

Tabletop Lighting Variations

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By

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Direct Sun Lighting



Three Flowers
By Carol McGonegal

- Lighting – Sunlight streaming through window onto the floor
- Arrangement – Tall vase with three flowers on the floor
- Background – Black scarf hanging over back of a chair in shadow
- Had to keep moving the vase to keep sun light on flowers
- Flowers in one plane to keep all three in focus
- Took multiple shots
- Leica V-Lux1 point-and-shoot, handheld



Kit for Demonstration



- Nikon D3 with 105mm Micro VR lens f/2.8
- Nikon R1C1 Wireless Close-Up Speedlight
- SB-800 Speedlight Shoe Mount with diffuser
- Black scarf
- Sheet of white construction paper
- Three chairs
- Subjects to photograph – figurine and rock
- Hair from Maine Coon cats - optional



Available Diffused Light



1/15sec at f/16 ISO 6400

- Light – Even from multiple skylights and windows off white walls
- Result
 - Almost no shadows
 - Both background and subject lit
 - Requires tripod, longer exposure and low ISO to get good results from most cameras
 - f/16 gives enough depth of field to have all of subject in focus
- Requires least amount of gear
- Scarf has no fold distracting from subject
- Maybe more interesting results if lit by direct sun light vs. diffused light



Close-Up Speedlight

- Light – Close-Up lights only. Top - both at same power. Bottom - right light at -0.7EV
- Results
 - Top picture looks flat. Bottom picture shows some shadow and shape
 - Shadow shows on scarf
 - Background much less exposed and less distracting
 - Flash dominates ambient light by ~5 stops in top picture, 3 stops in bottom



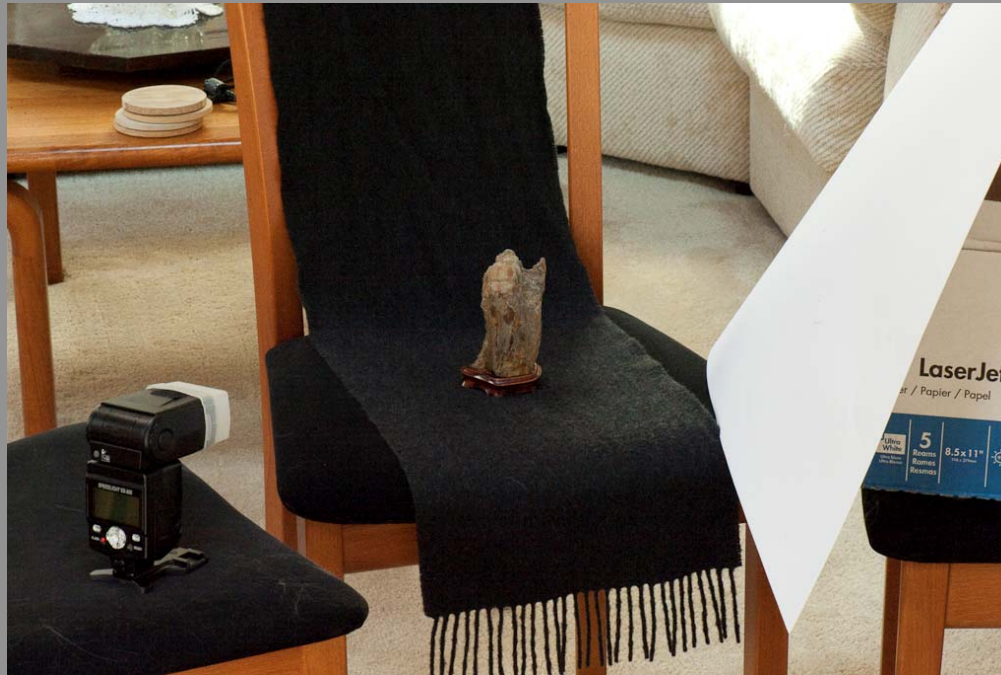
1/60sec at f/16 ISO 800
Both lights same power



1/60sec at f/16 ISO 6400
Right light at -0.7EV



SB800 Alone on Stand



- SB800 remotely fired, no close-up flashes
- Pictures with and without white paper reflector



SB800 and Reflector



1/60sec at f/22 ISO 400



1/60sec at f/22 ISO 400

With reflector

- Light – SB800 at ~45 degrees to the side
- Result
 - Much deeper shadows, top without reflector, bottom with reflector lightens the shadows
 - Background very dark with powerful flash and lower ISO
 - With f/22 the pictures are slightly underexposed....maybe better at f/16 or ISO 800
- The top has enough detail in the shadows....it's my pick for this round



Desk Lamp and Reflector



- A desk lamp replaces the flash
- SoLux 3500 degree Kelvin Art light



Desk Lamp & Reflector

- Light – Desk lamp with 3500°K 50watt bulb
- Result
 - Top Picture - Colors pop with deep shadows. Loss of detail in the shadows
 - Bottom Picture – Reflector fills shadows just enough to show detail.
 - Bottom Picture - This is my pick from the whole shoot
- Most cameras should shoot on a tripod at 100 or 200 ISO with a longer exposure



1/45 sec at f/22 ISO 6400



1/60 sec at f/22 ISO 6400
With reflector



Refined in Adobe Lightroom

Refinements

- White balance 3548°
- Slightly rotated 1.7
- Increased Clarity +75
- Vibrance +10
- Blue saturation -51
- Blue luminance -55
- Sharpening 105, mask 90%
- Luminance smoothing -73
- Post-Crop Vignette, amount -40, feather 33, roundness 45



SB800 with New Subject



Back to the SB800 and Reflector



SB800 and Reflector

- Light – SB800 remotely fired
- Result
 - Top Picture - Loss of detail in the shadows. See left ear area. Harsh shadow from fish
 - Bottom Picture – Reflector fills shadows just enough to show detail. Fills shadow from fish
 - Background very dark because subject is more reflective...through the lens metering throttles the flash
 - Bottom Picture - This is my pick for this experiment
- I should have reduced the ISO....can't think of everything



1/60 sec at f/22 ISO 6400



1/60 sec at f/22 ISO 6400
With Reflector



Adobe Lightroom Refinements

Refinements

- White balance –Flash
- Rotate crop 2.24°
- Exposure +0.29
- Brightness 57
- Clarity +74
- Vibrance +10
- Light tones +13
- Dark tones -11
- Orange Luminance -27
- Purple Luminance +20
- Blue Saturation – 50
- Blue Luminance -43
- Highlight Recovery 90
- Sharpening 98, mask 87%
- Luminance smoothing -61
- Post-Crop Vignette, amount –55, feather 55, midpoint 54



Final Thoughts

- I played with lighting this weekend thanks to an improvisational lighting demo I saw by Joe McNally, the master...
 - <http://www.joemcnally.com/blog/>
- Different subjects need different lighting
 - The two subjects I used rendered well with strong shadows to create visual depth
 - Jewelry, gemstones, transparent bottles, eggs and lace, etc. will require different approaches so....be prepared to play!

