



*Cary Photographic Artists*  
**Portraiture**

A “Mastering the Art of Photography” Topic

Developed by Brooke Meyer

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# Agenda

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- Definition
  - An Artists Perspective
  - Brief History of Portraiture
- Necessary & Useful Gear
- Useful Knowledge - Technical & Artistic
  - Discussion
- Online Resources & References
  - Extras



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# Definition

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por·trait

- Noun \ 'pòr-trət, - , trāt\
  - picture; a pictorial representation of a person usually showing the face
    - History: Middle French, from past participle of peindre
  - Synonyms: definition, delineation, depiction, picture, portrait, portraiture, portrayal, rendering, sketch, vignette\*



\*Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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# An Artists Perspective

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“All portraits, whether painted or photographed,  
are, in the end, fictional creations of the artist in which  
both the sitter and the artist “put on a performance”

Richard Avedon

From Paints to Prints: The Impact of Photography on Portraiture



# History

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## Antecedents: Miniature Painting



François I of France

Jean Clouet. c.1535, oil on panel

Louvre



# History

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## Antecedents: Silhouette



Beethoven as a boy

18th century silhouette portrait



Machine for drawing silhouettes.

From the 1792 English edition of  
Johann Kasper Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy



# History

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## Early Photographs - Daguerreotypes – 1839

“The Mirror With A Memory”



Daguerreotype of a young man by T.H. Newcomer, Philadelphia.



# History

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“...the sitter and the artist “put on a performance.” Richard Avedon



Jabez Hogg making a portrait in Richard Beard's Studio, 1843, Daguerreotype

Unknown photographer





# Necessary / Useful Equipment

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## Camera & Lens

- Camera

Adjustable Aperture / Shutter / ISO

- Lens

Primes - 50mm+ on APS-C, 70mm+ on Full Frame / Film  
Zooms - Medium to Long, 28-75mm, 70-210mm, 100-300mm

- Tripod



# Necessary / Useful Equipment

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## Light Source(s)

- Sun
- Artificial - Constant  
Lamps, Hot or Cold, Fixed or Portable
- Artificial - Instant  
Flash & Strobes with lots of aliases



# Necessary / Useful Equipment

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## Light Modifiers

- Diffusers

(Bed Sheet, Curtain, Shower Liner, Dirty Window, Umbrella, Softbox)

- Reflectors

Homemade or Purchased - White, Silver, Gold

- Shapers et al

- Barn Doors, Flags, Grids, GoBo's, Snoots, Gels



# Useful Knowledge - Technical

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## General

- Understanding Exposure & Post Processing  
(Prerequisite for all photography)

## Portrait

- Understanding Lighting Ratios
- Understanding Light Quality
- Traditional Lighting Patterns and Placements



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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- Listening, Understanding and Establishing Trust
  - Planning - Context and Concept
    - Clothing - Do's & Don'ts
    - Framing & Composition
      - Communication
  - Adapting To The Moment



# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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- Photography, like Painting, is a 2D representation of 3D subjects
  - Contrast creates the illusion of 3D.
- The difference in the amount of light on bright and dark areas is the Contrast or “Lighting Ratio”.



# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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The Lighting Ratio is expressed in “Stops” of light

- A lighting ratio of **1:1** lacks contrast with equal amounts of light in the highlights and shadows.
- A lighting ratio of **2:1** has 2 times (one stop) the light in the highlights than shadows.
- A lighting ratio of **4:1** has 4 times (two stops) the light in the highlights than the shadows.



1:1 Contrast Ratio



2:1 Contrast Ratio



4:1 Contrast Ratio



# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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- The side of the face nearer the light is illuminated by the **key** light.
- The side of the face away from the light is illuminated by the **fill** light.
- The difference between the **key** and the **fill**, in **stops**, is the **lighting (contrast) ratio**.
  - The fill light is always the “1” in the ratio.





# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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The Lighting Ratio has a strong influence on the mood of a photograph

- 1:1 ratio: Key and Fill Equal, Evenly Lit, Flat Image,
- 2:1 ratio (1 Stop) Typical Commercial Portrait Ratio
- 4:1 ratio (2 Stops) High Contrast, Low Key image



8:1 ratio (3 Stops) Dramatic, Very High Contrast, Low Key image



# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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There are two basic styles of lighting

- **High-key** lighting is mostly bright with few dark areas or shadows. There is strong illumination on the subject and usually the background.
- **Low-key** lighting creates depth with strong contrast of lights and dark. Few areas are lit at or above key, creating the low-key effect.



High Key



Low Key



# Understanding Lighting Ratios

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## Other lights commonly used with Key & Fill lights

- **Background Light:** Aimed at the background to separate the subject and background
- **Back Light:** Lights the subject from behind, separates the subject and background. Creates a fringe of light surrounding the sitter and can be used to highlight hair
- **Kicker:** Lights the subject from a low angle located behind and towards the side of the subject.

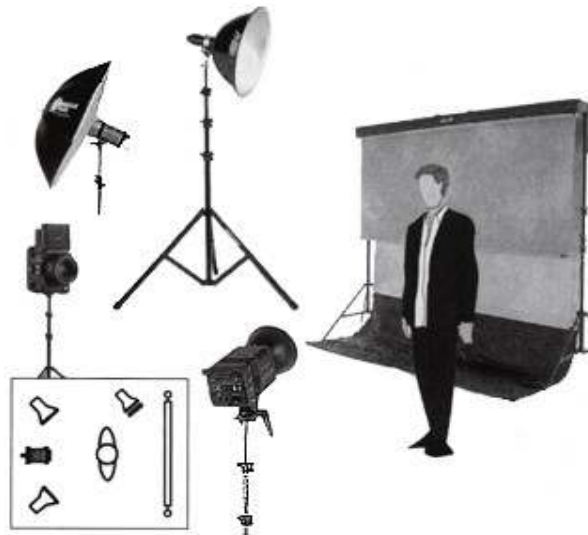


Image Adorama.com



# Understanding Lighting Qualities

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**Light Sources** have **Four Properties** that affect the mood of a portrait

- **Intensity** - Intense (sunlight) to subdued (candle). Measured in **EV** (Exposure Value) or **Stops**  
A bright, sunny day has an **EV** of 15. Shade has an **EV** of 13 or 2 Stops or 4 times less intensity.
  - **Color** – Warm To Cool
  - **Quality** - **Hard** (direct, Sun) or **Soft** (indirect, Shade)
  - **Angle** - The angle of the source affects **Intensity** and **Quality**



# Understanding Lighting Qualities

**Light Color** is measured in **K** (Kelvin), Warm To Cool

**Light Temperature**      **Source**

1,700 K

Match flame

1,850 K

Candle flame, **Sunset/Sunrise** →

2,700–3,300 K

Incandescent (Tungsten) Lamps

3,000 K

Soft White CFL's

4,100–4,150 K

Moonlight

5,000 K

Horizon Daylight

5,000 K

Cool White/Daylight Fluorescent

5,500–6,000 K

Vertical Daylight, Electronic Flash

6,500 K

Daylight, **Overcast** →

6,500–9,300 K

LCD or CRT screen

15,000–27,000 K

Clear blue northern sky



# Understanding Lighting Qualities

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## Light Quality: Hard and Soft

- **Direct Light** travels in an aligned (collimated) path, known as **hard light**
  - Bright Sun, Bare Flash and Spotlights are examples
- Hard light creates deep, sharply defined shadows and accentuates texture
  
- **Indirect Light** travels in a non-aligned, diffuse path, known as **soft light**
  - Overcast, Shade and Diffused Flash are examples
- Soft light “wraps” the subject in softly defined shadows and minimizes texture



Hard, Direct



Soft, Diffuse



# Understanding Lighting Qualities

## Angle of Light

- **Frontlight** - Even illumination, 2D, high key  
Good at golden hours, soft and warm



- **Overcast** - Even illumination, cool, soft, 2D, high key  
Good any time of day, auto exposure works well



- **Sidelight** - 3D, low key  
Available a few hours after sunrise and before sunset  
Available with a window or studio light



- **Backlight** – High or Low Key, 2D, Silhouettes  
Challenge to auto exposure, best with manual exposure



# Traditional Lighting Patterns

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**Loop Lighting** is named for the loop shadow it creates under the nose  
The key light is placed above and to the right or left of the sitter  
Common commercial portrait lighting in high key





# Traditional Lighting Patterns

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**Rembrandt Lighting** is named after the Dutch painter

A high window illuminates one side of the face and the cheek under the eye on the shadow side

Extend the nose shadow of Loop Lighting to the cheek and, voila



# Traditional Lighting Patterns

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**Butterfly Lighting** is named for its Butterfly shaped shadow under the nose  
The key light is above the sitter



Aka “Paramount” lighting, heavily used by Hollywood photographers in the 1930's

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# Traditional Lighting Patterns

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**Split Lighting** is simply Side Lighting.  
One half of the face is light, one half is shadow  
The Key Light is about 90 degrees to the left or right of the sitter



# Traditional Lighting Placement

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**Short lighting** illuminates the side of the face away from the camera  
The face appears slimmer, a popular choice for heavy people



# Traditional Lighting Placement

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**Broad Lighting** illuminates the side of the face towards the camera  
Often used for slim and thin faces.



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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“I'd like to get to know you” - Spanky and Our Gang, 1968

- Growing up, we become increasingly self conscious. A photograph can be very scary.
- No technical skill or equipment will fix fear.
- Listening and establishing trust will fix fear
- The Golden Rule is a great starting point



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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## Planning – Context and Concept

### •Questions:

- What is the purpose of the portrait ?
- How will you show that purpose ?
- How will you create impact?

### Answers:

- Decide on a theme
- Find or create settings that fit
- Plan the time and shooting sequence



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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## Clothing Do's and Don'ts

Portraits make our memories vivid. Keep the focus on the sitter, not their clothing.

- Don'ts
  - Big Stripes, Bold Patterns and Wild Colors
  - Lots of skin. It will steal attention
  - Heavy makeup
  - Fads, like 80's big hair

Do's

- Neutral colors
- Long sleeves, especially with heavy folks





# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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## Framing and Composition

Backgrounds establish mood and direct attention to the sitter

- Intimate portraits need little background
- Story telling backgrounds set the stage



The background is a supporting actor, not the star

- Deciding what to add and what to subtract is the same for all artists
- Design Elements Apply - Line, Shape, Direction, Size, Texture, Value, Color
- Design Principles Apply – Balance, Gradation, Repetition, Contrast, Harmony, Dominance, Unity



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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## Communication

Portrait Photographers need to be social. Have a plan to direct the sitter, establish rapport and continually tell them what you are doing and why

- Digital allows instant feedback  
Show them how great they look
- Relaxed, confident and trusting



# Useful Knowledge - Artistic

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## Adapt To The Moment

“Life moves pretty fast.

If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it” - Ferris Bueller

- Stay open to surprise



- If you can, build on the surprise



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# Extras



# Using the Rule of Thirds

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# Using the Rule of Thirds



# History

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“Portraiture, formerly a privilege of the powerful and the very wealthy, gained popularity and soon developed into a large industry providing a new commodity for mass consumption”

“Prestige, utility, the human passion for the mimetic, narcissistic investment and the human desire for the kind of immortality conferred by memory come together in portraiture and in photographic portraiture”



# History

New technology made everyone a portrait photographer for only \$1

1890: The first "Point & Shoot" camera

1902: It's easy, a child can do it!

**SPORTING GOODS** 46



**New Kodak Cameras.**  
*"You press the button, we do the rest."*  
(FOR YOU CAN DO IT YOURSELF.)  
**Seven New Styles and Sizes**  
ALL LOADED WITH  
**Transparent Films.**

For Sale by all Photo, Stock, Dealers.  
**THE EASTMAN COMPANY, Rochester, N. Y.** *Send for Catalogue.*

Image courtesy of Duke University/Perkins Library

Any school-boy or girl can make good pictures with one of the Eastman Kodak Co.'s **Brownie Cameras** **\$1.00**



**\$1.00**

Brownies load in daylight with film-cartridges for 6 exposures, have fine meniscus lenses, the Eastman Retax Shutter for snap shots or time exposures and make pictures 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 inches.

Brownie Camera, for 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 pictures.	\$1.00
Transparent Film Cartridge, 6 exposures, 2 1/4 x 2 1/4.	.15
Patent Film Cartridge, 6 exposures, 2 1/4 x 2 1/4.	.15
Brownie Developing and Printing Quin.	.25
Brownie Removable Finder.	.25

*Take a Brownie Home for Christmas.*

Brownie circulars and Kodak catalogues free at the dealers or by mail.

**EASTMAN KODAK CO.**  
 Rochester, New York.





# History

## 1920: The Wearable Camera

## 1902: The Vacation Portrait



*If it isn't an Eastman, it isn't a Kodak.*

A vacation without a **KODAK** is a vacation wasted.

**KODAK LITERATURE AT THE BRILLIANT NEW MUSEUM**

**KODAK SCHOOL**

No matter what your hobby may be, a Kodak will help you to enjoy it the more. Kodakery is well worth while for itself alone, but its adaptability to every other pursuit is equally its own merit.

And it is very, very simple, too. At the Kodak Developing Machine abolished the Dark Room. Every step is so light, and all so "point in the light."

**Kodak** \$1.00 to \$2.00  
**Super Kodak** \$2.00 to \$3.00  
**Kodak Developing Machine** \$2.00 to \$3.00

**EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, Rochester, N. Y.**



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

### Vest Pocket Autographic Kodak

*You don't carry it; you wear it—like a watch.*

*The vest pocket camera that will really go in the vest pocket.*

With a Vest Pocket Kodak you're always ready for the unexpected that is sure to happen. Your larger camera you carry when you plan to take pictures. The Vest Pocket Kodak you have constantly with you to capture the charm of the moment. It is small in size, but the negatives are of such quality that enlargements can be made without difficulty. The price of the Kodak is \$3.00. Film for 8 exposures is 25 cents. Kodak Pocket Attachment, 25 cents.

**Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y., The Kodak City**

## 1922: "Mom With A Camera"



*Keep a Kodak story of the children*

*Autographic Kodaks \$1.50 up*

**Eastman Kodak Company Rochester, N. Y. The Kodak City**

Image courtesy of Duke University/Perkins Library



# Resources

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## Notable Photographic Portraiture Collections

- National Gallery of Art – Modern Portraits in Photography
  - US National Portrait Gallery
  - United Kingdom National Portrait Gallery
  - The J Paul Getty Museum



# Resources

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- Introduction to the History of Photography (c) Marcelo Guimaraes Lima, PhD.

<http://photographyhistory.blogspot.com/2009/01/portraiture-and-photography.html>

- History of Photography – Light & Likeness, 19th & 21st C. Portrait Photography

<http://www.cod.edu/photo/curto/1105/slides/portrait/>

- Photography Classes, College of DuPage, Illinois Community Colleges

<http://www.cod.edu/photo/curto/index.htm>

