

Lighting.

Andrew Mills, MA Med CertEd All images copyright.

Lighting is often ignored or neglected in our everyday photography now that our cameras can encompass vast ranges of sensitivity. Film, limited to fairly low sensitivity forced us to consider how we lit our subjects and we took more time to allow for the aesthetic developing and understanding the direction, size and shape of sources and the various styles which could be evoked such as harsh raw fashion, soft gentle portrait, dark moody landscape, clear clean advertising, cinematic noir, etc...

Much of this innate ability has been lost and photographers often lack a starting point, knowing where to begin. There are some very simple methods from which all manner of ideas can emanate. All the rules are there to be broken but a little practice with tried and tested ideas will facilitate creativity and individuality.

Probably the first main tenet is - don't overcomplicate things, try just one light with reflectors to adjust shadows and balance. Big light, big surface area, close to subject, soft shadows. Small sharp source, hard shadows. Think overcast and sunshine. Reflectors are the best thing since sliced bread, big wall, newspaper, tiny mirror, dull side of baco-foil, white umbrella etc. To name but a few. Almost anything will do the job but to keep it clean use evenly spread reflecting surfaces.

0001

Old Masters and Impressionists understood lighting to create emotions, atmospheres using daylight particularly from large windows facing north. Still life evolved the use of artificial light, candles oil lamps.

0022

Early photographers still used a lot of daylight for studio work. Here we have Julia Margaret Cameron, Jacob Rils (self portrait), Alfred Steiglitz and others.

0034

Flowers are a favourite with club photographers – here are some photographers who approach the subject in their own way: Imogen Cunningham, Irving Penn, Robert Mapplethorpe and Ori Gersht who liked to blow his to smithereens.

0047

Studio lighting. Used for advertising, tourism, rock bands, the Argos catalogue, Nick Brandt and Tim Flach (fantastic animals) Rob Whitrow (hospitality), O Winston Link (trains).

The rest are taken by me for various reasons.

0081

Landscape, Seascape, Cityscape. Ansel Adams 0082, Darran Rees 0097, Charlie Waite 0106 – 0109, one of the best known and A. Spencer (Corfe 0098). It's all and only about time of day, the weather, and where the light's coming from.

0115

Animals, natural history. Nick Brandt, Andrew Suryono – leaf umbrella! Magda Wasiczek, Igor Huwat – caterpillar, Ross Hoddinott - butterfly. Linda drake – polar bears, Terry Allen – cheetah silhouette. Paul Barson 0138 - 0140 flowers. All the rest were taken by me. (Galapagos, Japan, Crimea, Gibraltar and Antarctica, Marwell and the Itchen in Hampshire.)

0143

People and Portraits. Sally Mann 0144 - 0145, Roger Balen 0146, Diane Arbus 0147, David Bailey 0148, Richard Avedon and working showing use of reflected sunlight on his project about Americans, plus his large format (10x8 inches) photos for Vogue with elephants. Irving Penn's portraits of Jean Cocteau and Truman Capote. Karsch of Ottawa's portraits of Churchill. James Eckersley's shots of Johnny Wilkinson and the actress whose name I have conveniently forgotten. Mapplethorpe - two men and woman with hood, and Tom Hunter the emulation of Vermeer with his prize winning portrait of a woman reading an eviction notice.

There are many different ways to photograph people however most of these images start with just one source of light. All the other images of people were taken by me, commercial, street, weddings, friends etc.

0195

Street and Documentary. Dorothea Lange, photographed people in the depression, Marc Riboud – Vietnam War protests. Robert Frank – the Americans, Joel Meyerowitz – ground zero. Rene Burri 0204 and 0204a. Eve Arnold 0205, Gary Winogrand, a prolific street photographer, and Rob Whitrow – boy in Africa. The rest are my images.

0221

Shadow. The negative space. Hard, soft, part of the composition, or perhaps all of the composition.

0232

Types of lighting. Ray Massey's studio in Camden with large very powerful Strobe lighting. Umbrellas, soft-boxes flash for studio and camera top. Continuous lighting and diffusers 0240. Using an array of diffusers and reflectors to photograph a fly 0239.

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