august 2016

shutter

magazine

THE
LIGHTING
EDITION

StickyApps is empowering photographers to take advantage of the biggest opportunity in our industry today.

"This opportunity is smacking all of us right in the face, right in our own backyard, and I'm kicking myself that I didn't figure this out sooner. This is gonna be huge ... it is going to quickly dwarf the other parts of my business!"

—SAL

Visit **www.getstickyapps.com/sal** to request an invite to our upcoming live webinar and learn step-by-step how to grow your business with this innovative new strategy and earn recurring revenue with your camera.

STICKY APPS

a new way for photographers to make money

shutter
magazine

shutter
magazine

JUST BECAUSE **WE'RE PRINT,** DOESN'T
MEAN WE AREN'T **MULTIMEDIA!**

sm

VISIT US ON **YOUTUBE** TO WATCH
EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS THROUGHOUT
THE MAGAZINE!

VIDEOS ARE AVAILABLE WHEREVER YOU SEE
THIS ICON:

sm **LEARN MORE.**
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

YOUTUBE.COM/BTSSHUTTERMAGAZINE

FIND US. FOLLOW US.
for special offers & behind the scenes action

f FACEBOOK.COM/BTSHUTTER

TWITTER.COM/SHUTTERMAG **t**

P PINTEREST.COM/BTSHUTTER

PLUS.GOOGLE.COM/+BEHINDTHESHUTTER1 **g+**

You Tube YOUTUBE.COM/BTSSHUTTERMAGAZINE

INSTAGRAM.COM/SALCINCOTTA

SEE MORE.   **LEARN** MORE.   **GET** MORE.

Salvatore Cincotta
BEHIND THE SHUTTER

shutter
magazine

MISSION STATEMENT

Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current, insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. *Shutter* uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience. Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community, and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

shutter
magazine

THE **LIGHTING** EDITION

THE **COVER**

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sal Cincotta | salcincotta.com
CAMERA: Phase One IQ3
LENS: Schneider 80mm Blue Line
EXPOSURE: f2.8 @ 1/200th, ISO 200
LOCATION: Gurgaon, India
LIGHTING: Profoto B2 and Portable Beauty Dish
ABOUT THE IMAGE: This image was taken in our hotel room in Gurgaon, India, July 2016.

LAUNCH **POINT**

A message from the editor-in-chief

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Light.
One of the
most crucial ingredients
to creating a ***great image.***
- Sal Cincotta

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

IPHONE
WEDDING
FILMMAKING

with Joe Switzer

How could a mobile phone provide satisfactory results for a wedding? This is not a joke. I've always believed it was inevitable that the day would come when the iPhone is taken seriously as a professional filmmaking tool. That day is today and the time is now. There is no barrier to entry for both photography and filmmaking. Everyone you know has a mobile phone or iPhone. It's a Hollywood film and photography studio in their pocket. In this article, you will learn how you can remain a relevant filmmaker or start your video company today with little more than your iPhone.

Apple sells about 35,000 phones an hour. Since the inception of the iPhone, the company has sold almost 1 billion units, and they keep innovating with faster and better devices. If you'd asked people if a phone could film in 4K just a few years ago, few would have believed you. Innovation isn't about to stop with mobile phones, especially at Apple.

Planning the iPhone Wedding

We have been planning the iPhone wedding for about 12 months. Waiting for the perfect couple in the right location was crucial. An outdoor wedding in Colorado with superb lighting and epic backdrops sounded like the best opportunity.

We planned to create a compelling music film of the wedding event. We wanted to show sizzling candy shots with a great song. The two- to three-minute music video concept is no different than what we create for all our wedding films. We were curious to see if there'd be a big difference if we used all our same tools and style that we use for standard shoots.

We normally shoot with only two filmmakers per project, but for this, we brought one extra person because we had never done this before. We also wanted three to four aerial video shots, so we hired Charles King for the day after the wedding. The final video ended up having five aerials, and every other shot in the video was taken with an iPhone. Next time we will have to duct-tape the iPhone to the drone so it's 100 percent iPhone.

The tools we used were a Ronin-M, Manfrotto tripod/monopod and Rhino motorized track. The three of us used 501 plates attached to Mefoto Sidekick 360's plus mounts that allowed us to swivel and attach our iPhone to all the tools. We used two iPhone 6S Pluses and one iPhone 6 Plus. For aerials, we used the DJI Phantom 4. The lenses were all made by Olloclip. For two shots, we used the Olloclip macro lens. All the other shots for the video were captured using the iPhone lens itself and the Olloclip Telephoto + Wide-Angle lens.

iPhone App

To get the most out of our iPhones, we used a $10 app called Ultrakam. It allowed us to record with more flexibility than just using our iPhone camera app. It let us choose our focus areas, ISO and shutter speed. We shot in 24 fps/H.264/16:9 mode. To help save space on our iPhone, we didn't record any audio. Our music videos rarely have audio, so it was no big deal. When the bride was reading a letter, we did turn the audio back on to record just in case we wanted to use the sound in the final edit. It's simple to quickly turn the sound off and on.

One of the coolest modes on the app was for time-lapses. It gives you options of taking a photo every second and up to one photo per hour. After you stop your time-lapse, it's ready to go. It combines all the photos in a video file similar to what our time-lapse app does on our Sony A7s cameras.

But we had some problems with this app that we will discuss as I take you through the wedding day.

### Wedding Day: Estes Park, Colorado

We were concerned with having plenty of time on the wedding day, so we showed up hours before hair and makeup to get a few time-lapses. Just like on a typical wedding day, we started early to position ourselves for success. TJ, Kristin and I captured a few establishing shots and found a good location for groom prep. We were struggling to find some good natural light for him, and eventually found an area outside the hotel on a deck.

Never hesitate to ask your bride or groom to move to the good natural light. When you have conversations before the wedding with the couple, tell them you want their hair and makeup as close to natural light as possible. They trust you and want great photos and video, so they will do what they can to keep near natural light for you. Guys are usually super flexible, so you can always move them to find good light in any situation. Just ask.

For wedding preparation with iPhones, we used our Fiilex lighting when working with the bride. Normally we just use natural light, but one thing about iPhones is that they don't work well without plentiful light. Unfortunately for this wedding, the bride was trapped in a small room with mixed artificial lighting. After filming for about 30 minutes, we decided to just scrap our shots and have her and the makeup artist do the final touches in the bride's hotel suite, where we actually had room to move. We tried using the tripod, monopod, track and Ronin-M to get some variety for preparations.

After working a while, we realized the track and the monopod were the best tools for prep. You can move quickly and get variety. We used the Ronin-M for a few shots, but not necessarily for bride and groom iPhone prep. We were fortunate to have a first look for the bride and groom before the ceremony. Weather conditions were perfect, with plenty of shade, sun and clouds. The first look was about an hour before the wedding. After we finished this scene, we realized we were going to have two serious problems: battery life and hard-drive space.

Images © Joe Switzer

Images © Joe Switzer
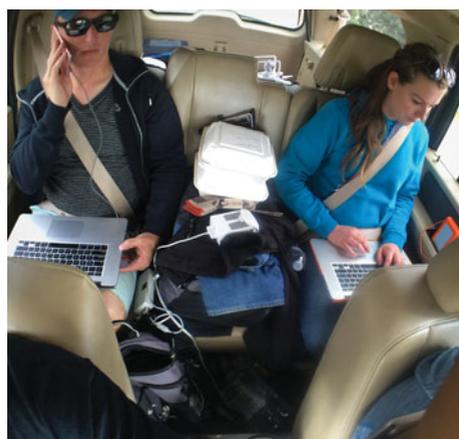
Problem #1: Battery Life

About an hour before the wedding, two of our phones were down to almost 5 percent battery. The third iPhone had less than 60 percent power. We quickly started charging our phones. Thank goodness the day before we bought some portable battery chargers. For the rest of the day, we could shoot and charge our iPhones at the same time. You will need a portable charger if you're going to use your iPhone professionally for weddings.

Problem #2: Hard-Drive Space

The three of us started with 80 gigs of available space on our phones. After filming bride and groom prep, we had only about 30 gigs per person. We hadn't anticipated using up that much space. We didn't even know how to get our video clips off the phone, back them up or delete them, but thankfully, with a few minutes to spare before the ceremony, we found out how to transfer the footage from the iPhones to another hard drive so we could free up some space. We were able to film all the ceremony video clips we wanted, but when it was over, we were all down about 10 gigs of free space again. We had to quickly transfer our iPhone footage from the ceremony to the hard drive to prepare for the reception. We had time to free up only one phone because of transfer speed.

For both the ceremony and reception, we used the Ronin-M, tripod, track and monopod. Of those tools, our least favorite was the tripod. The monopod was stable and did anything the tripod could do. We filmed the post-ceremony creative shots just like we would any other wedding.

One fun surprise were the rams that jumped up on the rock by the bride and groom. We filmed the animals jumping off and running away in slow motion. It was simple to change to 240 fps in the app. A glitch in the app was that it either overheated or couldn't handle the frame rates. It crashed every time we tried to film slow motion. Later in the night at the reception, even recording at a normal frame rate, the app crashed a few times. It was crucial that we'd brought our lights and had them on full power at the reception. IPhones cannot film in low-light conditions. Bring your lights. We are obsessed with the portable battery-powered, water-resistant Fiilex lights.

The next day, we took the bride and groom out for a rock-the-dress session. This is where we spend a few hours with them in their wedding attire getting some epic creative video shots that we normally couldn't get on a wedding day due to time constraints.

This is the day we brought the Phantom 4 drone with Charles to get the beautiful establishing shots. We went to a beautiful mountaintop for one of the best backdrops I've ever seen in my life. The post-wedding video shoot could not have gone any better. We had so much variety: mountains, golf courses, rivers, snow and elk. If you don't offer rock-the-dress sessions, you should start. We all got to see the beauty of Colorado and bond with the bride and groom during moments we will cherish forever.

On the way home from the shoot at the airport, I started to get organized and go through the footage. This was when I found the last issue we were going to have to deal with. A big issue.

Problem #3: Inconsistent Frame Rate Recording

Almost all the video clips had dropped frames and random frame rate recording. Sure, the app recorded in 4K and gave us flexibility with ISO, frame rate, focus and shutter speed, but even though we thought we were recording at 24 frames per second, we were actually recording anywhere from 12 to 24 frames per second. This caused severe damage to motion video shots and just about all of our video clips. Every 1.5 seconds or so, the footage had a dropped frame in addition to these random inconsistent frames. I reached out to the app company for solutions. No response. No solution. Do we go home and cry to our mommy? Was the entire iPhone wedding video shoot ruined? No.

The Edit

It would've been easy to give up and call this a failure. As catastrophic as it was to see the footage with the unacceptable frame rates, we are not the kind of people to throw in the towel. We believe there is always a way to make anything work.

The video and project files were over 542 gigs. This took way more time, hard-drive space and tweaking than originally planned, but we were able to produce a compelling edit. The workaround for the video files was to use shorter clips and a fast-paced song. Many of the video clips in the final edit had dropped frames and were recorded at about 16 fps. This is noticeable to the professional, but with the music and timing of the editing cuts, the average person viewing this on YouTube or Facebook is not going to notice the flaws.

Image © Joe Switzer

If we had to film this iPhone wedding again, we would use the normal camera app, an Olloclip and a Mefoto Sidekick 360 adapter. You can use all the standard video tools, like the Ronin-M, Monopod and track.

After watching the film, I'm sure you'll agree that the iPhone can be taken seriously as a filmmaking solution for professionals. At the end of the day, I'm still thankful to have our Sony A7s cameras and lenses. Filming this wedding with the iPhone made me appreciate what we have.

We won't be filming with our phones professionally this year, but now we know that anyone with an iPhone can make a product comparable to our traditional shoots. That's incredibly scary—and exciting. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Joe Switzer founded the international award-winning photo-cinema business Switzerfilm. His team is made up of four young creative minds striving to take the world of wedding cinema and photography to the next level. The team travels the world for inspiration, going anywhere and everywhere to top their latest work. Joe finds joy in teaching all over the world and helping up-and-coming "ographers" lay the groundwork for a solid future. Over the past 10 years, he has counted the majority of his clients as lifelong friends.

switzerfilm.com

Lighting offers probably one of the easiest ways for you to stand out from your competitors, mostly because of the endless ways it can be used and the seemingly complex nature of understanding how to both shape and control light.

I learned early in my career that all light is not created equally. You have to control the light. Merely turning on your flash does not make you a lighting expert. I have learned to respect light. After 10 years of shooting as a professional, I am still a student of light. Where I was once intimidated by it, I am now fascinated by what you can do with it.

I encourage you all to be curious about light. It doesn't matter what kind of light—off-camera flash, studio strobes, natural light, Ice Lights—be curious and experiment.

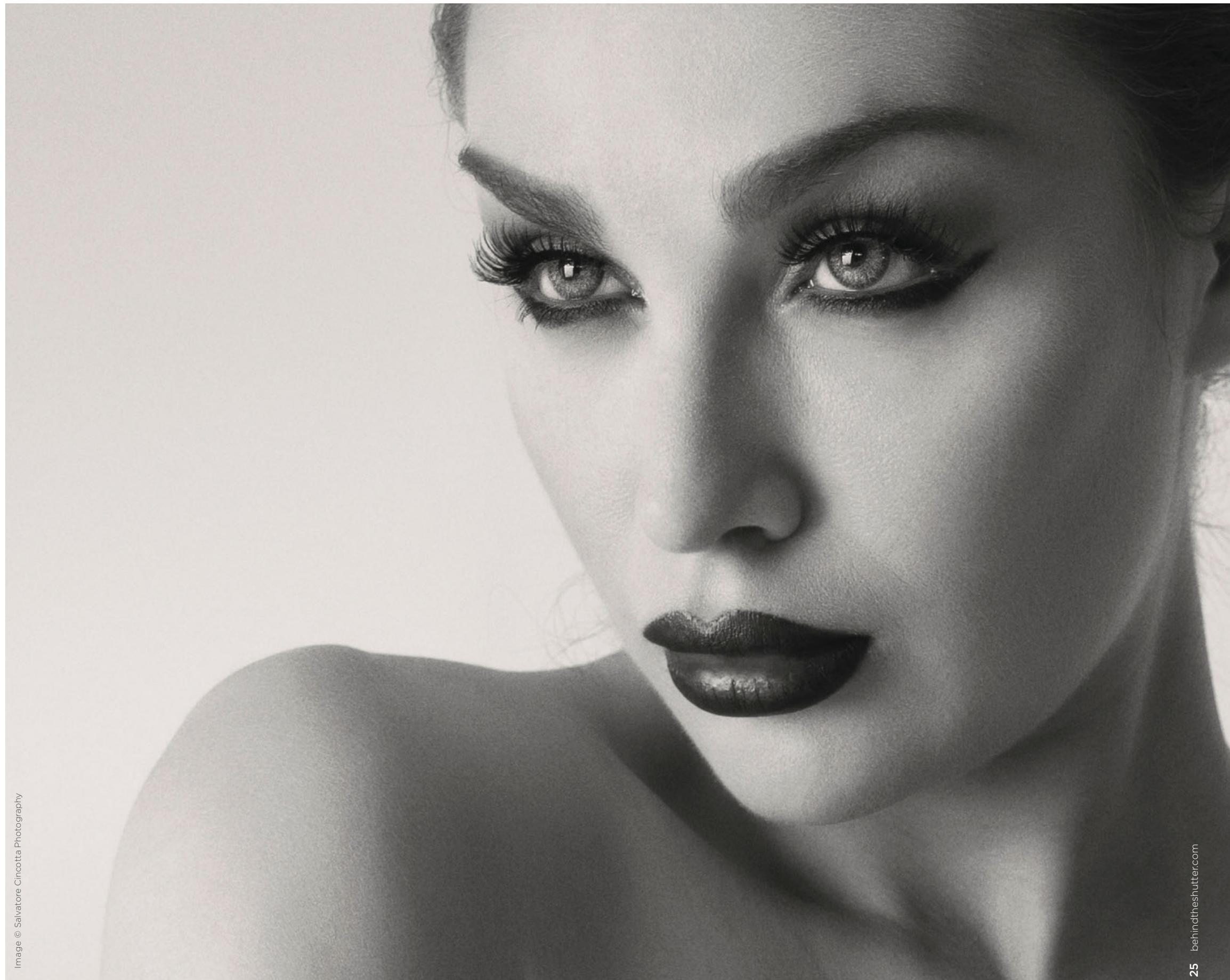In a world where "everyone is a photographer," how in the world do you stand out? If you have been following my messaging at all, you know I am constantly talking about standing out from the crowd and the myriad ways to do so. Lighting is a perfect way to do it. The average beginner is terrified of light. Perhaps better stated, terrified of anything other than natural light. They don't understand power, shaping, balance, etc. This is a perfect opportunity for you to figure this out and rise above your competitors.
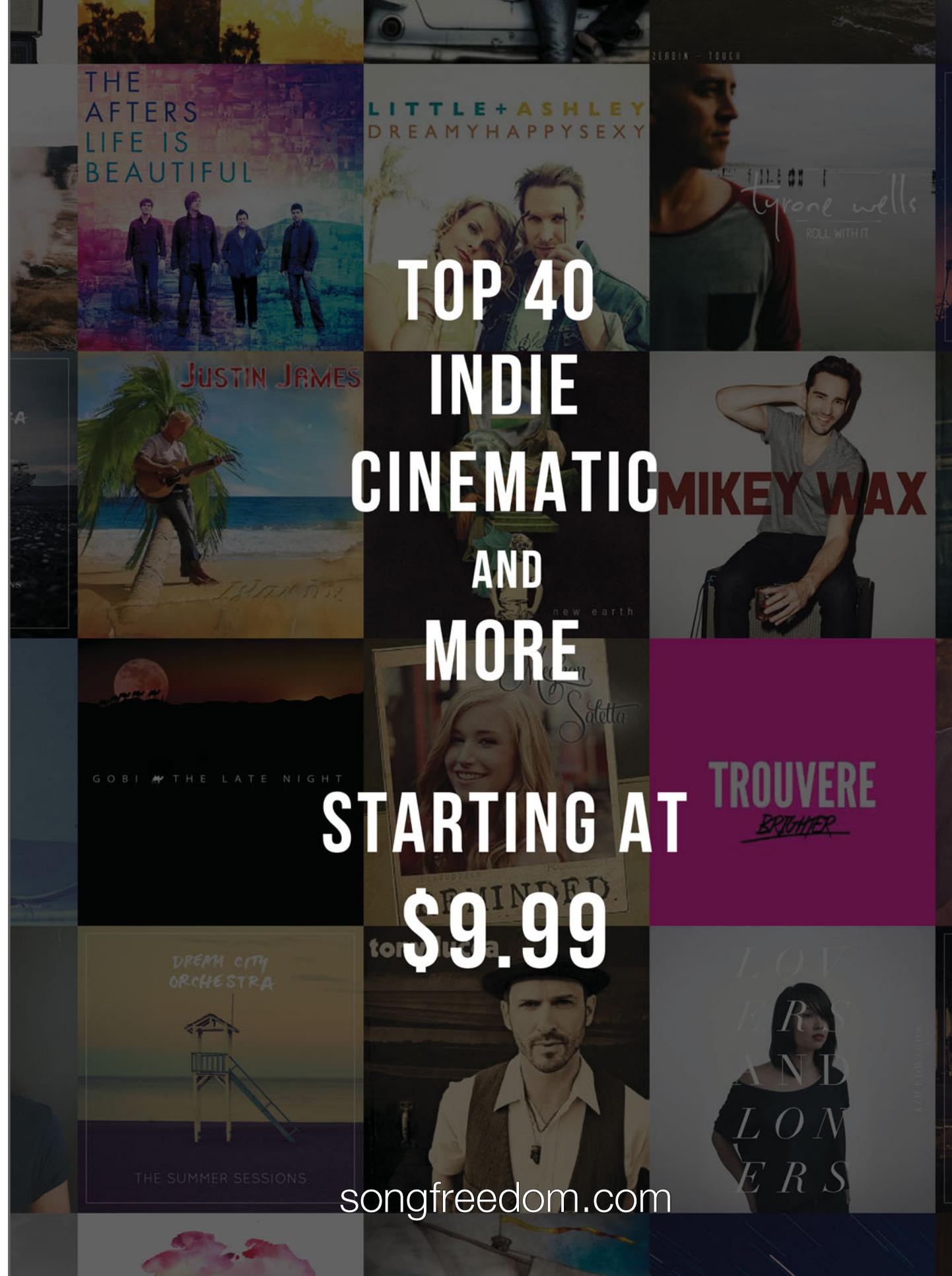
This leads me to my point: How do I use light to shape my style?

There is no substitute for speed.

If there's one thing that makes me batshit crazy, it's watching photographers stumble in front of the client using their gear. Speed. There is no substitute. You are not Annie Leibovitz. Give it a rest. You are working with normal clients who don't have time for all your technical lighting ratios and chimping in the back of the camera. If you are a wedding or baby photographer, good luck on a hot summer day getting a bride to stand around for 20 minutes while you get dialed in. And that baby? Yeah, she is more than likely screaming bloody murder after just 60 seconds.

You have to learn how to move with speed and efficiency unless you are working at a commercial level, where you have the luxury of more time and extra hands, versus a wedding day where the bride decided to give you 20 minutes to get all the creative shots.

That speed, no matter what your niche is, comes with practice. I have learned over the years, through lots of practice, how to get to my vision with the tools available very quickly. In fact, here is something not many people know about me or my studio: No matter how much I have spent on a piece of equipment, it doesn't come out of the box or get used in production until I have read the entire manual and had at least one chance to get out there and practice with it. This simple best practice allows me to get comfortable with a new piece of equipment and ensure I can work with it quickly to keep my clients from getting bored or frustrated watching me try to figure out my new gear.

Practice new techniques.

There are a million ways to light something. That is part of the beauty of what we do. Lighting is its own art. This is what has made me a student of light. I am always trying new techniques. It can be something I see in my mind, something I saw a commercial photographer do or something I saw in a Hollywood movie.

My process is to reverse-engineer a look. By reverse-engineering, I learn how they did it and, in the process, I am practicing and gaining a better understanding of light.

From there, I want to add my own flare to it. I start practicing and altering what I just learned until I find something that feels like me and my style. Don't overcomplicate practice. You can practice on a can of soda, you can practice on a dummy or you can practice on a friend. Grab someone, anyone. It's not about the final image. That's not the point here. The point when I am practicing is to learn about the light. I usually don't have a plan to use the final image, so my subject—and what they are wearing or what their makeup looks like—is usually irrelevant.

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

To modify or not?

The next step is figuring out light modifiers. Modifiers allow you to control and shape the light. Obviously, the bigger the light modifier, the softer the light. However, soft light might not be what you are after. This is where you need to practice. I will admit, this becomes a little tough without spending money on equipment. This is what trade shows are for. Visit any of the lighting booths at a trade show for demonstrations of light shaping tools.

Keep in mind, we can be talking about speedlights or studio strobes, but the effect is the same. You need to control the light, or you look like a complete amateur with light all over the place. We call this light spill. It's a sign the photographer has no idea what he is doing and is not in control of his light. Don't get me wrong—sometimes, when moving fast, we can get a little sloppy. If that's the case, you'd better be able to fix this in post production, or the image won't have that professional look. We always strive to get it right in camera.

Here are some of my favorite tools for modification.

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

For speedlights, I love the Rapid Boxes by Westcott. These travel well and are cost effective. And when it comes to ease of use, there is nothing better. It gives you ultimate portability.

For strobes, I am a huge fan of the Profoto B1 and B2. I love their new collapsible beauty dish when I'm using any sort of light modifier. When portability is a nonissue, I love their metal beauty dishes, both white and silver, and their grids for more control.

Something else to consider for any light source are grids, gels and snoots. These are things I have in my bag of tricks at all times. I may not use them, but when I need them, I need them. Over time, you will need to built your lighting kit. There is nothing worse than not having what you need to make a great image.

Regardless of what you decide to do here, just know that this will have a dramatic impact on your look and feel.

The right tool for the job.

I don't just go out there and buy all the latest and greatest toys—although, trust me, I want to. There is nothing more limiting than not having the tools you need when you need them. Above, I mention this regarding light modifiers, but it also pertains to the actual light.

There are times when a speedlight just doesn't give you enough power. Imagine a wedding or high-school senior shoot on location at 1 in the afternoon with a high sun. That speedlight is not going to put out enough power. In addition, the recycle time will be five seconds between shots. That's just not going to fly. In a situation like this, you need a strobe putting out much more power. I would use my B1 putting out 500 watts of power versus the 60-ish of a speedlight. There is no comparing the two, but we need both in our toolkit.

Now, let's flip this. Let's say we are working in a hotel room with a bride getting ready or we are in someone's home for a newborn session. We might need a little pop of light—could be a main light or filling for shadows. Either way, a B1 puts out way too much light. It's like bringing in a jackhammer when all you need is a screwdriver.

Then, of course, there are other scenarios where we need something soft, instant and WYSIWYG. Enter the Ice Light 2 from Westcott. Yes, I travel with all of these, because each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Photographers get all too caught up in the latest and greatest cameras and lenses—which is very important, but lighting tools will last you. They are worth investing in. Build your toolbox very much like a carpenter does. Have you ever seen a carpenter run around with just a screwdriver and a hammer? If so, I promise you don't want this person working on anything for you.

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Go for the dramatic.

You still need to figure out what your style is all about. There is no right or wrong answer here. I only encourage you to seek consistency—in your lighting, which impacts your marketing, which impacts your website, which impacts the clients you attract. I don't get clients looking for "open and airy" images. It's just not my style. I don't show pictures like that on my website. I don't shoot that way or light that way. So there is no confusion with my clients. In fact, my clients often see an image online and say to me, "I knew this was one of yours!" Yes! That's exactly what I want.

With all those tools at my disposal, I lean toward a hard-edged light. No light modifiers and directional. If I have a choice, I usually use a silver reflector versus a white one—again, for that hard specular light. This technique can be seen in many of my images on my site and in my portfolio. Does that mean I never use anything else? Of course not. If I am working a headshot, I light it a little differently than I would a bridal or beauty portrait.

By lighting this way, I have created a look and feel for my images that allows me to stand out in a saturated market. Without an alternate light source, there is no way to accomplish this look and feel that allows me to stand out and create impactful images my clients love.

It all starts with experimentation. Get out there with one goal in mind: play. Play around with lighting, modifiers and techniques, and see what happens. You've heard of the "happy accident"? Well, sometimes that accident becomes your signature look. Don't be afraid to be a student and learn. We all started somewhere. And for me, the journey will never end. Every day, I want to be a better photographer. ■

Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

salcincotta.com

HOW I
PLANNED
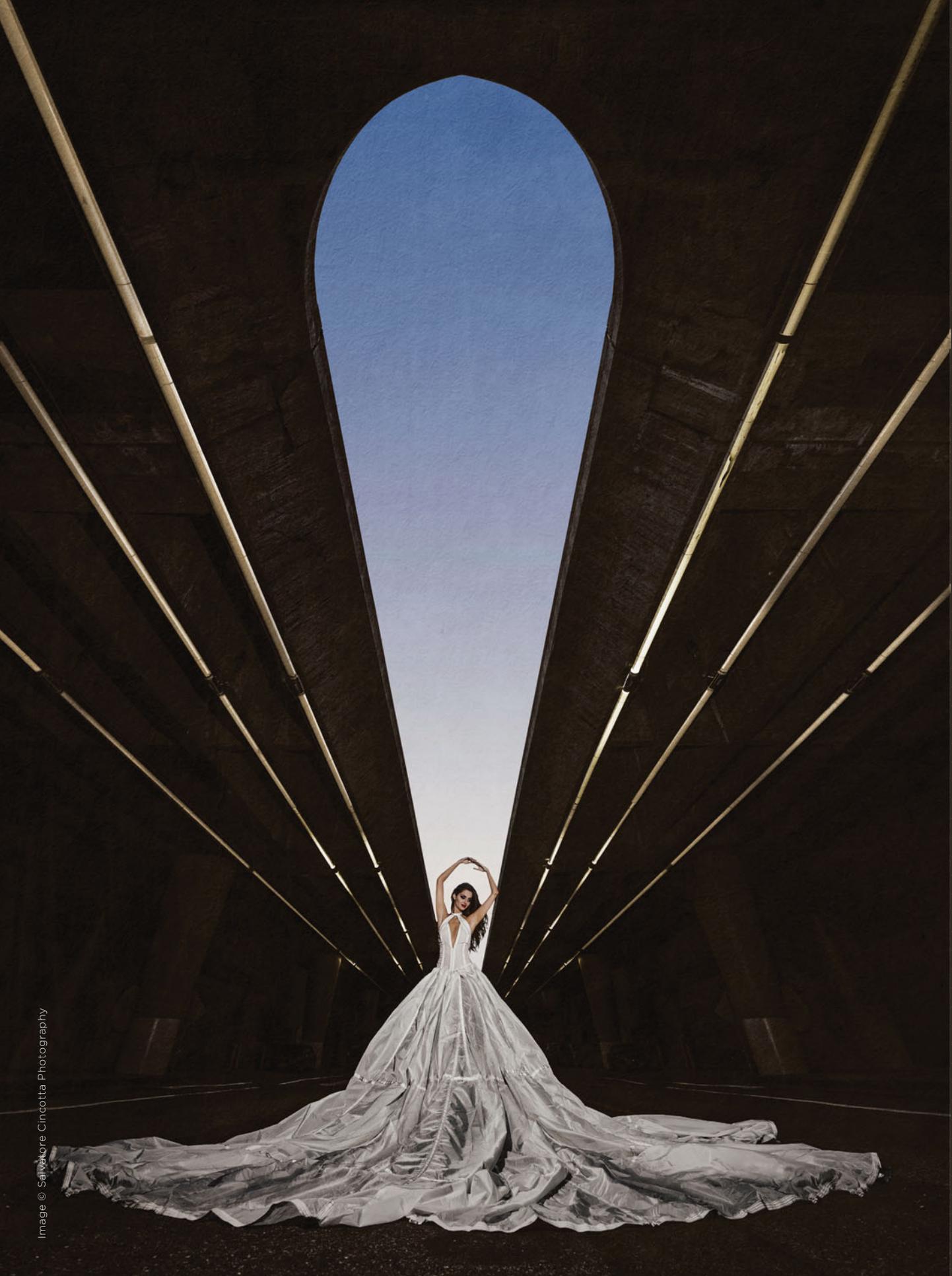# THE SHOT

5 TIPS FOR FINDING & BOOKING MODELS

with Alissa Zimmerman

Models are the number-one finicky variable when planning shoots. Planning around one person (or multiple people) and having faith they will show up on time, professional and ready to go, is enough to keep you up at night.

Models can either make or break your shoot—expression is everything in getting the right shot. We have had our fair share of shoots fall apart because of a model who didn't understand her angles, face, body, etc.

Here's a list of my top sources for finding models, plus how we word our pitches for booking them. Hopefully this helps your shoot-planning success.

### Ask a friend, family member, employee or even a complete stranger.

We all have an attractive friend or family member. For shoots that are meant to build your portfolio, you may not have the budget to hire a top agency model. Who is going to say no to being asked to model, especially a young female? Come on, we live in the narcissistic era, this part should be easy.

Tapping into your staff (if you have one) is a good source for models as well. Often when we are traveling, I will throw on a dress and "model" for Sal to get a shot when we find unique locations. These impromptu shoots can be done in a way that hair and makeup don't need to be professionally done, and your subject can pose in a way that doesn't show her entire face.

There is also the option of approaching a complete stranger in public and asking that person to model for you. Language is extremely important here because you don't want to send creeper vibes (especially if you're a male photographer approaching a younger female). It's as simple as this:

Hey, sorry to bother you, but I am a professional photographer and am planning a photo shoot for my portfolio. You have a great look and I would love to have you model for me. Is this something you'd be interested in?

From here, give the person the details of the shoot (date, time, location) and start painting a picture of the concept to get them excited. Tell them what's in it for them as well. When we do trade photo shoots (known commonly as TFP, or "trade for photos"), we specify that we will give them *any images Sal edits*. This way, if Sal ends up loving and editing only one image from the entire shoot, we are not on the hook to send them every image we took.
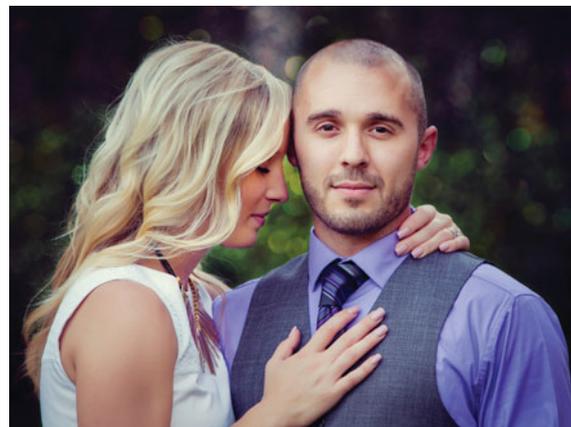
Reach out to previous clients you enjoyed working with.

We enjoy working with past clients for couples shoots (weddings and engagements) because they are a real-life couple, and we have already witnessed their on-camera chemistry. Expression is everything. Chemistry on camera is the secret ingredient that can turn an ordinary photograph into a magically romantic work of art.

Working with previous high school senior clients is almost a guaranteed way to get more business. Their generation is all about social media, showing the virtual world how great they look. Take advantage of this, don't mock it. Word of mouth is everything in our industry, so provide these people with the best experience possible so they share your images with all their friends.

Select clients who photograph well—people who enhance your portfolio, not just someone you had a good time with. Remember, these shoots are for you. It's okay to be critical of the person or people you're hiring (even if you're not paying). You are investing your time, effort and, more than likely, a good amount of money into wardrobe and other details. Make sure the models are exactly what you want to execute your vision.

Keep the language simple when asking your clients to model for you. Give them an incentive for helping you out. We tell them something along these lines:

Hey guys! Hope you've been well! We are putting together a stylized shoot for our portfolio next week, and would love to have you model for us if you're available and interested. We got some amazing images from your [engagement session/senior session/wedding], really enjoyed working with you and think you would be a perfect fit for the shoot we are planning. Let me know if this is something you're interested in, and I'll send over all the details!

We offer client models a free 16x24 canvas. Another added bonus: By having your clients model for a second session, you are creating more revenue if you bring them in for a second sales session.

Friends of mine and a real-life engaged couple.

We found the male model at a shopping mall in Illinois.

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

All images shown above are past clients used for various portfolio projects throughout the year.

Look to social media platforms for models with a little more experience.

Everything's done via social media these days. Finding models on Facebook and Instagram is much easier than you might expect (especially if you have a decent following).

Instagram models are everywhere—you know, the insta-famous girls who have over a million followers for simply being pretty. They love working with photographers to get more images to post online for their followers. All you have to do is reach out and ask if they would be interested. What's the worst that could happen? You don't get a response? Okay, move on.

You should offer to pay girls who have outrageous numbers of followers. This gets their attention, as I'm sure photographers contact these girls daily about collaborating for free. Also, send some of your images or a link to your portfolio so they can see what they can expect from shooting with you. Tell them something like:

Hi, I am a professional wedding and portrait photographer based in the St. Louis, MO, area. We will be in Los Angeles next month, and are putting together a photo shoot for our portfolio. I found you on Instagram and think you would be a perfect fit for the look we're going for. I have attached some of our recent work for you to get an idea of what we do. Let me know if you're interested in working together, and I'll send over all the details for the shoot. Please also let me know what your daily rate is, as this will be a paid shoot. Looking forward to hearing from you!

There are also Facebook groups dedicated to the modeling and photography communities in most major cities around the world. This is a great way to connect with models: Simply request to be a member, and post a casting call on the wall.

Another way to find models on Facebook is to simply post a casting call to your own page. This works really well if you have a decent following because your followers will start tagging people they know and sharing your post, which greatly expands your reach. I post something like:

MODEL CALL: Looking for a real-life couple to model for an upcoming bridal shoot. Wedding dress and hair/makeup provided, groom will need to provide a suit. Hair and makeup will start at 1:00 p.m., will need you both until about 7:00 p.m. For anyone interested and available, please email photos of you and your significant other to alissa@cincottaemail.com, and I will respond with exact details for the shoot. Please feel free to share this post! Thank you!
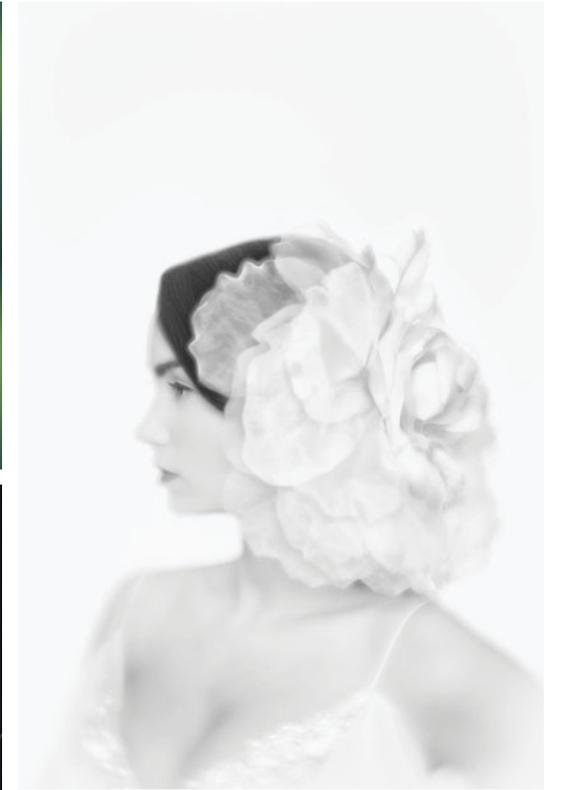
Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Two images above are of a model hired via Instagram.

Two images above are of models hired via Facebook.

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

All models above were hired via Model Mayhem.

Maximize resources with Model Mayhem—the correct way.

Model Mayhem is a website database of models, makeup artists and hair stylists. The site is notorious for being the home of the world's most unreliable group of "creative professionals," as they like to call themselves. Used correctly, Model Mayhem can be a great resource for finding quality models at a reasonable price point.

We use Model Mayhem primarily when doing international shoots, as a large portion of the international model base is agency-represented. These models are on the site to do shoots for themselves outside of agency regulations. Jackpot! These are the type of models you should be looking for—the ones who want to work with other talented people in the industry to build their portfolio while also helping build yours.

You can either post a casting call for models and hair/makeup artists to contact you, or you can browse the database and reach out to each person directly. We prefer reaching out directly so we have control of the look of the model and don't waste time weeding through any unqualified people who respond. Here's a sample pitch:

Hi, we will be in Tokyo, Japan, next week and are planning a few photo shoots for our portfolio in and around Tokyo. I am looking to book a Japanese female model on July 19, 21 and 22. This is a paid shoot. We will need the model available from 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Please let me know if you would like to work together and your availability ASAP so I can plan accordingly. Thank you!

A strong piece of advice, and a rule we live by when booking models through Model Mayhem: Always book a second model as your Plan B, assuming that your Plan A will be a no call/no show. It's sad and unfortunate, but a reality. Get the model's contact information and confirm with them the night before and the morning of the shoot.

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Female model above was hired via Model Mayhem. She brought her boyfriend along to model as our groom.

Hire your models through an agency.

The first time we took the leap from Model Mayhem to an agency-booked model, we were hesitant because of the common misconception that agencies charge an arm and a leg for a subpar model. We were relieved after Sal took his first frame and we all looked at the image straight out of camera. Worth every penny.

There is something to be said about a model who understands how to pose not only her body, but her face as well. I can't stress this enough: If you want to take your images to the next level, hiring a true professional model will elevate the quality of your imagery tenfold, guaranteed.

Going through an agency can be expensive, sure, but it doesn't have to be. When reaching out initially, tell them your budget and ask if they have any "new faces" available. These are the newly represented girls in the lineup who may not have much of a portfolio and are looking to get out in the industry and get some work under their belts. It doesn't mean these girls are inexperienced; it just means they are new to the agency and don't have the level of experience as some of the five- to 10-year veterans (who are booking jobs at an astronomical rate).

Agency-represented models are reliable and professional, and have always been extremely fun for us to work with. They are just as excited to be modeling as you are to be shooting. Remember, this is their job. They need these jobs to make money, and they want these images for their portfolio just as much as you want them for yours.

The model above was the first agency-hired model we worked with for our portfolio.

All models above were hired through a professional agency.

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

When reaching out to an agency, language is key. State your purpose and who you are quickly and efficiently. Agents don't have time to read your novel of a life story, nor do they care. Get to your point, state the facts, speak in bullets and be specific about what you're looking for so they can help you find the right model:

Hi, my name is Alissa Zimmerman. I represent Salvatore Cincotta, wedding/portrait photographer, educator, author and editor-in-chief of the photography education magazine Shutter. *We have our three-year anniversary issue coming up in July, and will be in L.A. on June 18 looking to do a shoot for our cover—our covers normally revolve around a stunning headshot, and we would love to work with one of your girls.*

Can you please let me know what the process is to book a model for this shoot? Below is more information about it:

-Date: June 18, 2015
-Duration: 8 hours
-Location: Hair and makeup at our apartment in Manhattan Beach, shoot location TBD
-Hair/Makeup Start Time: 1:00 p.m.
-Wardrobe: Provided
-Pay: Negotiable—need to know model's rates and agency fees. Final image will be delivered hi-res to agency, as well as printed versions of the magazine (however many you want!).

I have attached images of our most recent covers for you to get an idea of what we do. Looking forward to hearing back from you. Thank you!

Always be upfront if you have a strict budget—depending on the city and the caliber of model you want, you can expect to pay anywhere from $200 to $1,000 for an eight-hour day, plus the normal 20 percent agency fee on top of that. ■

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine
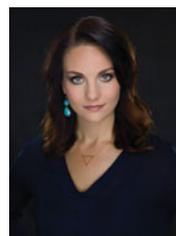
Alissa Zimmerman graduated with a degree in television production and has been a part of the Salvatore Cincotta team since 2011. Today she is behind the camera regularly as Sal's second shooter and as the executive producer and camera operator for Salvatore Cincotta Films, Behind the Shutter and Sal Cincotta's School of Photography. Alissa is the creative director for *Shutter Magazine* and serves as Sal's right hand, managing daily operations within the family of Salvatore Cincotta brands.

salcincotta.com

product
review

Manufacturing Co., Inc. with *Salvatore Cincotta*
"The World's Largest Manufacturer Of Photographic Backdrops And Props"

Manufacturing Co., Inc.
"The World's Largest Manufacturer Of Photographic Backdrops And Props"

Why Denny backdrops?

Not all backdrops are created equal. If you are looking for quality, Denny has been a market leader for quite some time. They understand the needs of the photographer and they understand quality.

On a recent shoot, I needed a white backdrop. We can use white paper, white cloth or, in this case, a white matte vinyl from Denny. In the past, I have used the cloth and the paper, and both were a nightmare to work with—glare, ripping, dirt, stains and a host of other issues. This time around, I decided to talk to the folks over at Denny, and the Matte Vinyl was the right tool for the job. I also wanted something that would stand the test of time. Needless to say, the Denny White Vinyl background was a winner.

The quality of this backdrop is something you have to see and feel to believe. It's incredibly well built and will stand up to the wear and tear of portrait work. Best of all, vinyl is easily cleaned.

Check out the details.

· Low maintenance (easily cleaned)
· 14oz Matte Vinyl (antiglare)
· Heavy-duty
· Can be adapted to mount on roller system or standard backdrop support system

Want to save big? Save 50% on this vinyl backdrop if you order by August 31. Use code "cincotta816."

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

For more information, visit **dennymfg.com**

THE LIGHTING EDITION

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

CREATING THE

SUPER-SOFT

PORTRAIT

with **Michael Corsentino**

The camera settings for this final edit were f/11, ISO 100, 1/125 s, using an 80mm f/2.8 Schneider-Kreuznach leaf shutter lens.

I love soft lighting, but I don't use it very often, so I was looking forward to creating these images and having a chance to flex my soft-light muscles. My design concept for this series of portraits called for a classic, elegant, soft editorial look with super soft lighting, elegant wardrobe and natural-looking makeup and hair. I also knew that I wanted a painted backdrop and a few props to add to the overall editorial quality I was after. Based on these guidelines. I was able to reverse-engineer the technical requirements and determine the right tools and techniques needed to get the job done.

Having a solid idea of what you want to accomplish before you shoot provides an invaluable roadmap for you, your models and clients. I encourage you to deviate and step outside the box.

But start smart, with a plan.

THE **BACKDROP**

It's no secret that when it comes to backdrops, I'm a snob. I typically opt for clean and classic seamless colors like white, dove gray and black. For my money, these are far more timeless than much of the printed fare I've seen. The custom-painted Oliphant backdrops that I do lust after don't come cheap, at around $1,600 each. You've seen them in the pages of *Vanity Fair*, and countless other publications and ad campaigns by iconic photographers like Annie Leibovitz. One day in the not-too-distant future, one of these will be mine.

In the meantime, I've found an amazingly high-quality close second that's a fraction of the cost. Emily Soto's "Eleanor" hand-painted canvas backdrop was the perfect fit for the classic editorial look I had in mind when I was designing these portraits. It's available exclusively though Seamless Photo.

THE **PROPS**

My concept for this series included two props. I recently added a couple exciting new items to my inventory of studio posing props: a set of distressed apple boxes and a vintage A-frame ladder. These are perfect for a variety of posing applications. I hired a New York City prop house to create the apple boxes, and an online garden supply company provided the vintage ladder, which I had custom-painted. Both of these props provide myriad options for standing, seated and floor-based posing.

In this behind-the-scenes image, you can see how simple my setup was: one light and a fill board. Play close attention to the model's position in relation to the Octabank. Notice how she's behind it. This is feathering.

Image © Michael Corsentino

THE **GEAR**

Okay, let's geek out on all the technical stuff. One light and the largest modifier you can get your hands on is really all you need to create beautiful soft portrait light. There are numerous ways to approach this style of lighting, some that include multiple lights, overhead scrims, etc. As long as it delivers the desired effect, I like to keep things as simple as possible. This way I can more easily focus on the concept, posing and being creative rather than getting caught up with an overly complicated setup.

My modifier of choice for this look was Elinchrom's 74-inch Indirect Octabank (Model EL26158, now discontinued, but replaced by the new 75-inch Elinchrom Indirect Litemotiv Octa Softbox Model EL28000). I chose this modifier because of its size, shallow profile and the indirect orientation of the strobe inside it. These three characteristics create a soft-light trifecta that produces gorgeous soft portrait light when placed close to your subject.

Remember, the larger the modifier and closer it is to your subject, the softer the resulting light. The indirect light orientation is an added bonus. For the strobe inside the Octa, I used an Elinchrom ELC 1000ws digital head.

At this point in my career, I'm kind of a nut about rigging and grip. Good grip equipment is worth its weight in gold for the obvious safety reasons but also from a usability standpoint. Two of my favorite and most useful pieces of grip equipment in the studio are Manfrotto's 387XBU wind-up stand and the Mega Boom 425B I use for my keylight. Using the wind-up stand means I don't have to muscle my light and modifier up and down as I make height adjustments, while the Mega Boom allows me to control the keylight's angle, pitch, direction, etc. via four-way geared cranks. Wireless triggering was accomplished with Elinchrom's new digital Skyport HS controller, and I used Sekonic's new L478 DR EU to meter and wirelessly control keylight power in 1/10 stop increments. This is a sweet meter, the first to offer wireless control of Elinchrom strobes; it also puts a complete strobe control center in the palm of your hands.

Images were captured using my Phase One IQ250 medium back, DF+ camera body, and 80mm f/2.8 and f/3.5 150mm Schneider-Kreuznach leaf shutter lenses.

One of the keys to achieving soft light is a large, broad light source. For this shoot, I used an Elinchrom 74-inch Indirect Octabank.
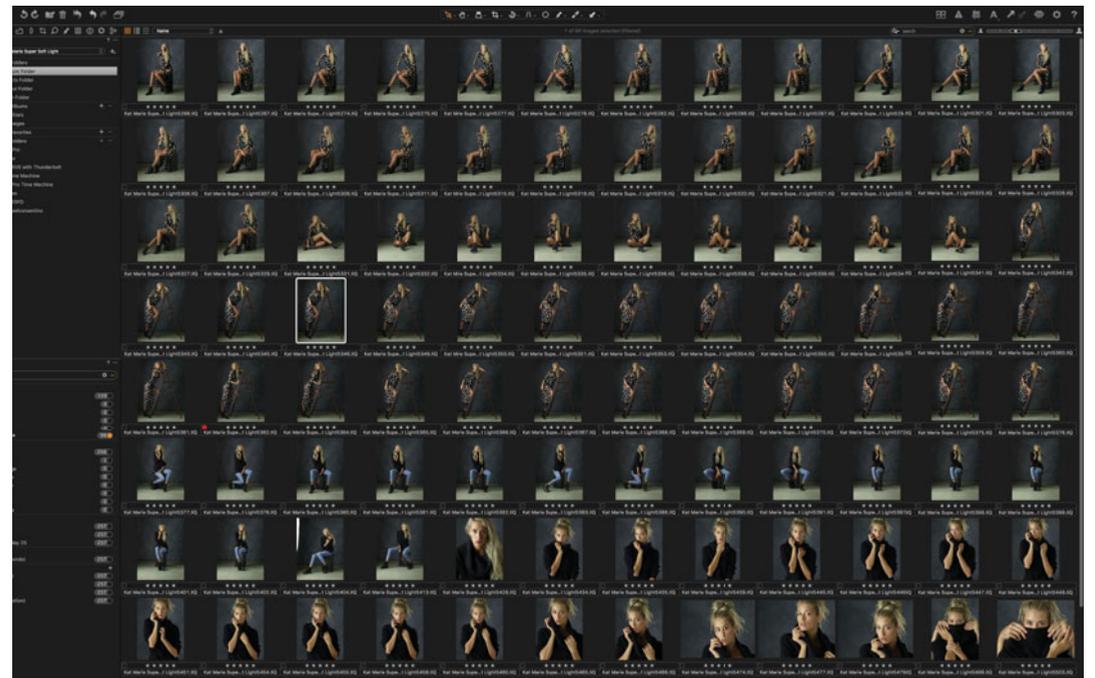
Keeping it simple allows you to focus on being creative and getting more done. This shoot was an embarrassment of riches. Here's a peek at my first round of selects.

Image © Michael Corsentino

CREATING **SUPER-SOFT LIGHT**

The first thing you'll need to create soft light is the largest modifier you have at your disposal. For this shoot, I used a 74-inch Elinchrom Indirect Octabank. Repeat after me: The larger the modifier, the softer the light. This modifier has several other factors that make it the perfect candidate for soft light. Its shallow profile and indirect orientation of the strobe inside it (meaning it points away from the subject and toward the inside of the Octabank) reduce contrast and significantly soften the light produced. As you can see, choosing the right modifier plays a pivotal role.

The way the keylight is positioned is also an extremely important factor in creating this soft lighting effect. As illustrated in the included lighting diagram, the keylight is positioned at a 90-degree angle from the subject and camera position, rather than the 45-degree angle associated with Rembrandt lighting. This angle creates a wider dynamic range and softer, more gradual transitions between the highlights and shadows. The front-to-back position of the keylight relative to the subject dictates the amount of triangle created on the subject's cheek, one of the hallmarks of Rembrandt light.

Creating soft light is all about—you guessed it—working with soft light. Feathering is a required technique when working with the softest part of the light coming from a modifier. The light at the edges of a softbox or Octabank is the softest light possible, and it's truly beautiful. Shoot a few tests, and you'll quickly see for yourself. Try one shot with your model illuminated by the center of your modifier and then another lit by the light coming from the edge of your modifier, and you'll immediately see the difference. There's no comparison. By moving backward and forward—again, relative to the model—you'll be able to modulate the amount of feather and find your lighting sweet spot. So get your feather on.
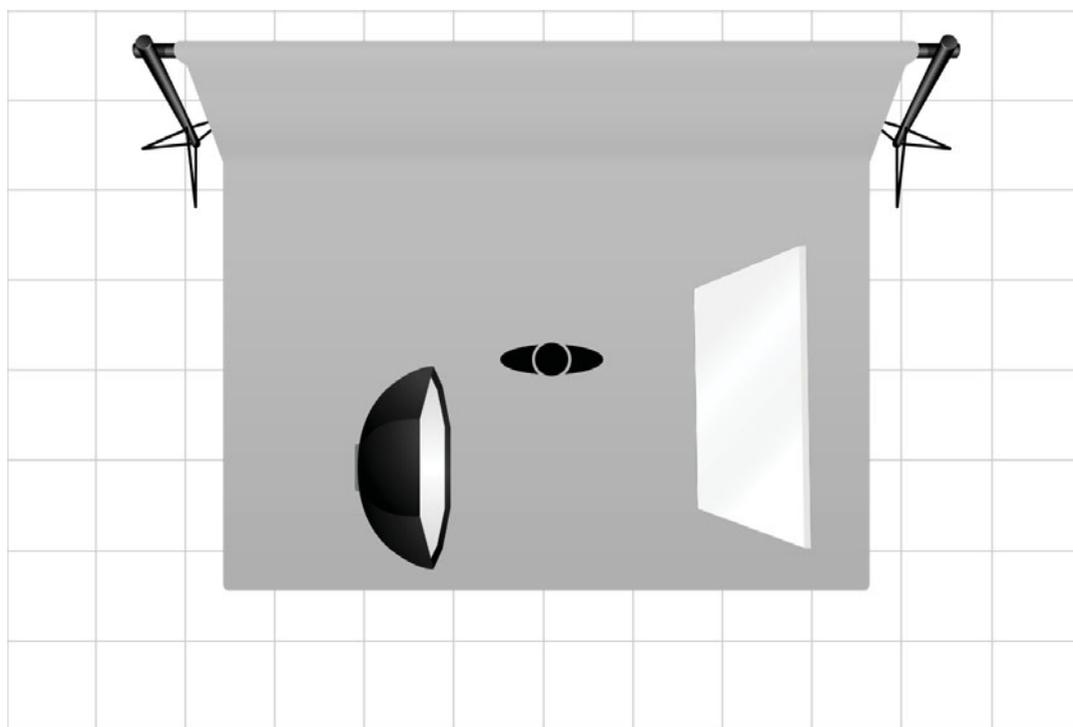
Image © Michael Corsentino

Even with a broad source like the one I'm using for this shoot, the height of your keylight still plays an important role in the creation of even illumination from top to bottom. You can see clearly in this image that my keylight is too high in relation to my model, causing her lower half to fall into shadow.

By simply adjusting the height of my keylight, in this case lowering it, I was able to instantly create a much more even and pleasing amount of light coverage.

The amount of feather you give your light is a personal choice, something you'll have to season to taste. In this image, my light is soft and feathered while creating moderately bright highlights on the model's face.

By simply pulling the keylight forward toward the camera position, I was able to increase the amount of light being feathered and reduce the highlights on the model's face. This helped create the softer, less specular look I wanted.

Images © Michael Corsentino

You'll also need some mechanism for fill light if necessary. This can be a second light, a reflector or a white foamcore V-flat like the one I used for the finals from this shoot. The amount of fill you use—and the decision to use it at all—is subject to taste and context.

The amount of fill light can be modulated by simply moving the reflective surface being used closer or farther away from your subject and keylight. You'll need to experiment and find your sweet spot, just as you did when establishing the amount of feather to give your keylight.

Image © Michael Corsentino

Here you can see how close the keylight was to my model. Remember, the closer the source, the larger its perceived size relative to the subject and the softer the light.

Image © Michael Corsentino

I like to start with the keylight alone and then introduce fill when needed. In this case, having the camera on the right side of the model was too dark, causing her face and dress to fall into deep shadow. To correct this, I added a white V-flat opposite the keylight to add fill light to the camera right side of the image.

SOFT LIGHT, **GET YOUR SOFT LIGHT!**

This image illustrates the result of adding the white V-flat for fill opposite the keylight. Note the dress and right side of the model's face. They're both significantly brighter, with enough shadows remaining to give the image a dimensional quality of light.

At the end of the day, you can achieve gorgeous super-soft lighting with a wide variety of modifiers. Ideally, you'll want the largest softbox or Octabank you can get.

Once you have your modifier picked out, follow the tried and true guideline: The closer the light source is to your subject, the softer the quality of light will be. To further heighten this effect, orient your light and modifier at a 90-degree angle relative to your subject, rather than the more common 45-degree angle you may be used to. This increases the dynamic range between the shadows and highlights, and creates gradual, smooth, beautiful transitions.

Lastly, if you can use a modifier with an indirect strobe orientation, make that your go-to, like I did here. Using an indirect modifier—one with the strobe facing in and to the back instead of out toward your subject—produces even softer, more pleasing light. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Michael Corsentino is an Orlando, Florida-based editorial fashion and portrait photographer. In addition to his busy shooting schedule, Michael is a passionate educator, teaching workshops domestically and internationally. He is an author of two books, writes a monthly lighting column for *Shutter Magazine* and is a regular contributor to *Photoshop User* magazine and JointheBreed.com.

corsentinophotography.com

NEXT-LEVEL

TRICKS FOR OFF-CAMERA FLASH

with Vanessa Joy

This past year, I've been stepping up my off-camera flash game. I've been getting a grasp on it overall, and it has now found a home in my workflow and shooting style. Now I'm looking to take it up a notch, to find ways to start molding and modifying it with more precision and creativity.

For the lighting issue, I'm excited to talk about a few new tricks—and, quite frankly, epiphanies—that I've discovered and started using in the last six months. If you're ready to join me in dedicating some time to bettering your OCF skills, then this is for you.

ONE-LIGHT MAGIC

I like using just one light. Not because I don't want to work with a five-light setup so every picture is perfect, but because I want to be mobile and have an easy and fast setup. Wedding photographers don't always get a ton of time to set up, if any at all, and the last thing I want is my bride and groom standing around while I futz with lights.

When I use one light, I put it in one of two positions around my clients—in front or behind them. This part isn't rocket science, but let's chat about it anyway.

I put the light in front of my clients when I want to fill in shadows cast by the sun. Could I use it for other things? Sure. But my clients want that light and airy feel that my brand portrays, so my goal is to give that to them under any circumstances.

These images were taken on a cloudy day, and, as much as we like to say that means we're shooting under a big softbox, that's exactly the problem. We're shooting directly under a huge softbox. When light is directly overhead, even when it's diffused, it casts shadows under eyes, just like what was going on for this wedding day. So, I just plopped my Profoto B1 on a stand and used it to fill in the shadows.

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 85 1.2 @ 4.5
ISO: 100
Shutter: 1/250

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 85mm 1.2 @ 2.5
ISO: 100
Shutter: 1/1000

Image © Vanessa Joy

Image © Vanessa Joy

Image © Vanessa Joy

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 85 1.2 @4.5
ISO: 160
Shutter: 1/800

When my clients look at my photos, they don't understand why they get a warm fuzzy feeling. They shouldn't understand it. But they should know that they can expect that from me even if the sun isn't shining on their wedding day or engagement session.

For the shot to the right, I used a Profoto B2, held by my assistant to camera right behind the brush. Why behind the brush? Because that's where the sun typically would have been shining through. This helped create that warm glow that this overcast day in the forest simply didn't provide naturally. I used a CTO gel on the light as well (more on colored gels next).

Image © behindtheshutter.com

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 135mm 2.0 @ 5.6
ISO: 640
Shutter: 1/250

COLOR ME PRETTY

One of the next-level steps you can take is to add color. You can do this to color-correct or color-enhance.

Take this photo below. I put on a CTO gel (fancy talk for medium orange) on their faces because I wanted to cool down the image overall so the building lights wouldn't appear drastically orange and the night sky would become more blue since we were past twilight. This is a good example of using a gel to color-correct.

Image © Vanessa Joy

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 24mm 1.4 @ 3.5
ISO: 2500
Shutter: 1/30
Lights: 2 Profoto B1's

Now, the technique I mentioned above can go terribly wrong if you overcompensate for the color. I did this in the photo to the right by mistakenly putting the dark blue gel on my light instead of the lighter blue. There was no Lightrooming/Photoshopping that was going to help me there. Learn from mistakes!

Additionally, you can make use of all the other gels in that pretty little gel pack and create any color light you'd like. I don't normally do this for weddings, but for fashion and portraits, it's quite fun. It can easily enhance otherwise dull backgrounds and create a fun rimlight around your subjects as well.

Image © Vanessa Joy

Image © Vanessa Joy

Camera: Canon EOS-1D X
Lens: 85mm 1.2 @ f/2
ISO: 1000
Shutter: 1/160

CONTROL YOUR LIGHT

I've been working on controlling the light with my OCF. If you look back at my night pictures from two years ago and even last year, you'll see a lot of light spill, particularly on the ground. I'd try to darken it in post, but that doesn't always work so well without some serious Photoshopping. Truth is, unless it's intentional, it's a good indicator that you haven't mastered light control yet (still guilty!). Someone told me once that you should never reveal your light source when shooting natural light or otherwise. I think that rule applies here.

The easiest thing to do is get a grid and start playing around. They make different grid degrees so you can determine exactly how narrow of a beam of light you'd like for the given situation. The best way to learn this is to just pop a grid on in a dark area, turn on the modeling light on your strobe and see the light change as you switch grids. When you use this with actual subjects, use the modeling light, especially if your subjects move. This way, you can always tell if they're in the beam of light you're creating.

This photo is an example of grid use on the backlight that is behind them camera left. I wanted the light to just kiss them so the image kept its nighttime ambiance and wasn't flooded with light or light flare. To light their faces, I had the Profoto portable beauty dish with the diffuser attachment to soften things up.

Image © Vanessa Joy

Now that I've inspired you to try a few new things—which usually means buying a few new toys—I'll take it one step further and show you how to put them together in the video. When I first get my toys, I sit there staring at them blankly before attempting to figure them out without directions. Allow me to save you a few minutes of your precious time so you can get shooting right away. ■

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

vanessajoy.com

product
review

Profoto®
The Light Shaping Company™ with *Salvatore Cincotta*

Profoto®
The Light Shaping Company™

Why the Profoto B2?

When it comes to making a great image, lighting is key to our success. Keep in mind, not all light is created equally. Things like quality, duration, color, construction and portability all play a vital role in the final product. Profoto made a huge splash in our industry with the incredibly powerful B1, with 500 watts of power in a portable unit.

Today, we are looking at the B2. Call it the little brother of the B1, putting out 250 watts of portable power. It's built with the same Profoto-quality construction we have all come to know and love, and is something in my toolbox that I often use and one I recommend adding to your kit. Speedlites can't compete with the power and recycle times of this bad boy.

Check out some of the benefits.

  1. On or off-camera flash: The B2 head is small and light enough to be put on a bracket on your camera. Or put it on a monopod or stand. The choice is yours. Both solutions have their advantages but are equally convenient.

  2. The B2 offers full TTL operation with both Canon and Nikon cameras.

  3. The B2 is designed to help you to add a little or a lot of extra light wherever it is needed. The entire B2 kit fits in a bag no larger than your average shoulder bag.

  4. At full power, the B2 recharges in 1.35 seconds. At lower power settings, it produces up to 20 flashes per second, eliminating the risk of missing that perfect shot waiting for the flash. Also note that the B2 has High-Speed Sync (HSS) functionality, giving you full control of available light.

  5. The built-in reflector creates a wide and even light spread that is beautiful on its own. But that is only the start. There more than 150 tools to choose from.

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

For more information, visit **profoto.com**

5

USES OF **RINGLIGHTS**

with Melanie Anderson

Image © Melanie Anderson

The ringlight I used for this article is an 18-inch constant with a gooseneck. The gooseneck is vital to the flexibility of the light, allowing me to bend and direct it. I prefer the 65W with 5400 Kelvin temperature. Many of you know my love for ringlights: The versatility of constant lights, ease of use, portability and affordability are among a few reasons they are part of my studio equipment.

This month, I share several ways to use ringlights. We have recently added a diffuser to our product line as well. The diffusers are wonderful for clients who have a more difficult time with the brightness of the light, as well as for some of our video projects when the light is just a bit too harsh.

ShutterFest 2016

What an incredible time we had at ShutterFest 2016. I brought several of my staff. I taught classes on senior photography, extreme sports and creative shoots with ringlights. Many attended our Monday Midnight Ringlight class, which we finally finished around 2 a.m. An epic night of creating was had by all. We photographed a few members of a local wrestling team, along with several models wearing parachute dresses and a one-of-a-kind comic dress stylized and shot by many attendees. With around 100 ShutterFesters surrounding us, we created some amazing images.

For the extreme wrestlers, we lined up the ringlights side by side to create flat light. I posed the wrestlers and applied eye black for a more intense look. For the comic dress model, I used a three-light setup, with two kickers and a main. For the tight shots, I shot horizontally through the ringlight. For the 3/4 shots, I pulled the main light over to the side and shot vertically.

Feel free to email me for behind-the-scenes and post-production videos of these creations.

Image © Melanie Anderson

Images © Melanie Anderson

Fashion

We work with a local hair salon and create for them many times a year. These images are used for their website, social media and promotional materials. During these photo shoots, I keep in mind which images would be great for print competition. We love filming behind the scenes of these types of shoots—great for clients' website and social media, and for ours too. You can view many of these videos on our YouTube channel at Anderson Photographs.
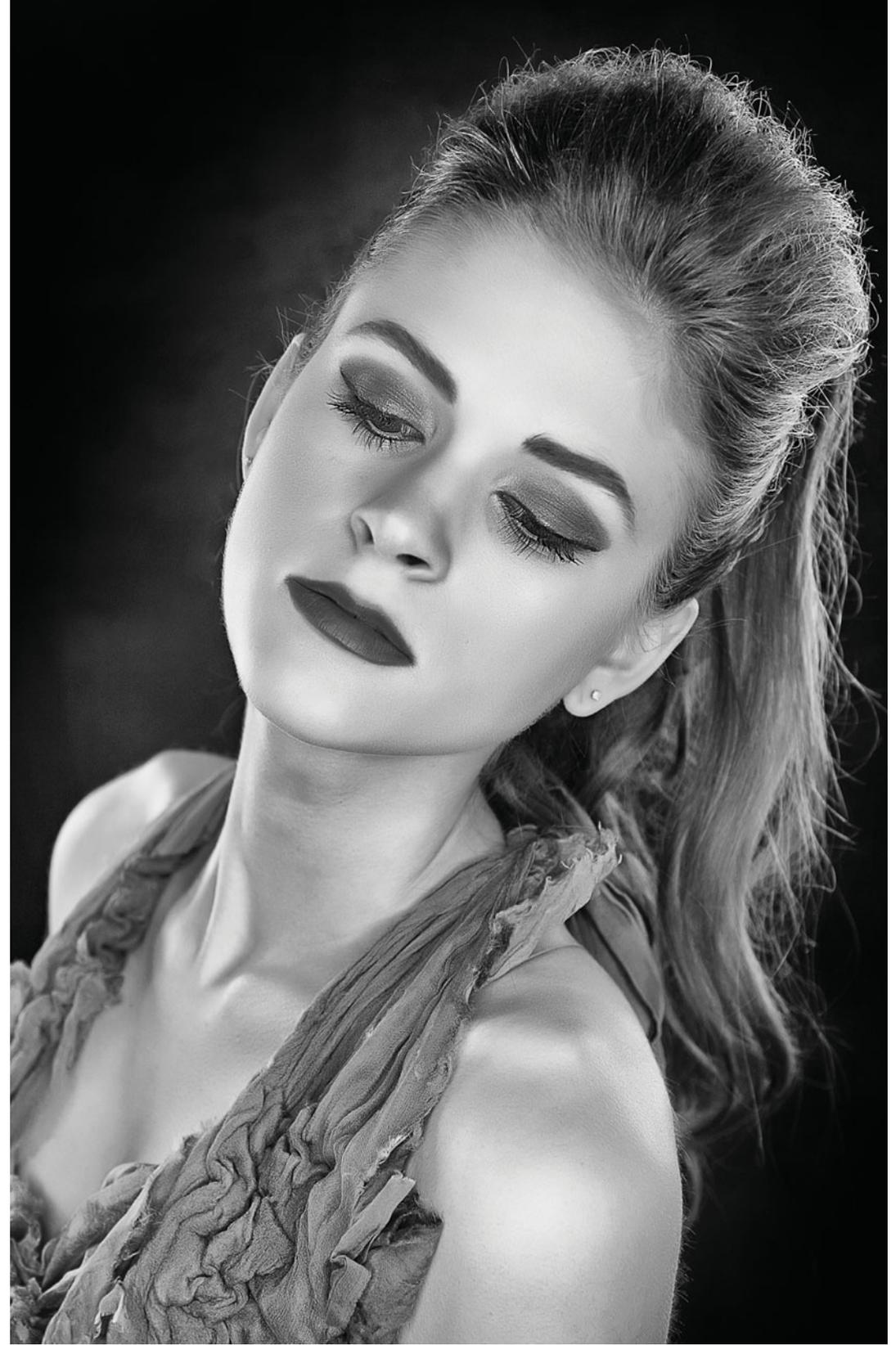

Image © Melanie Anderson

Image © Melanie Anderson

Headshots

We photograph hundreds of headshots a year. It often takes my clients longer to walk into my studio and fill out the paperwork than it does for us to actually take the image. I use a three-ringlight setup. Two are kicker lights that are aimed at the subject, which provides separation of the subject from the backdrop. I place them at a height to create light from the top of their head to mid-waist, which also works great as the hair light. The main light is placed in front of my subject, which I shoot through the light in such a way that the catchlights are just around the pupil. If you find that your clients do not like the circular catchlight, contact us for a quick video tutorial on how to remove that catchlight and replace it with another.

Most of our headshot clients are directors of companies, hospital execs, Realtors and bankers. These images are used for their websites, social media accounts and business cards.

Images © Melanie Anderson

Products

Ringlights are so portable that we take them everywhere. When using them on location with no accessibility to outlets, we use Paul C. Buff portable power, which can provide power for up to 90 minutes. With product photography, the gooseneck really comes in handy. I am able to bend these lights to the height that I need, and provide light directly overhead. I take three lights with me when on location. This ensures that I am able to create depth and dimension, and if a commercial client asks for a last-minute headshot, I'm prepared.

THE RINGLIGHT

Images © Melanie Anderson

Senior EXTREME Sports

We are known in our community for our EXTREME Sports product line. In previous editions of *Shutter*, I have discussed how we market and sell these creations. My goal is to photograph these within 10 minutes. Again, using a three-light setup, I start with a tight horizontal shot through the light, very intense and impactful. I then move my main light away and begin capturing three to five additional images in their sports gear. These creations are always presold and designed after their order session. You can view many behind-the-scenes of these creations on our YouTube channel.

Images © Melanie Anderson
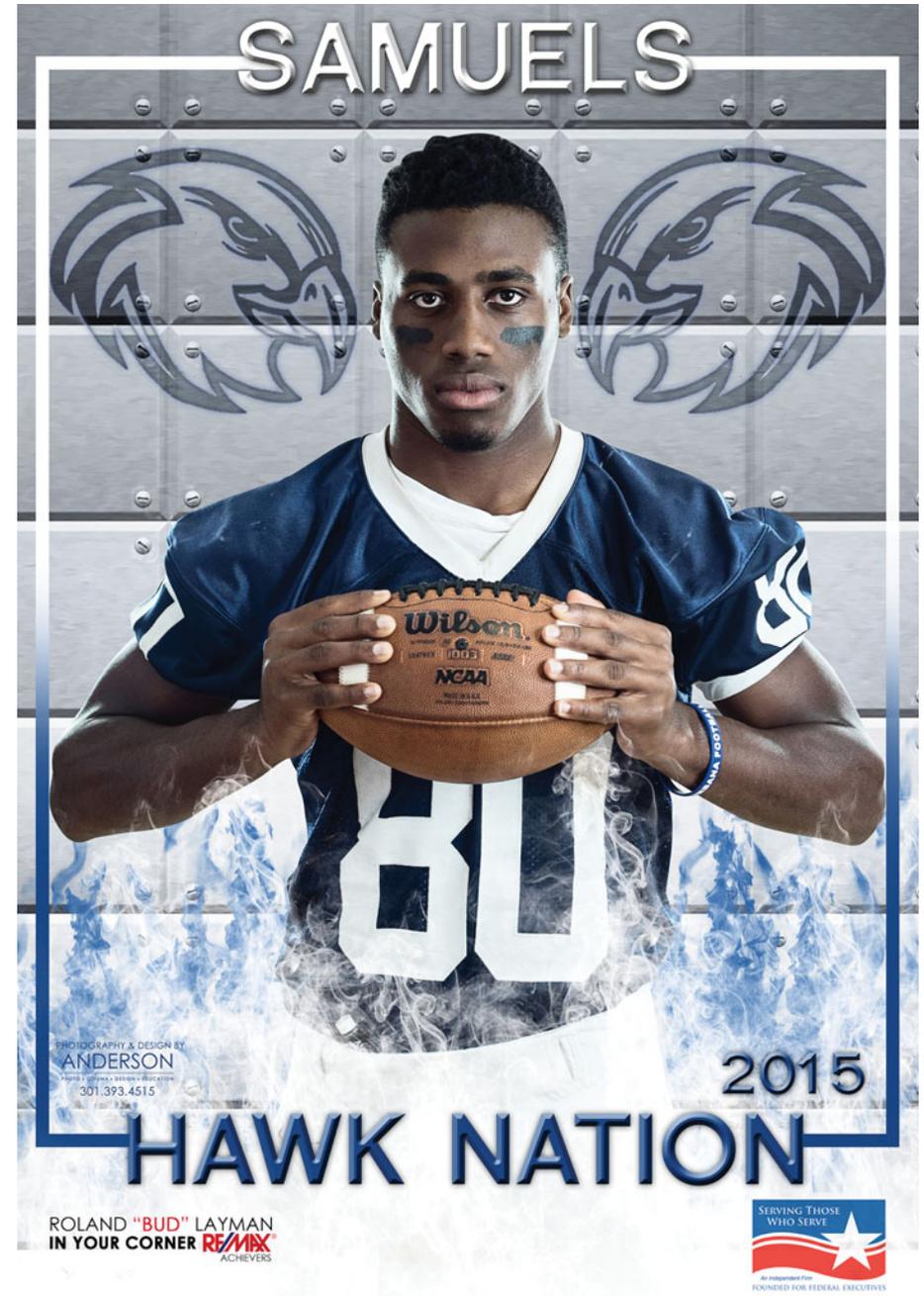
Image © Melanie Anderson

Volume Sports

Whether on location or in the studio, we use a three-light setup. High schoolers are photographed horizontally through the main light, and younger subjects are shot with 3/4 with the main light off to the side. For schools that are creating senior banners, we have a second station also set up with ringlights. These images are shot 3/4 vertically and are designed as banners that hang in gymnasiums and on sports fields. It's an incredible way to market your business.

Image © Melanie Anderson

I use ringlights more than any other light source when photographing indoors. Their portability, affordability and ease of use allows me to create images that set my studio apart.

Typical Settings:
F4
1/160
200–500 ISO
4350K

Equipment:
Nikon D4
24–70mm 2.8
85mm 1.4
Ringlights
Ringlight diffuser
Paul C. Buff portable power

Action Plans:
Register for ShutterFest 2017.
Network with a local hair salon.
Subscribe to Anderson Photographs'
YouTube channel.
Create a business headshot
promotion. ■

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Melanie Anderson is an award-winning photographer and wife to her husband of 20 years, Bill, and a mother to their four children, Sarah, Emily, Kayla and Billy. Anderson Photographs is located in the Arts & Entertainment District of downtown Hagerstown, Maryland. Melanie is a Certified Professional Photographer who received her Photographic Craftsman degree in February 2015. Melanie is passionate about one-on-one mentoring and works diligently to provide educational resources and workshops to fellow photographers through Anderson Education. Learn more at AndersonPhotographs.com.

andersonphotographs.com

When I first got into photography, I had no idea how much goes into creating amazing images. I thought you were either blessed with artistic talent or you were not, and that is what made certain photographers great and others not so great. Since I have been in the industry for a little bit, I have found that what I thought about talent is kind of true and kind of not true. What I have found out, from all my speaking and teaching I do around the country, is there is definitely not a lack of talent out there. There are some amazingly talented shooters, but what is missing is a lack of fundamental knowledge of the individual parts of photography.
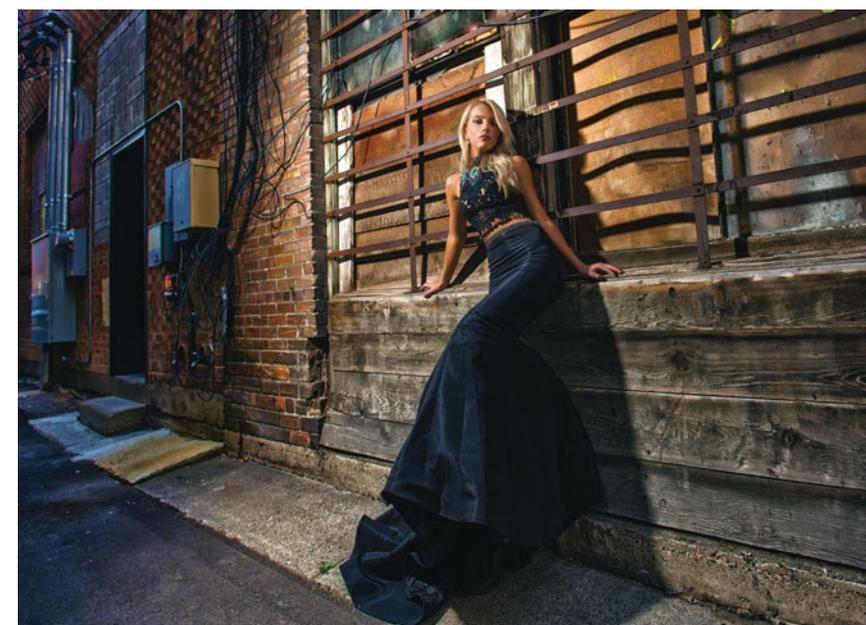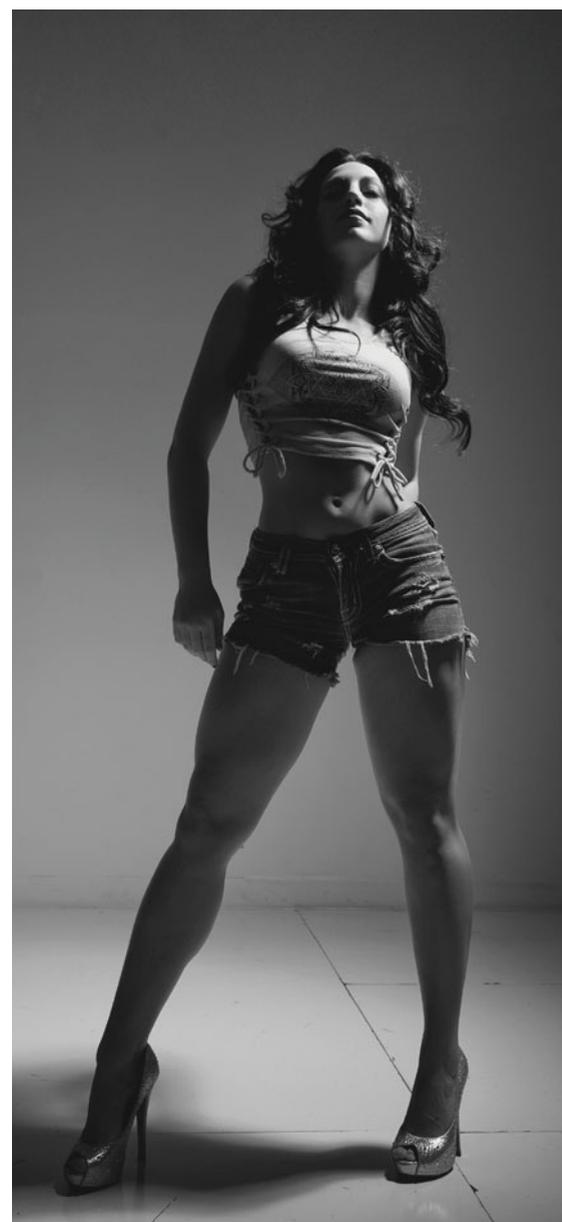
While there is a lot of commonality in the different genres of photography, like composition, exposure and aperture, there are a lot of very specific points of knowledge in the different genres. Landscape photography has certain challenges that product photography does not. Commercial photography has pitfalls that photojournalism does not.

Trying to tackle all the parts in one article would turn this into *War and Peace*, so this month, I address the basics of lighting and lighting patterns. Understand light patterns and how to use them to convey any mood you want, any look you want, so you become an educated creator and not just a talented picture taker.

Lighting patterns have been around since even before anyone thought it would be a good idea to invent the camera, and have been used by painters forever. I have racked my brain trying to remember where and when I was introduced to lighting patterns, but I can't for the life of me remember. I just know I was introduced to them or I stumbled across them, and they became the foundation of how I shoot people.

I'm a huge believer in previsualization when it comes to creating images. I feel like I should be about 95 percent sure what my images are going to look like before I ever push the shutter button. When your client comes to you with a vision in mind for their shoot, they expect you to be able to deliver their wants. Some clients might want a soft glamor look they saw in a magazine. Some clients might want a super-badass look like they see with professional athletes in ad campaigns. Some clients might want a very stoic and proper portrait to hang in their office.

Each of these scenarios is very different, and each one has a totally different type of light or different combinations of light to create the look. Over the next few issues, I will cover some of the combinations you can use to create any look you can dream up. This month I lay out what I believe to be the foundation of lighting: lighting patterns.

SPLIT LIGHT

Split lighting is when you have divided the subject into two halves with light. One half is in the light and the other half is in the shadows. The light comes directly from one side and a horizontal plane splits the face or body in half.

When to Use: I use short split lighting when I want a very dramatic and moody image. I either split the face or the body.

General Setup Directions: The key is to not let light that is unwanted spill onto the lit part of the subject. Place your gridded strip light, on a horizontal plane, on the side you want to light, and feather the light just enough to allow one half to be lit. I often add a fill light to bring some details out of the shadows.

Images © Craig LaMere

LOOP

Loop lighting is when the shadow from the nose creates a loop on the side of the nose. This is the most flattering pattern for general use because you are filling both eyes with light and still creating some depth on the side of the face opposite the light source.

When to Use: I use this pattern for glamour, bridals, seniors, older clients and any situation that needs to be bright and soft.

General Setup Directions: Place the light to the side of the subject at a 45-degree angle and bring it around until the shadow from the nose disconnects from the cheek, making a loop shadow on the side of the nose.
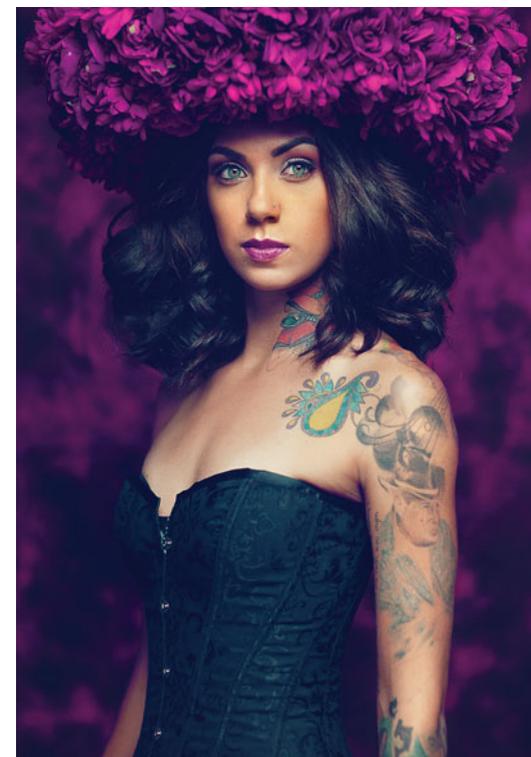
REMBRANDT

Rembrandt lighting is when the shadow from the nose connects with the chin to create a triangle of light on the cheek below the eye. This lighting pattern is very dramatic, proper and stoic.

When to Use: I use this pattern for elegant, stoic and moody images. I also use it for formal and regal portraits. This pattern should never be used for smiling or laughing images.

General Setup Directions: Place the light to the side of the subject at a 45-degree angle and bring it around till the shadow from the nose connects with the cheek, making a triangle of light under the eye.

Images © Craig LaMere
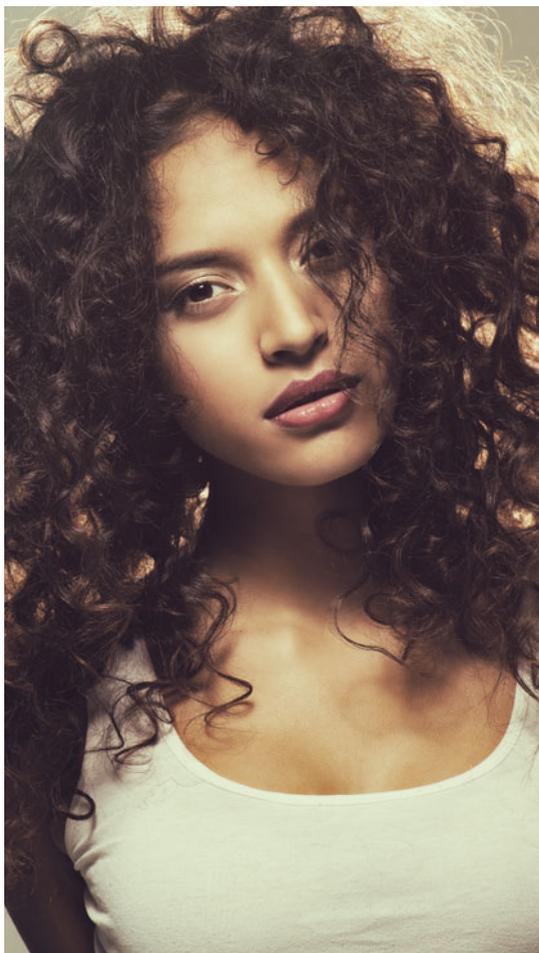
Images © Craig LaMere

BUTTERFLY

Butterfly light, or Paramount lighting, is when the light source is in front and above your subject with the light facing down on the subject. The light is called a beauty light, as the eyes are filled with light, the light is straight onto the subject and any skin flaws are lessened and the cheekbones are hollowed, making your subject more beautiful. The pattern is signified by a shadow under the nose that resembles a butterfly.

When to Use: I use this pattern for headshots, fashion, glamour and when I have a client with really bad skin. I use it to showcase the subject's face.

General Setup Directions: Place the light in front and above the subject. You will angle the light down until the shadow from the nose makes a pattern resembling a butterfly directly under the nose. You want to be careful of making the angle too steep, or you will make raccoon eyes, which are black pockets in the eyes. Some people do not like how dark the shadow is under the chin on the neck. You can add a fill card under the light and kick some light into the shadows.

Images © Craig LaMere

SHORT
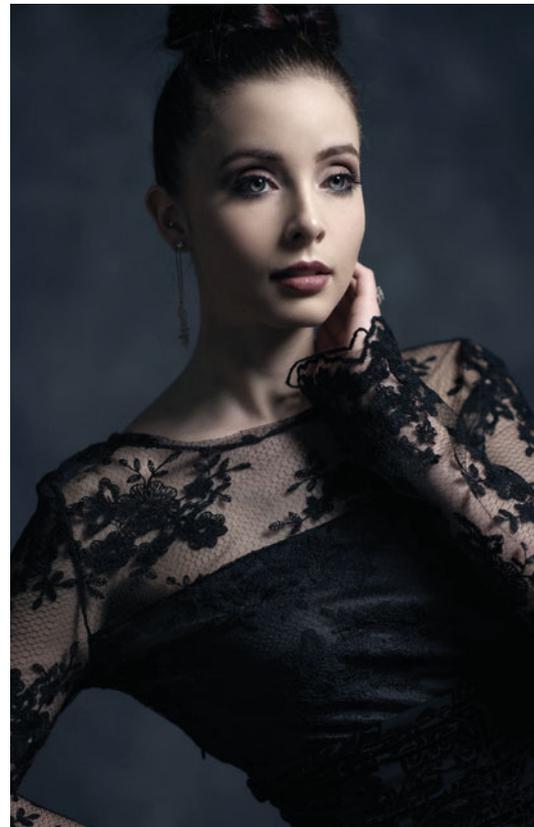
Short lighting is considered a feminine lighting pattern since it slims and flatters the face of the subject. In portraiture, short lighting is used on females to make the face seem narrower. Short lighting is usually not used on men in portraiture, since it is not typically pleasing to make a man look slimmer and less masculine. But if you have a male with a large face or a very round one, short lighting may be far more flattering for your subject than broad lighting.

When to Use: I use short lighting for formal women's portraits when I want to slim, and when I want to give my images power, confidence and depth.

General Setup Directions: Short light is typically shot at a 45-degree angle so you are able to get light in the subject's eyes. It can be used in a loop or modified Rembrandt pattern. You want the smallest part of the face toward the camera and nose facing the light source so the short part of the face is being lit. Short light is the exact opposite of broad lighting. The easiest way to short light is having the subject turn their face to the light source.

BROAD

Broad lighting is in general a masculine lighting pattern due to the width the light creates in the subject's face. In portraiture, broad lighting is used on males to make them look larger and more masculine. Broad lighting is usually not used on women in portraiture, as it is not typically pleasing to make a woman's face more broad, especially if they have a larger or round face. The exception being when I'm shooting fashion or glamour and I feel the subject's face will be flattered by the pattern.

When to Use: I use broad lighting for formal male portraits and when I want to convey power and dominance in my subject.

General Setup Directions: Broad light is typically shot at a 45-degree angle so you are able to get light in the subject's eyes. It can be used in a loop or modified Rembrandt pattern. You want the largest part of the face toward the camera and nose facing away from the light source so the "broadest" part of the face is being lit.

Images © Craig LaMere

RIM

Rim lighting is when you use a light to add highlights to your subject. It can also be seen as back lighting, but a true rim light is when a glow is added along the edge of your subject, outlining them in light.

When to Use: I use rim pattern when I want to separate my subject from the background or when I want to emphasize someone's form.

General Setup Directions: Place the light behind, to the side and parallel with the subject. The height of the light will determine how far up the body of the subject the light goes. The one thing you have to be careful of is bringing the light too far around the front of the subject, or you will put light on the cheek or nose of your subject.

Images © Craig LaMere

HAIR OR SEPARATOR

Hair light is used mostly to separate the hair from the background.

When to Use: This is done in case you have a person whose hair could get lost in the shadow because of how dark the hair is.

General Setup Directions: Place the light above your subject and behind enough so there is no spill of light onto the face of your subject. I do not use hair lights. I find them too confining and restricting. If your subject is static, it works well, but if your subject moves, they can easily be out of position. When I need to separate my subject, I light up the background behind my subject rather than the hair itself. This accomplishes what you need, and it does not hamper the rest of the shoot.

Image © Craig LaMere

Image © Craig LaMere

Now that you have the building blocks of lighting, next month we will put it all together and start creating specific moods. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Craig LaMere is an award-winning professional portrait photographer from Pocatello, Idaho. As well as running his full-time studio in Idaho, Craig is an international educator and speaker specializing in lighting and posing. He has two dogs named Logan and Steve and two cats named Emit and Martin.
mozstudios.com

Image © Joel Grimes

product
review

westcott with *Salvatore Cincotta*

westcott

Why Westcott?

Looking for a large and portable beauty dish? Well, Wescott nailed it! Their Rapid Box Beauty Dish is portable, extremely well built and comes with a speedring for some of your favorite light sources.

In true Westcott Rapid Box fashion, these are well built and portable. What stands out to me with this beauty dish is the ease of use. From packed to assembled and on a light in less than 10 seconds, it makes working in the field and traveling extremely easy. We have enough challenges during the day; sitting there assembling light modifiers when I don't need to is one less thing for me to do.

The quality of light is everything you have come to expect from Westcott. With this beauty dish, the light is soft and clean.

Features:

· Collapsible and travel friendly.
· Directs soft, clean pattern of light when paired with a strobe or monolight.
· Constructed of solid aluminum umbrella-inspired framework, making it simple, quick and compact.
· Unlike traditional beauty dishes, the Rapid Box breaks down instantly into a sleek carry case for travel and storage.
· This design maximizes durability, minimizes weight and eliminates the need for separate support rods.
· Features a built-in speedring available for Balcar, Bowens, Elinchrom, Photogenic and Profoto mounting options.
· The 16 aluminum rods make the dish completely round, unlike similar models on the market that are actually just small octaboxes (due to eight rods).

sm **LEARN MORE.**
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

For more information, visit **fjwestcott.com**

Images © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

CHOOSING
PORTABLE
LIGHT
MODIFIERS
with **Michael Anthony**

We hear the saying all the time: Light is light. But not all light is created equal. The secret to natural and beautiful light is the right modifier for any given situation. While I love the thought of carrying a 5-foot softbox to every shoot, as a location-based wedding photographer, it's not practical to carry around an entire studio kit.

Your gear should not be a hindrance to connecting with your client. I have always found that it is best to be able to set your gear up and break it down in a matter of seconds rather than take minutes to set up an off-camera lighting shot. While understanding your gear is very important to making sure you are able to quickly get the shot you need, the type of lighting modifiers you choose is just as important.

This article looks at how to choose modifiers for portable lights like speedlights and the Profoto B2 system.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODIFIER

Before you learn when to use each modifier, you have to understand exactly how each modifier behaves. Modifiers increase or decrease the softness, output and fall-off of your light source. There are three basic things you need to understand about light modifiers before applying them in the field.

1. The larger the light source in relation to the subject, the softer the light.

When you choose a large light modifier such as an octobox, your light will appear softer. By softer, I mean the transition between light and shadow. Softness refers to the amount of gradient between the two light points. Keep in mind that distance from the subject affects the softness of a light source. The sun is a huge light source, but because it is 92 million miles away from Earth, it causes hard shadows on subjects. If you placed a speedlight extremely close to a wedding ring, the light would appear softer because of the size of the speedlight in relation to the surface of the ring.

2. The closer the light source is to the subject, the quicker the fall-off of the light.

This is simple physics, and can be illustrated with the inverse square law of light. As a light source gets closer to a subject, perceptive contrast may increase since the light falls off more quickly into the shadow areas. This is important to understand because the closer a light is to a subject, the softer it is. That is generally true, but contrast from fall-off can make a light appear harsh. Removing a light source a bit farther away from a subject, you are allowing the light to essentially wrap around them, which could give you a perfect blend of softness and correct fall-off.

3. The color of light varies in different circumstances.

The color theory of light took me longer to understand than any of the subjects I listed above. The reason many images look unnatural when using flash is that the color of the flash does not match the ambient light in the scene. The key to good-looking flash images is to take into account hardness, softness and color. Color is one of the easiest factors to control with flash.

Image © Michael Anthony

## THE BEST MODIFIERS FOR PORTABLE FLASH

We use a variety of portable modifiers for our flashes. The key factors for me are portability and durability. We have used all of these modifiers, and through our experience, these are the best ones to use for wedding and location-based shoots.

1. Walls

I don't think you were expecting walls in my list of portable modifiers. At most locations, walls are readily available, and they don't have to be carried from set to set. The way we use walls on location is to bounce light off of them to instantly soften an artificial light source. Because walls are attached to structures, it is easy to find ones that are large enough to create a soft light source. You won't find a softer light source than this out in the field.

By placing your subject close to a wall and placing a light directly behind them pointing at the wall, you are creating beautiful short-side light on the faces of your subjects. If you are not doing this now, try it on your next shoot, and I promise it will blow your mind.

Image © Michael Anthony

Image © Michael Anthony
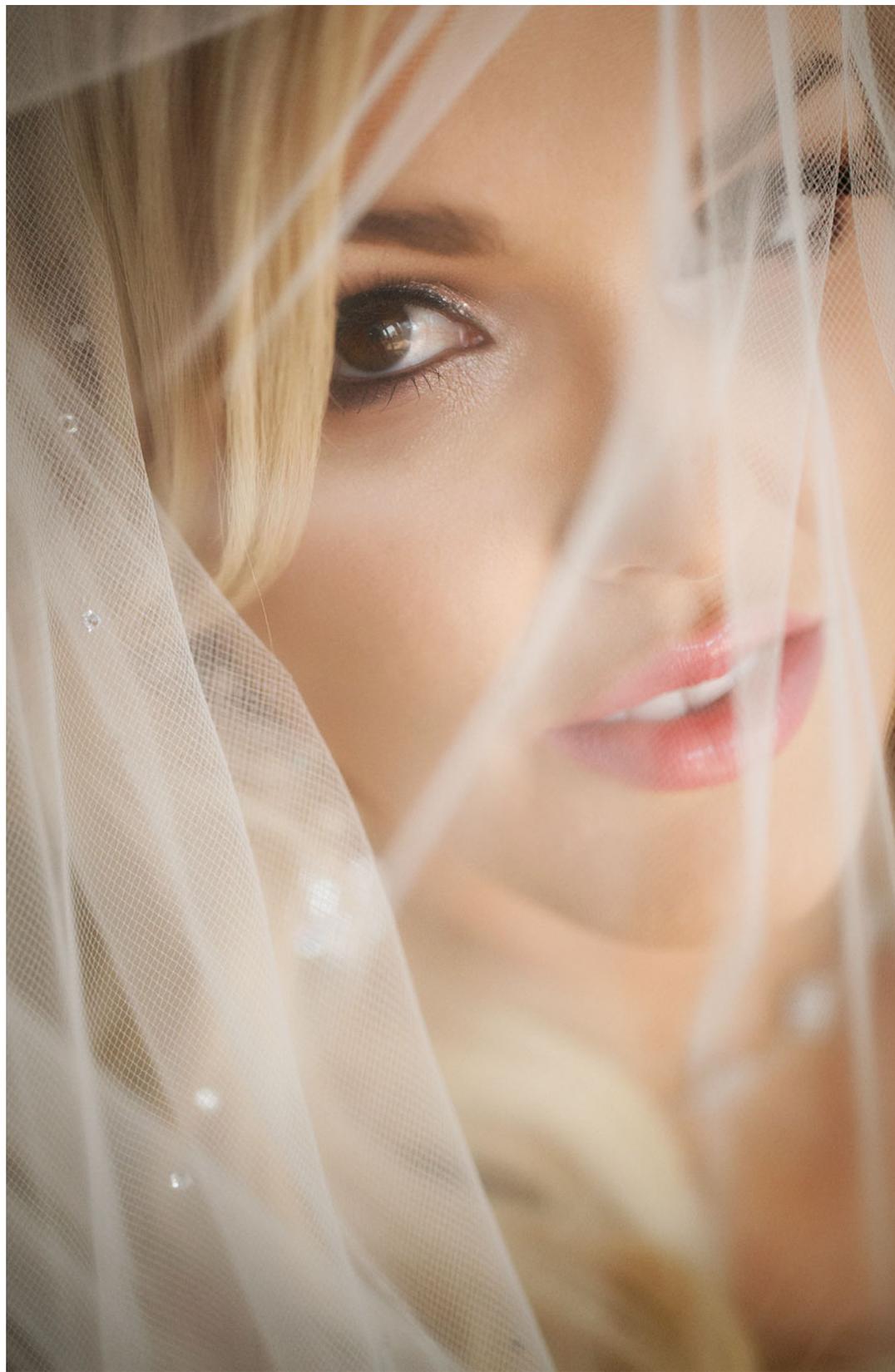
2. Softboxes/Umbrellas/Collapsible Reflectors

Softboxes or umbrellas are the obvious choice when you are looking to soften lights in an open area where there are no walls. These work great in a park or natural area where there are not many natural places to modify light. Choose a softbox that is collapsible or small enough to be carried easily. I use the Westcott Rapid Box to modify speedlights, or the Profoto OCF 2-foot octobox if you are using the B2 system. Note that the latter is not collapsible and must be carried, but it is light enough to not cause too many problems. These light sources soften light enough to give you a good balance of portability and quality of light.

I often use five-in-one reflectors to add fill to my off-camera flash, or to modify natural light. I use a 42-inch collapsible model that easily folds up into the laptop area of my shoulder bag. Reflectors often require an assistant to operate correctly, so when I am shooting solo, I do not use them except when the client is willing to hold it underneath their chin.

3. Grids

Grids are a necessity to help control light spill from your flash. While having an assistant available to feather light is wonderful, it is not always practical. The grids we use are part of the MagMod system. MagMods are an intuitive flash modification system that allows you to control the color and spill of speedlights. The trade-off is that they increase the footprint of your flash by adding large magnets to the head of the light, reducing portability. The gel system allows you to control the color of light, which we will talk about next.

4. Gels

Flash gels provide color control of your speedlights and strobes. They are a necessity for creating light that is natural and matches the ambient light in a given scene. MagMod has created very useful flash gels as part of its modification system for speedlights. They allow you to use creative or corrective color. Get the MagWallet to organize your gels—they are very easy to lose and expensive to replace over simple Velcro gels. I also love the Profoto OCF gel system to modify the color of my Profoto strobes.

Image © Michael Anthony

Image © Michael Anthony

HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST MODIFIERS FOR A GIVEN SITUATION

The answer to this question is both simple and complex. The simple answer is that you choose the modifier that best matches the conditions of the ambient light. For instance, if you are shooting on a cloudy day and there are soft shadows everywhere, use a soft light source to match the ambient light in the scene. If you are shooting at noon outdoors, use bare flash to match the hard shadows caused by the overhead sun.

The complex answer is that rules are made to be broken and the vision of the creative director takes precedence over general rules in any given situation. As the artist, you are making creative decisions daily based on your style, expertise and the needs of your client. If your style of photography consists of hard light and sharp shadows, you made the decision to use a harder light source in a softer ambient environment.

Another rule to consider is to match the color of your light with the ambient light in the scene. This is always more believable than the result you get using light at 5200k (the native color of flash). Outdoors, the sun is typically lighting a scene, and I prefer to use either a 1/4 or 1/2 CTO gel to match the color of the sun. In open shade, or when your scene is lit primarily with the blue sky, it is best to use the bare flash, but when you have sunlight in your scene, match the color of your light to that of the sun.

Image © Michael Anthony

In addition, when you are indoors, pay attention to the color of the ambient light. You will be shooting with incandescent or fluorescent overhead lighting, so it's important to have those gels available.

Like all rules, this rule can be broken. If you read my article on creative color balance in the lighting edition of *Shutter* last year, you saw how we use gels to completely change the color of ambient light in a scene.

Lastly, when purchasing modifiers, it's essential to look into brands that are durable and consistent. Profoto, Westcott and MagMod are all high quality. While they can be pricier, I have found over and over again that it's best to spend the money one time rather than twice because the first product broke when you needed it. Trust me on this.

For a more in-depth look into the modifiers we use, check out our video. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Michael Anthony is the owner of Michael Anthony Studios, a wedding photography studio based in Los Angeles. He has won multiple awards in international image competition for his creative use of light, storytelling and environmental portraiture. The five-member team at Michael Anthony Studios photographs around 60 weddings and over 200 portrait sessions a year.

michaelanthonyphotography.com
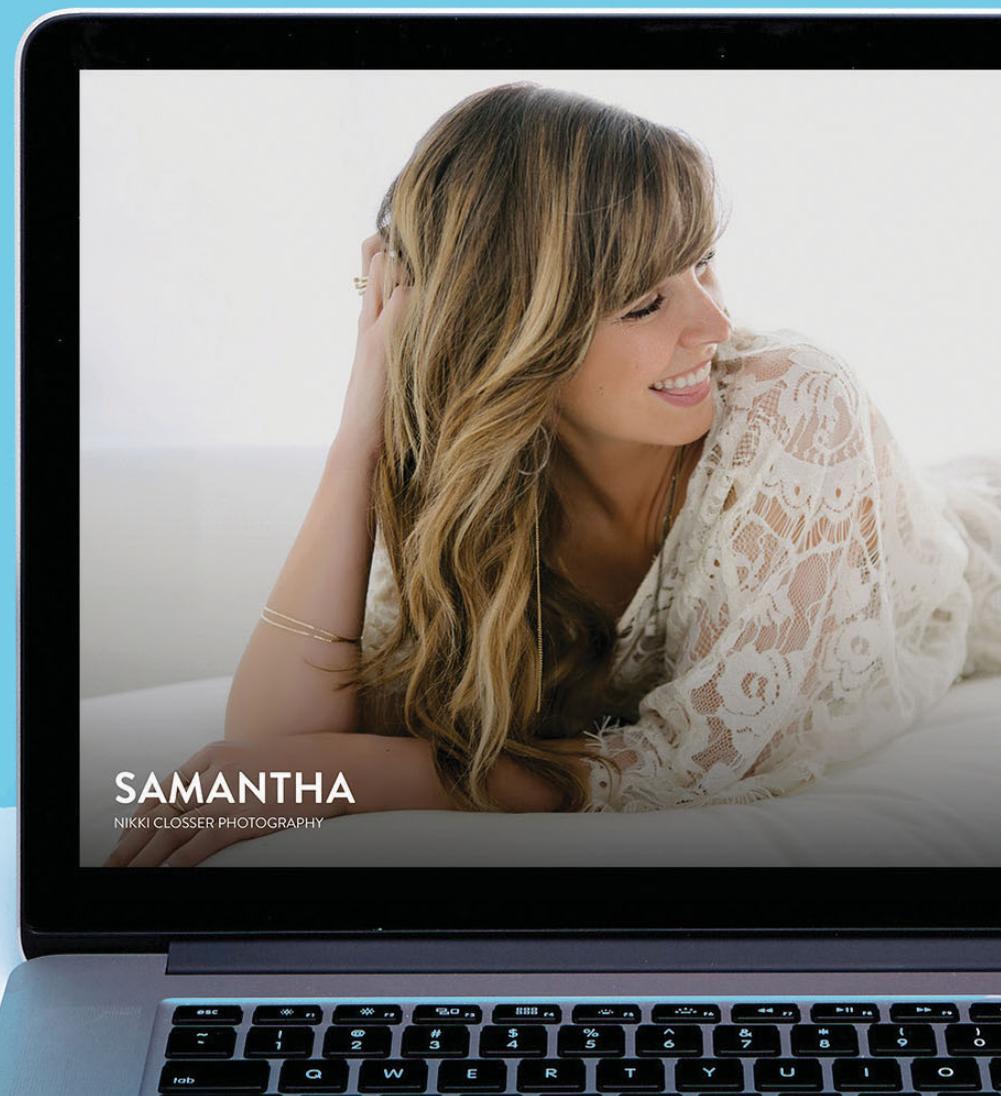
Image © Blair Phillips

STUDIO
LIGHTING

with **Blair Phillips**

Photography has continued to become more diluted over the past several years. Fewer people are hanging wall portraits. Even fewer get images printed any longer. Point-and-shoot cameras are rarely seen anymore in public. Nearly everyone reaches for their cell phone to capture anything picture-worthy. The public can take a decent picture, run it through a filter on their phone and end up with a pretty good picture.

Many no longer see the value in hiring a professional. It is almost our job to educate people on the components that make a great photograph. One of the most important components is versatile lighting. Lighting is the one component that will keep your phone ringing. Anyone can take a picture, but not everyone can produce a vast array of beautiful lighting.

Quantity, output and positioning of lighting are the main challenges. When I first began my photography career, I had only one studio light. With only one light, I learned that I did not like the look of flat lighting. Instead of placing that light in front of my subject, I placed it directly to the side of my subject. I was much more excited about the dramatic look that I produced. I later added a reflector, and it began to change even more. For this reason, I began to develop my style around a highlight side to shadow side of the face. If I ever need to evoke emotion in an image, this is my go-to setup. A guaranteed way to sell portraits is to get emotions involved.

The thought of where and how to arrange your lighting can become a little overwhelming. The biggest reason is that we have a tendency to overthink things. Think of lighting just like you would if you were baking a cake. Lighting is no more than a recipe. Think of each light as an ingredient. For example, one part main light, three parts kicker lights and two parts hair light. Once you find a recipe, you will begin to understand your lighting. Confidence levels will soar once you have a grasp on your lighting equipment. You can begin to focus on creativity, posing and making money once you understand your equipment inside and out. Another thing that automatically raises your bar is getting out and practicing.

There are tons of companies catering to photographers. Most photographers who have been in business for several years will continue to use the same lighting modifiers for the duration of their career. While there is nothing wrong with this, they may need to break old habits. Changing from a rectangular softbox to an octobox can make a big difference. Changing modifiers has the ability to force you to do things a little differently. When you do things a little differently, you get different results. Most softboxes have two layers of diffusion. I often use things in ways they were not intended. I sometimes take the outer diffusion panel off of my softbox. This gives me way more specular highlights in the eyes when shooting outdoors. I also enjoy the look I get from spending an afternoon experimenting with shoot-through umbrellas. Instead of shooting through them, I spin it around and fire the lighting so it is pointed in that direction. This gives me a beautiful, soft look.

Lighting patterns are a must for any good photographer to know and understand. There are six main patterns.

- **Split lighting** splits the face into equal halves, with one in the light and the other in shadow.
- **Loop lighting** creates a small shadow of the subject's nose on the cheeks.
- **Rembrandt lighting** creates a triangle of light on the cheek.
- **Butterfly lighting** creates a butterfly-shaped shadow right under the nose.
- **Broad lighting** is used when you want a client's face to appear to be a little wider. Bringing your lighting source into the side of the face that is closest to your camera also makes any wrinkles less noticeable.
- **Short lighting** is achieved by bringing your light source into the side of the face that is farthest from the camera. This is well suited for making faces appear to be slimmer.

Try your best to learn and use all of these lighting patterns. They're always a great place to start with a client should you ever experience a creative block. Once you understand these lighting patterns, you can begin to mix them and create your own unique patterns.

Image © Blair Phillips

Technology keeps evolving. With greater technology comes greater equipment. I am always searching for ways to make my job easier. Have you ever tried to put a 48-inch softbox in your vehicle without breaking it down? If you have, then you know how difficult that may be. I love the new octoboxes from Westcott that require no tools and very little effort to break them down. They basically break down just like an umbrella. For this reason, it is very important to go to photography trade shows to keep in touch with the latest equipment trends. If you find one thing that will make things easier, it is well worth it. It is so important to not get so comfortable with your equipment to the place that you never look to see what else is out there.

It is up to professional photographers to band together in order to protect and keep this wonderful industry alive. You have to put forth a lot more effort than years passed if you want to continue creating sustainable growth. What you did last year will certainly lose some effectiveness in the coming years.

Image © Blair Phillips

Image © Blair Phillips

Lighting is and will continue to be one of the most important factors in keeping people interested in coming in for a session. I know we all get used to doing the same old things, but push yourself to try several different lighting techniques during your sessions. Explain them to clients and talk them through all the different lighting scenarios you provide. It will validate you and your skill level. Most importantly, it will help justify your pricing.

We have to continue to set the example by doing it better and more efficiently than the average person with a camera can. You can build knowledge of lighting everywhere you go. Stand back and look at where the light is coming from, and you will begin to see things in a different way. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Blair Phillips launched his business nearly 10 years ago in a small town. Since then, Blair Phillips Photography has become a beloved household name to its many fans and clients. Each year, Blair photographs up to 30 weddings and over 600 high school senior, newborn and family studio sessions. He has educated photographers all over the United States at events by WPPI, WPPI U, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors and various state PPA groups.

blairphillipsphotography.com

sf 17

SHOOT. LEARN. PARTY.
2 DAYS. HANDS-ON. **$99.**
(REG $249)

THE **ONLY** HANDS-ON PHOTOGRAPHY CONFERENCE
ST. LOUIS MO. | APRIL 18-19 2017 | EXTREME APRIL 20
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW
SHUTTERFEST.COM/REGISTER

the **list** | august 2016

1

songfreedom

Songfreedom was created to bring the best music to creatives for a price that makes sense. With a library specially curated by an unparalleled team of Music Supervisors, Songfreedom brings exactly what you need for your next video.

Featuring music by popular Mainstream artists and incredible Indie artists, this library has multiple selections for your every musical need.

www.songfreedom.com

3

The SoHo Collection by Signature Collection Albums offers a more intimate, distinguished fine art album for your clients.

This fine art album features heavy Canson watercolor paper with hand torn deckled edges, hand sewn stitching, genuine rustic leather, and unique closures. Completely customizable, this album is handcrafted with the finest archival binding materials for a ruggedly handsome look and feel.

www.scalbums.com/soho-collection

soho
COLLECTION

2

ENCEPTION RENTALS

Enception delivers couture gowns right to your door, making stylish and artistic shoots easy, accessible and affordable.

As an Enception client, you gain access to a unique collection of gowns that range from bridal to the hottest trends in high fashion. You can rent each piece individually, or become a Pro member and get 10 - 5 day rentals each year.

www.enceptionrentals.com

4

Xpozer is a lightweight, portable, stunning large wall display at an incredible price.

With with an integrated frame that hides behind the vivid satin print, Xpozer floats away from the wall for a modern gallery look. As added value, you can redesign short-term displays or long-term installations without breaking the bank by reskinning your Xpozer frame with an Xchange print in just minutes.

www.bayphoto.com/xpozer

bayphoto.com

LET THERE BE LIGHT:
## CREATE YOUR OWN
LIGHTING
IN PHOTOSHOP

with Dustin Lucas

Photographers are constantly battling with light to capture an epic moment, especially when the sun is hiding behind clouds or is out of the frame, causing distracting glares across the client's face. It can be a nuisance, but Photoshop can help create an epic scene, no matter where the sun is.

In this article, I demonstrate how to add light rays in an image to give you a more dramatic look that leaves your clients in awe. You may not be a fan of post-process lighting, but if the light happened naturally, you would take it in an instant. So who cares how you do it? Let's look at some techniques for creating light rays and using brushes for efficiency.

Once you have processed the color correction and made some local adjustments, you are ready to set up your plan of attack for this new light. Remember that we need to use the direction of the natural light for this effect. It looks like it's coming from the left-hand columns. This is important for creating a photorealistic effect.

BASIC LIGHT RAYS

Create a new layer and name it Light Rays. Make sure you have the foreground color selected as white and the background as black. With the Light Rays layer selected, navigate to your top menu bar and click Filter < Render < Clouds and click Enter. (1) Your layer will fill with this filter effect. Now you need to adjust the threshold of this layer. In the menu bar, select Image < Adjustments < Threshold and click Enter. (2) No need to make any adjustments, just click the OK button. So far we have a patchy black-and-white layer that we need to create our directional light rays. (3)
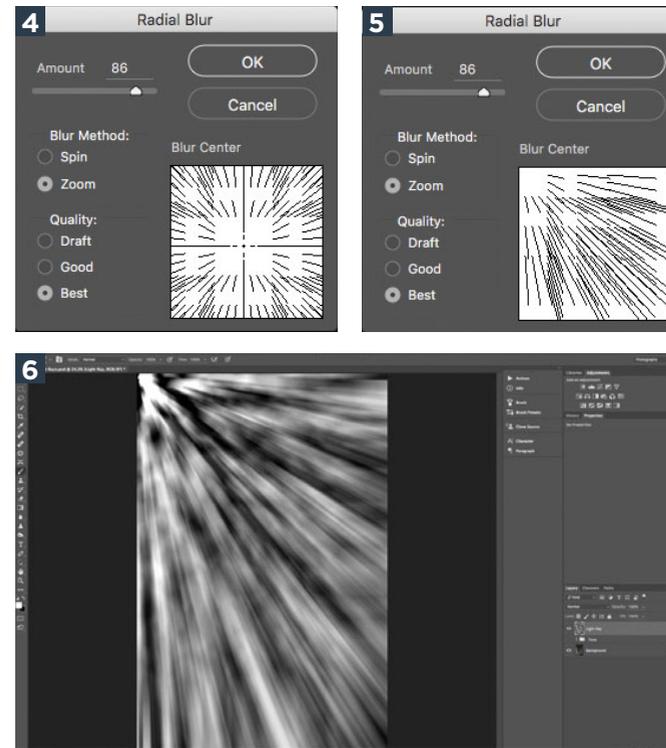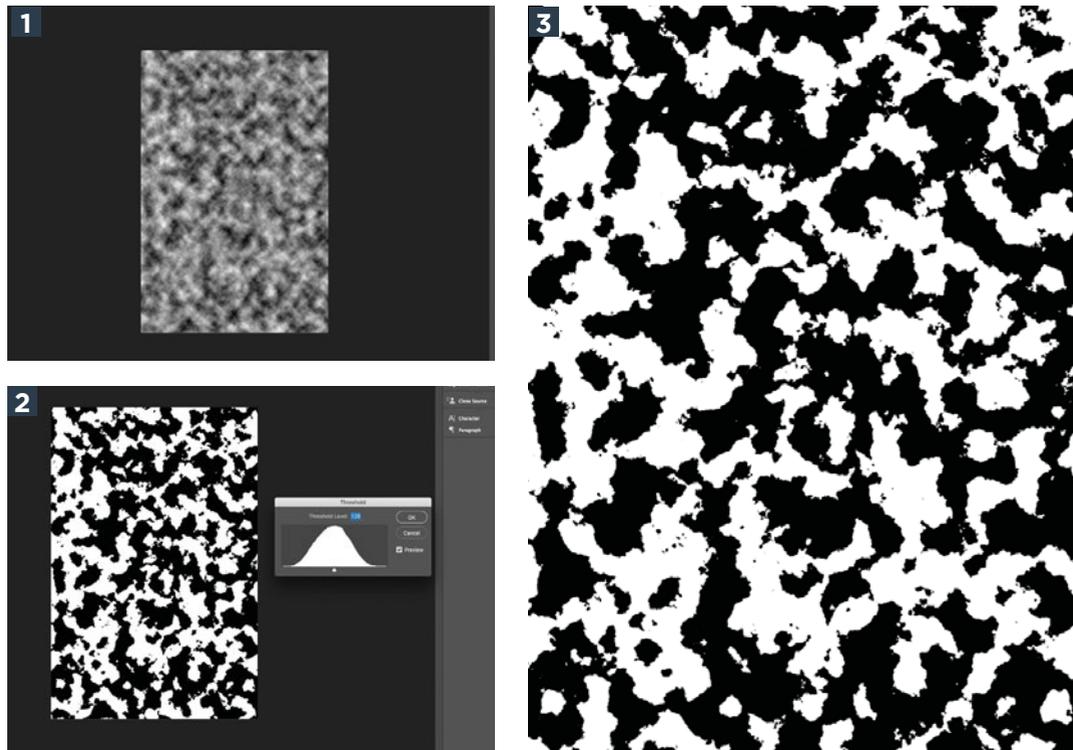
We now need to add a blurring effect to this layer. Let's use the radial blur tool. In the menu bar, select Filter < Blur < Radial Blur and change the settings accordingly. A good middle ground setting is 80 to 90. The blur method is key because it replicates the linear effect we want with light rays. Change this to Zoom, and the Blur Center preview changes accordingly. For quality, choose Best. We are now ready to examine our light source direction. (4) Since the lighting is coming from the left in the image, we can click in the center of the preview and drag the center radiating lines to the upper left corner. This gets us close to our ideal direction of light. (5) After clicking OK, we need to adjust the layer effects. (6)

Change your layer's blending mode to Soft Light and begin adjusting the opacity and/or fill. (7) I have dropped the opacity down to 75% so there's no distraction. Now we are ready to start masking out the unwanted areas and lessening the effect in others. (8) That was pretty simple, and we could make an action for this for increased efficiency. The only custom part is the direction of light; this can be easily done by recording all the steps and keeping the Radial Blur dialog box toggled on. (9) This allows all the steps leading up to the radial Blur to automate. You can change the direction of light, click OK, and the remainder applies.
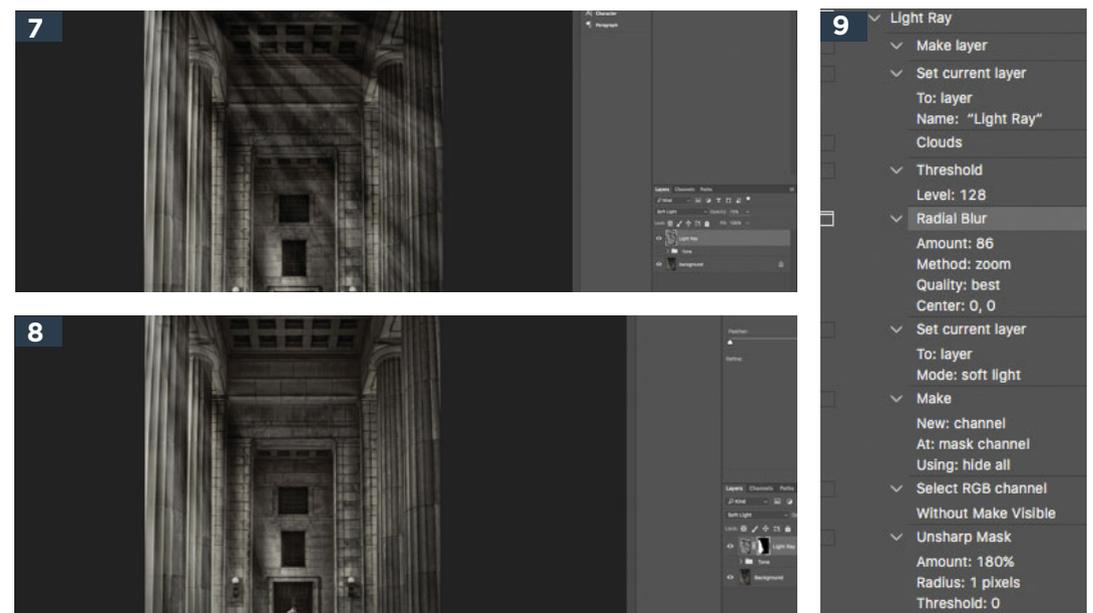
LEADING LINES WITH LIGHT RAYS

You may need a more customized lighting; you need to paint in specific strokes for this. Let's look at how to get this more dialed-in artistic approach.

With our previous Light Rays layer turned off, create a new layer called Light Rays 2. Instead of adding a filter, I want to brush the light rays into the image. I will paint multiple dots in the image where the light rays need to be coming from and going to. First, choose a foreground color again; for a color image, choose something that matches your sunlight. This image is desaturated, so white will work fine.

Select your brush tool and open the brush settings panel. Currently we have single brush strokes set up with a soft edge. (10) We want to be able to vary the sizes of the dots, space them out accordingly and randomly scatter them as we drag the brush around. First, click on the Shape Dynamics settings and slide the Size Jitter to 100% and Minimum Diameter down to 0%. (11) Spacing will be an issue for the dots; we can change this with the Brush Tip Shape settings. Move the Spacing slider to around 70 and the Hardness to 40%. (12) Now, we need to check the Scattering option. Check Both Axes, move the Scatter slider to 1,000% and begin painting the area where you want the light rays to be. (13)
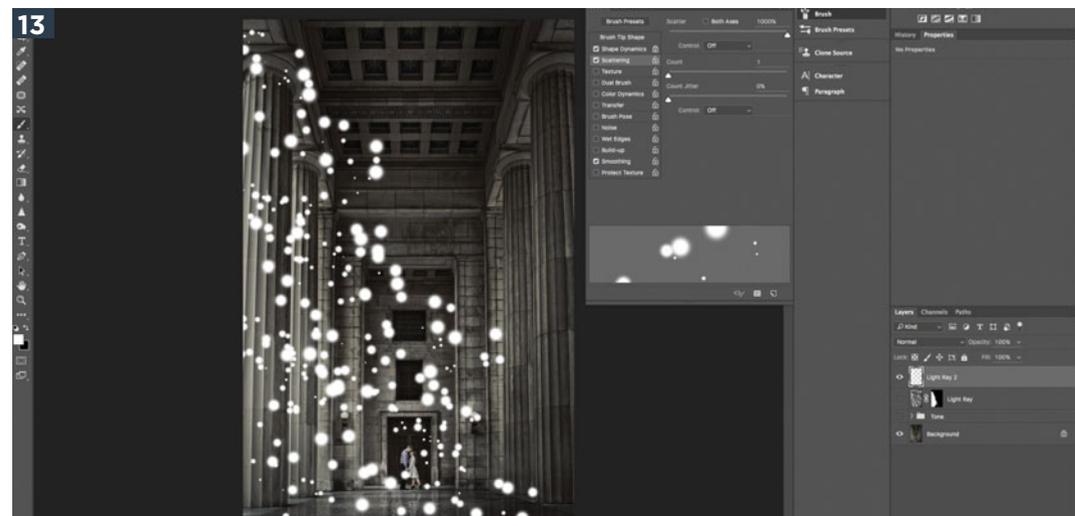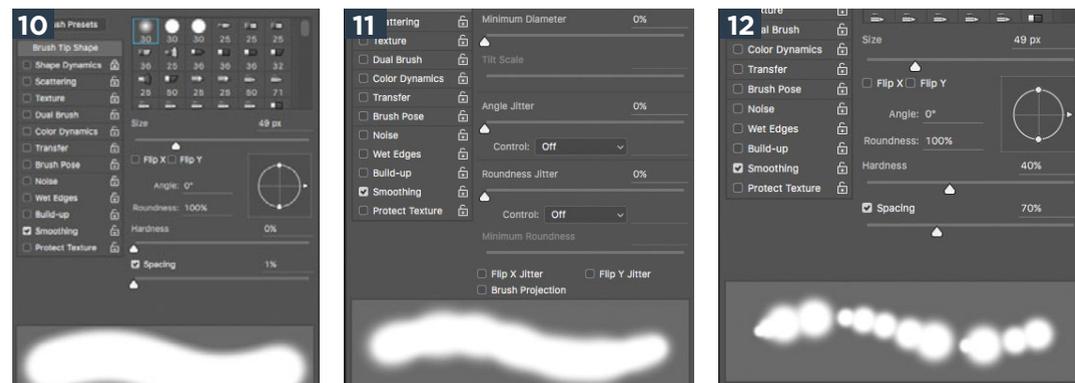
Your layer is now ready to have the Radial Blur applied at 100% to maximize the length of each ray of light. (14) If we zoom in, you will notice some grain. We can soften this again by striking Command and the "F" key. (15ab)
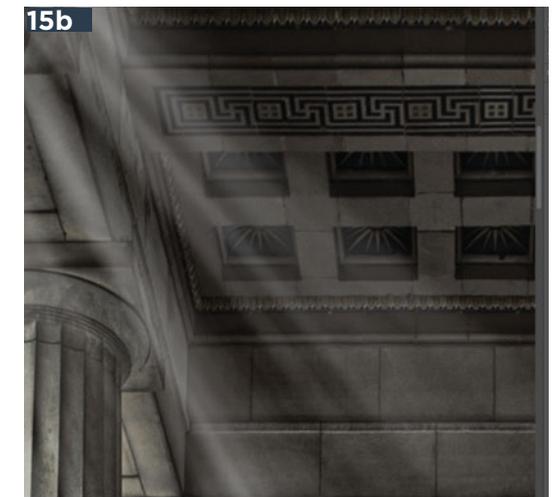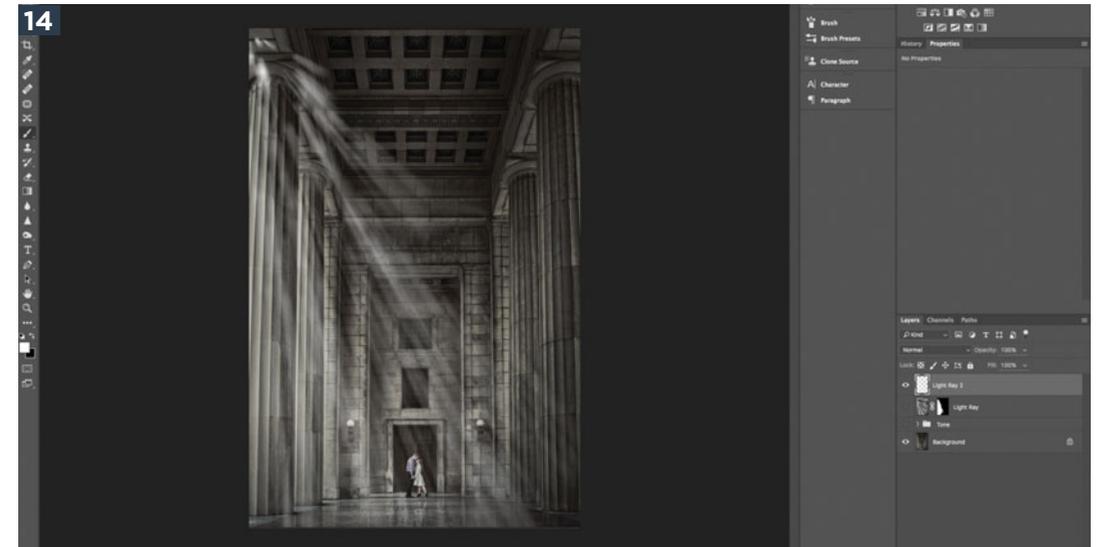
Selecting different layer blending modes greatly lowers the effect; leaving it at Normal works for this image. You can increase the effect by simply duplicating the layer; hold Option, Command and the "J" key. (16) This doubles the effect, allowing you to lower the opacity as needed. To move and change the size of this layer, hold Command and the "T" key. This allows us to maneuver the angle of the rays to be slightly more realistic and lead those lines right to the couple. (17)
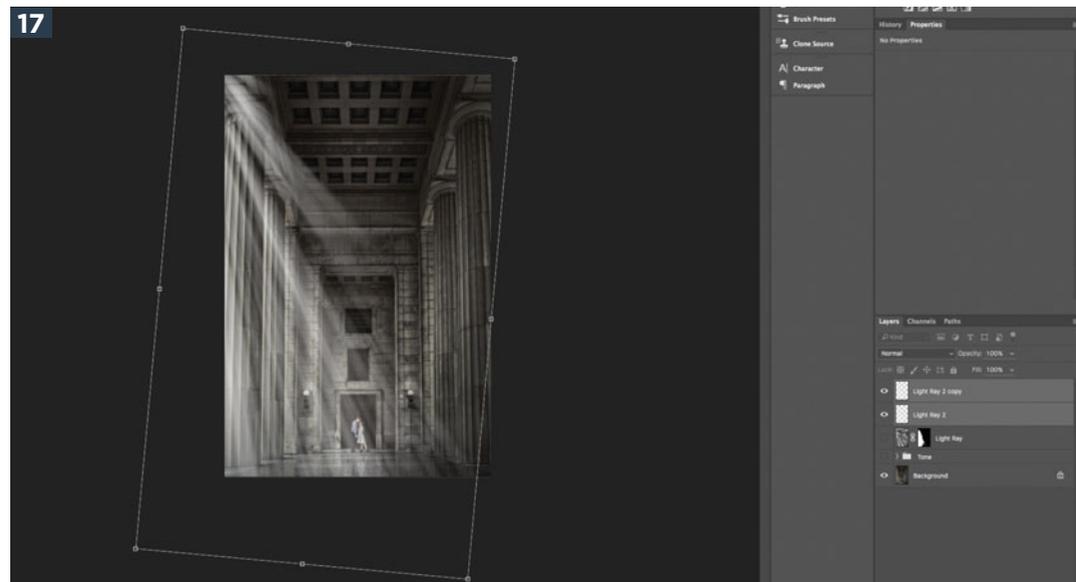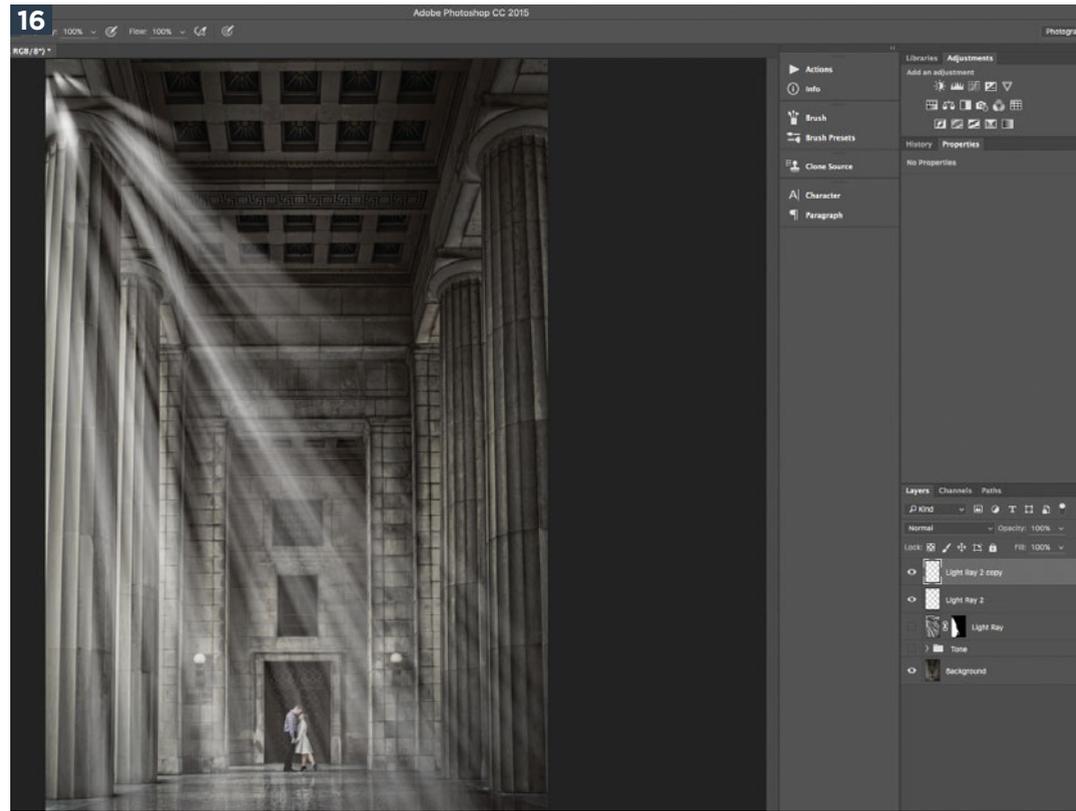
Attention to detail is very important. I need to bring back some sharpness and tone into these hazy light rays. I can sharpen the light rays by selecting the layer and navigating to Filter < Sharpen < UnSharpen Mask. Set the amount between 150 and 200. The radius can stay at 1. (18) This provides some definition to the light rays. Now let's get some of our dark tones back. Make a Levels adjustment layer and drag the left slider toward the edge of the histogram. (19) This effect can be added by duplicating the levels layer, or lessened by dropping opacity. Be aware that darkening effect is applied to the entire image, so mask out the areas the light ray does not affect. (20)
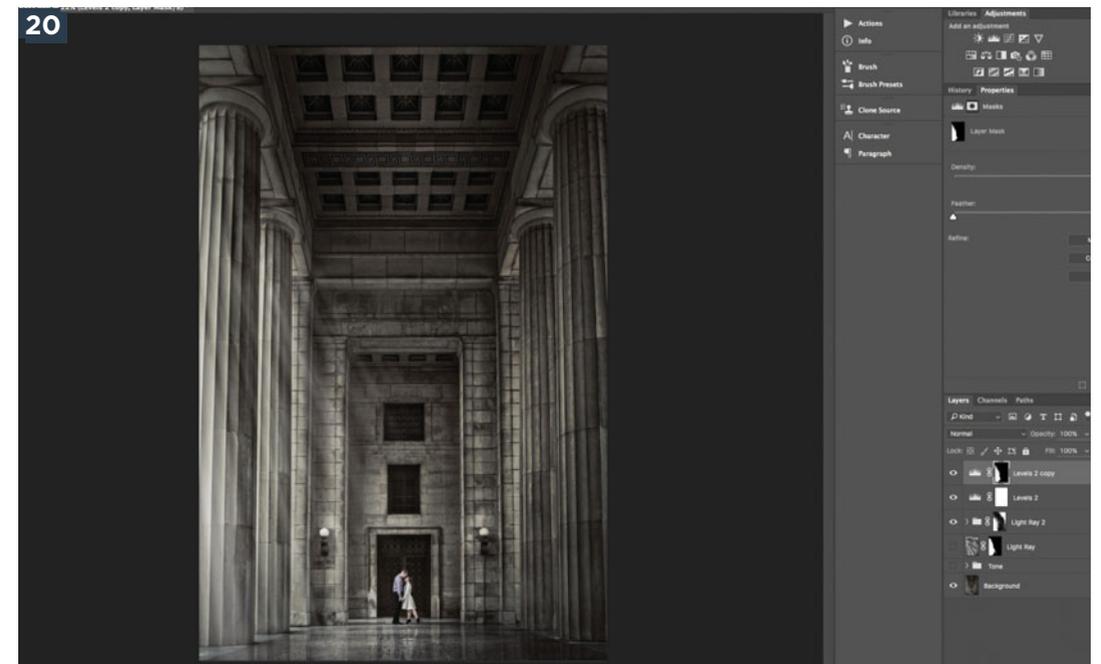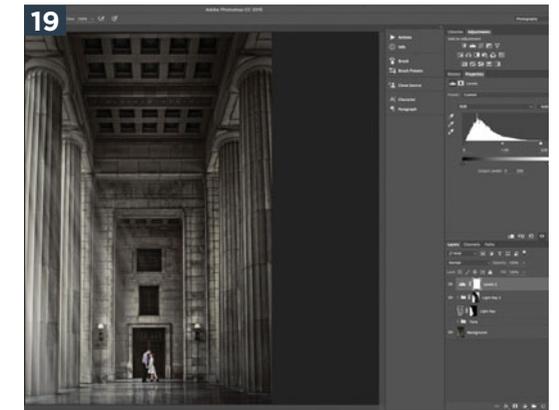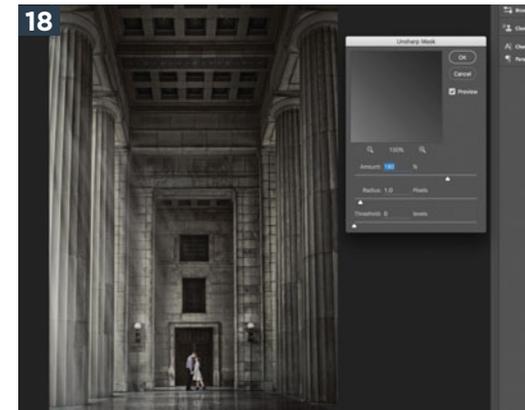
To create your own light rays, adjust brush opacity when painting. You may also adjust the scattering amount and build up your light rays rather than make a single one for the entire image. As you see, I should separate the light rays with the columns. (21ab) Lowering the radial blur amount helps, along with hardening your brush edges.

Before

After

> FINAL RESULTS

Now that we have masked out the subject and brought back some definition, this image is starting to look much more dramatic. We could also turn on the two circular lamps to complement the light rays. Turning on the lights is very popular as well. I recommend you adjust the settings I have used, and play around with these tools.

Although this look is not for everyone, make it your own. That's the point, after all. If you do try this out on your next edit, always follow the natural light direction and work on separate layers. ◼

sm LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his master of fine arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

evolveedits.com
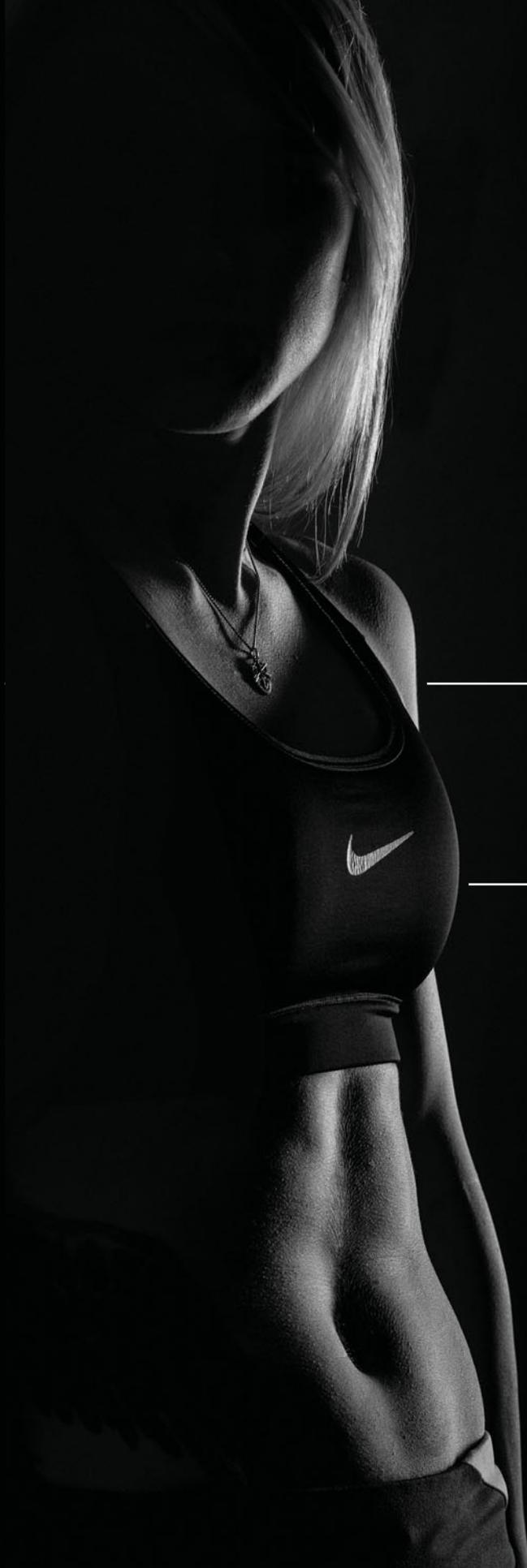
© DAVID A STAMM PHOTOGRAPHY

FREEDOM TO **PLAY.**

FREEDOM TO **SHOOT.**

FREEDOM TO **GROW.**

EVOLVE PREMIER | $199 PER MONTH
FOR PEACE OF MIND AND **UNLIMITED** COLOR CORRECTION
LEARN MORE AT **EVOLVEDITS.COM/PREMIER**

6 LIGHTING TIPS FOR BODYSCAPES

with Matt Meiers

Bodyscapes are the perfect addition to boudoir and fitness photography. Some potential clients may hesitate at first, and understandably so. Posing for photos that reveal so much of themselves can be quite unnerving.

"I was a little worried that all the insecurities I have about my body would stand out in pictures," clients have said.

Then, when their curiosity takes over, they just can't get over that feeling of, "What if I posed for photos like that? How good could I look?"

Now that the thought has been planted, let's get you started. Lighting bodyscape photography can be very simple. Having said that, it can also be quite frustrating, since just the slightest movement of your light, subject or camera can make a world of difference.

Some of these tips may also apply to fitness photography and other genres, but for now, I'll stick with bodyscapes.

1 HAVE A PLAN.

It goes without saying you should start with a plan. What are your client's goals? What do you want your final image to look like?

- Silhouette?
- Just a hint of light grazing across a shoulder or collarbone?
- Dramatic hard light accentuating unique facial features?
- Maybe some nice light brushing gently across your subject's torso or lower back?
- Do you want the light hard or soft?

You may not want to use the same light and modifiers to make her collarbones pop as you would to show the smooth curves of thighs, hips and waist. One of the great things about shooting bodyscapes is once you get it right in camera, there's not much editing to be done in post-production. Depending on the type of photos you're going to be taking, you may not even need to have hair and makeup done.
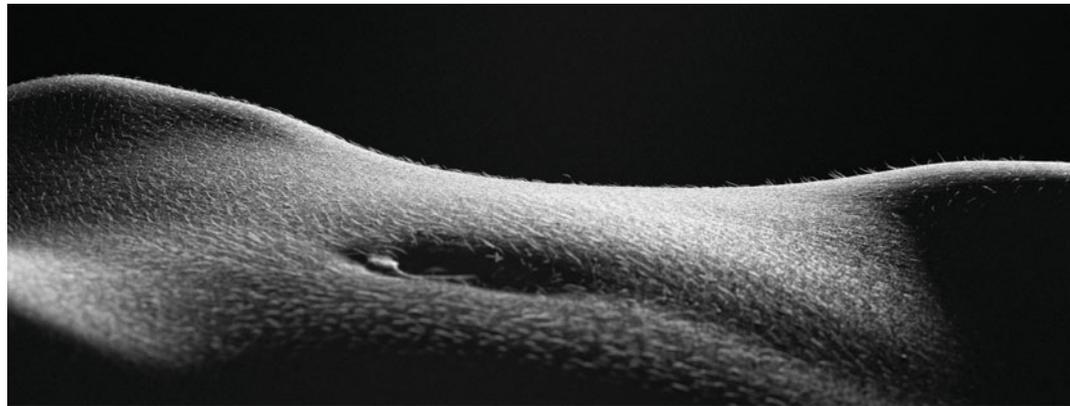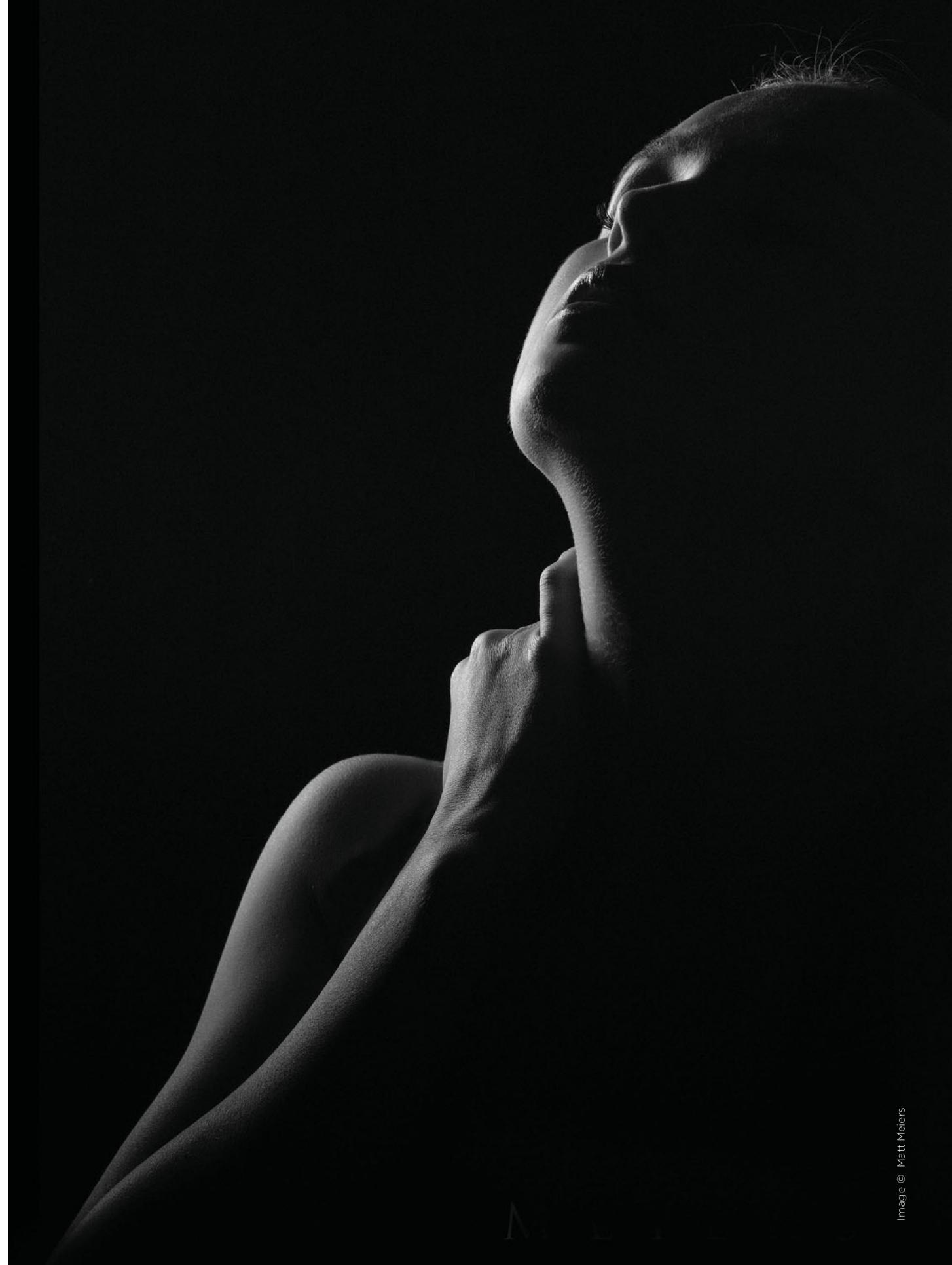

Image © Matt Meiers

Image © Matt Meiers

2 BACKGROUND.

If you're going for impact, a black background is best. If you have access to a black backdrop, use it. If you don't, shoot toward the open side of the room and raise your shutter speed to knock down the ambient light. Just remember that if you are using a flash, don't go higher than your camera's sync speed, or you will get that nasty black bar across your photo.

3 GRIDS, BARN DOORS AND FLAGS.

Controlling the light is a very important aspect of bodyscapes. I use a combination of grids, barn doors, flags and whatever else it takes. If you're not shooting full-length body photos, a smaller stripbox will work fine. Most of the photos in this article were shot with a Paul C. Buff Einstein with an 8x36-inch softbox, along with an egg-crate grid. There is no reason you can't use natural light, or even a ringlight, for bodyscapes. If you don't have strobes or access to a window, you should be able to find a speedlight, trigger, small white umbrella and stand for a little over $100.
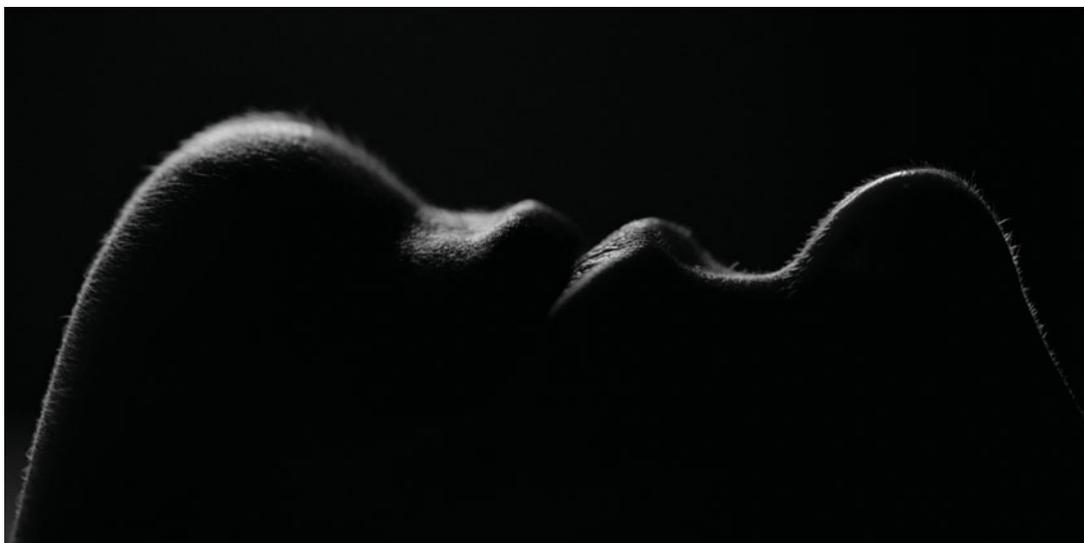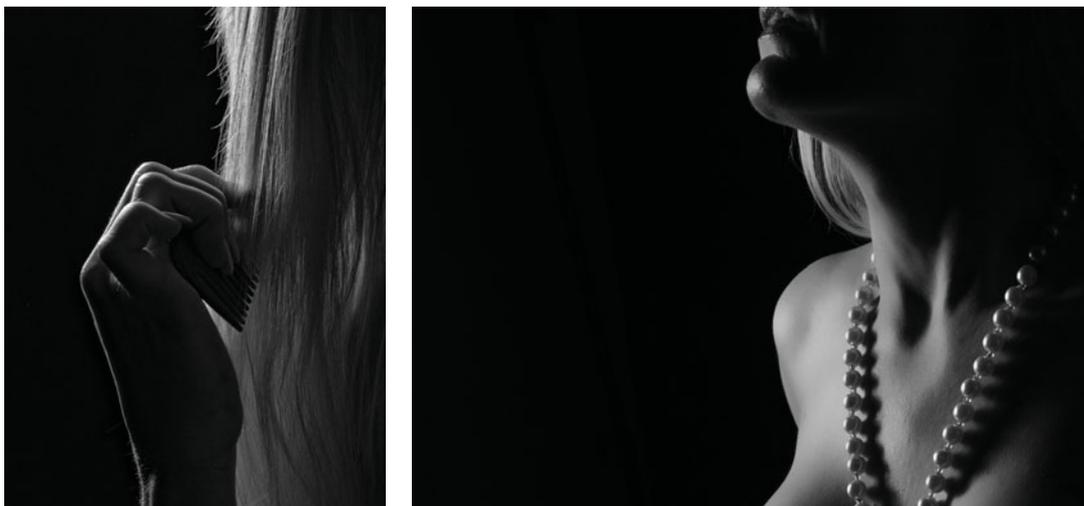

Image © Matt Meiers

4 MOVE YOUR CAMERA. MOVE YOUR LIGHTS. MOVE YOUR SUBJECT.

If you're not getting the results you want, don't give up and move to an entirely new pose and lighting setup. Move one of these three things: light, camera or subject. Don't move all three at once. The slightest adjustment can cause very dramatic changes.

First, move the camera. It's the easiest of the three to move, and you'll see new results the quickest. It may be best to start off on a tripod so there's no guesswork about where you were when you shot that last frame, and you won't need to reposition yourself because your tripod is already there.
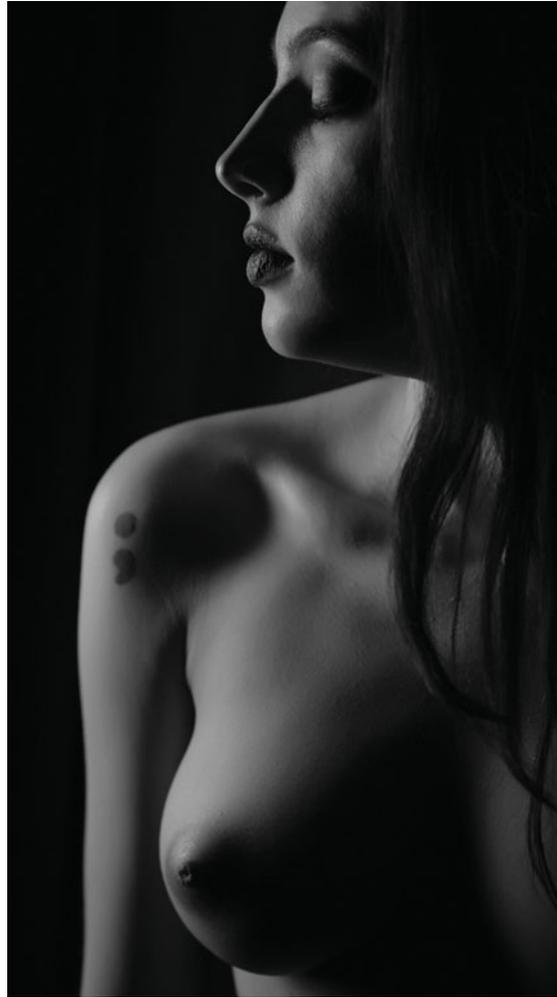
If you're not getting the shadows exactly where you want them, feather your light in one direction, then the opposite. Now move your light up, then down. Use your modeling light when you're shooting with strobes if you can.

Images © Matt Meiers

Image © Matt Meiers

Images © Matt Meiers

Image © Matt Meiers

5 EXPERIMENT.

I love to experiment. One of the best opportunities to do so is at ShutterFest. If you have never been, you owe it to yourself to change that. The number of people willing to pose for the camera, both models and photographers, never ceases to amaze me. There are people all over the place sharing ideas, time and even equipment. With a plethora of wardrobe options and people willing to assist you, it just cannot be beat.

6 PRACTICE.

Don't have a model? That's okay. Just use a mannequin, a peach or nectarine. Yes, fruit. You mean you never noticed how much a peach looks like a derriere?

Image © Matt Meiers

We photographers have dream jobs. There aren't many people circling the sun right this second who can make the impact we do with our clients. So, if you've never tried bodyscapes, I challenge you to start now.

One memorable bodyscape client wrote this of her experience with me: "Then he showed me one where I felt like I looked phenomenal. I'm not an overly emotional person, but I just started crying because for the first time, I felt like I had long, thin legs and a trim, sexy body. I felt pretty. I felt sexy. I'm crying again as I write this because I'm truly overwhelmed by how amazing this whole experience has made me feel."

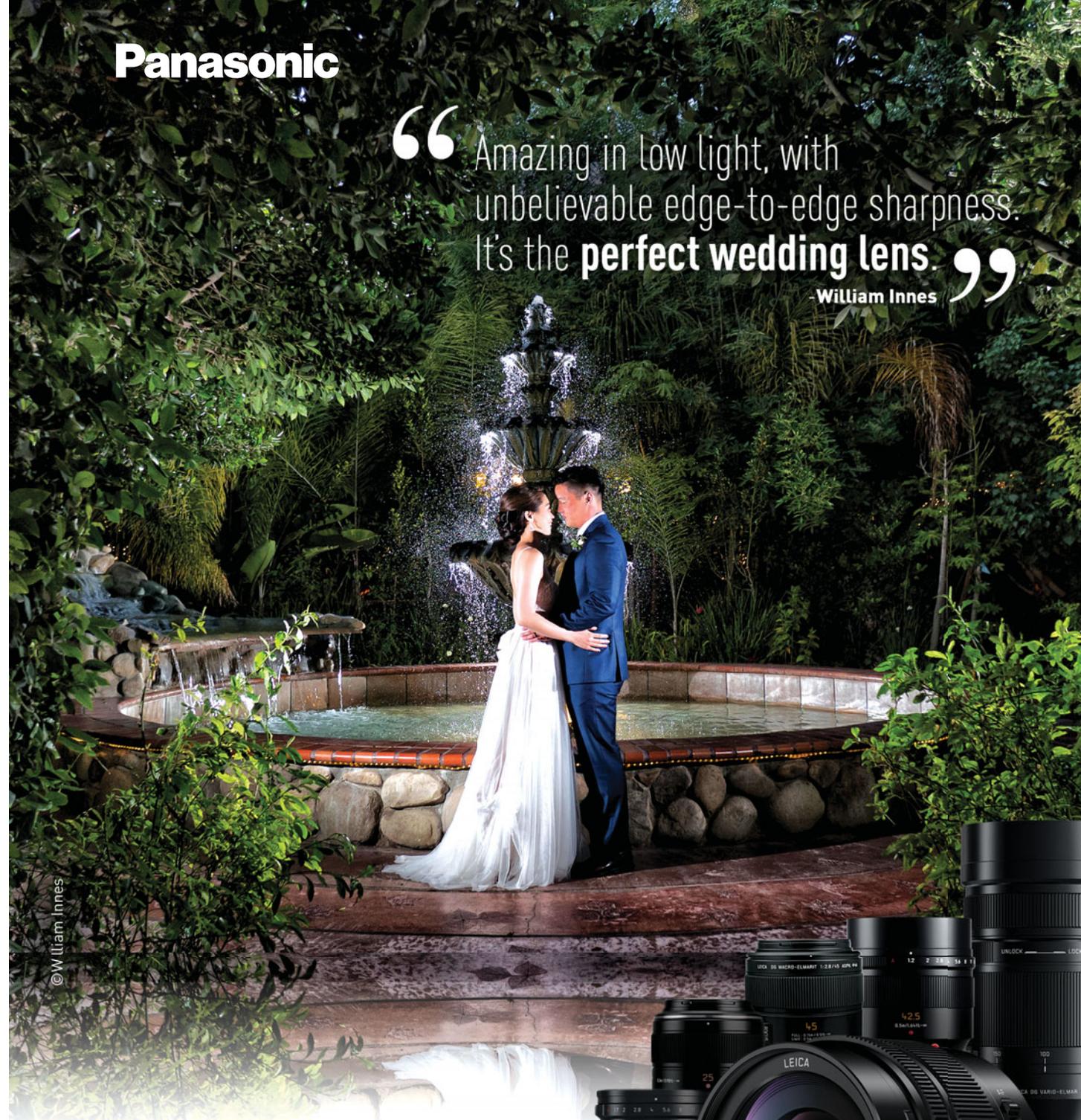But I think I got more out of that session than my client. ∎

Matt Meiers is a bodyscape and portrait photographer who loves to use lighting to highlight people's features and beauty in ways they've never seen before. He currently resides in Lewes, Delaware, and has an affinity for creating uniquely ridiculous hashtags.

mattmeiers.com

SUPER-SIMPLE
LIGHTING
SETUPS
TO KICKSTART YOUR FASHION CAREER

with **Jeff Rojas**

Strobe lighting can feel extremely intimidating when you're first trying to understand light. What constitutes great lighting? What would a professional photographer consider great lighting versus terrible lighting? The truth of the matter is that it's an extremely subjective topic among most photographers, and you'll rarely find two photographers who wholeheartedly agree with one another regarding what defines great lighting. That's simply because every photographer has their own preferred style of lighting, albeit some more traditional than others. The fashion industry isn't any different.

Let's begin by noting this important tip: Fashion lighting focuses on the attire in an image. Your job is to navigate the audience's attention to whatever subject matter you're trying to showcase. For example, if you were photographing a commercial campaign for running shoes, you'd probably want to highlight the shoes in an image. While that sounds pretty rudimentary, I often see photographers who forget that simple concept. You'll see photographers who want to break into the fashion industry focusing more on the subject and not on the clothing, and that's counterproductive. Obviously this rule can be broken, but I recommend sticking to it until you can master navigating the audience's attention successfully.

Throughout this article, I'll dissect a couple of lighting styles for fashion photographs. The idea behind these setups is for you to use them to create your own lighting style. Draw inspiration from each lighting setup to recreate something you can call your own.

TRADITIONAL

Simplicity is such a beautiful thing. This is one of my go-to lighting setups for fashion editorials and look books because it's a simple setup that can easily be converted to a mobile lighting kit. This image uses a Deep Parabolic Umbrella in Rembrandt position, which is 45 degrees from our subject and 45 degrees overhead. For this image, my modifier is the Profoto Umbrella Deep White XL with diffusion material. My light is placed around 6 to 8 feet from the subject and my subject is 4 to 5 feet from the background to ensure that both my subject and the background are lit evenly.
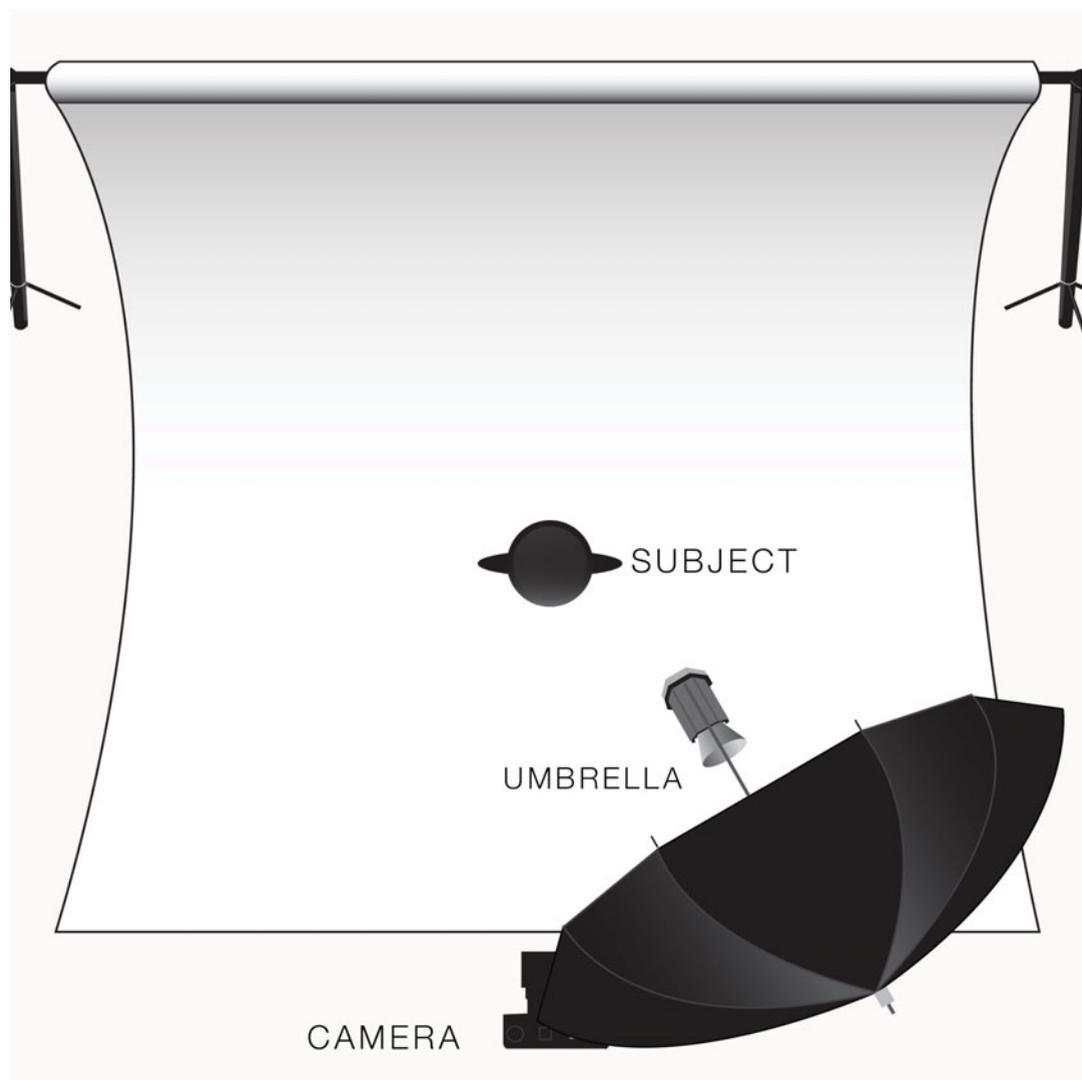
If you find that the lighting is too dark on the shadow side, you have a couple of options. Introduce a reflector or white V-flat on the opposite side of the light. You can also place a second light with a softbox to fill in some of the shadows. If you decided to use a second light, you'll want to be very cautious of cross light, as the second light will produce its own shadow if the light isn't dim enough. To test the shadow of your second light in this case, turn off your main light temporarily and use the second light only to see if there is any shadow produced. This is a setup any photographer should feel comfortable using in a pinch.

Image © Jeff Rojas

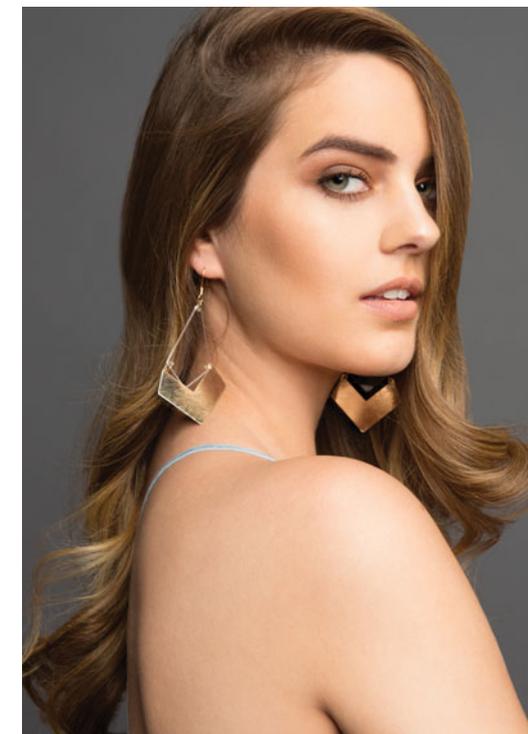*Fig. 1.1*

Images © Jeff Rojas

Fig. 1.2

Fig. 1.3

DRAMATIC

If you've ever gone through my portfolio, you know just how much I love dramatic lighting setups. Most of my images have lots of contrast and texture. That's because contrast and texture go hand in hand. You cannot see texture without contrast or shadow. Any object or person that is evenly and flatly lit does not have a lot of texture. While flat, even lighting is great on the face in order to reduce skin blemishes, it's not always great in showcasing clothing (which is the point of fashion photography). Designers spend countless hours selecting intricate pieces of material to use in their work, along with piping, tulle and metalwork to complement them. If you're using flat light to photograph clothing, you're likely doing a disservice to the designer.

The set of images in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 were shot using a very simple lighting concept. The main light is placed to accentuate the subject's face, the second light is placed to accentuate her clothing and the third is placed to light the background.

The main light is modified by a silver reflector, which creates a lot of contrast on the subject's cheekbones, but it's also placed far enough away so the light is broad enough to light the top half of her body. The second light is a beauty dish with a diffuser, placed on the opposite side and 45 degrees from our subject. It helps us lighten the shadows in the image. This ensures the shadows do not fall to black. The final light is an open gridded beauty dish placed to our subject's side, used interchangeably between images, depending on where I'm trying to draw the subject's attention. For example, the background light is used in Figure 1.5 to ensure the earring can be seen and that the audience's eyes are drawn to that area.

Fig. 1.4

Fig. 1.5

Fig. 1.7

21" BEAUTY DISH
with Grid.

SILVER REFLECTOR DISH

SUBJECT

CAMERA

21" BEAUTY DISH
with Diffusion.

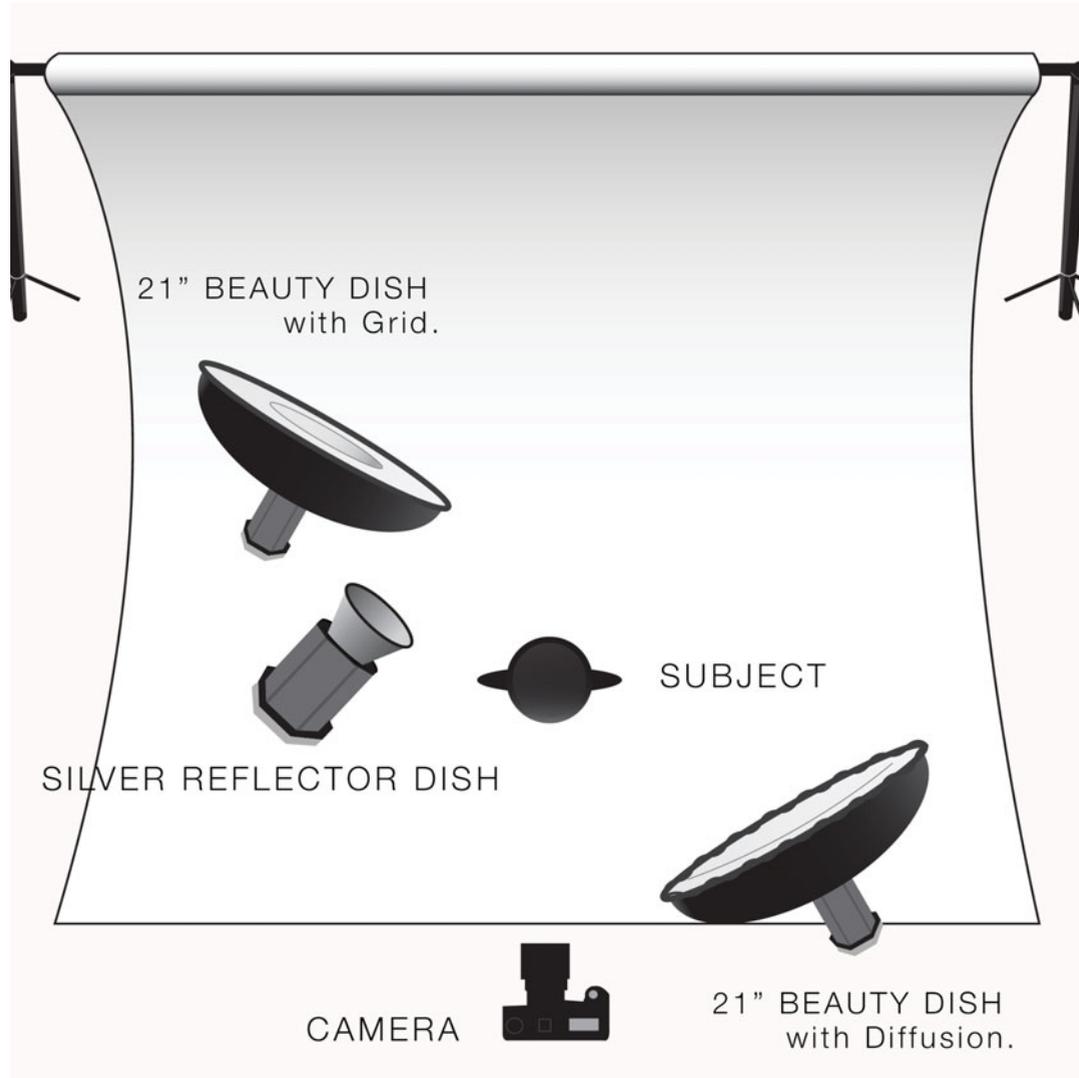*Fig. 1.6*

Image © Jeff Rojas

Image © Jeff Rojas

HIGH-KEY

My favorite high-key setup is far from traditional. I learned it from one of my first photography mentors, and modified it to fit a subject full length. This setup requires a bit of creativity and a less technical approach.

The main light in this image is a 21-inch white beauty dish with diffusion material, and our second light is a 6x4-foot softbox directly behind our subject, also with diffusion material. The subject is placed about a foot from the background light, as you can see in the image in Figure 1.10. Use your subject to block the strobe light from flashing directly into the camera. The main light is placed 2 to 3 feet from your subject and facing down 45 degrees to accentuate her jawline and cheekbones, while simultaneously creating lots of texture in the metal pieces on her dress. The main light does a great job of creating lots of contrast and texture in her hair, accentuating her beautiful braid.

This is a simple setup that creates a lot of drama. It requires very little equipment to produce, so it's great for those who are shooting in their living room, second bedroom or garage. ∎

Fig. 1.9

Fig. 1.10

Image © Jeff Rojas

Fig. 1.11

Jeff Rojas is an American Photographer and author based in New York City. His primary body of work includes portrait and fashion photography that has been published in both *Elle* and *Esquire*. Jeff also frequents as a photography instructor. His teaching experience includes platforms like CreativeLive, WPPI, the Photo Plus Expo, Imaging USA and APA.

sajorffej.com

Q + A

WITH *Salvatore Cincotta*

+ Explaining versatile lighting setups for weddings and events.
+ Creating a signature lighting style on a budget.
+ How to create cinematic-style lighting on location.
+ Tips for using CTO gels to color balance light.
+ Choosing the best lighting system for your studio investment.
+ Getting great light in difficult-to-reach locations.
+ How to use complex lighting setups during wedding receptions.

GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

Every month we will have a call for questions on our Facebook page
and Sal will answer them with real-world advice.

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world. Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is you.

Sal Cincotta, *Editor-in-chief*

BEST LIGHTING IMAGE

Image © Indigo Silver

Image © David Beckham Photography

Image © David Beckham Photography

Image © Larry Sacks

Image © Nate Creamer

Image © Legacy Photography

Image © Steven Hendricks Photography

Image © Nate Creamer

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

Image © Kellogg Photography

Image © N. Foster LeFou

Image © Legacy Photography
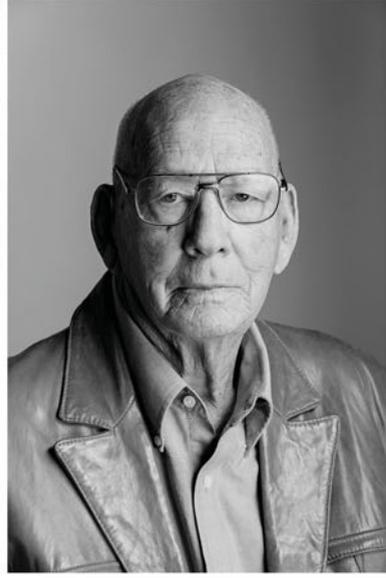
Image © Indigo Silver

Image © Jennifer Walker

Image © Stacy Jacob Photography

Image © Christine Diaz

Image © Casey Trueman Photography

Image © Stacy Jacob Photography

Image © Eight Oak Acres Photography
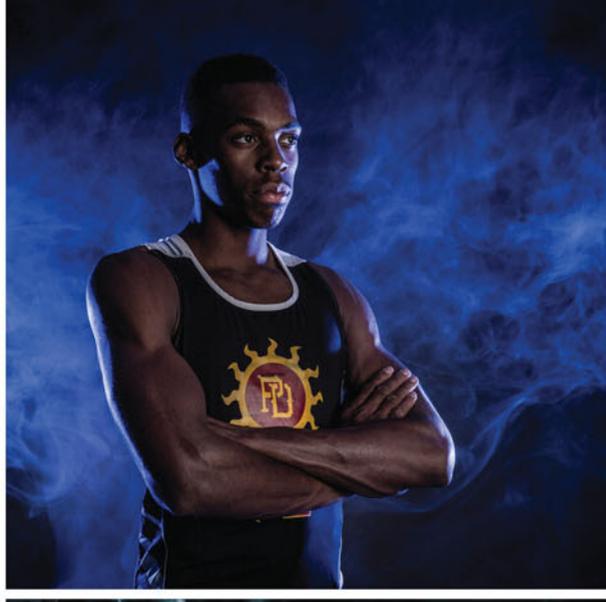
Image © Stacy Jacob Photography

Image © Toni Shaw

shutterfest

PROJECT | LUNACY

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2016 | TUCSON, AZ
$499 | LIMITED TO 150 ATTENDEES

ADVANCED CONCEPTS

Image © Michael Anthony

HANDS-ON LEARNING

Image © Vanessa Joy

IN A FORMAT ONLY
SHUTTERFEST
— CAN DELIVER —

Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW
SHUTTERFEST.COM/PROJECT-LUNACY
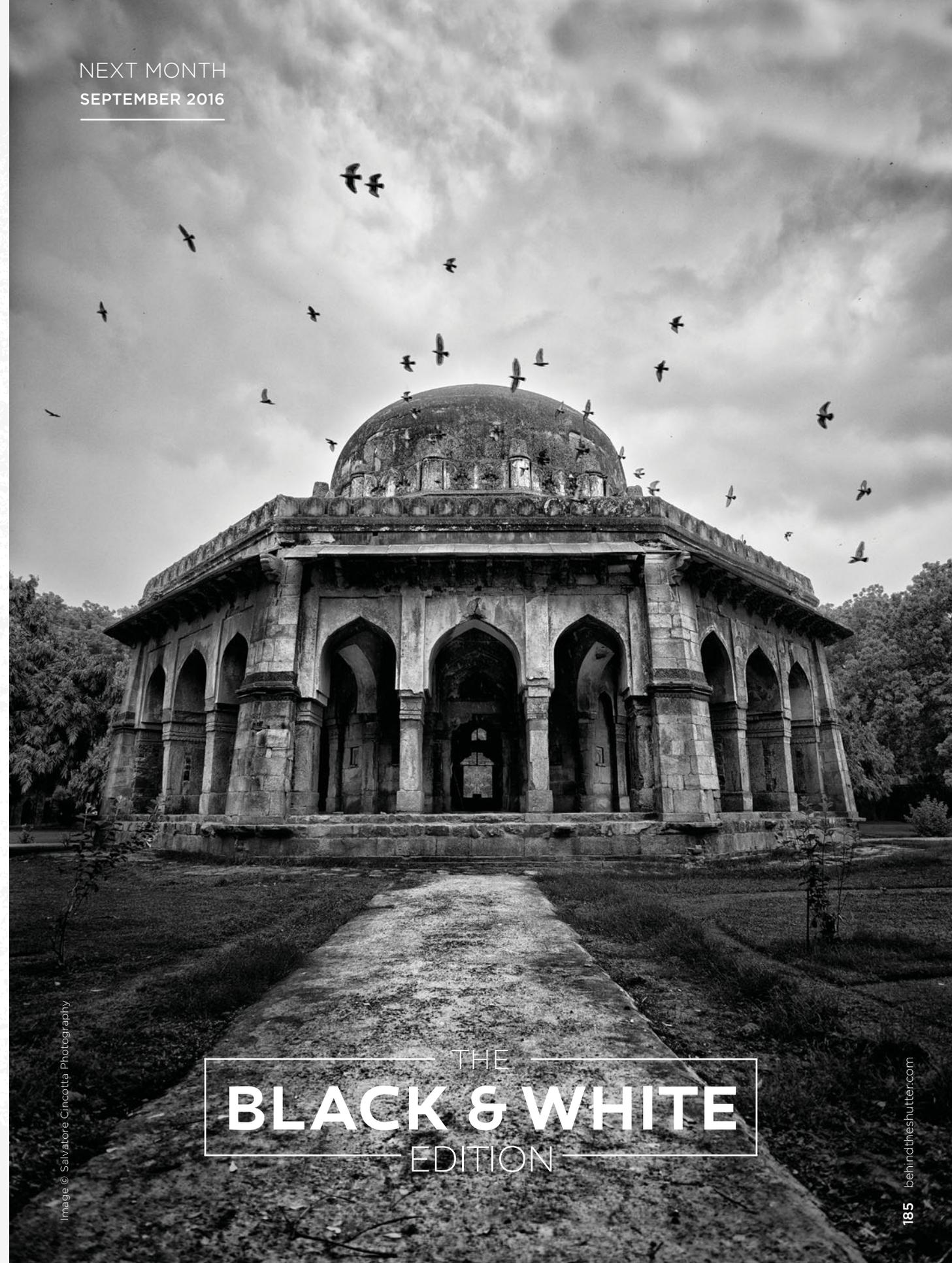
Image © Salvatore Cincotta Photography

THE
BLACK & WHITE
EDITION

BUILDING A
BUSINESS
THAT SUPPORTS YOUR
DREAMS
—PART 2—

with Phillip Blume

It's probably the best definition of *entrepreneur* I've ever read. The meme is a hilarious yet insightful commentary about those of us crazy enough to pursue our dreams as business owners: "Entrepreneurs—the only people in the world who will work 80 hours a week to avoid working 40 hours a week."

Does that describe you as a photographer and business owner? For some of us, with travel and the stress we bear 24/7, even an 80-hour workweek sounds like a vacation. If so, you don't need me to condemn you as a workaholic. I've been there. I've felt the wave of guilt after tuning out my young children's pleading voices just so I could push through another evening of editing and emails.

The absurdity of it all takes me back to the biblical verse that says "we stand condemned already"—we stand in real danger of sacrificing so much for success, we might not realize we've sacrificed everything and everyone who was worth succeeding for. It's what I call "Scrooge's fate," and if you read biographies, you'll hear the sad refrain again and again in the last words of lonely millionaires. Looking back over their lives, they realize they condemned themselves to one big, lavish, filthy-rich failure.

I don't wish that kind of soul-destroying failure on you or anyone, and especially not on myself. No. It's time for redemption.

In last month's issue (Part I of this series), I described how my wife, Eileen, and I built a business that supports our dreams and values. Rather than consume us, Blume Photography now breathes life into us. It allows us priceless time with our family, provided for the adoption of our third child, supports our personal projects and gives us time and resources to do pro-bono work attacking poverty here and overseas.

How did we arrive here? We began our photography business with one camera and low expectations, in a small city that boasted America's highest poverty rate. Now our mom-and-pop studio is a fast-growing, award-winning business with the world as our market. Were we just lucky? Did we have all the right connections, timing and resources at our disposal to make success easy? Clearly not.

As we discussed last month, it all comes down to replacing your pipe dreams with a defined vision. This is the "it" factor that the most successful individuals and companies have in common. Vision with a capital "V" is what guides your many business decisions in one strategic direction and connects you deeply to clients.

This month, I detail three practical and time-saving changes we made to our studio's workflow that finally allowed us to focus on vision, and that help us pursue our dreams every day.

Image © Phillip Blume

Images © Phillip Blume

OUTSOURCING

Let's just get this topic out of the way, shall we? For some reason, as Eileen and I travel this country teaching photographers, we get more pushback on this simple idea than anything else—especially when it comes to outsourcing image editing. But it's really just a classic case of needing to admit you have a problem before you can fix it.

Every business book I've read says the first rule of business growth is to focus your personal energy only on what you specialized in. Outsource the rest. You're just one person!

If you think you specialize in everything, you're wrong; you are mediocre at everything, and you now need to focus your energy on becoming great at something. That one thing we should focus on and excel at is, you guessed it, photography. This doesn't mean you have to become the world's best photographer. In fact, artistic ability will take you only so far. The key is to collaborate with people who are more efficient in every other area where your business has a need.

We began by outsourcing our image edits to Evolve Edits. As a control freak and perfectionist, I empathize with photographers who have a hard time relinquishing control. After all, editing is part of your brand, right? Well, kinda. We need to keep in mind that basic exposure correction and color balance are not artistic—they are objective "fixes" to our in-camera errors that anyone can do, yet they consume enormous amounts of time. Because of the number of weddings and portraits we shoot, Evolve's Premier plan was unbeatable, and their consistency and speed surpasses ours. But even if you use an in-house intern, don't color balance another photo yourself—ever!

Whether you want to grow a studio or increase your income as a one-man band, start by outsourcing little things. Anything someone will do for minimum wage, let them do it. Your time is worth more. Outsource your website design. Hire a pro to design your logo. Heck, hire a house cleaning crew and lawn service. Not coming from money, I confess I felt lazy letting someone else clean our house at first. But remember, it's not extravagant if the net result is more income. It's a good business investment.

Image © Phillip Blume

IN-PERSON SALES

Artwork sales was another area we steered clear of in the early years of Blume Photography, to our own detriment. Those were lean years, barely making ends meet. Still, we didn't consider in-person sales as an option. We aren't natural salespeople, we didn't have a place to do sales meetings and we were totally against what we saw as pressuring clients.

Our point of view finally changed when we were invited by former clients to celebrate their first anniversary with them. It was a huge honor, especially since we knew them only in a professional context. We brought them a gift, a simple 12x18 print from their wedding.

We were caught off guard when they reacted emotionally to it. They had received digital wedding images from us, but they never got around to printing a single one. None of our couples had. We realized our couples were gaining nothing of lasting value out of all our hard work. And even if they could have produced quality artwork themselves, it still would've cost them while gaining us nothing.

We decided that every wedding package we offered would include a wedding book for our couples, something their children would value as much as they. We implemented in-person photo viewings at our then decrepit little house in a bad neighborhood, mainly to help couples design their wedding books and guarantee they received them promptly.

Those meetings changed our lives. Pricing and packaging is a complex topic for another time, but suffice it to say: When you show quality samples and give your clients the simple opportunity to invest in something that is valuable to them, they will. We didn't have to pressure anyone or use any of the tactics we loathed, such as overdesigning wedding books to sell extra pages or withholding digital versions of images until minimums are met. Those methods leave a bad taste in clients' mouths. Instead, by using positive reinforcement (special art packages the day of an ordering appointment), our weddings quickly rose from an average $2,800 booking to sometimes $10,000 after orders.

To this day, we use only Lightroom (no additional specialized software) to show images. And for destination couples who can't visit our studio, we use ShootProof galleries and meet clients online via Skype. We find the basic human connection, rather than emailing them a sterile link to a gallery, allows us to average online artwork sales nearly as high as in-person. No excuses! You can do this in your home (even if it's as small and dirty as ours was) or at a comfortable coffee shop—now. The additional hours you spend are well worth the new hourly rate you'll receive. Almost 70 percent of our current income results from artwork sales alone.

Images © Phillip Blume

AUTOMATION

A crucial change you can make to your business today is automation. Photographers sometimes go years (until hitting rock bottom) working around the clock on emails and social media updates. All of us are trying to drum up more business. Then, once we finally get an inquiry, we go into overdrive trying to keep them interested. The game becomes quite disorganized very quickly.

Email is the best place to begin automating, because it's the biggest time sucker. Are you replying to business emails the way you'd respond to a personal letter, typing out a new and unique response each time? Talk about inefficient! Yet this is so commonplace. Every time you write a client, save the text of your reply in a document and give it a name. For example, the first email text you save might be called "Wedding Inquiry." Now simply copy and paste this reply, along with all its links and attachments, to every person who inquires about your weddings. Maybe add one personal sentence to connect with them. Sounds basic, right?

But it gets more complicated. What about the client who responds by haggling over price, or would prefer to schedule a consultation for a different place, or wonders about military discounts? And what should you say if you don't hear back from a couple you really connected with during the consultation? If they book, how do you thank them, schedule their engagement shoot, collect payments, and gather all the details for their wedding day?

Eileen and I have spent eight years creating, saving and tweaking emails that communicate exactly what we want clients to know, exactly when we want them to know it; other photographers even use our templates. Equally important, we found studio management software with which we can build workflows to send these emails at the right time. And not just emails, but also contact forms that automatically enter new clients into our system, interactive questionnaires we can study before an event and more. If our wedding business couldn't occasionally run on autopilot, we would never have the time to speak at conferences, travel overseas or just kick back and relax.

There are many systems out there. We tried half a dozen before we found one that worked well. Transferring our data from one failed system to another was a lot of work. We feel extremely fortunate that the systems available now are far superior. We recommend photographers research and test-drive ShootQ and 17Hats to find which works best for them. These are the most robust and intuitive systems we've found. Or, if you'd like to start smaller, even ShootProof (traditionally for online photo galleries) now integrates clients, contracts and email templates. Amazing stuff.

The best time to get automated is now. Don't make the excuse that you're too busy. Sure, studio management software takes time to set up. But it will transform your current chaos into control and peace of mind. There is absolutely nothing better than knowing you are up to date on everything. If you're like me, even time off isn't relaxing when you have late deadlines and unhappy clients crowding your mind.

Image © Phillip Blume

Image © Phillip Blume

In the video below, I want to tell you about one final change that helped our business take flight: delegation. ■

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Phillip Blume is an international award-winning photographer and, with his wife, Eileen, cofounder of Blume Photography Studios and ComeUnity Workshops. In addition to photographing weddings and portraits worldwide, the Blumes focus their efforts on personal projects to help those suffering extreme poverty. As educators, the two have appeared on CreativeLIVE, and speak to thousands of photographers every year. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

blumephotography.com

We all know what people refer to when they describe something as being "classic." Just to make sure we're all on the same page, the dictionary defines it as being "judged over a period of time to be of the highest quality and outstanding of its kind."

Recently I was at a classic car show. One of the most stunning cars was a 1937 Packard painted a beautiful candy-apple red. The owner spent seven years building it from parts he acquired from three different vehicles.

At the other end of the spectrum were several brand-new Corvettes. They were stunning, and their owners exhibited the same level of pride in the quality and workmanship as the Packard owner.

Classics never die. They resist the pressure of fads, trends and marketing, and they never get knocked off their pedestal. I thought it would be fun this month to talk about classics from a photography and business perspective.

Let's see how many of these you have in your stash.

Can you light and pose a traditional bridal portrait?

It's one of the strongest classics in professional photography. It's what Justin and Mary Marantz refer to as "shooting for the silver frame." At every wedding they photograph, they always look for that one image that's so stunning it's going in the silver frame on the mantle.

Do your subjects feel you've captured who they are in a portrait?

There's that old expression about the eyes being the gateway to the soul. A classic portrait captures the essence of the subject. Classic posing plays a serious role in adding a level of flattering beauty to the image.

Can you do a solid headshot?

It's a component of consistent bread-and-butter business. Every businessperson needs a good headshot, but can you meet a client's expectations? Do you understand lighting, posing and composition?

Can you tell the story of an entire event with your pictures?

Obviously, this is about storytelling, which is especially effective in wedding coverage. But even a day-in-the-life session with a child needs a mix of images to tell the story. So, do you have an outline of how you want to tell the story in your head as you're covering an event?

How are your panning skills?

It might not seem like a classic, but to me, it's a skill set that's a necessity, especially when photographing kids. It's not used often, but being able to drag the shutter and pan a child on a bike for the first time is a classic.

Let's switch to classic skill sets.

If there weren't a "P" on the dial, could you shoot manually and know what you were doing?

You might be laughing, but being able to play with depth of field and create stunning images that leave people staring at your work is a classic quality to have.

Do you understand lighting?

Short light, broad light, split light, butterfly light, modified loop light are all techniques the great portrait artists used to teach. They're not only classics in themselves, but also important ingredients in creating classic portraits.

**What are you doing to build your reputation in the community?**

Seriously, what good is working to create great images if nobody knows who you are? Publicity, community involvement, relationship building are all part of making yourself a classic in business.

How are your listening skills?

The number-one challenge for every photographer is to meet the mindset of the client. It's also one of the biggest complaints from clients who are disappointed in their photographs, especially brides. There's a great line about your ears and mouth: "You've got two ears and one mouth, so listen twice as much as you talk."

How's the diversity of your skill set when photographing subjects out of your core specialty?

Let's assume you're a wedding photographer. How are your skills at children's portraiture, close-up/macro work, maternity, etc.? In today's competitive business climate, you don't want to be a one-trick pony. It's important to have an expanded skill set up your sleeve, allowing you to cover most challenges that come along.
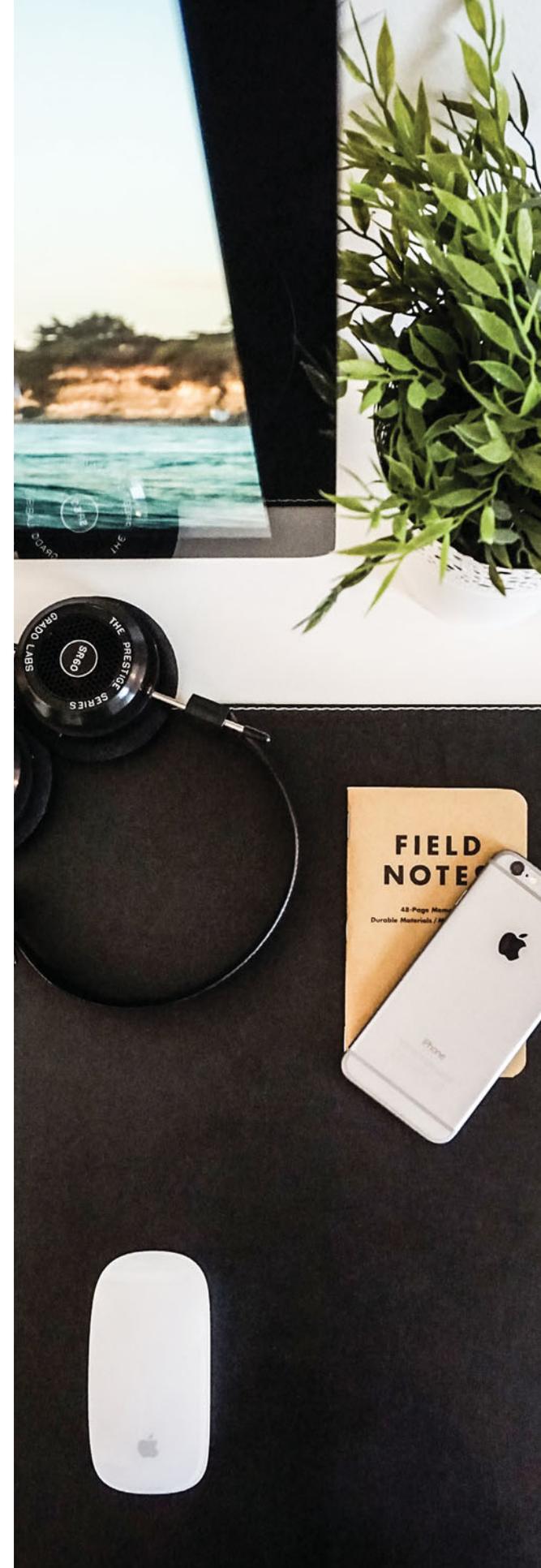
Is your approach to customer service classic or outdated, bordering on offensive?

This classic category requires a fast response and minimal callbacks, and is never confrontational. A classic approach requires empathy, integrity and taking responsibility. Most importantly, it's solution-driven.

Do you have classic skills when it comes to meeting somebody?

Too often the younger the photographer, the less competent they are at conversational basics. They don't have a firm handshake. They don't look you in the eyes when they're talking and they can't carry on a conversation.

Are you classic in your appearance, decorum and presentation?

Do people sense you're dependable, trustworthy and professional? Will people you meet or work with say or tell others, "What a class act"?

Appearance requires one more level of definition. I've seen young photographers who believe they always need to appear "real," even to the point of wearing clothes they might put on to cut the lawn. Meeting with a client almost always requires a professional look. Most wedding photographers, for example, dress to fit in at the wedding and are usually in something more formal.

Does your studio or office represent a level of classic organization?

I've been in studios that look like an episode of *Hoarders*. You might consider meeting with clients at other locations. Better yet, clean up your office or studio.

Let's switch from you and move over to your blog and website:

Is your About page a classic?

Your clients don't care about the awards you've won, what gear you shoot with or how you got started. What they care about is whether or not you can be trusted to capture the kinds of images they want. They want to know why you love being a photographer.

Are you showing classic quality in your galleries?

Less is more. So many of you show too many images. Plus, you share images that anybody's Uncle Harry could capture. Make every image is a "wow" print—meaning it's so good you'd have to show only one image to get hired.

Is your website organized in a classic way?

Walk into a Nordstrom's any place on the planet, and you'll find a classic approach to retail and consistency. When people come to your website, is it easy to navigate? Is it easy to find what they'd like to see? Does your website give a sense of strength, identity and professionalism? Or is it like walking into a Big Lots on a close-out weekend?

Do the graphic elements on your website and blog represent a classic approach to understanding your target audience?

Women make 98 percent of photography purchase decisions in the portrait/social categories. Does your website reflect a classic look that meets the expectations of this audience?

Are you classic in your approach to blogging?

A great blog requires a level of commitment, and especially consistency. Is what you share even relevant? Do you post on a regular basis, at least twice a week? Are you helpful?

Are you classic in your approach to your network?

Do you give as much as you take? A great network requires care and feeding. You need to participate, and your friends and associates need to know they can count on you.

There's a very thin line between looking at a classic level of performance as old-fashioned versus cutting edge. While some of my points are definitely old school, it's hardly old-fashioned to be considered a class act.

Having a classic approach to business is about being the very best. It's about outshining your competitors and building a level of trust with a potential client at the very first impression. ∎

LEARN MORE.
Click here or check us out at
youtube.com/btsShutterMagazine

Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded SkipCohenUniversity.com in January 2013. He's been actively involved in the photographic industry his entire career, and previously served as president of Rangefinder/WPPI and Hasselblad USA. He has coauthored six books on photography and is involved in several popular podcasts, including *Weekend Wisdom*.
skipcohenuniversity.com

photographer   salvatore cincotta
image title   kamakura
exposure   f4.5 @ 1/160th, ISO 200
lighting   profoto b1 with white umbrella and diffuser
location   kamakura, japan
gear   phase one iq3, schneider 80mm blue line
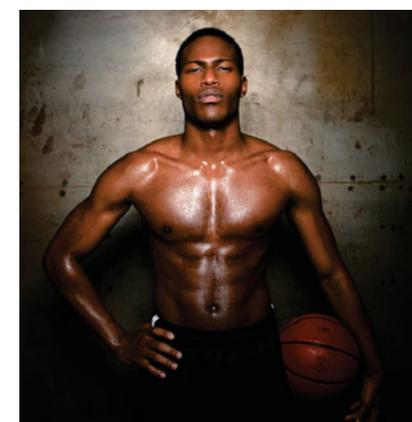
Light shaping
by Joe McNally

Internationally acclaimed photographer Joe McNally knows more about lighting and TTL than most. Watch his three how-to videos and absorb some of that knowledge.

Watch them at: profoto.com/joemcnally

Profoto®
The light shaping company™