Lebanon Camera Club

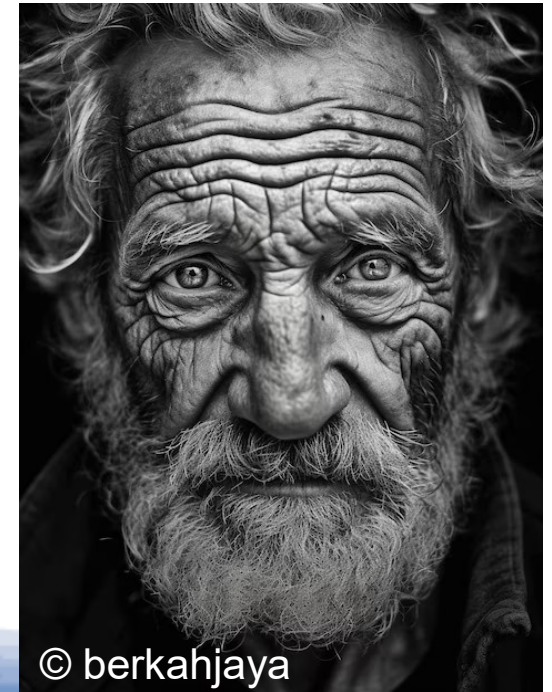# Ring Lights and Light Tents

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2/6/2024

See last slide for Fair
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Ring Lights and Light Tents

Motivation

- Contrast control
  - High contrast → 'hard' light (bright highlights and dark shadows)
    - More dramatic
    - Good for landscapes
    - Good for B&W photography
    - Good for 'intense' portraiture → emphasizes wrinkles and 'cragginess'

© Nick Page

© berkahjaya

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Motivation

Note: The beetle photo may not seem to be low contrast, but beetles can have very shiny exteriors, and normally there are very bright highlights unless the lighting is carefully controlled.
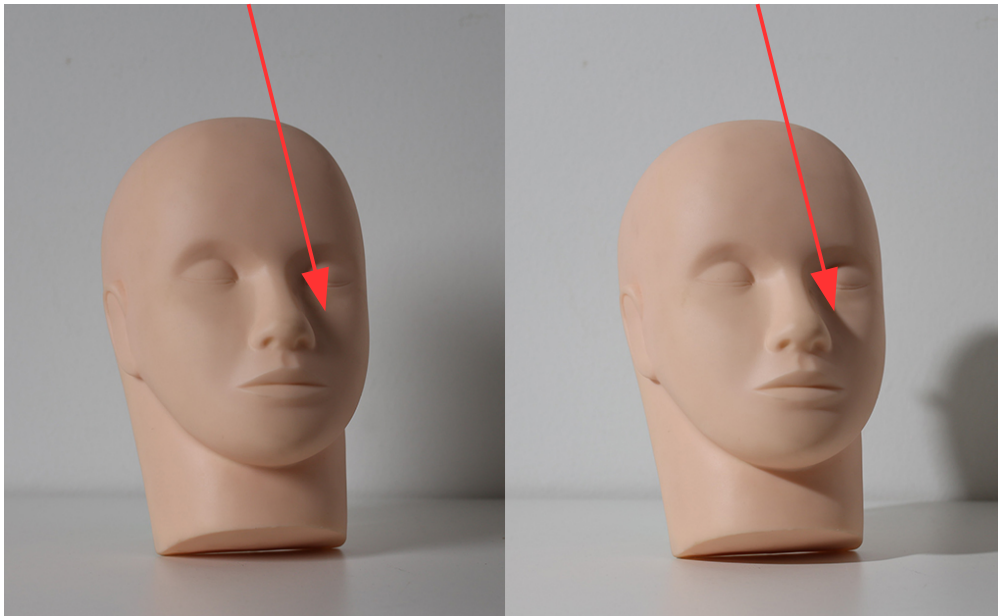
◆ Contrast control

  ◆ Low contrast → 'soft' light (diffused light, no harsh shadows)

    ➢ Less dramatic
    ➢ Good for macro to reduce bright reflections (especially insect eyes)
    ➢ Good for vlogging (video blogging)
    ➢ Good for 'smooth' portraiture → more flattering for women's faces

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www.HottestWalls.com

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Contrast control

- ## High contrast
  - ### Well defined light source(s)
    - Small in relation to the subject size → the sun is a small light source
    - Single source produces the sharpest shadows → direct sunlight
    - Multiple sources can reduce contrast (a reflector is an additional source)

shadow edge softer   shadow edge harder

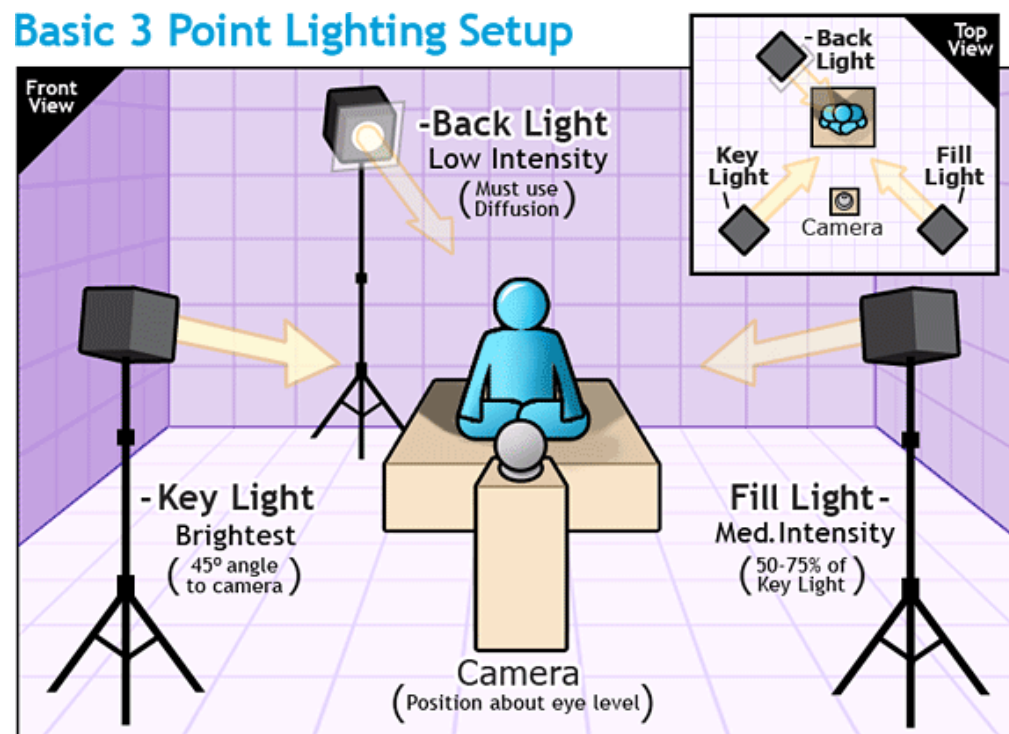larger source = softer   smaller source = harder   single source   reflector added

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Contrast control

- High contrast
  - Well defined light source(s)
    - Small in relation to the subject size → the sun is a small light source
    - Single source produces the sharpest shadows → direct sunlight
    - Multiple sources can reduce contrast (a reflector is an additional source)

Basic 3 Point Lighting Setup

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Contrast control

Note: An overcast day may be too low contrast for portraits → use a reflector to add additional light to the subject.
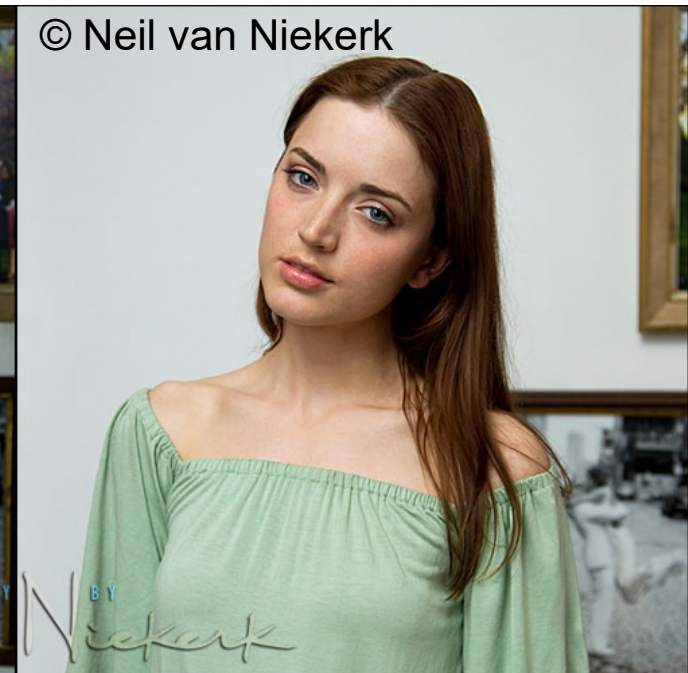
- Low contrast
  - Illumination arriving from all directions
    - Overcast day, bounce flash → large illumination area

© expertphotography.com

overcast sky → low contrast

hot spots

© Neil van Niekerk

direct flash → high contrast

bounce flash → lower contrast

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Contrast control

- ## Low contrast
  - ### Illumination arriving from all directions
    - Overcast day → light source is entire sky, minimal shadows
    - Ring light → light from many directions (if not smaller than subject)

hot spots

normal light, left → uneven illumination

ring light → even illumination

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Contrast control

Note: Portrait lighting usually features a light gradient across the face, but in some cases a lower contrast may be preferred (especially for vlogging, where the subject may move).
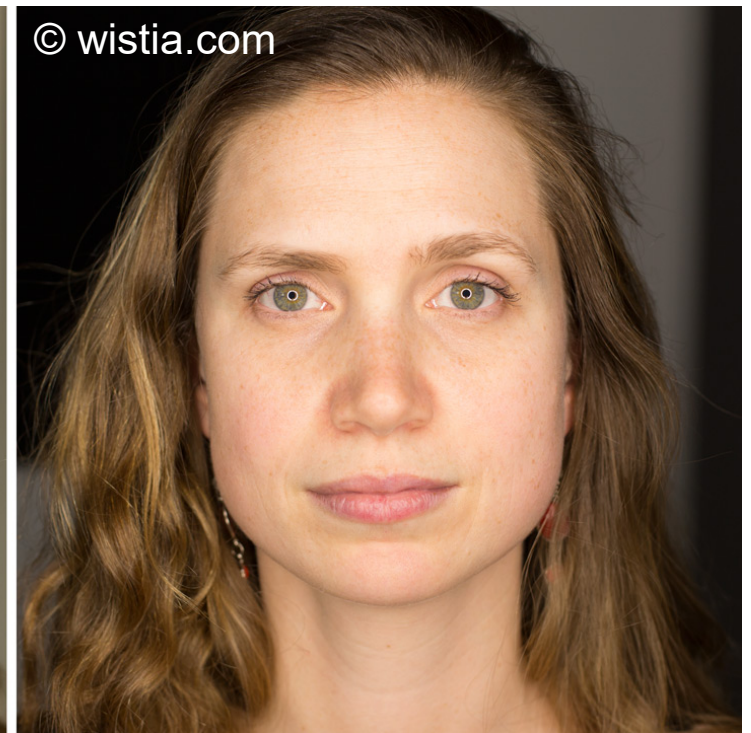
- ## Low contrast

  - ## Illumination arriving from all directions
    - Overcast day → light source is entire sky, minimal shadows
    - Ring light → light from many directions (if not smaller than subject)

© wistia.com

normal lighting → uneven illumination

ring light → even illumination

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Note: Ring lights produce a circular catchlight, which many photographers like (catchlights are the bright spots in the eyes of a subject).

Contrast control

- Low contrast
  - Illumination arriving from all directions
    - Overcast day → light source is entire sky, minimal shadows
    - Ring light → light from many directions (if not smaller than subject)

normal light → spot catchlight

ring light → circular catchlight

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Note: Light tents are available in different sizes, from 10.5" x 10.5" x 13.5" to 48" x 48" x 48".

Contrast control

- Low contrast
  - Illumination arriving from all directions
    - Overcast day → light source is entire sky, minimal shadows
    - Ring light → light from many directions (if not smaller than subject)
    - Light tent → subject in illuminated enclosure (minimizes shadows)

light tent with external light sources

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Ring lights

- Types
  - Macro lights
    - Smaller ring, usually mounts to lens filter threads
  - Portrait lights
    - Larger ring, usually mounts to a light stand or table stand

Godox RING48, $38 (67mm max thread)   Godox 14.2" LED ring, $89

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Note: Most circular macro flashes have two semicircular tubes on the left and right of the flash head → they can often be controlled independently for more lighting flexibility.

Ring lights

- ## Macro lights
  - ### Flash units
    - Some of the earliest ring lights
    - Circular flash tubes, or multiple circular segments
    - Can still get them today → some TTL, others manual flash

Sunpak GXR8, $29 (used)

Godox MF-R76, $179

not a true ring flash but looks like one

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Ring lights

- ## Macro lights
  - ### Continuous units
    - Multiple LEDs arranged in a ring → more LEDs = more light
    - Much less light than flash units, but can be easier to work with
    - Some have brightness controls
    - Some can adjust brightness of different parts of the ring

Note: The Godox RING48 can be powered by batteries or the included AC adapter. The Bolt VM-110 is powered by batteries only, includes 4 clip-on diffusers, and can power on when the shutter button is depressed to save power (not a flash).

48 LEDs

48 LEDs

Godox RING48, $38 (67mm max thread)   Bolt VM-110, $50 (77mm max thread)

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Note: A modeling light is a continuous light used with flashes which allows the photographer to see the effect of the light prior to using the flash. The power is much lower than the flash itself.

Ring lights

- ## Macro lights
  - ## Hybrid units
    - Flash tube(s) + continuous light (may be only a modeling light)
    - Can choose which type of light to use

Godox AR400, $499

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Ring lights

- Portrait lights
  - Fluorescent → watch the CRI (Color Rendering Index), 90+
    - Circular tubes
    - Need to be significantly larger than macro lights (subject is much larger)
    - Can shoot through the ring or outside the ring
    - Single and multiple tube models

Note: The Interfit triple fluorescent ring unit has 7", 10", and 14" tubes. It comes with a fabric diffuser to create a wide ring when all tubes are lit. Also includes a camera mount.

Interfit 19" fluorescent ring, $100

100mm opening

Interfit triple fluorescent ring, $103 (discontinued)

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Ring lights

- Portrait lights (includes vlogging lights)
  - LED → make sure the CRI is high, at least 90
    - Many LEDs arranged in a ring, most common type today
    - Need to be significantly larger than macro lights for portraits
    - Can shoot through the ring or outside the ring
    - Single rings only, I haven't seen any multiple ring LED units

Lumecube 17" LED ring, $270

Yingnuo LED ring, $29 (vlogging)

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Light tents

Note: Translucent clamshell tents can be used with interior or exterior lights.

- Types
  - Translucent
    - White fabric with external lights, or semi-rigid foldable clamshell
    - Lights can be positioned for best effect (farther away for more even lighting)

Impact (18" x 18" x 27.5"), $60

Orangemonkie Foldio 3 (25", with lights), $131

Ring Lights and Light Tents

Light tents

- Types
  - Translucent
    - White fabric with external lights
    - Lights can be positioned for best effect (farther away for more even lighting)
  - Reflective
    - Silver interior with internal lights (often multiple LED strips)
    - Some models allow individual control of the light strips

Note: Godox reflective light tents have a built in diffuser, which helps make the light more even. However, the diffuser cannot be used for shooting straight down. Even with the diffuser the LED strips can produce specular highlights.

LED strips

Godox LST60 (23.6" x 23.6" x 23.6"), $79 – also in 15.7" and 31.5" models
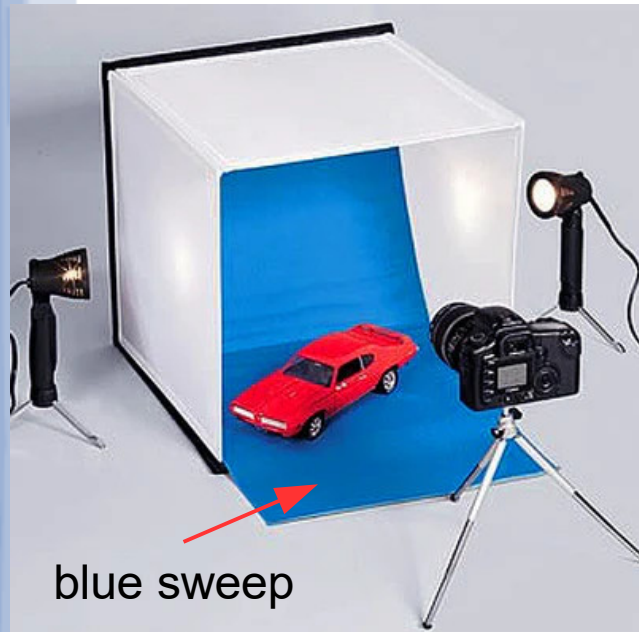
Ring Lights and Light Tents

Light tents

Note: Some light tents come with paper or fabric 'sweeps', which are used as shooting surfaces and curved to form backgrounds.

- Uses
  - Product photography
  - Jewelry photography
  - Food photography
  - Flower photography

© Padma Inguva

blue sweep

homemade light tent for food

Ring Lights and Light Tents

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