



# CREATIVE MEDIA **FUNDAMENTALS**

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## **THE NATURE OF LIGHT**



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CMF025

# INTRODUCTION

## **TURN THE LIGHT(ING) ON IN YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY FOR OPTIMAL IMPACT!**

The first thing a photographer learns is how to click the shutter. From there a magical journey begins! Camera angles, depth of field, composition, perspective, color harmony, balance ... LIGHTING! all combine, enabling us to create memorable images with emotional impact, artistic merit and timeless value.

Lighting is one of the basic tools in photography. Natural light photographers find light, choose times of day that utilize existing light in artistic and flattering ways, and modify light when the time of day or angle isn't optimal for an existing circumstance. Beyond natural light, photographers learn to create and add their own.

This presentation is designed to show you, simply and visually, what light is, how it looks in various circumstances and how you can easily use and control it to make your pictures the very best they can be. Lighting is easy - once you see it, you see it - and you can't stop seeing it! It opens your visual world and allows you to appreciate and describe your surroundings in new and exciting ways!



**A photograph of a rock formation becomes dramatic and impactful because of the cloudy natural lighting and high contrast presentation.**

**This image is called "Guard Dog"**

# LIGHT IS CONTRAST

THE FIRST NOTICEABLE QUALITY OF LIGHT IS CONTRAST



Our eyes will always be attracted by the item that is the most different from every-thing else. Light against dark, dark against light. Notice your surroundings so you can compose images that make the most of this! For instance, if your subject is dark, find an angle where you can show it off against a light background for maximum impact!



# LIGHT IS DIRECTIONAL

CHOOSE HOW YOU WISH TO VIEW THE WAY LIGHT WILL APPEAR IN PICTURES!



Light is consistent. There are 5 natural lights in nature: Specular Highlight, Diffused Highlight, Shaded Side, Reflected Light and Shadow. The more of these lights you include in your images, the more depth you achieve. Fewer lights = flatter images. Placing the shadows towards camera = drama. Front lit images look soft and colorful.

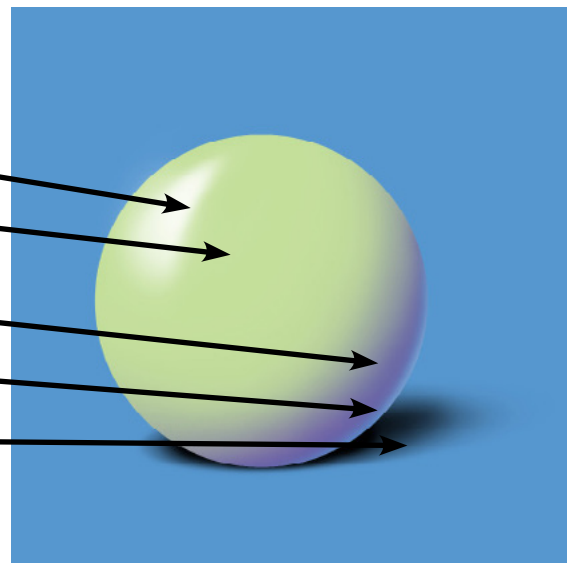
**Specular Highlight**

**Diffused Highlight**

**Shaded Side**

**Reflected Light**

**Shadow**





### **SIDE LIGHT**

Full range of color and tones. Bright highlights, deep shadows, Color has the strongest representation in the mid tone areas.



### **FRONT LIGHT**

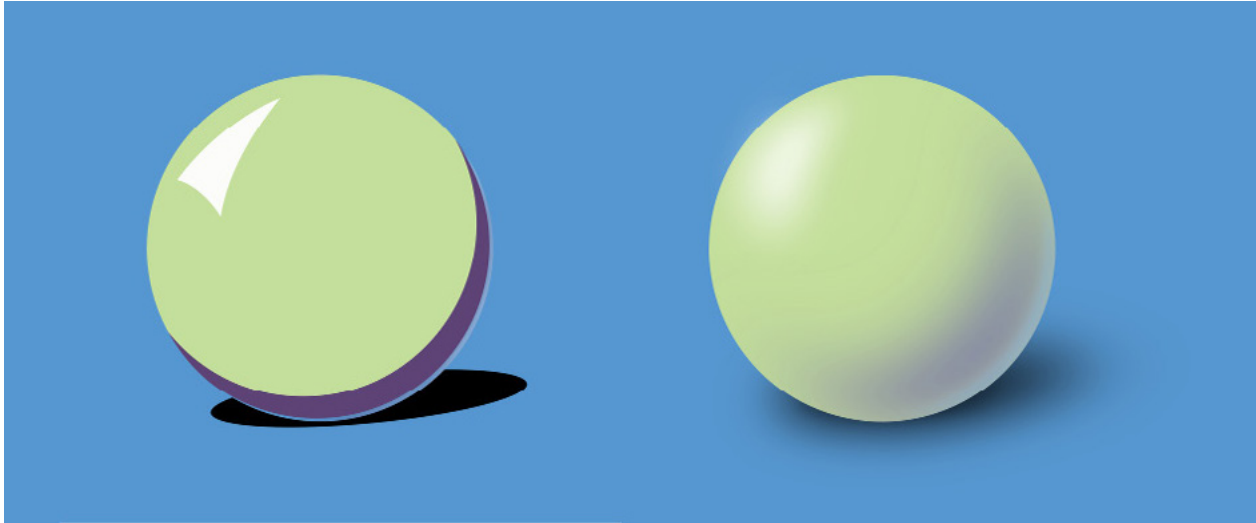
Flatter than side lit images, this one contains mostly specular highlights and diffused highlights. Color is represented throughout.



### **BACK LIGHT**

Dramatic images like this one sometimes require after capture editing to achieve more than silhouette. This one was edited in SnapSeed.

# HARD AND SOFT LIGHT



## **HARD LIGHT IS PRODUCED FROM SMALL, INTENSE LIGHT SOURCES**

Small light sources, like the mid day sun and flash units create light transitions that have distinct edges. This is called Hard Light. It is good for city scenes and other types of photography that benefit from sharp contrast, bright colors and drama.

## **SOFT LIGHT IS PRODUCED FROM LARGE, DIFFUSED LIGHT SOURCES**

Large light sources, like open sky just as the sun is coming up, window light and light bounced off of large reflectors create light transitions that softly blend into the next tone. This is called Soft Light. It is good for portraits, dreamy landscapes and any image that benefits from a graceful, tranquil appearance. Explore the buttons on the right and click any that you like.

## **YOU CAN CONTROL LIGHT**

Light can be controlled simply by time of day. Early morning and late afternoon = soft light; Mid-day = Hard light. Bring accessories to modify existing light: Reflectors, diffusers, filters, gobos, flash.

# EXISTING LIGHT OPTIONS



## HARD LIGHT VS REFLECTED LIGHT

You can use existing light “as is” by finding a flattering angle for the subject, or you can choose to use a reflector to redirect (bounce) softer light onto the subject.



Photo by Clay Blackmore

## REFLECTORS, DIFFUSERS, GOBOS

Reflectors catch and redirect light. Popular colors are white, silver, gold. Reflectors are smooth or shiny.

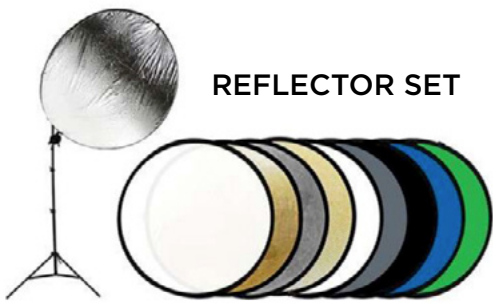
Diffusers spread light. They are placed between a light source and the subject. Diffusers are translucent.

Gobos block light completely. They are used to get rid of unwanted light sources. Gobos are opaque.

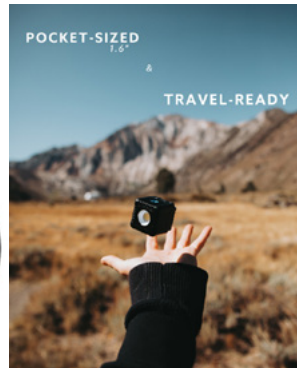
# ADD YOUR OWN LIGHT

## BALANCE WITH FLASH

This image uses existing light from behind to light the hair and a flash turned backwards onto a large reflector to light the face.



REFLECTOR SET



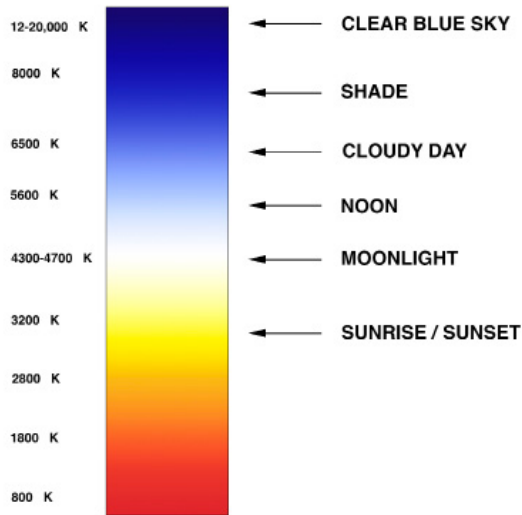
LUMECUBES





# COLOR TEMPERATURE

## Kelvin Scale / Light Temperature = Color



## COLOR OF NATURAL LIGHT

Light affects colors differently throughout the day. Early morning light is soft and blue. Mid day is neutral in color. Late afternoon light paints everything with a warm glow. Choose accessories to match existing light, for example, use a silver reflector early in the morning, a white one mid day and a gold one late in the afternoon.

“THE COLOR OF AN OBJECT ILLUMINATED PARTAKES OF THE COLOR OF THAT WHICH ILLUMINATED IT”

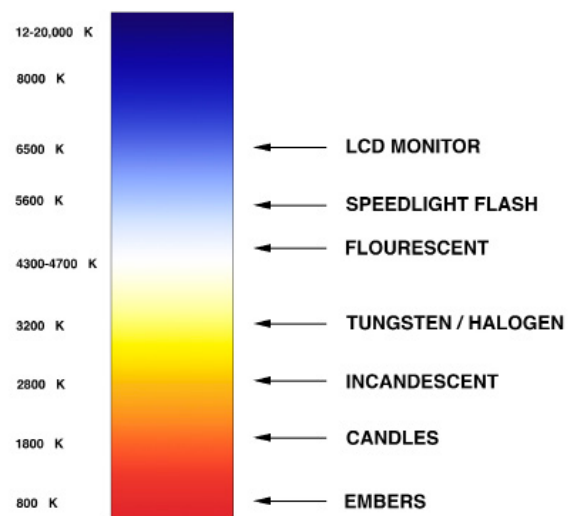
- LEONARDO DA VINCI

## COLOR OF ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

Flash units, lamps and streetlights also affect the way we see color. Use filters over flash units to match existing artificial light - or dial in the color temperature you want on your LCD lighting panels.

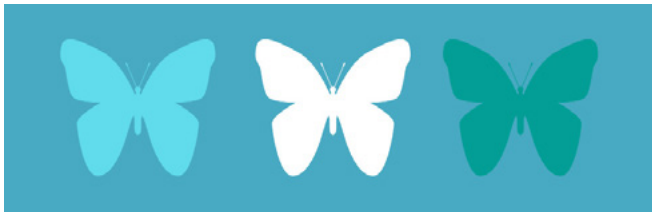
**You may also choose to mix and match lighting colors for creative expression!**

## Kelvin Scale / Light Temperature = Color



# CONTRAST = IMPACT

Every image has a focal point, a center of interest. Focal points are achieved (or created) in locations where the highest degree of contrast, color and detail are represented. When these elements occur simultaneously in one area - hopefully your subject! - you have achieved maximum impact - STRONG STATEMENT! EMOTIONAL! MEMORABLE!



## VALUE CONTRAST

In medium to dark images, the eye will always go to the lightest values. In light images, the eye goes to the darkest ones.



## COLOR CONTRAST

The gaze is drawn to the color that is different, brighter or most predominant.



## DETAIL CONTRAST

Attention is demanded by objects that have the sharpest edges ...



## DETAIL CONTRAST

... or the locations that are represented by the most number of pieces.



## SHAPE CONTRAST

Our eyes are always looking for the thing that is different from all of the rest. Look for opportunities to make the most of it!

# IN CONCLUSION

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT LIGHT IS ALLOWING YOURSELF TO SEE IT!**

Our eyes are so accustomed to seeing light that we often take it for granted. We might appreciate the sparkle on the ocean but don't stop to think about how it got there nor enjoy the playfulness of the wind and water that makes it dance for us. We might love taking pictures on bright sunny days but not think about why we have such dark circles under our eyes or the shadow from our nose drooping over our mouth - and not realize that we can change it.

Photographers study and refine lighting throughout their careers, always striving for perfection - so please don't expect to achieve perfect results the first time you head out with your new reflector! Expect some "interesting" results now and then, and have fun experimenting - when you don't like your results, think about what you did, and what you can try different next time. When you do like your results, think about what you did so you can remember it for the next time!

Seeing light is one of the most exciting things we can achieve as artists. When the light goes off (excuse the pun), a whole new world is waiting for us to explore and enjoy playing in! You will find yourself looking at everything around you with new eyes, eyes that have something fresh and new to observe and study. And you will be excited to play with the magic of photography again, just like you did the first time you picked up a camera.

So go out and have fun!

Take the pictures! Take ALL of the pictures! Then take more with planning!

Become the Master of your Masterpieces!