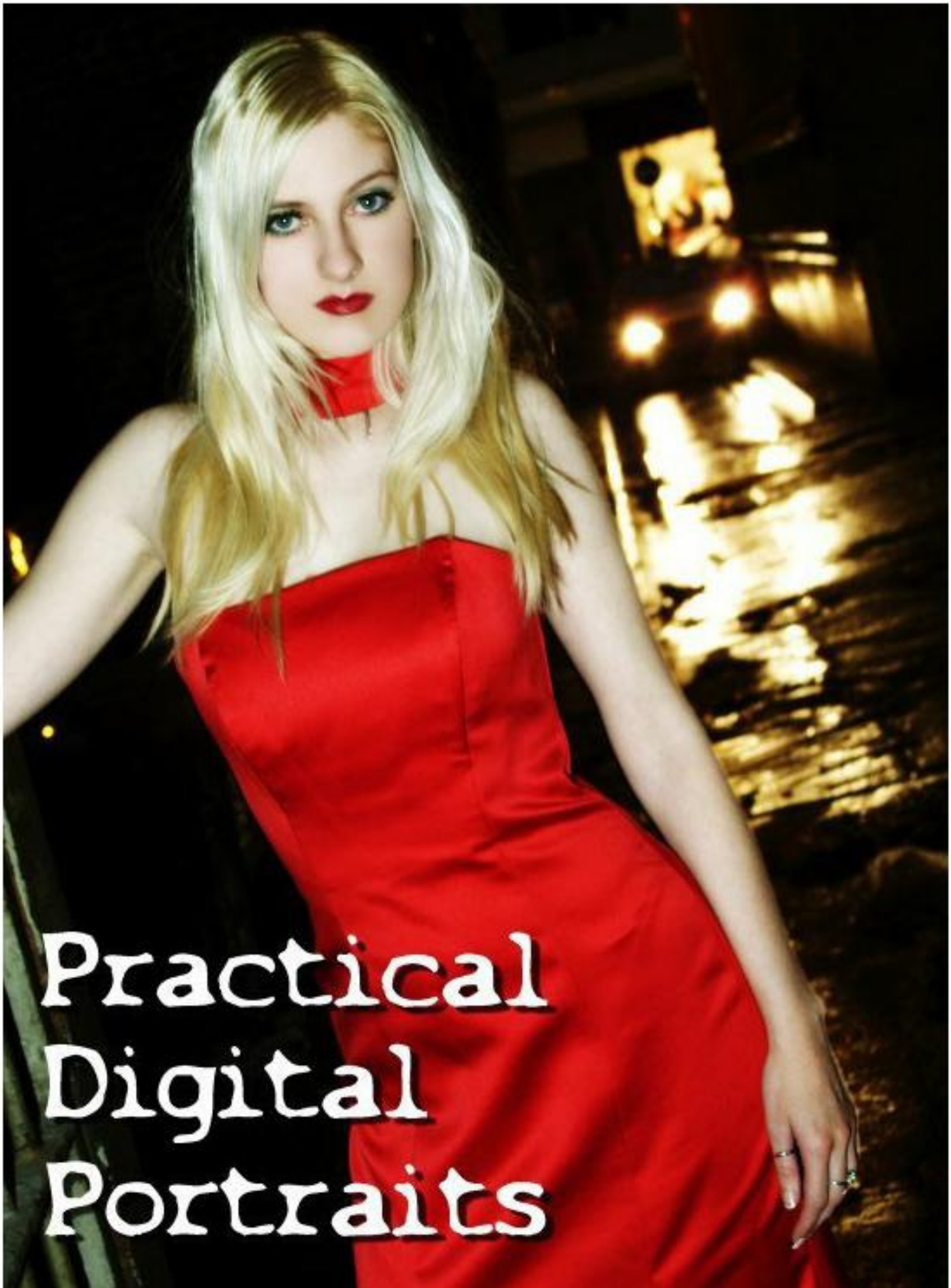
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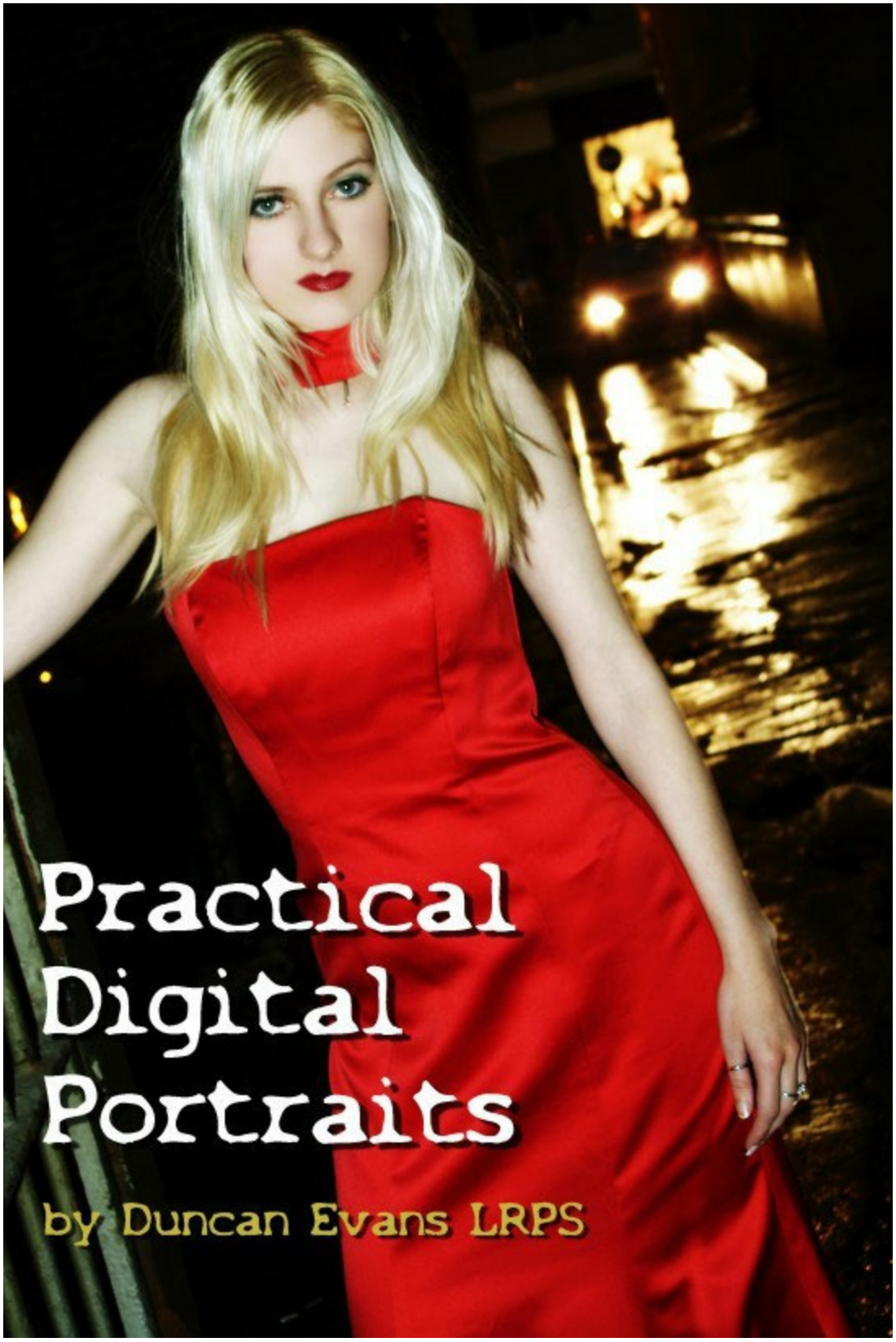
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Practical Digital Portraits, the latest e-book from Duncan Evans. In this e-book are 10 chapters, varying in complexity and style, covering many aspects of shooting portraits. It starts with a guide to basic composition and the kind of mistakes that can easily be made, whether they are the fault of the photographer or a characteristic of the focal length of lens being used. If you have never been in a studio then that chapter will be invaluable as it explains how to use studio lights with your DSLR. Then come the standard photo shoot tutorials covering fashion styles and glossy portraits. From there it's a trip into the past to see the classic styles of Bailey, the golden age of Hollywood portraiture and the painted drama of James Wedge and his Victorian dancing girls. To finish there's a look at period-themed shoots by organising a shoot at Whitby Abbey with a Victorian-attired model, going on location for a massive war weekend re-enactment, and rounding things off with some post-apocalyptic shots from the near future.

Who is this book aimed at? Typically, a DSLR owner who knows how to change a lens and turn the camera on, but wants to get more out of the custom aperture, shutter speed, ISO and metering settings, wants to learn a little more about lens effects

and who doesn't have experience of carrying portrait shoots on location or the studio. If you've never photographed a model before, there are some helpful hints. Also, if you have a fully featured compact camera then there's plenty of advice here as a lot of the book deals with location based photography. However there are studio, or home studio, sections where being able to connect your camera to studio flash lighting would be an advantage. It isn't essential to have your own studio lighting though. You can either hire the lights in a studio or simply replicate some of the lighting ideas in other ways. In all aspects, this is a practical book, explaining how to get things done, and ways to make shots better.

Duncan Evans LRPS

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CHAPTER 1. BACK TO BASICS

Your guide to getting started with lenses and composition

The single, biggest mistake beginners to portrait photography make is in regards to their choice of lens. When you first start out, all it appears is that lenses simply make things appear closer, and that's it. Except that they don't and also, the longer the lens, the more limited the aperture selection, particularly at the wide open end – unless you spend thousands of pounds. This chapter then, is about lens distortion, composition and depth of field in portraits.

DISTORTION

The shorter the focal length of the lens, the wider the field of view and the more curved the glass is on the front of the lens. This means that when standing close to the subject, all the detail that is further away from the central point will be shortened and diminished as the light from the lens is bent into the camera. Now, it's often the case that there isn't much room to take a photo and that consequently, you have to use a wide angle lens – anything under 50mm can be considered wide – in order to get everything in. Firstly, in these circumstances, ask yourself, do you really need to see the whole of the person, or

will a head and shoulders shot do? If you really do want an entire body shot, then you must be aware of the effect of foreshortening.

How to get around it without moving back? Well, strictly speaking, there isn't any way around the effect, but you can minimise it to a degree. Normally, the camera is at head height and you are focussing on the subject's face, so it's the same height. This will lead to the torso and legs becoming much shorter and the head longer. A quick fix is to drop down and aim the camera at the chest area, so that this is the central point and the legs and head are roughly balanced in terms of their size.

Another alternative is to actually use the effect to play around with the image. Get up on a chair and focus down at the subject, and they will appear to be in a pit looking up. Have the subject hold out a hand towards the camera and it will appear to be the same size as their head. If they are sitting down on the floor, point the legs towards the camera and they will appear longer and will not look unnatural.

The actual solution to lens distortion like this is to use a longer focal length lens and stand further back. While this isn't always practical because of space considerations, it can also limit the lowest f-stop number available, which dictates the amount of

depth of field in the picture. Many top pro's swear by using a 200mm lens to shoot portraits with, however you would need an awful lot of room to use a lens that long. The other advantage of a longer lens is that it offers a very narrow field of view, so that once the subject is in it, nothing else usually is there to distract the viewer.

In this shot, at head height, with a wide-angle lens, the legs appear shorter, the head and torso longer.

By moving the lens downwards and pointing at the middle of the subject, the distortion effect is lessened with the head and shoulders appearing a more natural size compared to the previous photo.

On this shot the camera is well above the subject – in fact I was stood on a chair. The distortion effect is maximised for creative effect, elongating the head and shortening the legs dramatically.

More creative effects can be used by moving parts of the body closer to the lens. The model sticks her hand towards the camera and consequently it appears to be larger than her head.

In this shot the legs are extended towards the camera, making them longer, but this effect is actually quite pleasing for fashion, portrait and glamour shots.

HEAD DISTORTION

The next two shots dramatically show what happens even with head and shoulder shots, when you use a wide angle lens for portraits. The composition for both is virtually identical. In the first shot, the wide angle lens is used and distortion makes the head appear elongated and the forehead bulges. In the second shot, just by standing back 3 metres and zooming in, thus extending the focal length, the distortion is completely removed. The composition is the same, not much more room was required, yet the picture looks far more natural.

Using a wide angle lens close up leads to distortion like this where the forehead bulges

Exactly the same composition, but by standing further back and using a longer focal length – literally zooming in – the head distortion is removed and the picture looks natural.

COMPOSITION

You could write a whole book about composition, so we'll concentrate on the basics. Composition is the art of putting a picture together and using the space within. You will often hear the following as a golden rule: "Never place the subject in the middle of the photo."

Obviously no-one told David Bailey that because his star portraits from the 1960s broke exactly that rule. In fact, you can learn a lot by studying Bailey's early work because it revolutionised portraiture to the degree that the stylistic approaches he created then are still popular today.

What that rule is actually trying to say is use the space sympathetically. The reason Bailey's centrally placed shots work is because while the subject was stood facing the camera, the cropping was right in close to maximise the facial features and the personality, minimise the space to the sides, and equally important, the lighting was from one side, so that the shadows on the face were angled.

What you should not do is place the subject in the middle of a wide angle scene because then you lose the impact and the large space on either side of the subject is a dead area.

This picture is wrong compositionally. The subject is standing slightly right of centre, but is looking off to the right. The viewers' attention is lead out of the picture, rather than into it, with dead space all down the left

The golden rule of composition is this: “Compose the photo to lead the viewer’s eye through it.” What this actually means is that there should be no dead areas. If the subject is standing to the right of centre, they should look left, into the picture. Conversely if they stand on the left, have them look right, so that the viewers’ eye follows the subjects gaze, and uses the rest of the photo.

Now there are various creative ways you can interpret this. You can lead the eye vertically through a picture, or even three dimensionally, using different foreground and background levels. If you want to place someone in the middle, crop right in close so that there is no wasted area.

Also, unless you are cropping close and being clever with the lighting, don’t have the subject stand flat to the camera. It looks static. Angle the body. This is where the next variation comes in. The subject stands left of centre, but looks directly at the camera. You make this work by angling the body so that the front points across to the right of the picture, leading the eye across. The further off centre the subject goes though, the more obvious or extreme the head or body positioning needs to be to direct the eye back across into the rest of the picture.

In this shot the subject stands right of centre, and while she is looking at the camera, the body is angled so that it leads the viewer into the left side of the picture.

At first glance this picture could seem problematic as the head and arm are in the top right corner, looking straight out of the picture. However, it works because the body is angled from the bottom left so that the eye travels up from bottom left to top right, using the length of the photo.

Here's a much better composition. The gun leads the eye up the photo, the back is resting on the right side and the gaze is looking across to the left, while the background is a pleasing blur from using a wide aperture.

Finally, here the subject curves across into the middle of the picture, but this works because the hay bales in the background, despite being diffuse, clearly lead the eye to the right and into the distance, so that both the space to the right is utilised and also that there is depth into the photo as well.

APERTURE CONTROL

One of the key elements in portraiture is using aperture to set the depth of field. For this reason, when using natural light, it's best to use the camera in AP, aperture priority mode. Certainly, you should not use Program or Automatic mode when taking portraits as this leaves the aperture control to the camera, and it will not use the best setting for your portrait, it will use whatever is best to get a correct exposure. For compact cameras where there is no specific AP mode, set the camera to Portrait mode as this will tell it to use the widest aperture available as well.

The aperture range available is set by the lens itself, with longer focal length lenses, having a more limited wide open aperture setting, unless you spend an awful lot of money. For example, with a 50mm prime lens, you can expect to have a wide aperture of f/1.8 whereas with a telephoto lens of 200mm it could be f/3.5, f/4 or usually at best, f/2.8. Zoom lenses make matters worse, losing f-stops at the wide open end of the range.

What it all boils down to is that the lower the f-stop number, the less depth of field there is. Controlling depth of field is important because it sets how much of the picture is in sharp focus. The reason for limiting depth of field is to keep the

background out of focus so that it does not intrude on the subject. In practical terms, this is more often a problem indoors where objects such as lights, decorations, flowers or beams will appear to join with the subject is there is significant depth of field. Hence you get the object sticking out of someone's head look.

This is a real problem for compact digital cameras because they generate much more depth of field at each aperture than a digital SLR lens. The effect can be minimised somewhat by moving the subject as far away from the objects in the background as possible. As longer focal lengths have less depth of field than shorter ones, it is also possible to minimise the effect by standing as far away as possible, and zooming in. That creates much less depth of field than standing in front of someone.

Now, a word of caution. Shallow depth-of-field is a great thing, but if you are using something like f/1.4 or f/1.8 then you really do get very little depth of field. If you focus right in on a subject the depth of field can be so shallow that one side of a face is in focus and the other is out of focus. In these situations it is advisable to focus on the eye of the subject that is the most important photographically – there's no rule to say which one, because it all depends on how you composed the picture. But the overall objective is the same, ensure that the

most important eye is in sharp focus so that the viewer's attention can fix on it, and everything else can go out of focus. Alternatively, if you are cropping right in close, use a slightly higher f-stop to create a little bit more depth of field and ensure the entire face is in focus.

In this photos, I have deliberately included more of the background in the top of the photo to illustrate the point. With too narrow an aperture, the background is in sharp focus so things appear right out of the back of the subject's head. To make it all worse, the light is on and makes a massive halo

above her head. Use a smaller f-stop number, turn the light off and make the subject stand a little further away from the background.

This picture uses an aperture of f/1.8, creating very little depth-of-field. As a result, the point of focus was aimed at the right eye, as that was closest the camera and the most important. That eye and the side of the face nearest the camera are then in focus, with everything else going out of focus. The f/1.8 aperture means the background is nothing but a pleasing swathe of pale green.

CHAPTER 2. GO INTO THE STUDIO

The prospect of studio shooting is quite daunting if you've never done it before, however, it's neither as expensive, nor as difficult as you might imagine. There are lots of photographers with big studio spaces and when they aren't using them, they sit empty. Rather than that, they like to hire them out. Studios that use state of the art equipment, in a trendy part of a capital city are of course overpriced and you would be better served avoiding them completely. Cast your view around though and it's possible to pick up two hours of studio time for £50/$75, which includes using all their lights, props and backgrounds. Some studios are specifically set up to cater for the enthusiast and have both good deals and actual sets created for you to use. Also, being inside in a secure workspace has other benefits if you want to try glamour or nude photography, but even for portraits, you will have no trouble booking models on a TFCD basis if you giving them time in the studio as well. What you do with the time and space is down to you, and hopefully, the other chapters in this book will give you plenty of ideas. For now though, this chapter deals with the practicalities of how you actually use your DSLR with studio lighting.

HOW TO METER

When you first get to grips with photography, you learn that it's all about aperture and shutter speed, so a trip into the photographic studio can come as a shock. For a start, your usual in-camera metering process is now of no use at all unless you are using a continuous light source. Camera-based metering reads available light before you take the shot and gives the camera the aperture/shutter settings. This is fine for regular photography, or tungsten in the studio, but it doesn't work for electronic flash because the flash is only activate when the camera fire button is pressed and it only lasts for a very brief instant. So, instead of in-camera metering, you need to use a light meter that is connected to the flash lights – either by cable or infrared trigger.

The other point that can be confusing is that you will often hear it said that the shutter speed is irrelevant. While this isn't true, it does lead to a special set of considerations. The starting point in most instances is in ascertaining at what shutter speed the lights and camera can synchronise at. This means that when the fire button is pressed, the flash fires at exactly the same time. Usually it's 1/125th sec or 1/250th sec. Some cameras and lights, particularly modern DSLRs, can synchronise right down to very slow speed, but 1/250th is usually the fastest they will sync at. Now, this is where the comment about shutter speed being irrelevant comes from. It is used to sync with the lights, but as also hinted at, you can use it at slower speeds to create mixed lighting exposures. This then is the key point. With apertures of

around f/11 and a shutter speed of 1/125th sec or 1/250th sec, the overall exposure is insufficient to record the background or ambient light. So, the only light recorded is that from the electronic flash itself. With no background light being recorded, the lighting in the picture is exactly what the studio lights are set up to create. And that's all down to you. Here's how to do it.

SHOOTING IT

There's an important point to realise first, and that is that the power setting you dial into the flash unit is not the value that is used on the camera settings. Power settings on electronic flash either use general fractions, such as quarter power, half power or full power – and it's down to you to know what that full power setting actually is, or it uses actual f-stop ratings for power. As mentioned, just because the lights say f/22, doesn't mean you enter that into the camera because there are three things that modify this power setting:

1. What kind of diffusion you are using on the front of the flash unit. No diffusion gives the strongest effect with harsh shadows, but a softbox, reflecting dish or brolley will all reduce the power of the light heading towards the subject. The reason for using them is to soften the flash, so that there are no harsh shadows on the subject. This is one huge advantage over a flashgun or

built-in flash – the larger the diffusing area, the softer the shadows are as a result.

2. The distance to the subject affects the brightness of the light. This works on the ratio that as the distance from the light source to the subject doubles, the amount of light reaching the subject halves.

3. Overlap of lights will increase the power reading and intensity at that point. You don't have to use just one light in the studio, you can use lots at once, and that's the other reason you don't just use the power setting on the lights themselves, you need meter the light falling onto the subject.

So, most important point, when shooting in a studio with electronic flash, you will need a hand-held light meter. If you don't have one, the studio almost certainly will. Just make sure before hand and that you have spare batteries for it.

The best way to proceed is to identify which electronic flash unit and diffuser you are going to use as your main light. This is known as the key light. Set it up in a typical position in the studio space and connect your light meter to it. Some light meters will require connecting to the key light by use of a cable – again, the studio should have lots of these. Other light meters have an infrared trigger that will fire the lights without the need

for cables. The advantage of using cables is that it will always fire, the disadvantage is that you can trip over them or they aren't long enough. A meter with an infrared trigger is usually better, but has the disadvantage that the flash has to be in line of sight in order to trigger.

SETTING THE LIGHT METER

Most light meters have numerous modes. You want to set it to Cord or infrared trigger mode, if it has one. This is the mode the meter using to connect to studio lights, so read the manual and see which one it is. Having selected the right mode, you then need to enter the shutter speed at which the camera and lights will synchronise. This is usually 1/125th sec, but set it to what the camera is set to. Usually, you set the camera to the sync speed of the lights, only if you are trying something fancy with ambient lighting as well will it need to be anything else. To get started though, you need to set the camera and the meter both to the speed of the synchronisation of the lights, typically 1/125th sec as mentioned.

The light meter will usually have a receiver globe as well. With the globe across, covering the element, this is set for light hitting it directly from the electronic flash. With the globe slid back to expose the receiver element, it is used for light reflecting off surfaces – just like the in-camera metering. For

your purposes, slide the light globe over the receiver so it is covered.

Now, to actually use all this, go stand in the spot where your subject is going to stand. Hold the light meter up at around face height, pointed towards the key electronic flash unit and press the light meter fire button. Check the reading on the light meter. This will give you a typical f-stop value to work with so you know what settings to use on the other lights. There are usually lots of different modes on a light meter, including EV readings, but the most useful mode is one where it syncs to the lights and gives you a power reading in terms of f-stops. As mentioned, because electronic flash is all over in a brief flash, the shutter speed is simply used for synchronising with the camera.

Fast forward now to when you are setting up a shoot with a subject. You can introduce them to the studio and get them to stand or pose in your preferred spot. Still keep the meter connected to the key light. Note that where the light from the key light falls, it will be well exposed, and where it doesn't there will be shadow and darkness. As explained early, because the settings used are much faster and narrower than normal, the ambient light won't be recorded, or if it is there won';t be much of it. Just because you can see clearly in the studio doesn't mean that the camera will record it. It will only record the light from the studio lights. Other lights are known as fill lights and the idea is to use them, either at the same strength as the key

light, so that you get an all-round balance of lighting everywhere, at a lower power, so that those areas are slightly darker and you get shadow definition, or brighter so you get highlights. Typically, small spots or lights with a conical attachment known as a snoot, are used for lighting the hair.

Okay, so now add any secondary lights for filling in light on the other side of the key light and hair lights or spot lights for effects behind the subject or creating highlights on the hair. When the meter triggers the key light, sensors in the other lights will detect it and trigger at the same time as well. So, you only have to fire one light at any point, either with the meter or the camera. All other lights that are powered up, will fire when they detect the key light firing.

When all the lights are set up that you want to use, check the light readings at various places on the subject simply by pressing fire on the light meter. The light will be different in different places. Adjust either the power or the positioning of the lights until you are happy with the arrangement. Then get the meter reading from the area of the subject that forms the key part of the exposure – usually it's exposed to the key light. Now, this is the important part. When you meter the lights, determine yourself, what should be the middle part of the exposure in the camera. Typically, this is the reading from holding the meter up in front of the face. This meter reading

will form the middle part of the exposure. Anywhere else on the subject that has a lower light reading will be darker, anywhere that has a higher f-stop reading will be lighter.

Go to the camera and ensure it is in Manual mode. Connect the camera instead of the meter, to the lights. Again, you can use PC sync cords – the same one as the meter used, or you can use infrared triggers that slot on the top of the DSLR where the plate for a flashgun goes. Dial in the synchronising shutter speed – typically 1/125th sec as mentioned, and then the aperture setting that the meter revealed for the middle part of the exposure. You are now ready to go! Focus on the subject, get them to use the desired expression and fire away. You do not need to meter again or change any of your settings, until you move or change the settings on the lights.

Depending on the quality of the studio lights, they will recycle and power up quickly or slowly. If you fire before they are ready, then that image will come out black. Just work to the speed that the lights allow. Some lights will plug directly into the mains, professionals tend to use heavy duty power packs that can recycle the power much more quickly so they can shoot a lot faster.

TOP TIP

Use a small studio light which projects a narrow beam of light thanks to a modifying attachment like a snoot and aim this at the hair. Set this to be one f-stop brighter than the key light. This will introduce highlights into the hair because they light there is brighter than the key light.

TYPICAL STUDIO SHOTS

Okay, so you've read the theory, you want to see it in practice so let's have a look at some studio shots.

This is a standard lighting setup that you would see in unimaginative high street studios. Why? Because it's two lights, at 45 degrees left and right, same power, pointing into the middle. It provides all round lighting coverage and once set up, you don't need to waste any time changing anything. The subjects can roll around in the middle and the image will be well exposed regardless. The only variation here is that there are two more lights, firing at the background, at a higher power, so it's completely white and throws back a little more highlighting onto either side of the dress.

On this shot there are two main lights again, one slightly more powered than the other, but they have been move all the way around to the sides, so that the middle of the subject facing the camera is darker. The key light is to the left, the fill light is on the right.

Here the key light is on the right and is angled so that it covers the subject and also some of the background. The light on the left is smaller, but just as powerful and is aimed higher, at the upper torso of the subject.

For this studio shot, there's a bit more work involved. The key light is on the right at an angle. There's a hair light from above on the left, and there's a fill light on the left, pointing at the chest.

A satin fabric dress reflects the light nicely. Again, key light to the right to illuminate the back, there's a hair light from almost directly above, and a fill light from the left to provide definition on that side.

Time for some fun. Firstly, the model was asked to bring a reflective dress. There's a light at the front, just to the left of the camera. This formed the meter reading. Behind the model was a fabric curtain. There are two lights behind this, pointing towards the camera, set at full power. The result is a halo

behind the subject, coming through the fabric.

CHAPTER 3. FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

The odds on making it big as a fashion photographer are only slightly better than those for winning the jackpot on the lottery. Even 95 per cent of all photography graduates are working in other fields five years after completing their courses. To get your foot through the door you must either strike it lucky coming out of college or wangle an assistant job with someone well known, and then make the breakthrough when you leave.

However, the overwhelming unlikeliness of you turning into the next Rankin or Bailey shouldn't dissuade you from adding a touch of fashion style to your portraits. A great source of reference for images are women's magazines such as Vogue for high end fashion and Cosmo or the fashion colour supplements of the Sunday papers for more regular styles. If you want to see a real stock of high fashion ideas, try to pick up a copy of Italian Vogue as it's more like a fashion bible than a magazine.

There's an almost endless variety of styles and concepts you can come up with, though fashion model poses tend towards miserable and aloof, ungainly and deliberately disinterested. The counter point to this is where you strike specific poses to accentuate particular features of the model or the clothes. You can shoot in the studio or on location, whether that's inside or

out. That also means equipment can vary from DSLR and studio lighting to simply a good quality compact and a model with great clothes who can pose.

To get some ideas for this category, magazines such as Vogue and Cosmopolitan, or the Sunday papers colour supplements will have lots of latest styles.

MEAN AND MOODY

The ethnic or peasant look usually has some mileage, though pay attention to short-lifespan fads that are popular one season and gone the next. Unless the images are for a specific commercial purpose that needs that cutting edge, then more general images will be able to stay in your portfolio for a lot longer without dating it. Some styles and variations stay current for a decade before being replaced, while others will blow hot then cold in only a year. Fortunately at the moment there is a very wide range of clothing styles on offer, as well as vintage revival going on, so there is plenty of latitude. Going with a vintage style is actually a safe bet as well because it is clearly aimed at replicating that specific era, and therefore cannot, by definition, go out of fashion as such.

For this shot you need a skirt with plenty of pleated or frilly cotton and, preferably, a white cotton blouse with some ornate detail. Aim for the model to look miserable. On no account must the subject smile or look slightly pleased with the prospect of being photographed. However, avoid veering into a parody of Oasis-like photographer antipathy, just stick to moody and melancholy, get the model to slouch and affect a couldn't-care-less attitude. Shadows are important, as are areas of darkness. This can be shot in a room, on stairs or in studio.

If you're using a flash then one electronic flash head, placed off to the side to generate shadows behind, will suffice. Use a reflector to add definition and bits of highlights to the darker side. Use a narrow aperture like f/16 or f/22 with the flash on full power to get the rest of the room to descend into darkness. If using natural light then use a narrow aperture to reduce the background light, and use reflectors to keep the main subject brighter than their surroundings.

The subject looks miserable and moody, she hunches up and lets her hands dangle, though they tend towards the unwanted bunch of carrots look

Here's the same kind of pose, all disinterested to the extent that the model isn't even looking at the camera. This one is on location, and a grubby location at that, so the only light here is from a large window. A portrait lens of 50mm was used at f/1.8 aperture so there's little depth-of-field. An ISO of 200 was

needed just to keep the shutter speed up to 1/60th sec.

On location again, this time with an interesting alley. While the model is now looking at the camera, the body pose is even more ungainly while the miserable look is played to perfection.

Again, the portrait lens of 50mm was used at f/1.8 and because of the very gloomy conditions and ISO rating of 1250 was required to get the shutter speed up to 1/50th sec.

MAD AND MODERN

When your subject is wearing modern, vibrant clothes, the photography should follow suit. Go for expressive poses, use coloured spots – whether from gels on inexpensive flash heads, or simply by shining coloured bulb lamps at the subject. Also consider shooting at angles to emphasise the dynamism of the subject and if the subject has long legs, then exploit the fact and shoot from a low angle to make them seem as if they go on forever.

When using studio flash then brightly lit is the key. While some shadow definition stops the subject from being flat, the entire scene should look bright. If using coloured lamps in conjunction with flash, take a flash meter reading, put the camera into its aperture priority mode, and use the camera to take a meter reading. The speed setting that it comes up with will allow the exposure to record the lamps. Set the camera into manual mode as usual, dial in the aperture from the flash meter and the speed from the second reading. This will inevitably be much slower so the model needs to keep fairly still unless you deliberately want to record some blur.

Shooting from a low perspective at an angle creates a dynamic look that emphasis the model's long legs

Note the use of coloured gels on the side light here. The key light is also aimed at the wall to provide a highlight on one side and darkness on the other.

The key light here is actually pointing behind the model at the backdrop, making it brighter than the fill light which is used on the model herself. The result is a bright halo, ideal for emphasising the hair and black gloves.

For this shot we're out of the studio and onto the streets. This is very much a lifestyle fashion image showing the model being happy. Shot at dusk to get all the street and shop lights it required an aperture of f/1.8 and an ISO of 800 to just get a shutter speed of 1/25th sec, which is right on the limit of what

you can do without a tripod.

HIGH KEY

The staple diet of student photographers everywhere – and for good reason, it makes for an effective and graphic photo. The subject should be wild and wacky, the make-up should be as bright and glaring as possible, without looking like Ronald McDonald. Attitude and posture from the model are key.

This type of head and shoulders shot works better if the subject has bare shoulders. Don't have the model face directly at the camera unless she is doing something else, like pulling her hair out.

Blast the subject with light. If you don't have a studio flash unit then use natural sunlight, diffused through netting, or bounce it back onto the subject using a reflector. However, don't have the subject stand facing bright sunlight or they will be squinting.

Take a meter reading and open the aperture up one stop (lower the f-stop number). In film photography the idea would be to completely overexpose the subject, but digital imaging offers much more control so simply produce a bright-white image, rather than one where most of the detail has gone.

A more traditional high key look. This was shot to be bright, then Curves in Photoshop was used to whiten out areas and to increase the contrast in the detail areas.

STYLISED POSES

For the next couple of shots there were specific stylised ideas to shoot. The first uses the subject in a bright red, shiny, evening dress with matching choker. It's a combination shot, using flash for the model and ambient light for the background. This is quite a tricky combination and it depends on how much control over your flash gun or source that you have. The simplest way of doing it is with a flashgun and knowing what speed it usually syncs to the camera at. Here it was 1/60th sec. So, a meter reading for the background light was taken, with a shutter speed setting of 1/60th sec and that gave an aperture setting of f/2.8. The camera was then turn on to manual, with those settings, and the flash was set to on. With a modern flashgun, it will fire enough light to match the exposure settings and then stop. More sophisticated flashguns will offer more control, and old ones less, but this is okay because they simply have power settings that you can set. If you are using on-board flash, simply use the settings as read and make sure the flash is set to be forced to fire. Then the flash illuminates the foreground and the ambient light illuminates the background.

A tricky mixed lighting shot, with a stylish evening dress and lots of editorial interest.

This shot was a location based shoot in a wood and was intended to depict a country or rural fashion aesthetic. Location scouting for an area with trees and a path that led to them was done the week before. The model was prepped with rural clothing requirements which included the boots and hat, and we

picked up the stick while there. It's a wide aperture shot of f/1.8 using the 50mm portrait lens at 1/90th sec. The ISO rating was 100 but -1EV exposure compensation was used to stop highlights on the cardigan and hat from being lost.

CHAPTER 4. GO GLOSSY

How to shoot stylish portraits in upmarket location

While this type of photography is ideal for Christmas what with parties, restaurants and dressing to impress, it's also perfectly applicable for any kind of location-based shoot where you want an up-market image in an out-of-the-studio setting. In this feature you can go for creative lighting with portable studio kit, or rely on natural light, reflectors and the photographer's friend, Photoshop.

MATERIAL GIRL

The idea of this shot is to simulate the effect of reflective fabric flying behind the model who is wearing a satin, reflective dress, without recourse to a wind machine or a trip to somewhere very, very windy. All good and well if you do have a wind machine and a nice background to stand the model against, but otherwise, here's how to create this dynamic look, the easy way.

Firstly find lots of spare room on the floor. If it's a wooden floor, either arrange the subject so that they follow the lines up, or lay across them, so it gives a background like a log cabin. Next, set up the main light to hit the face, fabric and top of the subject. If you have another light position that on the other side to light up the legs. If not, use a reflector in that position,

which is what was used here.

You need to stand above the subject – a stepladder is the safest thing. A chair will create a more extreme effect than standing on a table, though is obviously easier to do.

Stand at the end where the model's head is and look over and down the torso for the shot. If you stand anywhere else it will show up the neck area and even on skinny subjects, this doesn't look good. Fire away, then head for Photoshop or PaintShop Pro or GIMP.

1. First select all around the subject. Don't feather the selection because any subsequent hue shifts will affect the feathered edge as well, giving a line around the subject. Invert the selection and select Filter> Blur> Motion Blur. The angle is set to match the general direction of the wood, and a value of 25 pixels should be good enough to generate movement blur, without turning the background into paste.

2. With the background still selected, go to Image> Adjust> Hue/Saturation. Pick reds and use the sampler to click on the wood. That should target the colour properly. Then use the Hue adjustment to shift it so that it contrasts with the colour of the fabric. Also try to pick out a colour from the outfit – in this case a light purple colour.

3. Reduce the saturation of the background so that it separates from the foreground, then invert the selection. Now select Image> Adjust> Curves and enter an S-shape curve to boost the contrast, shadows and highlights of the main subject. Flatten the image then crop to the desired shape and save.

CROSS PROCESSING

There's a technique in the film world known as cross processing whereby slide film is developed in print film chemistry and vice versa. The effect of the chemicals is that some colours stay the same while other undergo startling hue shifts. The exact effect is not predictable, and much film and potions are usually required to get a decent result. When it does come off the effect can be arty, surreal or simply very pleasing. Simulating this in a photo editor is equally not an exact science, but experimentation is easy if you follow this technique. It's also worth looking at a number of film filter or retro plug-ins like Alien Skin's Exposure 5 that offer this kind of treatment. Anyway, this is the process for most versions of Photoshop.

1 Take the original image and create a new Adjustment Layer using a Gradient Fill. Don't worry about the exact one just yet. Whatever you choose the effect is likely to be too over the top. Change the Blend mode to Colour and reduce the Opacity to

50%. This will make it much more palatable.

2. Double click on the gradient map in the Layers Palette to bring up the gradient being used. Click on the small arrow facing right, underneath the gradient to bring up the various categories of gradient. The pastel ones tend to be very subtle and suit lighter images, the metal ones very vivid, and require a different blending mode to be anything other than garish. Select a gradient that contains one of the colours already present in your image, and go through those that do to see what effect is most pleasing.

The final cross processed image with a range of purple and yellow tones

BACK LIGHTING

If the sun is shining and you get your subject to stand against a window, then invariably they will turn into a silhouette. There are two ways of dealing with this. One is to balance the exposure so that there is as much light in front of the person as there is behind, and the other is to exploit the effect, while still making the person visible. So how do you do it and still make the picture look glossy and lovely? Read on...

Halo Effect

In this shot the background is very bright, forming a halo effect around the model's head. Also there is a pleasant colour cast

from a large tungsten lamp to the right. An aperture of f/4 was set to ensure that the background disappeared out of focus – if it could be seen. Then, in Aperture Priority mode, spot metering was used to meter just to the right of centre of the girl. The exposure time of 1/8th of a second was what was required as the middle part of the exposure range. This was where the tungsten lamp light was falling. By setting the Automatic White Balance to 6600K (or bright day/ bright cloudy day on your camera) as well, it also meant that the colour from the lamp would register.

Balanced Exposure

The tungsten lamp was dispensed with and a portable flash head with a softbox set up to the right of the model. The

aperture setting of f/4 was retain for the same reason it was used in the first place, and the flash head set to quarter power, which also gives a reading of f/4. To get the background to match, the camera was set in Aperture Priority mode, the f/4 aperture dialled in and spot metering used to take a reading off the cloud/trees level with the model's head. This gave a shutter speed setting of 1/250th sec. The camera was then set to Manual, and 1/250th and f/4 dialled in. Hey presto, the foreground and backgrounds are balanced.

PORTRAIT IDEAS

In case you still need some more ideas, here are a few others for creating interesting and distinctive portraits.

Moody looks

The close up here runs the risk of distorting the leading arm, and is also quite dramatic with the shadows across the face – this is always useful when aiming for a moody portrait.

Here the subject is looking thoughtful and not at the camera, while the bright splashes of sunlight light up areas in the background.

Mysterious focussing

There are two ways of shooting this, both using a wide aperture – f/2.8 was selected in AP mode. You can either focus on the foreground, making those objects sharping, then the subject can be seen pondering in the background. Who is she waiting for, why is the room empty, who is that figure? Alternatively, reverse the concept and focus on the figure, so that she is plainly visible, but the out of focus table in the foreground sets the questions.

Alternatively use a narrower aperture and place everything in focus so that the viewer can see the subject and all the details in the background.

Try some mono

Although it might seem a little odd to go mono in such a colourful surrounding, it's always worth trying to see if you can get something different out of the shoot.

With so much light coming in, there are areas where you can use shadows to break up the background and add some mystery to the face.

CHAPTER 5. SHOOT LIKE BAILEY

Learn from the masters with David Bailey's ground-breaking portrait techniques

Like the man or not, David Bailey is something of a legend in portrait and fashion photography and you don't reach that exalted status without having a decent slice of original talent. What this article aims to do is not recreate Bailey pictures from years gone by, but to distil some of the signature technique styles so that you can apply them to you modern portrait shots, whether you have cheap studio lighting or are simply using a point and shoot compact.

MODERN PORTRAITS

You don't realise just how influential Bailey has been until you look at the years of portrait photography that followed. Here we are looking at the most instantly recognisable technique style that requires nothing other than good lighting. Then we have a variety of poses that need one directional light source.

1. The crop head shot. Classic Bailey and still popular today. Aim to get close in to the head, some space on either side is allowed, but the top of head should be cut off. The reasoning is so that the attention is drawn to the eyes and face. You can look happy or glum, it's applicable to all.

2. With moody looks and peasant blouses always popular, this style is worth pursuing. You need one light that is positioned high above the model and at 45 degrees to the right. This is the classic loop lighting of the 30s but the twist here is to get the model to look all mean and moody and have a fan blowing

like mad at their hair.

3. There are two varieties of this next position. The light needs to be at head height and 45 degrees to the model so that some of one side of the face is in shadow. The forehead will remain clear, one side will be perfectly lit, but the shadows and light on the other side add depth and interest. Either shoot a close up

like here.

4. Or pull the camera back and get a top half shot like this one. Once again, the play of shadows across the right hand side of the torso stops the image from being flat.

5. Now let's look at a real extreme technique that Bailey used on mainly his male sitters, but some of the female ones as well. That 45 degree sideways light has now been moved all the way around to the side – keeping the height the same – so that only one side is lit and the other is in shadow. For this look

your victim should look pensive and moody.

6. A final style type is quite subtle. The light is just off centre and just above the model so that it pours light down on to them. The allows the model to move around, but would usually be looking at the camera.

GOING RETRO

If you fancy moving on from straight portraits you can have a go at 60s retro, either obviously so here with our Mary Quant outfit, or with gypsy tops and lots of flowing lace. Look to get poses with sprawling limbs and making angles with arms or legs. Affected poses such as with the head resting on hands or tucked behind the head are also fun to use. Check out the individual poses to try out. All of these shots were done with two flash heads, pouring light into the scene. There is no particular lighting technique beyond making sure that everything is well lit. It's all about the pose and the outfit.

1. Archetypal cropped head shot, but this also includes the top half of the body, leading from top left to bottom right and leaving the right side of the frame empty.

2. A close up cropped shot with the model hugging a knee and filling the frame. The body and leg make a pleasing shape through the frame. The facial expression for all of these should be pouty, aloof or with a hint of a smile. No cheesy grins for this section.

3. The head looking back over the shoulder is a favourite and if you do try this, think about focussing on the face and use as wide an aperture as possible to get everything else to fall out of focus. Given the natural ability of digital cameras to keep things sharp you might want to add a bit more blur on the PC.

4. The extreme version of the last concept is the model looking at the camera while upside down. If you can shoot this one in a crowded bedroom or messy flat then even better, but remember, you must have a wide aperture for this style of on-location shot so that the messy surroundings go out of focus.

DISTRESSED COLOUR

No roundup of Bailey techniques would be complete without a mention of his penchant for distressed colour shots. Harking back to his fondness for masks, here the mask is over the portrait itself, where a typically single colour is applied with a distressed effect. This is particularly easy to do in Photoshop or PSP so one of the shots from the studio was given just that treatment. Note that you'll need to reduce the number of tones, particularly from the mid-range – so use Curves or Contrast/Brightness quite harshly.

CHAPTER 6. CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD

Bring back the golden age of studio portraiture in Hollywood.

Back in the 1930s and 40s, movie stars were usually contracted to individual studios for a number of films and years. To better promote their stars and increase interest in the films they featured in, the studios spent a lot of time shooting their portraits. While a number of these were on-set, there were also even more with elaborate settings and the fact that the photographers had access to endless lighting equipment meant that shots varied from fairly simply to very complex. Technology had rapidly developed from the 1920s, resulting in much higher quality photography that really helped promote the stars, films and studios.

At this time there were no such thing as electronic flash, the photographer had to work with large tungsten lamps and heavy cameras, resulting in long exposures as on the set there was little or no natural light. So the subject generally had to adopt a relatively relaxed pose that was easy to hold. By the 1950s, faster films and lenses were common place and portraits become far more action orientated, with less emphasis on complex lighting schemes and style, but that's what Hollywood portraits are all about.

The advantage of using tungsten lamps is that you can see exactly where the light is going to fall, before you take the shot, and indeed, this is how it would have been shot at the time. Tungsten is a continuous light source, whereas electronic flash is very brief, and while electronic flash units do come with modelling lamps, they are not as accurate. It meant that back in the day, very precise arrangements of lights could be made around the subject. These days, we tend to use electronic flash for the higher colour temperature that corresponds with mid-day daylight, rather than tungsten lighting, though there are some units around. You can still use your flash gear for this type of photography, but the softboxes and brolleys that did the diffusing need to be dispensed with. Instead, harsh, direct lighting is the order of the day.

THE 1920S

There is no particular lighting style that would instantly identify a 20s shot, as you could with a 30s or 40s, but the cameras and film were a lot cruder. What you need to consider are the fashions and styles and what the resulting images would be like when printed. The first thing to start with is the pose. These really did have to be comfortable because the exposures were longer than the other periods and often you would get soft or blurred images. And that's before you had the poor quality

lenses. Also, quite a few of these images would have been shot with natural light, let in through skylights, as well as the heavy tungsten lamps.

Style wise there were often ethnic or exotic elements included, particularly Egypt and Arabia. Short hair in bobs or with fringes and nets, flowers and other accessories were popular. For the gents, the hair is pretty much slicked back and you may include a moustache or two. Of course, flapper dresses were very fashionable and although this gives the impression that all outfits were one-piece and straight up and down, that isn't the case. There are lots of historical photos of two piece outfits with knee-length pleated skirts, which were of course, ideal for dancing. Other notable features include the distinct -curl of hair on the forehead, heavy eye makeup and the pouting-kiss lip makeup. It's important to note that there was a big difference between what young women wore and the much more formal attire of the middle aged and elderly.

What you really need to pay attention to is post-production to ensure a real lack of sharpness and contrast that the lenses of the day delivered. Add vignetting, paper textures and sepia for an authentic finish. While old techniques such as Calotype and Daguerreotype are offered in a number of photo-editing plug-ins bear in mind that these processes had actually stopped being used by the 1870s.

A typical 20s style shot. Note the very soft image, the blown highlights, the out of focus vignetting. The style of the subject as well features large eyes with eye shadow prominent. A bob-hairstyle and lots of ethnic patterns on the gown fabric and in the background.

The important points to note here are the style of the fringe, the blown highlights, the fading of the corners and the puckered-kiss style of makeup on the lips.

THE 1930s

The signature lighting style of the 1930s was called loop lighting. In this the key light was placed at 45 degrees to the side of the subject and 45 degrees above, so that the shadow caused by the nose went down diagonally to one side. Of course there are variations, but this is a key lighting style that will identify the picture. The styling of the day, for women, was straight hair tied back or straight hair with a curl at the shoulders. Now, bear in mind that skin and red tones were rendered quite dark on the films of the day, so the men tended to look a little swarthy, but the women wore lighter, whiter makeup. You don't really have to worry about that at the shooting stage, but at the colour to mono conversion point, ensure that any red lipstick used comes out quite dark in mono. Lenses had improved from the 20s so not as soft and there was more contrast. Sepia was still used, but a lot less. Instead, photographers now went to town with lots of lights, creating areas of dark shadow and light.

This is a modern reshoot of a classic 30s Hollywood pose. Note the black glove emerges from a dark area and is clearly visible against the white background. Note too the nailed on 30s loop lighting effect on the nose.

Black gloves again here and one key light and a fill light. To be honest, this really needed a fill light on the right hand side as well.

THE 1940s

The signature lighting style of the 1940s was something called the butterfly lighting effect. To get this the key light needs to be directly in front of the subject but 45 degrees above, pointing down. This will produce a shadow directly under the nose, in the shape of a butterfly. This technique also tends to mean that the eyes can be left in shadow, so fill-in lighting or a reflector should be used to ensure that some light goes into the eye area as well. Styling wise, hair was now fuller, as were eyebrows and lipstick.

Developments in film stock meant that red colours were now rendered more faithfully and not as darker. Exposure times were shorter, so if the subject was laying down, it was because that's the pose they wanted, not because it had to be like that. Whereas in the 30s shots, you'll see a lot of people leaning on props, in the 40s, it starts to move away from that.

There are also types of 40s shot, from modern daywear to glamorous evening wear. While most stars were dressed in their best frocks, you also could see some regular 40s fashion shots using afternoon or tea dresses as well. Accessories are also important in this era, from handbags to jewellery. The other style from the 40s came in towards the end of the decade with

the popularity of film noir. While this is not classic Hollywood portraiture, you did see it start to creep in, and if the star was in a film noir then they were definitely going to be shot in that style. The idea with noir is to use unusual angles and dramatic lighting to suggest a sense of unease and danger. The lighting would often be from below, which, and you really need to take this on board, is not attractive for the subject.

The first shot here is a traditional 40s setup with key, fill and hair lights, plus plenty of overt styling.

A sultry look that has distinct butterfly lighting.

This shot departs from the usual 40s butterfly lighting style and heads into the world of film noir.

CHAPTER 7. MOULIN ROUGE

How to shoot and then hand colour photos to capture the spirit of Edwardian dancing beauties

Around 35 years ago a photographer called James Wedge made a splash by taking risqué photos of girls in Moulin Rouge style outfits in black and white. Some he shot in genuine theatres, others were done in studio mock ups. He then printed the results and painstakingly hand painted the prints. As you can image, the process was torturous and one slip could ruin the whole venture. Fortunately, with the advent of digital technology, the entire process is a lot less painful and prone to disaster. You also don't need to have your very own theatre on hand either.

How authentic you want to get with the look and feel of this project is down to you and the availability and cost of an appropriate venue. If you can't find a suitable venue consider anywhere with a stripped wooden floor. Then take out the modern artefacts with Photoshop afterwards. That's what we'll be doing here. If you can't lay your hands on even that kind of setting then the solution is to head for the home studio or simply your spare room and attempt to remove the modern look and replace it with a period feel. We've also had a go at that

as well.

As far as costumes go you'll find that with the success of the Baz Lurhman film of the same name a few years back, most fancy dress outfitters will have something suitable. It's just a case of getting someone into the outfit which either means your nearest and dearest or a couple of hours of a model's time. One thing you don't have to worry about is that automatic white balance which can go awry indoors, because you'll be converting this all to black and white to start with. What you do need to try and ensure is that you get as much light onto the model and the outfit as possible.

As far as posing goes you can either go for the louche look which is a mix between dancing girl and lady of the night, or a more formalised stage pose. In the case of Mr Wedge his photos were erotically orientated so featured nudity and much more risqué poses. One of the classic poses to attempt is that of the girl sat on the edge of the stage with lights shining up from below. As we'll see, get the pose right in the first place and then attempt to do the lighting in Photoshop.

SELECTING THE POSE

1. We are looking for a main shot to construct wooden panelling behind. This isn't bad but the focus is too soft and there is little detail in the hair.

2. A more energetic pose but the camera snaps while the model has her eyes shut. Also, her hair disappears into the feather boa. So, wacky, but not what we're looking for here.

3. Another good pose and facial expression, complete with boots up on a small ledge. This is the one that's going to be turned into an Edwardian music hall.

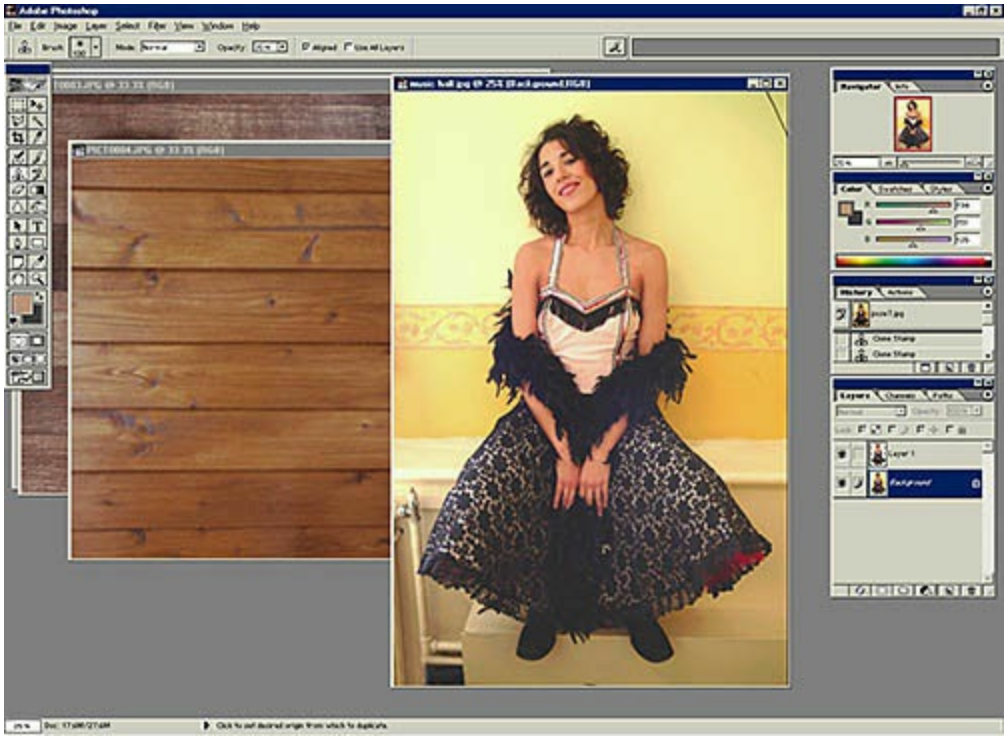
4. Nice coy pose with the boa, but the leg position is all wrong. It could be used but the previous photo was better.

HOME BREW MUSIC HALL

So what if you don't have a handy foyer or accommodating local hotel with stripped wooden floors? Well you shoot it in an ordinary room like the original for this section and then you find some wood – the pieces used here are actually from my bathroom – and shoot them from the same angles that they need to used in the composite picture. While the angles can be distorted, that should only be done to fit the wood panelling, not to force it into the right shape.

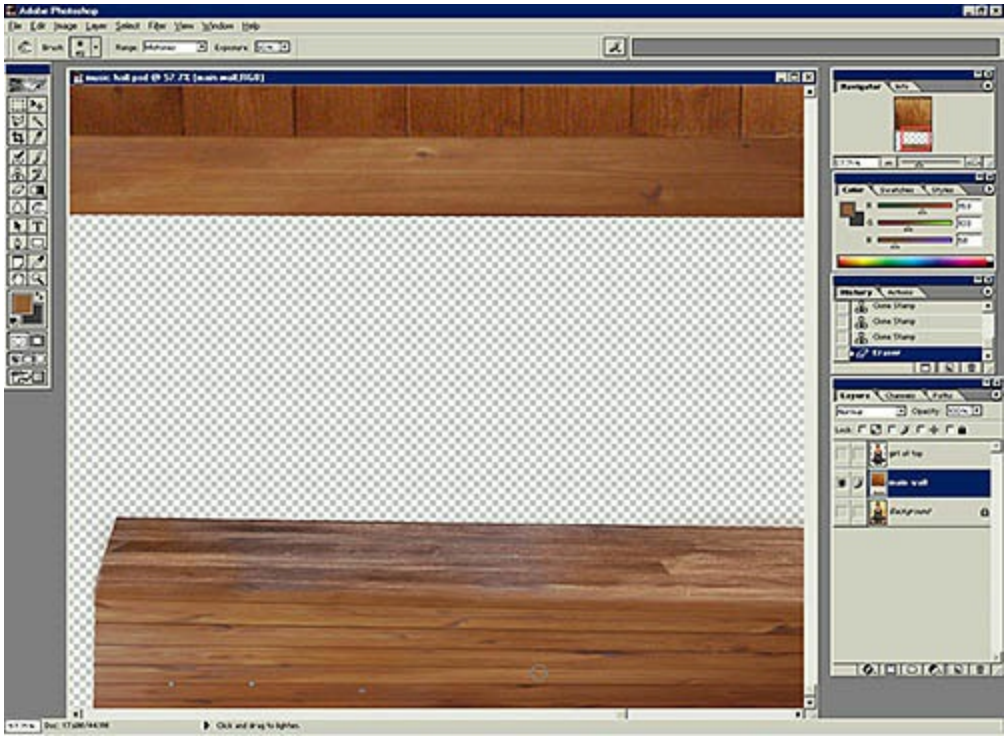
STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

1. The first thing to do is to cut out our girl because she will be the upper most layer. Use the Pen, the Selection or whatever tool you prefer but don't worry about making a good job of the hair – just cut round the whole barnet. Apply a feather of one pixel and then make a copy by pressing Control-C and a new layer by right clicking on the background layer in the Layers palette and select New Layer via Copy.

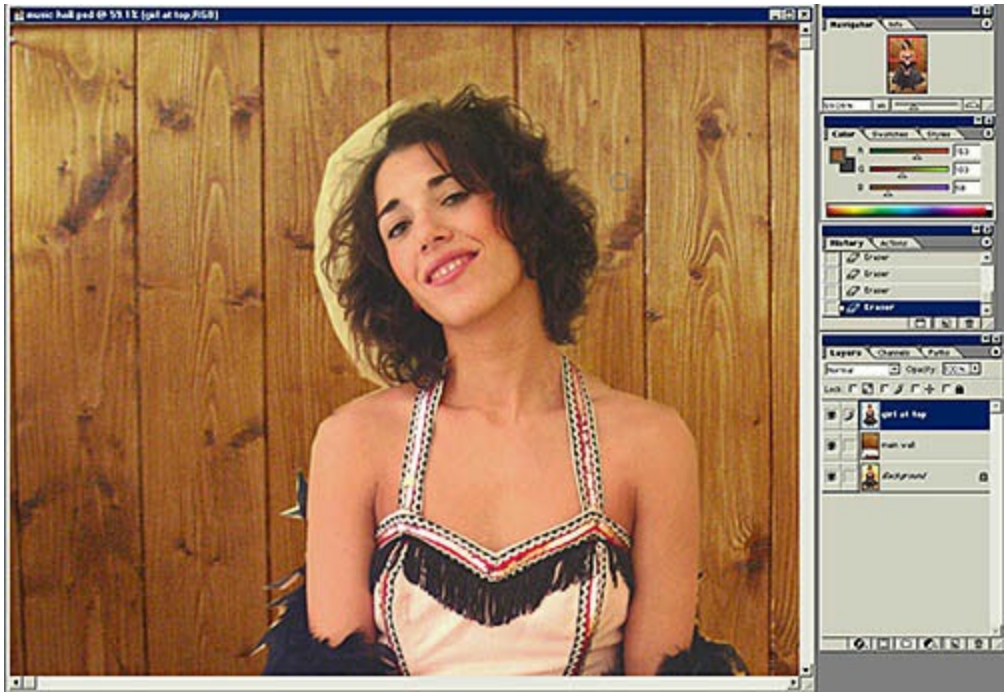


2. Do whatever cloning is required to remove things like corners of beds and so on, but don't waste time removing anything that is going to be overlaid like the wire in the top right of the photo. The load in the first of your wood textures. Start with the one to go right behind the girl. Press Control-A to select, Control-C to copy and the switch to the main composition and press Control-V to paste as a new layer. Now use the Transform Scale option to scale it into place.

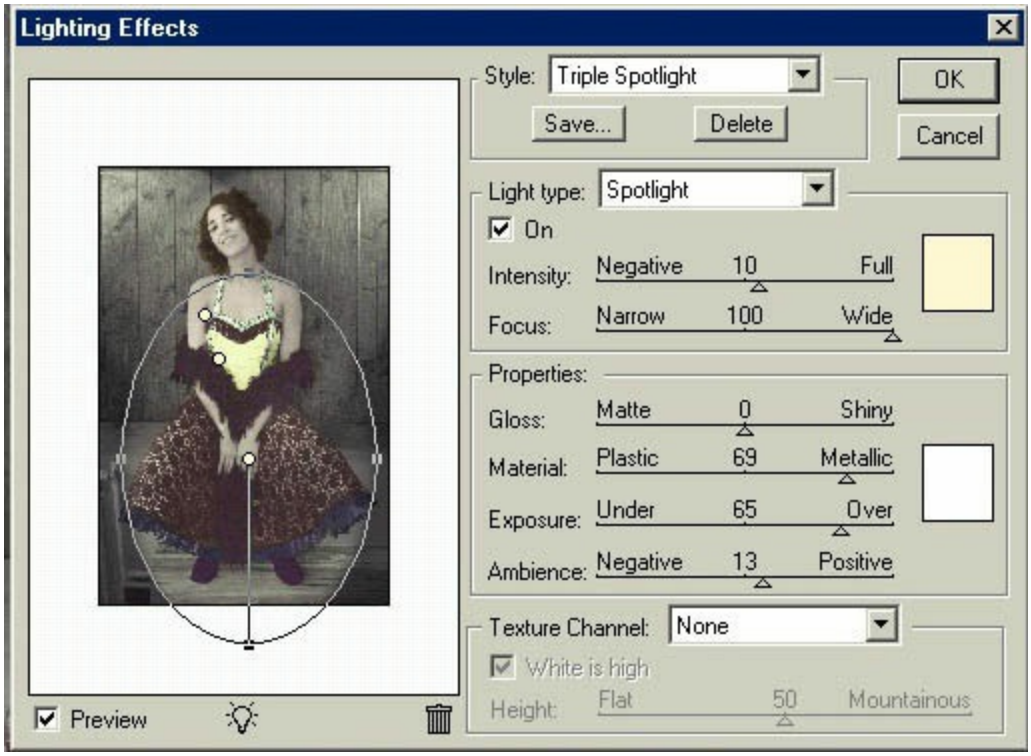
3. Having stretched and placed wooden effects for the background and footstool, the remaining surfaces can be a little tricky. Mask off and copy then paste as a new layer anything like pipework, and ensure that it is in the right place in the layer stack. Now copy and paste some more woodwork. Where it is for a plank at an angle use the Perspective distort to make it look like it is getting smaller the further away it is.



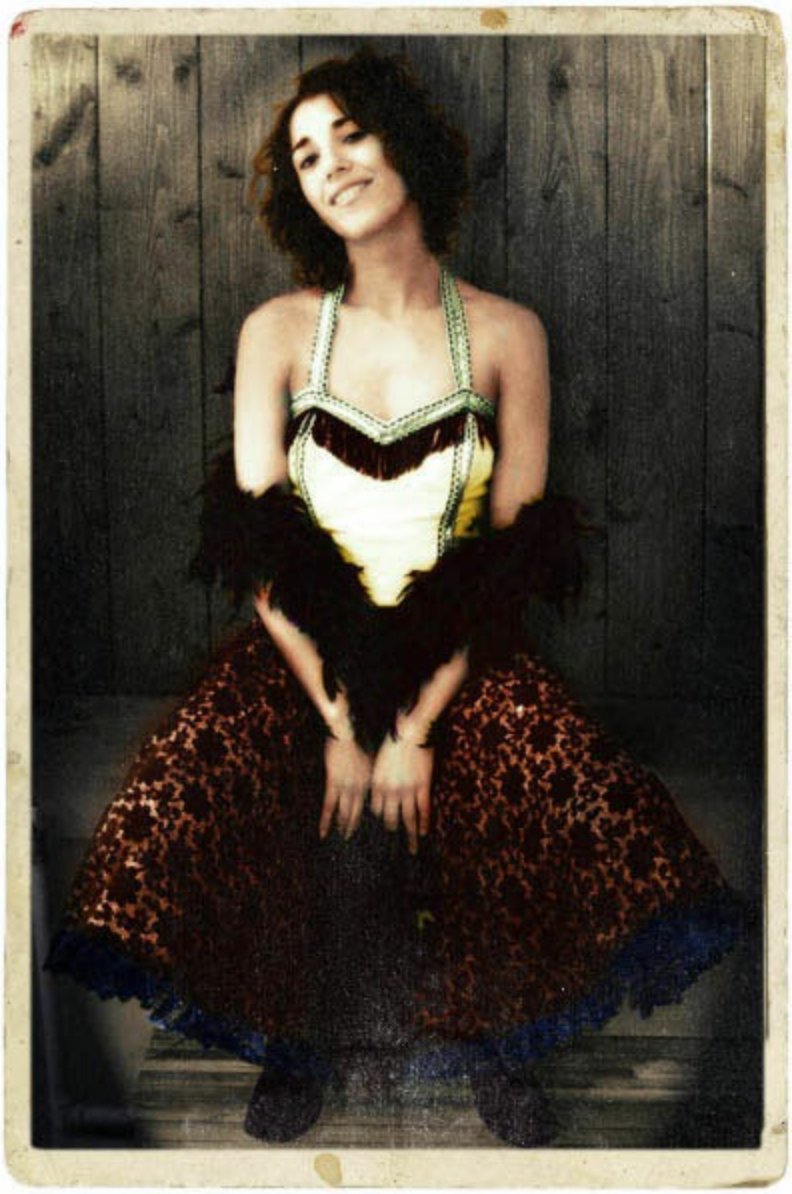
4. To simplify matters, select all the pieces of wood and ensure that only they are visible. Then go to Layer> Merge Visible. Where there are gaps between the textures, use the Clone tool at 35% and clone from both above and below the gaps to fill them in. This also breaks up the too-neat edges. Where a vertical wall meets a horizontal surface use the Burn tool to make the join look natural. Also use it to add slight shadows behind the model.



5. Now for the tricky part of the hair. Select the girl on top layer and the Eraser. Select a 25% opacity and start deleting the yellow halo. Use gentle dabs inside the curl line where yellow can be seen – just enough to start the background showing, without the hair being lost. If you dab the main hair itself simply back up one step and redo. Then work on the edge of the yellow halo with a 33% opacity to remove it completely. To finally remove any traces of yellow, and also, those bits around the feather boa, firstly use the magic wand to select the empty area around the girl. Invert it so you won't inadvertently paint over the background. Now, use the Paintbrush with a Darken blend mode and a brown picked up from the background. This will not paint over black, but will colour in yellow.



6. Use the Burn tool to add a little depth where natural shadows would fall, in this case on the model's right hand side and when done, merge all the layers and desaturate the entire image. Now apply colour as detailed in the previous examples. The final stage is to use the Filter> Render> Lighting option and select a triple spotlight. Move them around and tweak them to get a stage lighting effect. Save to finish.



Here's the final image, complete with some extra toning and a period border from Alien Skin's Exposure 5.

CHAPTER 8. VICTORIAN DRAMA

Use a combination of digital photography and darkroom manipulation to create period-themed images

Working at home or in the studio is all good and well but surely the most ambitious venture for the digital photographer is to shoot a model out on location. As if that wasn't adventurous enough, this article covers shooting on a particular theme as well. In this case think Wuthering Heights, Mary Shelley, Dracula, the Bronte sisters.... think Victorian gothic.

To the average digital snapper in the street this can seem daunting to the point of precluding you from ever attempting it yourself. Not so dear reader. If you have a decent digital camera and by that I mean one where you can control both the aperture and the shutter speed, then you are perfectly equipped to mount your own location shoot. If you check out the panel for what this actually cost us you'll see that we didn't get much change out of £400/$600 but it's also equally possible to do the whole thing for under £50/$75. The reason why is to limit the scope of the adventure and to take more time in getting the elements required for free.

The first stage is to find a model. Check out your Thompson Local or Yellow pages for an agency, or try the on-line versions if you want a model based in another town. Go to www.thomweb.co.uk or www.yell.com in the UK or try modelling sites such as www.net-model.com or www.purestorm.com. Agency models cost more money for the simple reason the agency wants their slice of the pie. The good news is that they will have lots of people on their books and you should be able to choose from a selection for the face or body you want. Agencies will also advise what type of modelling each person will undertake. Alternatively keep an eye out for stories in your local paper for new models winning competitions and get in touch via the paper. Offer to shoot the model for free in return for providing prints for his or her portfolio. Strangely enough, hair salons will often know of someone who is moving into modelling and will give you a lead.

To actually hire someone yourself the cost can vary enormously. The model for this feature was Lisa Forster who didn't have an agency and she cost £180/$275 plus travel expenses for an entire day of photography. If we had wanted nude work she would have cost £200/$300. To help find a model who doesn't use an agency, and thus is also cheaper, you can do a few web searches and also look in the back of photographic magazines. However, the best place to look is on modelling websites. Here you will find all manner of people who think they are going to be the next big thing. Of course 99% aren't, but it does mean

that you can find new or beginner models with either low rates or, those asking for Time for Prints (TFP) or Time for CD (TFCD). For these, all you need do is supply some pictures after the event and you get your model for free. Bear in mind that unless the model is local to the location then you will still have to pay travel expenses.

The next stage is to sort out your location. This being Victorian with a romantic gothic feel to it, Whitby on the Yorkshire coast was chosen. This of course was one of the settings for Bram Stoker's Dracula. When deciding where you want to shoot you should visit the site before hand to scout it out. Then, bear the following points in mind:

(1) If it's far away, you'll need either to make an entire day of it or stay overnight, and do the same again on shooting day.

(2) Who owns where you want to shoot? You may need permission. Get the ball rolling early, get the name and phone number of the person you need to speak to. Explain exactly what it is you want to do.

(3) What will you do if it rains? Make contingency plans. Scout some indoor locations. Or remember to pack an umbrella for you and a towel for the model.

(4) How busy is it? Seaside locations in the summer can be packed with tourists. You aren't going to get a period shot down cobbled streets in the height of summer.

(5) Where is the sun during the day? This may sound blindingly obvious but it's no use hoping for a glorious sun setting over the sea and heading for east coast. It sets in the west remember. A caveat to that is that the actual sunset location changes throughout the year, rotating through southeast, east and northeast then back again as the year progresses.

(6) What time are you going to be shooting and in what locations? Early morning the light is cool and sharp – ideal for shooting vehicles and also mist and fog. At mid-day the sun is directly overhead giving short, ugly shadows and running down the face. Later in the afternoon the light is much warmer and golden and you get longer shadows. Look for where these will fall and plan your shoot accordingly. This is the theory mind you, when I was in Whitby the sky was overcast, completely still and a featureless grey.

For this feature I needed to get permission from Whitby Town Council to use the art gallery and adjoining museum and then the grounds of Pannett Park, in which these buildings are set. After changing their collective minds three times, I was

eventually charged a £25/$38 location fee. Hardly worth it to be honest, but it guaranteed me somewhere dry in case of rain and a measure of variety. Also, the rose gardens were actually very nice.

The ruined Abbey is owned by English Heritage and this involved a paper chase before I eventually secured permission the week before the shoot. As it transpired, I got permission for free, which was handy because the site manager at the Abbey told me they usually charge a location fee for weddings and photography. So, go to head office like I did and cut out the grasping middle manager.

WHAT IT COST

Lisa Forster – £215. Model hire for day plus expenses

Costume hire - £60. Three Victorian costumes for five days.

Accessories - £17. Wig and ear rings. Lisa provided brouch, cross and alternative wig herself.

Location hire – Whitby Abbey (English Heritage) and Museum (Town Council) both free but you would normally expect to pay £40 to shoot at the Abbey and £25 to shoot at the Museum.

Transport costs - £35

Food and drink - £22

Total cost: £372/$558

DOING IT ON THE CHEAP

How to save money: Use a new model on a TFCD basis for free. Use a model with the same hair length and colour you want. Choose a location nearby. Use fewer costumes. Don't eat as much. Follow these tips and your total cost is likely to be well under £50/$75 although it will take you longer to organise.

SHOOT IT

1. Here we are in a museum, with our model looking like a Sunday school teacher. Light levels were very low so a tripod was needed. You also need to be care with the WB in order to avoid a sickly colour cast, unless you convert it to mono, in

which case it doesn't matter too much.

2. Outside with the ruined abbey on the hill. This shot uses an open aperture to throw the background out of focus. Although the model is positioned on the right and her body is angled to the right, she hold the image together by looking directly at the camera, leaving the viewer to explore the soft detail to the left.

3. A costume change and the white outfits compliment the creamy stone of the abbey. A wide aperture ensures rapid fall off of focus into the distance.

4. The horizontal parallel lines are good in this photo, but the back of the abbey had some very distracting vertical lines from the open window slits. Fortunately I had a step ladder with me – yes, really, I packed it in the car! So, with the elevated position the distracting vertical strips could be removed from the

composition.

5. Moving the ladder even closer enabled this high shot, cropping close in to the subject.

6. While this doesn't really work as it is, it can easily be cropped to make it better. The subject is too central, there's too much space above her head. Crop the top and right side to have her look across the photo to the left.

7. This is possibly the best shot of the day. There's the interest of the gravestone, the model shot close in holding the right side of the picture together and the water and beach in the background.

8. Night is closing in so some flash was used down on the beach. This now looks like a prim and proper Victorian lady going for a walk on the beach.

9. In this version, she has removed her hat and is looking out into the distance, thinking of a husband at sea...

CHAPTER 9. WAR WEEKEND RE-ENACTMENTS

Explore the world of re-enactments, revivals, nostalgia events and period-themed festivals

One of the most popular periods in time that people enjoy re-creating is the 1940s, and specifically, the war years. It's not because they want to relive the horror of war, but rather enjoy the fashions and uniforms, the music and the spectacle of re-enactments. There are various events like this throughout the year that are all worth your time as a photographer. One of the best is the War Weekend at Pickering in North Yorkshire, where, for three days, the town hosts re-enactments, a parade, period-themed steam train rides and is swamped by people and dedicated re-enactors in the dress and uniforms of the day. For the photographer, there's a variety of disciplines to try out which includes candid shots, portraits, vehicles and action shots, all of which require different techniques and approaches.

SHOOTING CANDIDS

With large crowds in period costume you have a great opportunity for shooting candid photographs. Candids are those people shots where the subject is unaware that they are being

photographed so they don't pose or take a rigid expression for the camera. The idea is to either pick out expressions or details in figures, or to find individuals and isolate them from the crowd. Needless to say a long lens is the pre-requisite here as the further away you are, the more unobtrusive you can be and the more successful the candid shots. How long is long enough though? Well, really you're talking about a focal length of 300mm or more. The good news is that if you have a DSLR camera with a DX format sensor, rather than the larger FX format sensor, then there will be a focal length extension, typically 1.5x the focal length set on the lens. So, that 200mm lens will give you the range of a 300mm focal length and a 300mm lens will extend it out to the equivalent of 450mm which is extremely useful.

Not all lenses are created equal though, which is the reason nature photographers have such expensive kit. It all comes down to the maximum aperture, or the lowest f-stop, at the end of the telephoto. The wider the aperture, the more it costs. A typical consumer superzoom with a range of 28mm-300mm is likely to have a maximum width aperture of around f/6.3 at the telephoto end. This has two implications: shutter speed and depth-of-field. Firstly, shutter speed. The longer the lens, the faster shutter speed you need to keep the photo sharp and avoid camera shake. Typically, the reasoning goes that you need the focal length, expressed as a part of a second. So, if you have a 300mm lens you need 1/300th sec shutter speed to avoid shake. Now, this can be taken with a pinch of salt since

if you have shaky hands or it's a windy day you need faster speeds and if the camera is well braced or you have really good image stabilisation then you can get away with slower speeds.

The point about the maximum aperture is that a very expensive lens will give you f/2.8 at the 300mm end, thus delivering more light and giving you a faster shutter speed. That f/6.3 setting might sound similar but it lets in less than a quarter of the light that the f/2.8 lens does. Set your camera in AP mode and dial in the widest aperture. If you then find that the shutter speed is not fast enough you will need to increase the ISO rating. On a sunny day you might be able to use ISO100 or ISO200, on a cloudy day ISO200, 400 or 800, and if shooting people who are in the shade then ISO1600 could be required. So, the advice here is frame your subject and check the shutter speed to see if it is fast enough.

The other point mentioned was depth-of-field. Now, telephoto lenses have much less depth-of-field than wide angle lenses, but even so, an aperture of f/6.3 focussed on a figure standing towards the end of the telephoto will still result in some detail being present in the background. Yes, it won't be in focus, but you'll still be able to read signs and make out people. So, for long lens work, the wider the aperture the better all round. The other issue to consider is if you are about to buy a new lens. A fixed prime lens will offer better quality than a superzoom and

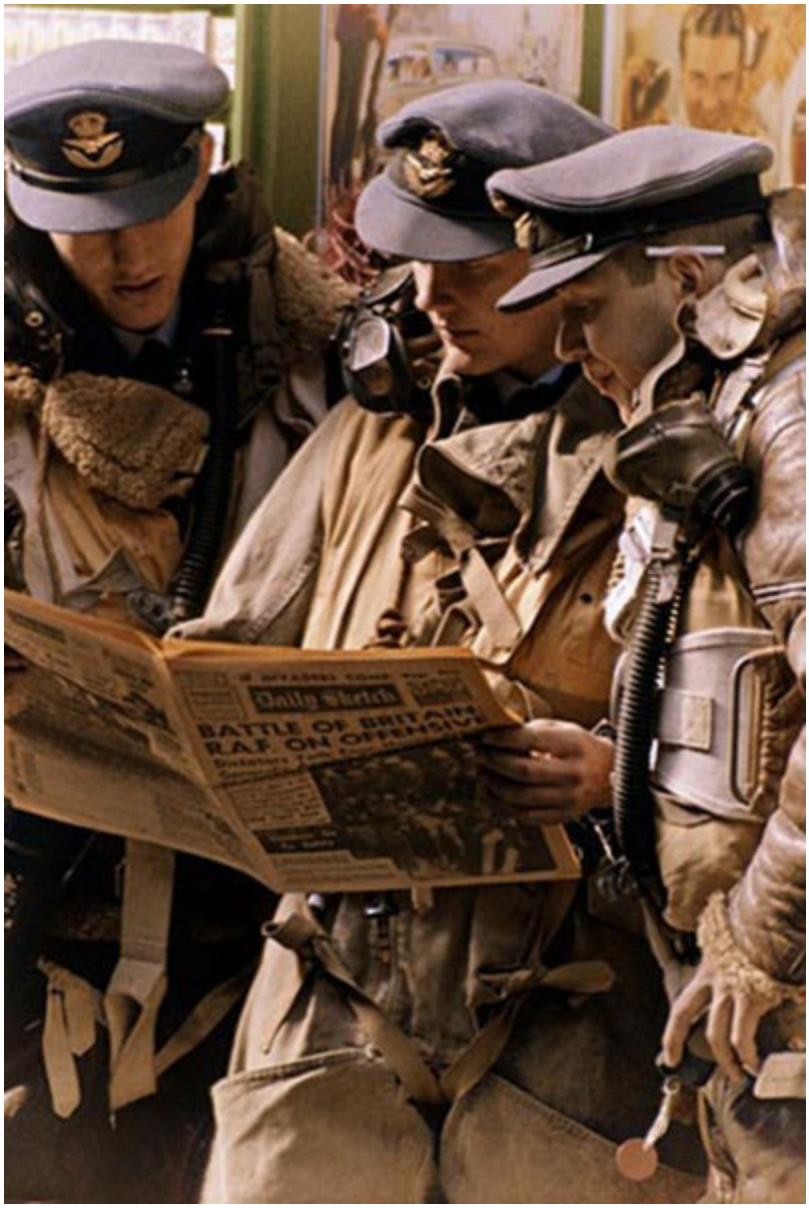
also a better wide aperture setting, without breaking the bank. Of course, it isn't as flexible as a superzoom or one of those expensive f/2.8 telephoto lenses.

140mm (210mm), f/5.6, 1/640th sec, ISO1600, -0.7EV, CW

A group of re-enactors talking at the train station, captured with a modest telephoto. I waited until the woman turned her head and looked along the platform.

116mm (174mm), f/5.6, 1/250th sec, ISO500, -0.3EV, CW

A short telephoto shot of a woman in uniform struggling up the hill. It was overcast so needed a higher ISO rating to keep the shutter speed up.



300mm (450mm), f/6.3, 1/80th sec, ISO400, -0.3EV, CW

This shot was risky with a low shutter speed but the camera was well braced and there was no time to change the settings before they moved again.

116mm (174mm), f/5.6, 1/100th sec, ISO400, -0.3EV, Zone

This is part re-enactment, part candid. There was a plastic bag in the shot that had to be removed in Photoshop

HERE COMES THE PARADE

As well as shooting candids with your long lens it can also be just as useful when photographing parades. Now, the temptation is to just get the wide angle lens out and shoot everything going past. To do this you need to be in good shooting position, not behind someone, and not shooting sideways into the parade as this simply gives flat and messy results. To get the front end of vehicles into a shot, try angling your camera. This fits the body shape of a vehicle into the square of the shot and also provides for a more dynamic composition. If there's room it can be worth trying a panning shot which keeps the subject relatively sharp but blurs the background. However, you need plenty of shooting room for this, nothing in the way and the subject to be moving at a decent speed. Vehicles moving at walking speed are likely to be going too slow to make this work. However, if you fancy having a try, set your aperture to f/22 to slow the shutter speed right down, pre-focus on the area the subject will go through and then turn autofocus off and wait for the subject to arrive. As the target enters the start of the tracking area, compose and shoot and then move the camera with the subject in the middle through the shot. The faster the target is moving, the shorter the exposure time needed to blur the background. Ideally you want to be aiming for anything from half to 1/8th of a second. A long shutter speed will make it

impossible to get the subject sharp, so if necessary, be prepared to go dial down to f/8 or f/11 if the exposure time is too long. Back to the telephoto lens now though. If you are in a crowd then the best bet is to use this to zoom in through a gap so you don't have people at the front of the shot. Focus and look for details and expressions of people in the parade. Because the field of view is narrower on a telephoto lens, you can exclude the surrounding crowd or areas and isolate interesting subjects.

200mm (300mm), f/6, 1/500th sec, ISO400, -1EV, Zone

Everyone in this line was looking ahead but when the middle figure turned to look to the right, I focussed on him and shot. Bright background light required minus exposure compensation to retain highlights.

17mm (25mm), f/8, 1/40th sec, ISO100, -0.7EV, Zone, flash

The angled shot gets the front of the jeep in while flash was used to brighten the foreground and a little panning used with focussing on the MP driver.

FACE FRONT SOLDIER

At this point it's time to swap the telephoto lens over for your best portrait lens. Actually, that might be the same thing, but what we want here is a shallow depth-of-field which makes something like a 50mm f/1.4 or f/1.8 prime lens ideal. If you don't have one then rather than go for the wide angle zoom in your kit bag, get that telephoto lens out again, use it at the shorter end so you have as wide an aperture as possible and stand further back. It is tempting to use the wide angle, short zoom lens, that is standard for landscapes and groups, especially if it's something like 17-35mm, so on a DX format DSLR it gives 25-52mm, but that 52mm end is likely to have something like an f/4 aperture which really just is nowhere near as good as the results from the prime lens. Anyway, an aperture of f/1.4 or f/1.8 really will throw the background completely out of focus leaving the view to focus on the subject. In terms of the subjects, because you are now engaging with them, you'll need to ask permission to take the photo. You can't just shove the lens in someone's face and shoot away. Fortunately most people at events like this are only too happy to be photographed, though if it's the end of a long day they may have had enough so be polite and respect the reply. It's important that the subject behaves in character though, so you don't want grinning guards or people jumping up and down unless they've just been told the war is over and that's the

scenario they are portraying.

Normally you wouldn't want someone squinting into sunlight, and to a degree you still don't here. If it's a bright and sunny day try shooting them backlit using centre-weighted or spot metering, or get them to stand in the shade. It can work though, especially if the subject is in uniform, because they can look grim and serious, and also, subjects in military uniform may have hats, caps or helmets that will keep the sun out of their eyes.

50mm (75mm), f/1.8, 1/500th sec, ISO100, -0.7EV, CW

A Luftwaffe pilot in full flying gear. He was stood in the shade so this was an easy shot.

50mm (75mm), f/1.8, 1/2000th sec, ISO100, -0.7EV, CW

Very bright sunshine so this Russian soldier stood with her back to it with just a touch of rim lighting on the shoulders and hat.

50mm (75mm), f/1.8, 1/320th sec, ISO100, -0.3EV, CW

This enthusiastic chap was a member of the crowd but happily posed by someone else's car and put his best Teutonic glare for the camera.

50mm (75mm), f/1.8, 1/8000th sec, ISO100, -0.7EV, CWA metering

Getting close to the limit of the shutter speed of the camera for a wide aperture shot in bright daylight.

50mm (75mm), f/2.2, 1/200th sec, ISO160, -0.7EV, CW

A snap shot in a dark tent. The reason for the happy smile is that this woman was playing the part of the French resistance, welcoming people into a café.

IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

No period event would be complete without some form of re-enactment. Often you'll find the participants setting up camp first, whether that's civil war era, knights and horses or WWII with vehicles and genuine weapons. This is your chance to get round to talk to people and learn about the period but also get some more shots. The portrait shots come into play again but also for vehicles or a large scene you'll need a wide angle lens to get it all in. In the case of vehicles you want it all to be sharp, unless focussing on a small detail like an identifying badge. That means using apertures like f/8 but be aware that even f/2.8 on a 17mm lens will produce a lot of depth-of-field. So, if you don't want anything in the background you really need to exclude it when composing the photo.

There's a case to be made for employing some filters when shooting wide angle scenes or vehicles. For the former, a graduated neutral density filter will help balance the exposure if the sky is much brighter than the landscape area. In the latter, a polariser can help cutting out reflections from glass so that you can see into vehicles rather than looking at your own reflection.

When it comes to actual battle scenes then it's back to the

telephoto lens to zoom in but before the shooting starts you need to work out where to stand. For a start, if it's sunny and you're shooting into it, then everything will either come out severely underexposed or you won't have any detail in the sky. So, check where the sun is and position yourself so it's behind you or at least to the side. The other factor to consider is that of where the general public are going to be standing. Ideally you don't want the crowd in the background to the shot. Sometimes though it's a question of the lesser of two evils, and in this case, go for the better lighting situation.

300mm (450mm), f/6.3, 1/640th sec, ISO200, -0.3EV, CW

The main German camp with officers and an engineer. A long telephoto shot isolated the subjects which were backlit by the sunshine. I had to wait for the flag to flap in just the right position.

300mm (450mm), f/6.3, 1/640th sec, ISO320, -0.3EV, CW

The Russians push the German forces back in the battle scene. Strong sunlight kept the shutter speed high without having to increase the ISO too much.

GIVE IT SOME AGE

The thing about digital camera images is that they all look so fresh and clean. For period looks it really shouldn't be that sharp or uniform so it's a good idea to distress, add grain, fade corners and mess up the colours in either Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro or Elements. Ordinarily you'd try to keep away from using high ISO ratings but with modern DSLRs the noise tends to be uniform rather than multi-coloured, so it's more like the grain from high ISO film. Compact cameras have a different approach and aggressively reduce noise, usually making the image very soft. Add grain with the software editing program and either mute the colours or tone them with a sepia overlay. Two Photoshop-compatible plug-ins that can be highly recommended are Alien Skin Software's Exposure 5 and Nik Software's Color Efex Pro 4.

CHAPTER 10. FUTURE SHOCK

Take fashion into a post-apocalyptic future with a location-based shoot in the ruins of an abandoned society.

The idea behind this fashion-gone wrong location shoot was to place it in a post-apocalyptic settings, where there are people who still have money, but look down their noses at the rest of humanity scrabbling around the rubble. And then there are those in the ruins, who have disconnected with society and live in their own dream worlds. The location needed plenty of abandoned buildings and ruins, lots of rubble and fences. Building sites, where old houses are knocked down, but the site hasn't been cleared yet, are ideal for this kind of thing. Slightly safer are abandoned industrial units and complexes. There are a couple of things to bear in mind when finding your ideal location and they all revolve around security and safety. Firstly, just because the place is a ruin, doesn't mean that no-one owns it. If it has been recently demolished then it's likely that the area has been bought, will have security guards or at least fences. Shooting on such ground is basically trespass and while you can usually talk your way out of any difficulties, it being obvious that you are a photographer, there with a model, the least you could expect if encountering security, is to be escorted off the site.

There are physical dangers too. The more destroyed the site is, the more unsafe it becomes. Don't expect to get your subject to walk around over crumbling floors, it's a risk they should not be taking. Also, climbing over rubble is far from easy if the subject is wearing heels and a sprained ankle, a fall and cut hands are all very possible. It's down to you to make sure that the area you shoot on is both safe and practical for whatever the model is wearing. The final point about security is this: try to have an extra pair of hands along with you. This goes for any location-based shoot. Someone to watch the bags, use a phone or provide extra numbers is invaluable. Also, don't shoot this at night. Grim places like abandoned warehouses and buildings are magnets for criminal activity, and you turning up with a pile of expensive camera gear makes you a target for theft, at the very least. And there are much worse things that can happen. So, night time shoots in locations like this really should be avoided unless you have a large team of people.

PREPARATION WORK

The plan was, that this would be shot on a dreary day, lots of cloud overhead, so it looked depressing. Cloudy skies are ideal for portraits as there is no sun that will cause harsh shadows and squinting, or flare if you shoot towards it. You can use

bounce flash from a flashgun if you need directional light and the diffuse light is great on faces. So after scouting the location in such conditions, when we turned up to do it, the sun came out and it was glaringly bright all afternoon. Those are the knocks from location shooting though. Unless you have a large budget and willing models, it's difficult to re-arrange them. The other point is that at least you can still shoot in the sunshine, though it's harder, if it rains there are even worse problems. Check the forecast on the day and ensure you have a current mobile phone number for everyone taking part. Scouting a location first always pays dividends. You know where the best shots are, where you can go, and in this case, if it's raining, whether there are decent undercover locations or if you need to cancel the entire thing.

As far as models go, you can almost always get someone for a location shoot on a TFP or TFCD basis (prints or CD) because anything that offers variety and imagination is good for a model's portfolio. If you want more choice, then post a casting call on somewhere like www.purestorm.com in the UK or www.net-model.com in the USA or overseas and offer a £15-£20 ($25-$35) an hour fee. On the free basis, if you want to draw in models from further afield than the location of the shoot, then offer travelling expenses up to £30/$50. Those with cars or low-cost railcards will then be willing to travel in. Ensure you have a car if they are coming by train or are on foot, so you can pick them up.

The other point about preparation is to ensure that you know what type of shot you are going for so you can instruct the model on posing and attitude, and make sure you have discussed clothing and accessories before hand. Most models, except the very new, have astoundingly large wardrobes. They also tend to know other models and can borrow specific items. Get it all worked out for yourself first, then discuss what you need with the model when you've found one that best suits your type of shoot. A quick tip here: When advertising a shoot online, don't accept the first offer that comes along. Also, if you are inexperienced at directing models and have never done a location-shoot before, try to get a model who isn't a beginner. Most models will have some idea of what to do, even if you don't. As long as you brief them fully at the start, you don't have to macro-manage every single pose.

If you have someone for a two-hour shoot, try to get them to arrive fully clothed and made up – unless it's something outrageous and they are travelling on public transport. That way you save valuable time and can get straight into the shoot. They should have another two complete changes of clothes so that after the first set, you can move around the location, get them changed and have time for another two sets. Getting changed and altering the hairstyle takes up time but if the model arrives ready to go, and If you're quick, you can even get four complete sets done in two hours.

It's worth noting that at all times you should be respectful of the model's personal space and privacy. On a location like this, your car may be parked some way back from the site, so it isn't practical to return to it to get changed. That being the case, the model will need to get changed in situ. Simply find more discrete areas and keep your eye out for passers-by, don't stand and gawp. When clambering over any rough ground, hold your arm or hand out for the model to hold on to, carry all the gear, and refrain from grabbing and holding to shove through some small gap in a wall.

SHOOTING IT

While it's entirely down to you what you bring, here are some options. A wide-aperture portrait lens – 50mm or 75mm with f/1.4 or f/1.8 will enable you get some great shallow depth-of-field shots with diffuse backgrounds. If it's really sunny, that means that dialling in f/1.8 in Aperture Priority mode and hoping that your camera shutter speed is fast enough to cope. You should also be on the lowest ISO rating you can get. If it's very bright, the shutter speed may still not be fast enough, in which case, having a neutral density filter in your kit bag will pay dividends. Slot this in front of the lens and reduce the light coming in by two or four full aperture stops. The converse of this applies if shooting inside a ruin – it's going to be dark. While the wide open aperture is essential here, it may be too dark for a hand held shot. Anything slow that 1/30th sec is going to give you problems. In this case either considering using some flash – and the most effect way to do it is with a flashgun that has a movable head. Point at a wall or ceiling and bounce the light back onto the subject. Or, increase the ISO rating until you get a fast enough shutter speed when using AP model.

The other lens suggestion is a telephoto one – 200mm

upwards. This has three advantages. The first is that you can place the model a long way away in the ruins, and shoot from distance where it would be impossible with a wide angle lens. The second is that telephoto lenses have less depth-of-field than wide angle lenses at the same aperture settings so it's easier to get the background out of focus. The third is that a telephoto lens narrows the field-of-view, so you can exclude things to the side of the model. All of which brings us around to the wide angle lens – 35mm and under, that you may be tempted to use because you are stood close to the model and it's the only way of getting her and the background in shot. Refer to the first chapter on Back to Basics to see what happens as regards to lens distortion. It usually isn't nice. The best way to use it, is to exaggerate the effect for dramatic purposes. Otherwise, compose the image better and use the other lens types.

50mm lens (75mm effective), AP mode, f/2.8, 1/5000th sec, ISO100, -0.3EV, CWA metering

So here's the first of our decadent shots, with a clearly

overdressed model doing her best snooty pose. An aperture of f/2.8 was used so that all of the model was in focus, but the background wasn't.

21mm lens (33mm effective), AP mode, f/5.6, 1/20th sec, ISO100, 0.7EV, CWA metering

This is a wide angle shot, but from a low-ish angle to use the

small amount of distortion to enhance the length of the legs. The shutter speed was just fast enough.

21mm lens (31mm effective), AP mode, f/5.6, 1/15th sec, ISO100, -0.7EV, CWA metering

Using the wide angle lens again to go for a punk-rock type

look, with the distortion purposefully on the head and arms for this pose. The significant exposure compensation reading was to ensure highlights didn't blow out because it was very bright.

200mm lens (300mm effective), AP mode, f/5.6, 1/200th sec, ISO100, spot metering

Using the telephoto lens with the future-lost concept to remove

the side detail and render the background diffuse. Not that f/5.6 on this lens blurs the background whereas f/5.6 on the wide angle lens doesn't. Also, because the subject was backlit, spot metering on the dress was used.

98mm lens (147mm effective), AP mode, f/5.3, 1/320th sec, ISO250, spot metering

Here with the telephoto lens to shoot the subject stood a good

ten feet higher than the camera, in the ruined shell of a building. The ISO was increased to keep the shutter speed up.

----- APPENDIX -----

If you liked this e-book you may be interested to know that there are two others in the range currently.

An Intensive Introduction to Digital Photography is a crash course in the basics of digital camera operation.

Get Started in Digital Glamour Photography (Lingerie Edition) is a guide for both film and digital users wanting to try the world of glamour photography.

Both books can be ordered from where you bought this ebook. Simply search for Duncan Evans to find them.

There is also another version of Get Started in Digital Glamour Photography – the nudes edition, at the same price. Unfortunately nude photography is not allowed through the Smashwords channel but if you would rather buy that version you can do so through PayPal. Send me an email at

dg@duncanevans.co.uk for details of how to pay and receive it. All orders are fulfilled the same day via email.