooting glass and high gloss labels can be a frustrating exercise because of the multiple reflections that occur. Remember as you shoot to look through the lens to see if you have any reflections on your products in the set. All reflections are caused due to the angle between lens and light source. Review your polaroids carefully for any reflections before you expose the film.

TIP ~

Moving the product a small amount may be the best way to remove the reflections. Before you do that, adjust your light to eliminate any glare and reflection. Each time you change the light position you must check for glare.

Place all the products on the table top according to the layout supplied by your client or art director. The image above was tiered giving it height and depth.

The light is positioned directly over the set. It is tilted slightly toward the backdrop and away from the camera. The backdrop is set up as a sweep. It is a piece of gray formica. See "Building a Studio" to

learn how to make this if you are inexperienced in studio construction.

Three white or silver cards are used in the front and on both sides to pump additional light into the scene. These are carefully and strategically placed to avoid seeing the reflector cards in the glass.

When you are shooting glass objects, the main light should reflect in the glass. It indicates the direction of the light source. The main light source reflection is acceptable as long as it is not too bright. The fill light from the reflector cards should not dominate your main light source.

TIP ~

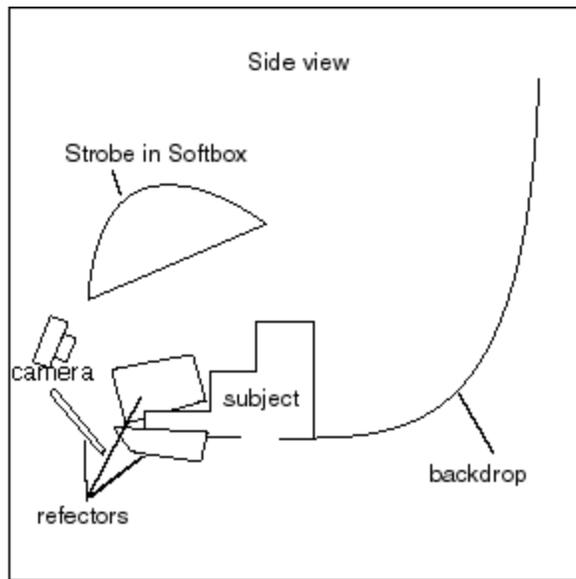
Reflector cards can be made from any material that reflects light such as a white card. Large pieces of foam core are used and cut into smaller pieces depending on the size of the set. Silver cards are also used. They are positioned to reflect the light coming from your main light source and bounce the light softly back into the set. These cards will add more light and sometimes add unacceptable hot spots on the products. These hot spots are very distracting and unsightly.

Now that you have all your lighting sources in place, look through the camera to see if you have any reflections. If you have a lot of glare in your image, readjust the overhead light by tilting it more towards the back or front. Be careful to avoid lens flare. Lens flare is when your light or lights reflect a glare back into the lens. For example, when someone shoots into the sun, the lens picks up a glare. Block the lens flare with a black card by placing the card between the light and lens. Make sure not to put the card into your scenes final crop or in a position where you block your image. You may need to move your lights or use a scrim to get rid of the lens flare. It will be easier to add a scrim if you have previously adjusted all the glass for no reflections. Instead of a scrim you could use a lens hood. The lens hood attaches to the front of the lens.

It protrudes from the lens and blocks any glare falling on the front lens element. Each lens may use a different hood. These come in many different shapes and sizes. I use a scrim because it is far more versatile.

Assuming your light source is in a good position, you may still have some glare on the glass. You can eliminate many reflections by slightly tipping the product forward. Use a small object under the back side of the product while not disturbing the product's position. These are very slight movements and will not change the appearance to any great degree. Also tip the reflectors back and forth and side to side to remove any added glare from your objects. Be attentive to all the objects. You may eliminate glare in one object and produce it in another. You must check for any reflections in your polaroids. Some reflections are very difficult to detect when viewing the set from behind the camera using the modeling lights.

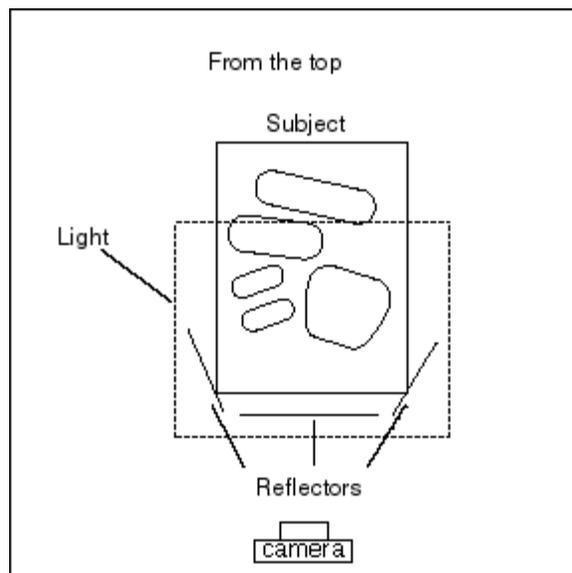
Use an incident meter and read the light falling on the set. Always bracket your exposure. Bracketing is the process of taking many shots of the same set but using different f/stops. For example, if your meter reads f/32 at 1/60th of a second, your bracket would be one stop on either side, f/22 and f/45 at the same speed. The image was shot at f/32 or greater depth-of-field. Some photographers bracket with 1/2 stops and 1/3 stop differences. They shoot 5 sheets of film using these small incremental changes.



Final cropping of image



The final image displayed on the left was successfully shot with no glare on any of the products. All the products were in glass or were wrapped in cellophane. The image has been cropped to match the final inset space for the brochure. This shot took about a half day to shoot.



Using Props with Products

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
90mm / Wide

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



When using props to help convey your message, remember the visual basics about color, perspective, framing, contrast, backgrounds, and balance.

This image of a racing bike was shot from an angle that enlarged the back wheel. The wide angle lens helps pronounce the wheel size as well as increasing the elongated perspective of the bike.

The bike was shot against a black background. Isolating your subjects by eliminating distracting backgrounds will help make the objects in the set stand out. The three arrow-shaped plexiglass pieces all point to the distance. This visually portrays the speed and forward motion of a racing bike. Primary colors of the plexiglass are used to simplify the information in the image. The gears of the bike are pronounced displaying the bike's power and versatility. The camera position is very low and tilted upward to further increase the illusion of size.

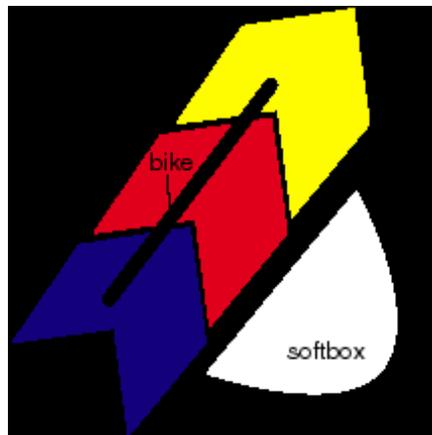
A softbox was used to keep the glare on the chrome to a minimum. It was positioned parallel to the bike seat on its right side and tipped down slightly toward the pedals. If you look carefully you can see the reflection of the softbox in the blue plexiglass. This is acceptable. The light has bounced color from the plexiglass back onto the chrome of the bike. This adds interesting color highlights to the image that balance well with the other colors.

Parts of the wheels reflect the colors of the plexiglass, adding an interesting bit of color.

The room was totally darkened for this shot. Some photographers will even paint their walls black for a shot like this. A black velvet backdrop will work also. The velvet material absorbs any light that falls on it.

When you are taking your exposure readings, make sure that you take readings of the background walls in the scene. Do not face your light toward the back wall. The meter readings of the walls should be at least 4 stops darker than your final exposure. This will maintain a black background.

The wide angle lens was used to achieve maximum depth-of-field. This image was exposed at f/45.



Multiple Exposures

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
150mm / Normal
and 90mm / Wide

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



This image was designed as a poster for a national bowling tournament. The objects were intentionally placed leaving black areas for the white text or copy and logos to be placed on the final poster.

The image above was done by repositioning the camera three different times and exposing the film each time with the change. (Three shots on one piece of film) In addition, the lens was changed for one of the shots.

You will need a large piece of black velvet to absorb all scattered light. All exposures were shot on the black velvet. The velvet does not see light. This leaves that area of the film unexposed. This allows you to expose something else in the black area, which occurs when you take your next exposure.

You will also need a piece of acetate to place on the film back for tracing the objects in each exposure. This will help you line everything up and avoid overlapping your products. By tracing the objects that appear on your film back onto a piece of acetate, you will be able to align everything perfectly.

The first exposure was made of the bowling ball in the bottom right with a wide angle lens. The second exposure was made of the bowling pin on the left bottom. The third exposure was made of the top right 2 bowling pins. One of these pins was raised up on a block for added dimension. With each exposure, the camera was progressively pulled away from the scene. The camera lens to subject distance was increased to help this illusion of depth. Diagrams below may help you understand this better.

Make sure when taking photos like this, that any part of the image you wish to remain unexposed is filled with the black velvet. You can add any lighter value to a black area with film because it is unexposed.

When you are ready to make the first exposure, trace the film back onto the acetate by placing the acetate over your film back. Do this with each exposure.

A softbox was used and placed close to all of the subjects producing direct lighting. Your exposure times and f/stops can be different for each exposure just as if you were taking separate photographs. In fact, think of this type of image as a composite.

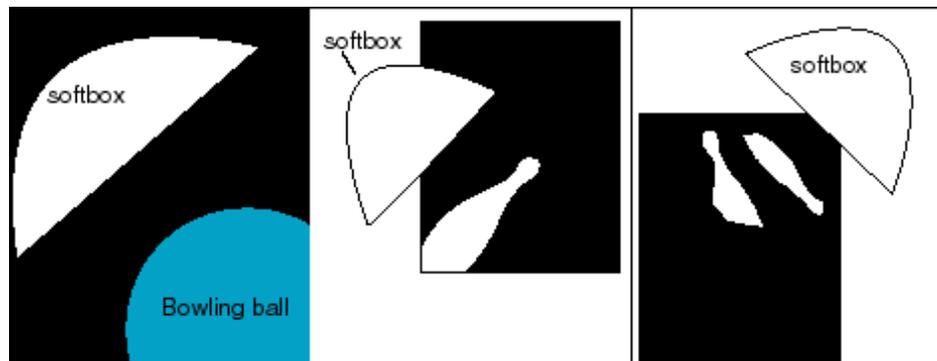
Wide Angel Lens



Normal Lens



Normal Lens



Making Reflections Work for You

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
150mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with
Softbox

Meter:
Handheld
Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

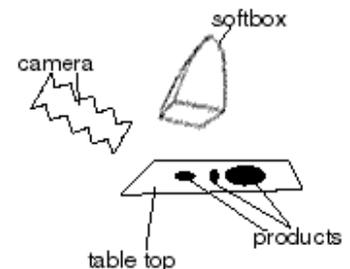
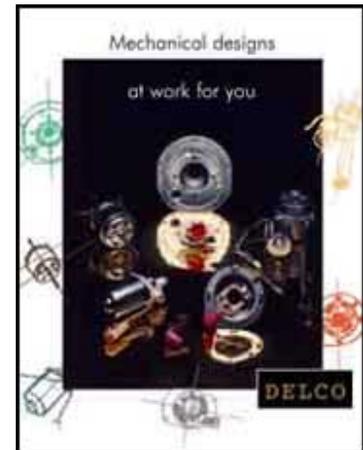


The image above was shot on a highly reflective background. It came in a long roll about 4 feet wide. The light was positioned toward the front parts of the products to avoid a hard horizon line. The light falls off into black making it useful for the reversed type of white. (see below) Be careful to avoid lens flare when positioning the lights near the camera lens. Make sure to block any light that may fall on the lens. Use a scrim to block the light. A scrim is any black piece of material that will function as a light block. Black masking tape was secured to the edge of the lens to block the light. Be careful not to show the tape in your photograph.

Glare can be a major problem with highly reflective sets like this one. Always remember to look through your lens to avoid this. Tip your light toward the front or back of the scene to adjust the glare on the set. This shot was taken using a strobe head inside a softbox. This type of light is often used in product photography, especially when shooting highly reflective objects. The light rays are scattered and softened by this kind of light source.

Each of the objects in this scene are very reflective. The reflective gold surface used to shoot on adds interest to the products by adding a gold reflection of the product onto the gold surface. This gives depth to the image.

Adding different colored line art around the edge of the image in the white border adds an extra dimension to the final composite below. This was done by the designer after the image was taken. Some of the line art is in front of the image and some is dropped behind the image. Reverse text is used on the black part of the image and black text is used on the white border.



Using a Product for a Background

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

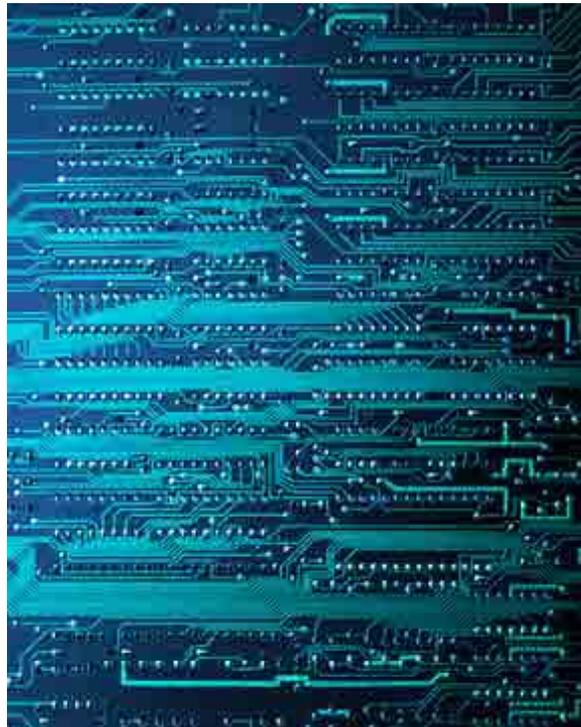
Lens:
150mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox and
Reflector

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



This close-up of a computer chip was designed for the front cover of a computer company's brochure. (see below) It was necessary to get the best detail for enlargement reasons so a large format camera was used. The end image was 9 x 12, our negative was 4" x 5".

A strobe with a softbox was used to light this subject from the left side. An accompanying white reflector card was placed close to the subject to fill in the right side with light. (see diagram below)

The bellows on the 4 x 5 camera were extended to enlarge this chip to fill the frame. When extending the bellows, you increase the need for light to reach the film. In this case, we did not need to have a small f-stop number for sharpness, so we left the lens open at f/5.6 and made our exposure appropriately. Even if you need to pop your flash a couple of times, extending the bellows should not be something to hold you back from making the close-up you want to shoot. The detail in this shot is achieved by using a 4 x 5 camera with a good lens.

TIP ~

Popping or firing the strobe multiple times is done with the lens open in a darkened room so the only light in the room is coming from your controlled multiple burst of the flash. Since you have no need for speed when shooting inanimate objects, keep pumping in the light to get the exposure you need. In a dark room you could leave your lens open and just continually pop the strobe. Or you can cock the shutter and repeat the same exposure until it adds up to the correct amount of light required. Make sure you are on a very steady tripod. The slightest amount of movement will blur your image.

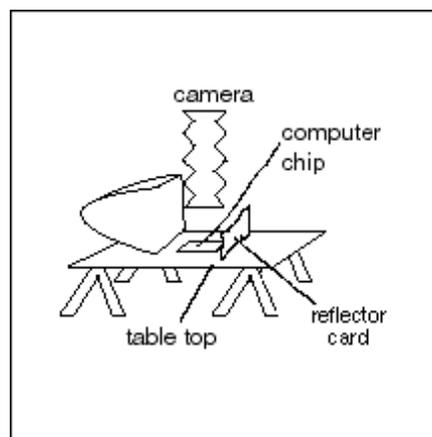
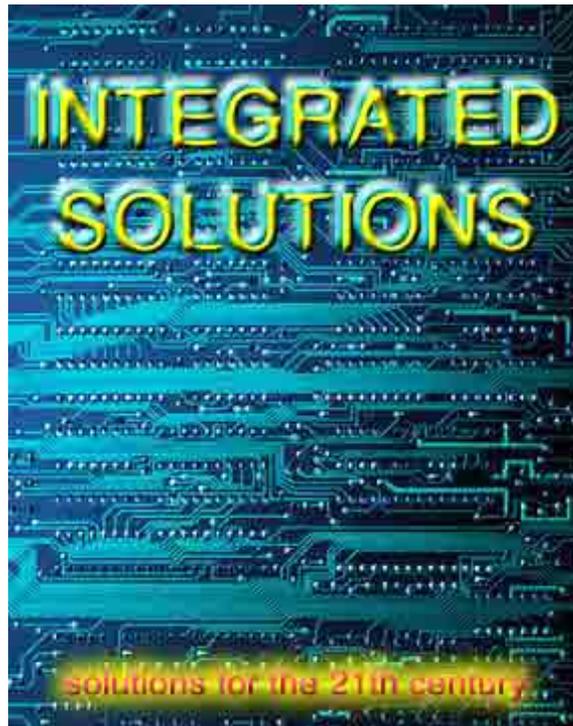
TIP ~

The best set up for any overhead shot with a 4 x 5 is to put your set on the floor. This is of course, dependent on the size of your set. A short-legged set of horses works very well also. The legs used in this set were about 12" high.

The hue of blue/green works well with the yellow text.

The text pops off the image. This color prevents the text from falling into the background. The background of the computer chip remains a simple reminder of what the company does. It is the text that the viewer is expected to read.

This image would also make a great backdrop for a collage or montage image.



Floating Product

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
150mm / Normal
and 90mm / Wide

Light Source:
Strobe with
Softbox

Meter:
Handheld
Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

Polaroids:
Yes



Both images in this lesson give the illusion of floating. The top image is propped up underneath by a block. A softbox directly above the computer circuit board was used to achieve a soft even light. In today's high-tech industry, these kinds of images are being used in composites and as single images.

TIP ~

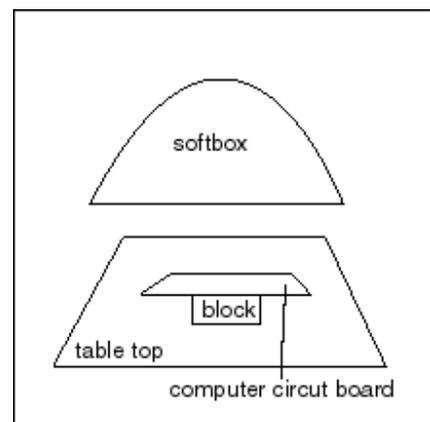
Using black velvet as a backdrop can achieve a similar effect where the subject appears to float. The light will be absorbed into the black velvet material to create the illusion.

The computer chip is not grounded to anything so it appears to float. (see Fig. 1) The angle of the light on the computer circuit board picked up some very interesting highlights in Fig. 1 which adds to the high-tech feel of the image.

A 4 x 5 camera was used to get greater detail with the larger negative for enlargement purposes. Depth-of-field was achieved at f/32.

When shooting any subject like this, you can portray many kinds of interesting illusions. The black velvet material may be a little more expensive but nothing else works as well. This kind of material will help you take the shots like the pros.

Fig. 1



Boring Product -Interesting Design

Film:
Ektachrome 100 /
Daylight Film

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horseman
Large Format

Lens:
150mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



Some products you will be photographing will be just plain boring such as the rods in the shot above. It's your job as the photographer to bring life and interest to boring products like these. In the image above, the client needed his products shot for his company catalog.

Making something interesting from something boring can be done by using an interesting background or unusual lighting. In this image the layout and diagonal positioning of the rods directs the viewer's eye to the top right area of the image of the frame. Text was placed at the top and right side of this image. (see final image below)

The softbox was positioned above and to the left of the product as indicated by the soft shadows. Fig.1 This image could have easily been cut out from its background and placed on any other background. Minimal depth-of-field is needed for this shot because the maximum height of the product was only two inches. An aperture of f/8 was used. The exposure is made with an incident meter reading to achieve an overall well-balanced tone.

Deep shadows could have been used to add interest to these products by using a direct light at a very low level to the table angle. Fig. 2 No softbox would be used for this kind of shot.

The set is placed on the floor so your camera position is directly over the top of the set. If shot on a table top you would need to stand on top of a ladder to take the shot. The easier choice is to shoot on the floor.



Fig. 1

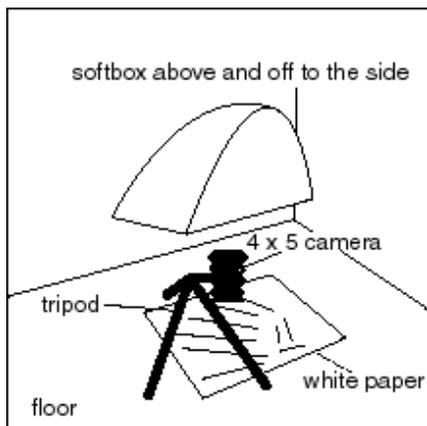
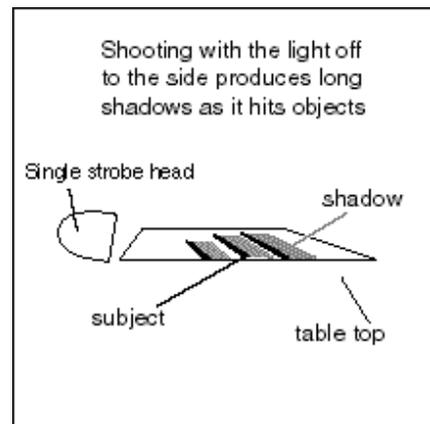


Fig. 2



Still Life

Lessons in this section:
Mixing Texture, Shapes and Color
Arranging a Set
Photographing Beautiful Glass
Messages in a Still Life
Creating a Mood
Still Life's Selling Products

Setting the stage works to help convince the viewer of a place and time or mood. Small details make a shot believable. These lessons will teach you how to think and tell a story of a certain place in time. Picking the right props for your shoot will ensure believability. The lessons in this section work in conjunction with the Product Photography section.

A still life photographer can be found working in a studio or on location. This type of photography demands the recreation of a set or going to the set to capture a moment in time. This can be done on location, in the studio, or digitally created on the computer. The truth is, it fits into many categories. It is more than product photography. You are creating a scene that conveys a sense of being somewhere.



Still life scenes are often used in a designer's set, or in a showroom, like in a furniture store. They can also be used to convey a story quickly and help transfer the concept and idea throughout the entire image. These lessons include tips on how to light objects in small and detailed areas. They will help you pull your entire learning experience together. I include details and diagrams that will reinforce your understanding.



Mixing Texture, Shapes and Color

Film:
Ektachrome 100

Camera Format:
4 x 5 - Horsemen
Large Format View
Camera

Lens:
150mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



The image above was shot as a portfolio piece. Mixing textures, shapes and colors, the photograph displays the photographer's eye for design. It is photographed on black velvet which adds saturation of the overall appearance by absorbing all the light that falls on it. The black velvet can be purchased at any fabric store.

Two scarves are positioned at opposing angles adding strong graphic interest and competition between them. Against the soft colored scarves, the dark blue hat pops out. The colored markers are color complements to the blue hat and add additional depth to the image.

Resting on top of the scarves are brightly colored objects which add spots of color and interest. The curvy lines of the ribbons break up the edges of the two scarves and add a bit of fun to the image. The final crop of the image forces the viewer to see the positive and negative spaces of color within the frame. Cropping plays an important role in the success of your image.

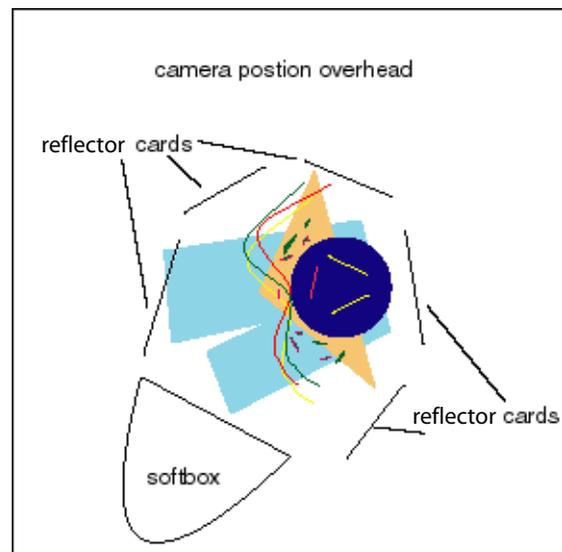
**How the image was photographed ~
One main strobe light was used. It was shot through a softbox or mylar scrim. Several white and silver reflector cards surrounding the set bounced in a soft fill light. Using the reflectors as fill light evens out the overall appearance without eliminating the direction of the main light. The shadows in the image are soft and reveal more texture in the scarf.**

Minimal, if any, depth-of-field was needed in this image so it was exposed at $f/5.6$. The meter reading is taken with an incident meter and pointed directly at the camera. Several readings were taken of the entire image. For example, a meter reading was taken of the light falling on the hat, the tip of the triangular scarf, and the black corners of the velvet before an exposure was chosen. A range of only 1 stop was allowed between these exposure readings. Reposition your reflecting cards either closer or further

from your subject to adjust the exposure variations. Your final exposure choice will be of the area in the scene that is the brightest or where the most light is falling. If your exposure variations are between f/16 and f/11, f/16 indicates the brightest area in the scene. You should know this at this point in your education. If you don't, go back to the "Camera Basics" section and read over the lessons. Choosing f/16 will prevent overexposure to the lighter areas in your scene. The camera was positioned directly over the top of the set using a tripod. Make sure your tripod is capable of supporting your camera in these unusual positions.

Pick three or four objects that work well together. Lay them out on a solid colored background in an interesting design pattern. Position your camera, lights and reflectors. Using a color transparency film, bracket your frames as you shoot.

Final crop of image



Arranging a Set

Film:
VPS 100 - Color Negative

Camera Format:
2 1/4 square - Hasselblad
Medium Format

Lens:
80mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None

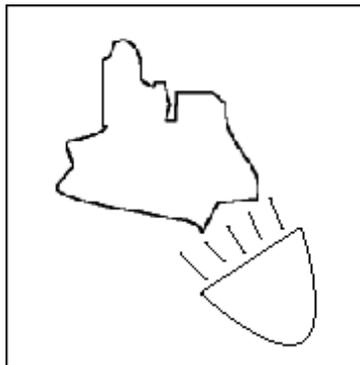


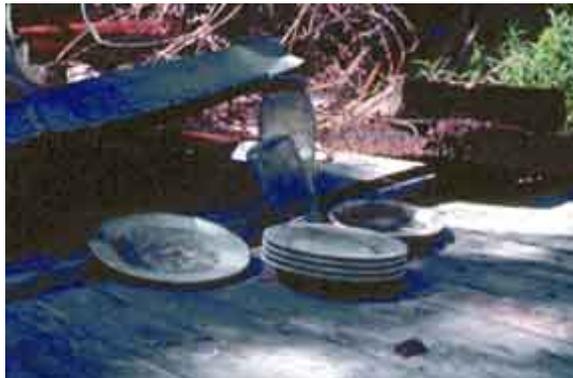
Within each image there can exist sets that pull the entire image together. The image above is an example of one of these small sets. The set is staged for a period in time.

Some professionals hire stylists to set something like this up. Background information helps convey a message in the overall scene. For example, suppose you are shooting the interior spaces of a Victorian home and your client wants to place the product in the late 1800's. Objects in the photo above will help transport your viewer into that time in history. Props are a very important part in convincing your viewer of a place in time. You can find props at antique stores for this kind of scene. Time period images must be authentic down to the smallest details. Hire a historian for accuracy if needed.

Magazines use small inset photos that display intricate details of settings. They may not be set against a black background as in the photograph above. The background should be dimly lit or out of focus to help accent the subject. Shallow depth of field and object placement will work together to make your image successful.

One main strobe light was used in the photograph above with no fill lights or reflectors. This drops the background of black velvet into black, making it a perfect place for white text. Remember an editor or designer usually needs to add type and will need this space.





Still lifes have been used in fine art for many years. The image above happens to be found in nature but could have just as easily have been set up in a studio. The arrangement of the plates and glass objects can be emulated in the studio or in a set. I have included this image to show you that what you find most naturally in life is how you should set up a scene whether in the studio or on location. Take your camera into the world around you and shoot small stories such as the one above. These still lifes will help you to stylize your own setups. This lesson will help you learn how to crop and balance your images. Pay close attention to the light falling on the objects in your scenes. Follow the previous example to determine the proper exposure of your film. Be deliberate when you consider the photographs you will take. Take your time.

Remember to see within the boundaries of your frame, balancing objects from front to back, side to side, and corner to corner. See "Visual Basics" for more information on setting an object's position within the frame.

Photographing Beautiful Glass

Film:

VPS 100 - Color Negative

Camera Format:

2 1/4 square - Hassalblad

Medium Format

Lens:

80mm / Normal

Light Source:

Strobe with Softbox

Meter:

Handheld Incident

Tripod:

Yes

Filters:

None



The image above will give you an idea of how to light small objects in a room or on a set. You can make objects pop out that are a very small part of the scene. For example the color in this image is something you really want to show but each of the objects must be placed and lit properly to portray the beauty of their colors. Small strobes with funnel snoots will spotlight only the objects you are interested in. The blue background color was chosen as a color complement to the colors in the glass.

TIP: A snoot can be made from a rolled piece of poster board into the shape of a cone. You can also buy these cones to fit on the strobe. Be careful if using poster board as the lights can get very hot.

Take a large piece of poster board and roll it into a cylinder shape, Fig. 1. Tape the center of the cylinder then expand one end and decrease the opposite end of the cylinder. Fig. 2. Make the expanded end large enough to fit over the strobe head. The other end of the cylinder should be small enough to direct the light at whatever object you want to be lighting. The size of the smaller hole will dictate the angle of the light pointed at the object.

Fig. 1

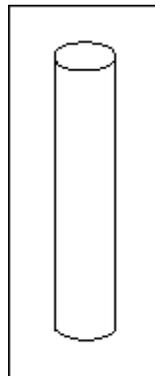
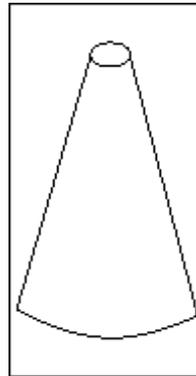
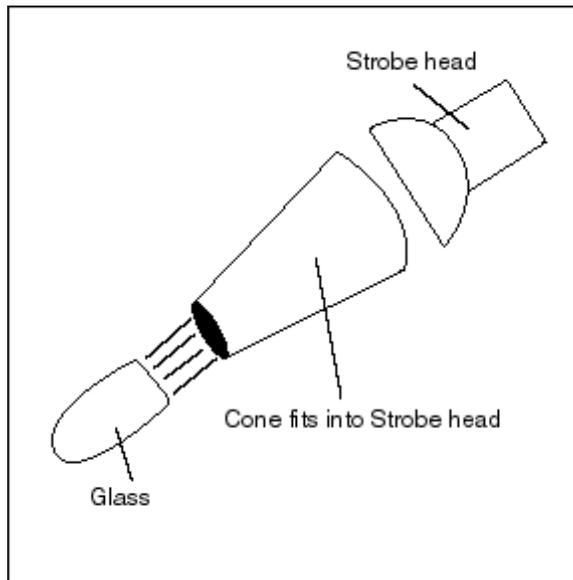


Fig. 2





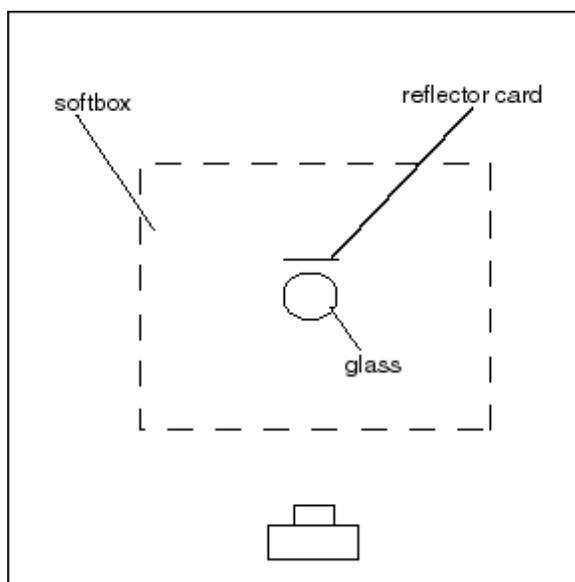
WARNING:

DO NOT USE POSTER BOARD CONES WITH TUNGSTEN LIGHTS! The chance of fire is far too great. **NEVER** leave powered lights unattended!

The glass objects in the photograph above have had the light pushed directly through them. When the light passes through, the colors are revealed.

Shooting glass with liquid in it is described in the diagram below. The softbox is placed directly above the set and slightly tilted away from the camera. With the liquid in the glass, place a reflector card behind the liquid only. Looking through the camera lens, make sure the card does not extend past the liquid above or to the sides. Tip the card backwards so it picks up some of the light falling down from the softbox. This will illuminate the liquid giving it a glowing appearance.

Your background can be any color detail or density when using this reflector card.



Messages in a Still Life

Film:
Ektachrome 100

Camera Format:
35mm - Nikon
Small Format

Lens:
50mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
5 Red CC Filter



The above image sends a message of peace and comfort to its viewer in a couple of different methods.

One method is achieved by the type of lighting used. (In this case a strobe within a softbox.) A warm glow of very soft light is scraping horizontally across the image and highlights fall on the outer pages of the book. It has a golden quality. Another method is achieved by using a number 5 CC filter over the camera lens. This accents the rich red color in the roses with their saturated hue and balances perfectly with the gold color in the pages as well as the reddish-brown boards that they sit on.

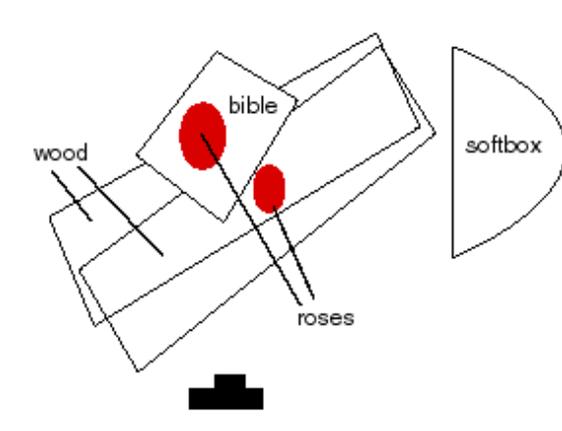
TIP ~

A red or orange transparent gel in an acetate sheet form could be placed over the softbox to warm the color pushed into the set.

The background falls off into black holding the viewer's eye on the bible and the perfectly balanced roses.

This was shot with a softbox to the right of the scene with no fill cards or fill lights. The main light source is close to the subject so the light falls off very little. When the light is positioned close to the subject it's effect on the opposite side is minimal.

Using light, color, balance and the right props, this image conveys both warmth and love. The main subject is the bible. The roses are used to convey a feeling of love. If instead of roses guns were used as props, the message would be entirely different, perhaps of violence. Props can make or break your image.



Creating a Mood

Film:
Ektachrome 100

Camera Format:
35mm - Nikon
Small Format

Lens:
50mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobes and reflectors

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
No

Filters:
None



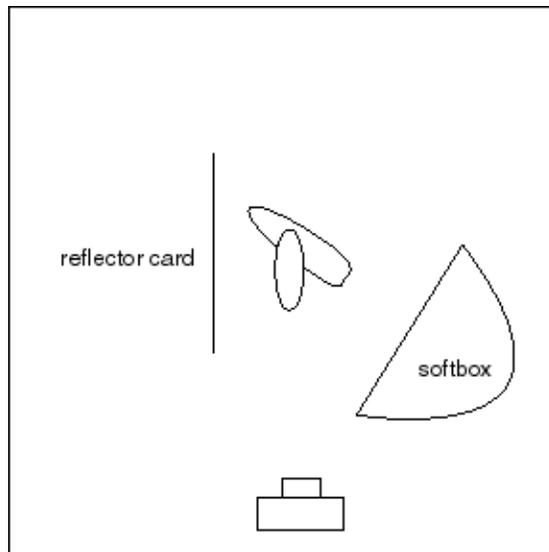
Making a statement with your photography should be foremost in your mind. The image above tells us ~ bedroom, lovers, intimacy, passion, etc. It is up to our imagination to fill in the blanks. You have only a few moments to convey your message so be careful not to be too subtle yet not so blatant that your message is visually insulting.

The location in this shot was specifically chosen. Shot on a wooden floor, a rustic authenticity is portrayed. A "cowboy" feel was achieved with these surrounding elements. The lingerie casually draped over the boots looks accidental and unplanned. The boot that is tipped over leads the viewer to believe an impetuous moment of hurried passion is taking place. The background is evident but intentionally made out of focus by shooting at f/4 for shallow depth of field.

This image is far from haphazard. It was planned from layout, to location, to scouting, to object placement. The idea came first, then the execution of the image. Although minor alterations of layouts are common, the concept will remain the same. This eliminates confusion by isolating one idea and working it through from all directions.

Scouting out locations can be a full-time job and you may need special permission to shoot in a particular place. See property release in the "Legal Forms" section to cover your legal requirements and release forms.

This kind of image will work very well for an ad selling lingerie. A strobe light with a softbox was used to light the boots and the lingerie from the right. A reflector card was placed close to the boots to fill in the left side of the scene. The light is positioned low near the floor which scrapes the light on a low plan. This was placed to simulate a specific time during the day, sunset or early evening. The light at this time is warm in color value which adds to the subject matter's message. The camera vantage point is low also bringing the viewer into intimate contact with the boots and lingerie.



Still Lifes Selling Products

Film:
Ektachrome 100

Camera Format:
2 1/4 square - Hassalblad
Medium Format

Lens:
80mm / Normal

Light Source:
Strobe with Softbox

Meter:
Handheld Incident

Tripod:
Yes

Filters:
None



Placement and staging of objects requires a thought-out layout and planned execution when using multiple products. Layering has been used in this image where non-information has been overlapped, for example, where the licence plates and shirts touch. Your viewer does not need to see the entire object in this case to know what it is. Strong diagonal lines have been made by object placement. This helps pull the viewer through the image and leads the eye to a specific area of an image. This image was created to find funding for Vietnam vets by selling these products.

If you have been asked to shoot several products and put them all into one image, think of it in terms of a still life setting. Larger items will be placed in the background, sometimes even being used as the background. For example, picture a group of images all representing something American. The background for this scene could be a flag which is also one of the subjects. There is no need to see the entire flag because it is an easily recognizable icon.

In the image above, the wooden floor was used to add a sense of the rustic and gritty realism of the Vietnam war. It was lit with a softbox directly above the subjects. The aperture was a concern for foreground to background sharpness so the camera was pulled back far enough from the scene to allow for a large aperture of around $f/5.6$.

Below is the final image. This was dropped into a 3 fold 8 1/2 x 4 brochure along with other images of the same sort.

