Speedlights

On and off camera flash

Big light/Small light

- What is a big light source?

- What is a small light source?

Big light/Small light

❧ What is a big light source?

❧ What is a small light source?

What can you do with a Speedlight?

- Provide light in a darkened area

- Fill in shadows

- Create definition

- Freeze movement

- Add colour

- Create mood

- Capture movement

- Turn day into night

- Light Painting

Controlling the light

- Inverse square law. Twice the distance = 1/4 of the light, four time the distance = 1/16

  - Move your subject away from the background to create a darker backdrop

- Hard vs soft light

  - Bigger sources create a softer light

    - Or do they

- Moving the light source closer will soften the light

Controlling the light

- Diffusion

  - Softboxes, umbrellas, tissue paper

- Reflection

  - Umbrellas, card, ceilings, walls

- Flagging

  - Barndoors, shutters, boards, gaffer tape

- Separation

  - Move the light away from or closer to your subject or your subject from the background

Bringing light into the darkness

❧ Limiting the ambient light allows the flash to dominate thereby making the fall of the light more controllable

❧ This is useful when the flash synchronisation speed of the camera is low and there is less chance to control the ambient lighting

❧ Because focussing in the dark can be difficult, it may require several shots to get the one you want

A Shot in the Dark

This technique works well with a static subject

Gaffer tape a mark for your model

Focus manually as most AF systems aren't sensitive enough to cope

Image courtesy of Ryan Cooper; for f-stoppers

Lighting the shadows

- Set the camera to manual mode

- Outdoors, set white balance to around 5600K

- ISO 100-200

- Shutter speed depending on sync speed but around 1/100 – 1/250 sec

- Expose for the ambient light, the background and set the aperture to correctly expose the background, set the flash to match. A smaller aperture will darken the background but don't forget to change the flash setting to match

- If depth of field is critical, reduce the background exposure with a neutral density filter

Lighting the shadows

❧ Fill flash may be:

    ❧ Direct, on-camera flash

    ❧ Directional, off camera flash

    ❧ Diffused, using a softbox, umbrella or reflector

    ❧ Single or multiple flashes

High Speed Sync Flash

- Some cameras will allow synchronisation at all shutter speeds with specific flashes

- This is achieved by producing a longer burst of light from the flash in order to get even illumination of the frame

- This can be used creatively to control the effect of ambient light

- Shots that create a night time look are then possible

Film Noir

- One of the techniques that can be employed using HSS is to recreate the effect of old Hollywood film stills in the Film Noir style

- This has the advantage of allowing easier focussing in a brightly lit room

- Increasing the shutter speed eliminates the effect of the ambient light

Film Noir

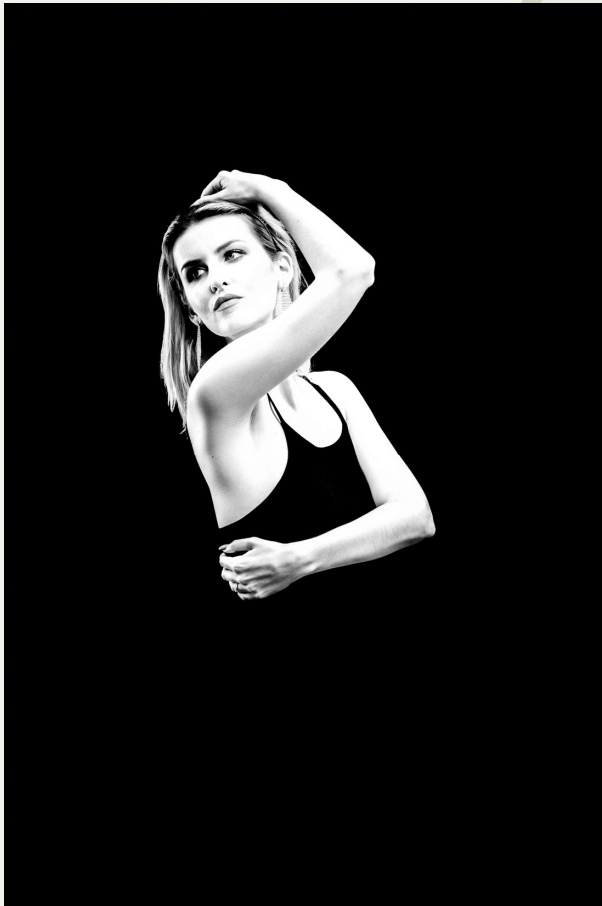Self portrait by Gene Tierney

Film Noir

So how do we start to create this look?

This is a good example of the genre.

Model: Amber Tutton

Film Noir

Using High Speed Sync Flash, the ambient lighting can be effectively eliminated

This allows effective and accurate use of autofocusing mechanisms with control of the lighting

Examples of film noir using one or two speedlights

Building light using coloured gels for effect

Essential reading

- Joe McNally - Nikon

- Neil Freeman - Nikon

- Jake Hicks - Gels

- Lara Jade - Canon

- Kate Hopewell-Smith - Sony

- David Tejada - Nikon

- Neil Van Niekerk - Nikon

- Gavin Hoey - Olympus

- Glyn Dewis - Sony

- Brett Harkness – Canon/Pentax MF

- Alistair Appleton - general

- Brian Worley - Canon