

Portrait Shoot Evening

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There is a camera club portrait studio shoot Cliff has arranged for Tuesday 10th March 2020, 7.30pm

For anyone new to this workshop evening or new to “studio” lighting, don’t worry, it is fun and help is always around. However it will be much easier if you do a little preparation beforehand. So, get ready now, this is what happens...

The club sets up 2 to 4 “studios” in the club hall. Each one has its own strobe or continuous lights. Cliff supplies our models; we are too scared to ask him how he finds them! They are available for you to direct, pose and shoot. A volunteer may sit if we are a model short.



Usually someone will be stationed at each set to advise you on the camera settings and offer help when you need it.

Camera

You will need to bring your camera

IMPORTANT. You should **know how to set your camera** into manual and change the ISO, aperture and shutter settings. If you are new to manual mode, to get the most from the workshop, try to master this before the evening by reading your manual. If you are still not sure how to do this please bring along your camera & manual and seek help from another member either at an earlier meeting or on the night, before you queue for a place at a set.

When it is your turn you will be given a “remote trigger” to fire the flash. The trigger fits into your camera’s hotshoe. You may be advised a working ISO, aperture and shutter speed to use. The triggers will fit nearly all camera makes (*some older Sony cameras have a non-standard hotshoe, if you have one of these you may need to bring along a hotshoe adapter.*)

Take a test shot and the strobes will fire. Check your exposure. If it is too dark or light either increase/decrease the ISO or open/close your aperture.

If you have a mirror-less camera and the viewfinder/LCD is very dark you probably need to change the camera menu setting *exposure simulation* to *disable*, or words to that effect. Consult your camera manual on how to do this.

Depending upon the length of the queue for the set you may be limited to just one or two minutes shooting time; return to the back of the queue or move sets. Hence the advantages of being familiar with your camera settings before you take your turn.

Lens and Focus

Typically most portraits are shot using a lens focal length from 50mm to 200mm on Full Frame (FF.) *The equivalent on an APS-C lens is about 35mm to 130mm or Micro Four-thirds lens 25mm to 100mm.* Due to the available model to camera distance I often find I use 50mm to 100mm (FF)

You can use auto-focus, face or eye focus, or manual focus depending upon your camera and how well it might focus in the available light.

Shutter Speed

Strobe (flash) Lighting.

Typically your shutter speed needs to be slower than 1/200, usually 1/160 will work OK for everyone. *The short flash duration ensures images are usually crisp and sharp. Please ask me if you want to know why shutter speeds that are too long, e.g. 1/30, or too short, e.g. 1/500, are rarely a good idea in setups like these.*

You are unlikely to need a tripod to keep the camera steady but feel free to use one if you wish to keep the camera at a set height or hands free.

Continuous lights.

If a set is using continuous lights instead of strobes, depending upon the light's brightness, you may find the need for a tripod or use a high ISO.

Advanced users can be creative when mixing continuous lights with strobes.

Aperture

If the suggested exposure is, say, f/5.6 at ISO 400 then, as a starting point, all cameras can be set to this regardless of their sensor size.

Technically smaller sensors have a greater depth of field. If you have a smaller sensor camera, e.g. APS-C or Micro 4:3, and you insist on having the equivalent DoF as the FF shot, you will need to open your aperture by 1 or 2 stops respectively (e.g. f/5.6 to f/4 or f/2.8.) This will let in more light and over expose, to compensate lower your ISO by 1 or 2 stops (e.g. from 400 to 200 or 100 ISO)

Your own Flashgun

You will not need this. Firing your flashgun (or pop-up flash) whilst someone else is shooting the model can trigger slave lights to fire prematurely, distract the model and the photographer may lose their shot. If you wish to use your own flashgun wait your turn for the model and do not use the trigger.

Generally the evening is to give members experience of using off-camera flash.

Crashing a Shoot

Taking shots of the model whilst another member is shooting is considered bad manners. It distracts the model, they may glance away from where the working photographer wants them to look and this can ruin their shot. Please be considerate and wait your turn, the model only needs one photographer at a time.

Burst, Continuous or Bracketing Modes

Switch these off. When using strobe lights your camera should be on **single shot**. Strobes need time, from 0.5 to 8 seconds, to recharge between shutter presses. Shooting too quickly can result in under exposure or black frames.

Camera Settings Summary

Manual, Single Shot

1/160, ISO 200, f/5.6 (example only, these will vary from set to set)

Exposure Simulation = disable (for mirror-less cameras or live view)

What Makes a Good Portrait?

There are no right or wrong answers but if you feel the need for some general guide lines some of these may help

- Focus on the eyes, or the nearest eye if the face is at an angle
- To keep the whole face in focus generally use apertures of f/5.6 or f/8 (FF)
- Avoid focal length lenses shorter than 50mm (FF) 25mm (4:3)
- Keep the whole face and some background in the frame to optionally crop parts later in your computer
- When including shoulders do not crop off at the elbow joints, crop either above or below the joint. The same with the waist, knees and ankles/feet
- If it bends then bend it, e.g. arms, wrist, fingers
- Avoid an unconnected arm coming into the frame from the edge
- Avoid the model showing the palm of their hand towards the camera
- Profile shots, have them looking into the frame, not out of the frame
- Once you have the correct camera exposure set move around, try photographing from different angles and heights, ask the model to turn their head. Usually the set exposure will not need changing
- Avoid shooting up the model's nose
- Talk to the model, give clear instructions, avoid "left" or "right", instead try "please look toward the light" or indicate a direction with your hand

Have Fun and Ask for Help

The main thing is to enjoy the shoot.

Get to know your camera before the shoot otherwise ask a helpful member who is looking for something to do for some help.

The models are always pleased to receive a copy of your best PDIs from the evening.

We are expecting one set-up to involve you in some *organza wafting* for creative images. *More to be revealed on the night.*