THE LAST FRAME

Lighting It Up

On November 12, 2003 St. Albert Photo Club Member Tim Schultz gave a presentation on basic studio portrait photography. He brought Shannon, a teenaged dance student, as a model to help demonstrate this genre of photography.

Lighting Setup

In Tim's demonstration, a muslin fabric is used as a background with two moonlights bounced into square umbrella reflectors to light his model. The first of the lights (the fill light) is bounced into a white umbrella reflector placed on axis with the camera lens. Many photographers agree that a good position is with the bottom lip of this umbrella just above their camera lens. The second light (the Main or Key light) is bounced into a square, silver-lined umbrella and is placed to the side of the model. The main light determines the style of lighting on your subject and is almost always the more powerful light of the two. The silver sheen on this umbrella creates a specular effect or crispness on your subject. Tim recommended that the main burst of light from this light source not be aimed directly at your model. Instead rotate this light slightly forward of your subject so the light coming from the far edge of this light hits your subject. This is known as feathering the light. Do not feather the light towards the rear of your subject because that lights your background causing colour desaturation.
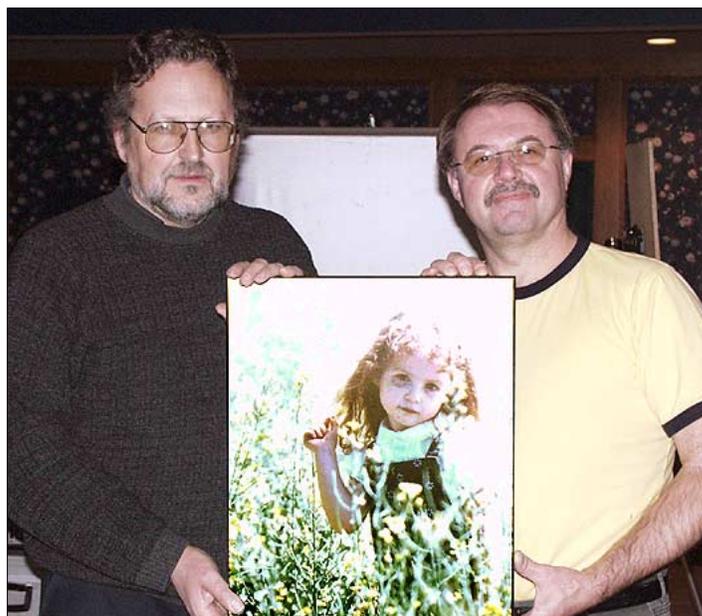
Light Ratios

The relationship between the intensity of the fill light to the main light is known as the lighting ratio. As previously mentioned, the fill light should always be your weaker source of light, providing non-directional, non-specular light to fill in shadows.

Pictures Of The Year
Above, club member Seig Koslowski presents St. Albert Inn owner Mike Mazepa with the clubs' Picture Of The Year for 2001 that was photographed by Koslowski. Below, Seig did it again for the clubs' Picture Of The Year for 2002.

DECEMBER GUEST SPEAKER	DECEMBER COMPETITION	TECH TIPS	JANUARY GUEST SPEAKER	JANUARY COMPETITION
None	Christmas Lunch	None	Sheila Holzer	Open

Using an incident light meter, take a reading of the light falling on your subject from the fill light to determine the base fill.

In this instance it was determined that the fill light falling onto Shannon was f/5.6.

To create modeling on Shannon's face, the fill light was turned off, the main light turned on and adjusted to create a catch-light (a reflection of the main light source) in Shannon's eyes.

An incident light meter reading was taken from just the main light (a reading of f/8).

So, working in f/stops, one can deduce that twice as much light was falling on Shannon from the main light than from the fill light.

One stop of light equals either a doubling or a halving of the light. Since the main light was one stop brighter (f/8) than the fill light (f/5.6), this produced a 2:1 lighting ratio.

If the fill light remained at f/5.6 but you moved the main light close to Shannon or increased its intensity to yield an exposure of f/11 (a 2-stop differ-ence) the light ratio would change to 4:1. Once you exceed a 3-stop differ-ence (8:1 ratio) you get an extremely high contrast situation not often utilized for portraiture.

F/stop Film Exposure

To maintain shadow detail, expose your film at the fill light reading (f/5.6 in this case) because a reading of both the fill and the main light at the subject's position gives a combined exposure of f/9.5.

If you were to expose your film at f/9.5 the shadow area will be under-exposed by over 1 f stop. In portrait photography, you expose your film for the shadows which the fill light determines.

Posing

As far as posing is con-cerned, position your sub-ject at an angle rather than directly into your camera lens.

By positioning them at an angle to the light and having them turn their head back into camera lens you have the side of the face closer to the lens shaded or contoured. This is known as short light-ing.

If your subject is posed so they are facing away from the light source and then turn their head back toward the light, the side of their face toward the lens is fully lit. This is called broad lighting. Short light-ing tends to slenderize the subject's face while broad lighting tends to fatten people's faces.

When you turn your sub-ject's face towards the lens pay attention to two condi-tions that will weaken the photograph.

1. Make sure their nose does not protrude beyond the far plane of their face (this view tends to elon-gate their nose); and

2. Make sure their far eye-ball does not protrude from the far plane of their face. You should be able to see the skin beyond their eye-ball otherwise it looks as if the eye is falling out of their face.

When photographing couples, have their faces layered rather than level with one another. Place one person lower in the image, having the mouth of the higher subject level with the eyes of the lower person.

When photographing groups of three try to create triangles in your posing. Again, avoid having any two heads at the same level. In larger groups, try to keep the space between individuals similar.

When photographing people from their back side and having them look back over their shoulder to the camera lens try to reserve this for female subjects only (it is considered a feminine pose). Keep the shadow side of their back towards the camera.

Basically you are cross lighting them, keeping in mind that both their far eye and nose must not break the far plane of their face.

By incorporating a slightly lower camera angle when shooting this or any type of portrait, you can make your subject appear slightly taller.

This is a very technical area in photography. It takes plenty of practice and experimentation, includ-ing moving your lights around, changing their intensity or moving your subject to build confidence with portrait photography.

Article/Derald Lobay

THE LAST FRAME

CLUB MEMBERS WINNING MONTHLY PICTURES

Second place slide - Seig Koslowski

First place slide - Derald Lobay
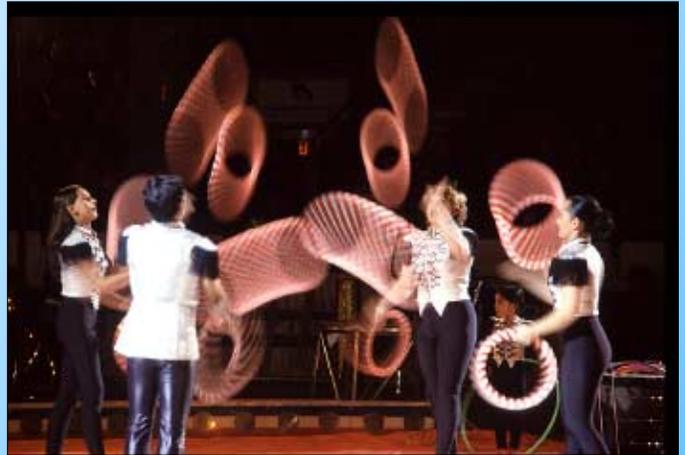
Third place slide - Seig Koslowski

2nd place print - Allen Skoreyko

Above, 1st place print - Allen Skoreyko

3rd place print - Allen Skoreyko