

Seeing With Light

Two kinds of light:

Natural Light--Physics shows us that light is ambiguous and paradoxical possessing the properties of both particles and waves. Light's changing physical properties demonstrate that everything is in flux and nothing is as it appears to be, signifying the numerous ways any subject may be viewed and interpreted.

once you understand the cycle of natural light, you might want to consider additional possibilities of controlling the light in your images.

Artificial Light--Artificial Light is a substitute for natural light.

The simplest way is to begin working with a single artificial light with a bowl-shaped reflector on an adjustable stand having three folding legs and a center pole that can be raised and lowered.

The Thingness of Light

Light is a plastic medium that is the key ingredient shared by every photograph and determines the look of every photograph you make.

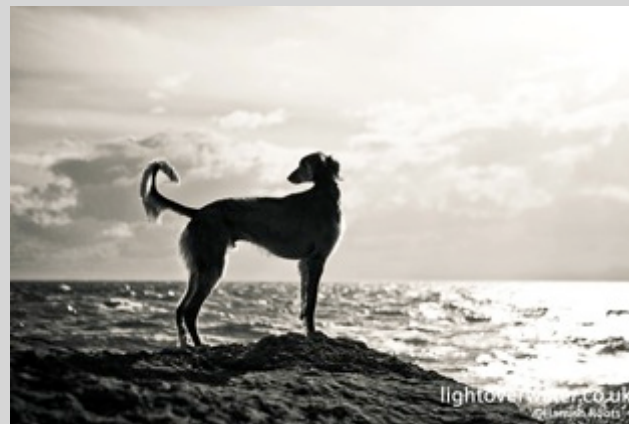
Light's authority defines the essence of a subject.

Light is the glue that holds your image together.

Light makes known the emotional and physical contents within your visual space and activates vision and meaning.

Every image provides a different set of conditions in which we can experience light.

Good Light—the definition of ‘good light’ is solely dependent on a photographer’s intent. There is no time of day or year when the sunlight is photographically better than another. However, it might be more suitable for a particular subject. At various times of day and in different seasons, light takes on a range of unique physical attributes, each with its own emotional and tactile qualities.





Based on the light in these photos, what time of day do you think they were shot?



Natural Light--time of day???

The Camera and Light—your ability to function as a creative photographer depends on your knowledge of how to make your equipment work for you. A camera is a recording device, and it will not reproduce a scene or an experience without your guidance. The camera can isolate a scene; it can reduce it to two dimensions; capture a slice of time; and set it into a frame. The camera does not discriminate in what it sees and records, but you can, and must, make such distinctions to create successful images. **Keep in mind that the camera, lens, software, and paper have but a single purpose: to capture and present light.**



Cycles of light—notice how light changes throughout the day. Here are a few phases of light that will affect your images:

Before Sunrise—light is cool, shadowless and colors are muted.

Morning—warmer colors, shadows can look blue. As the sun rises, the color of light becomes warmer (red-orange). By midmorning, the light begins to lose its warm color and starts to appear clear and white.

Midday—greater contrast between colors. At noon the light is white and colors stand out strongly. Shadows are deep and black. At noon the light may be too harsh, stark or crisp for many subjects.

Afternoon—as the sun begins to drop to the horizon, the light begins to warm up again. This is a gradual process and must be carefully observed. An increasing amount of detail is revealed as the level of the sun lowers.

Twilight/Evening—after sunset there is still a lot of light in the sky. Often sunset colors are reflected from the clouds. Light is soft, and contrast and shadows are at a minimum. After sunset and throughout twilight, notice the warm colors in the landscape.

Night—after the sun has set the world is seen by artificial light and reflected light from the moon. The light is generally harsh, and contrast is extreme. Combinations of artificial light and long exposure can create a surreal atmosphere. Photographing under these conditions requires long exposures at a high ISO setting in combination with a tripod, brace or very steady hand.

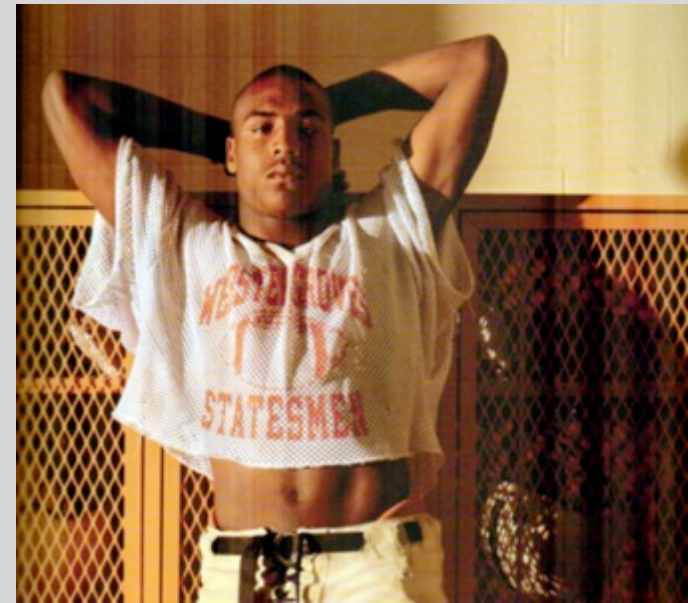


It's all light...

Natural and Artificial Side Light

Sometimes you can use light from a window or door to dramatize a subject.

It may need additional light in the form of artificial light to light up areas that would otherwise be too dark.



Placement of light will determine where the highlights and shadows will fall and how sharply they will be defined. Bear in mind that creating a three-dimensional illusion of the space in a two-dimensional photography requires highlight and shadow areas.

Whatever type of artificial light you use the direction of the light and degree of its diffusion will determine whether you produce a hard-edged or soft effect.





Compare different ways these famous photographers used light.



Some photographers, like Cindy Sherman really like to emphasize the artificiality of the light. What does the extremely artificial light say about the subjects?



Other photographers use extremely natural looking light. What does the natural light do to the meaning of the images?

**Basic Lighting
Methods:**

1. Front Light— most like natural light.
2. Side Light-- seen here.
3. High Side Light—
4. Low Side Light—
5. Top Light—
6. Back Light—
7. Under Light--.



5.8 © Michael Bosworth. *Front Light*, 2006. Dimensions vary. Digital file.

For front light, position light source in front and to the side.



5.9 © Michael Bosworth. *Side Light*, 2006. Dimensions vary. Digital file.



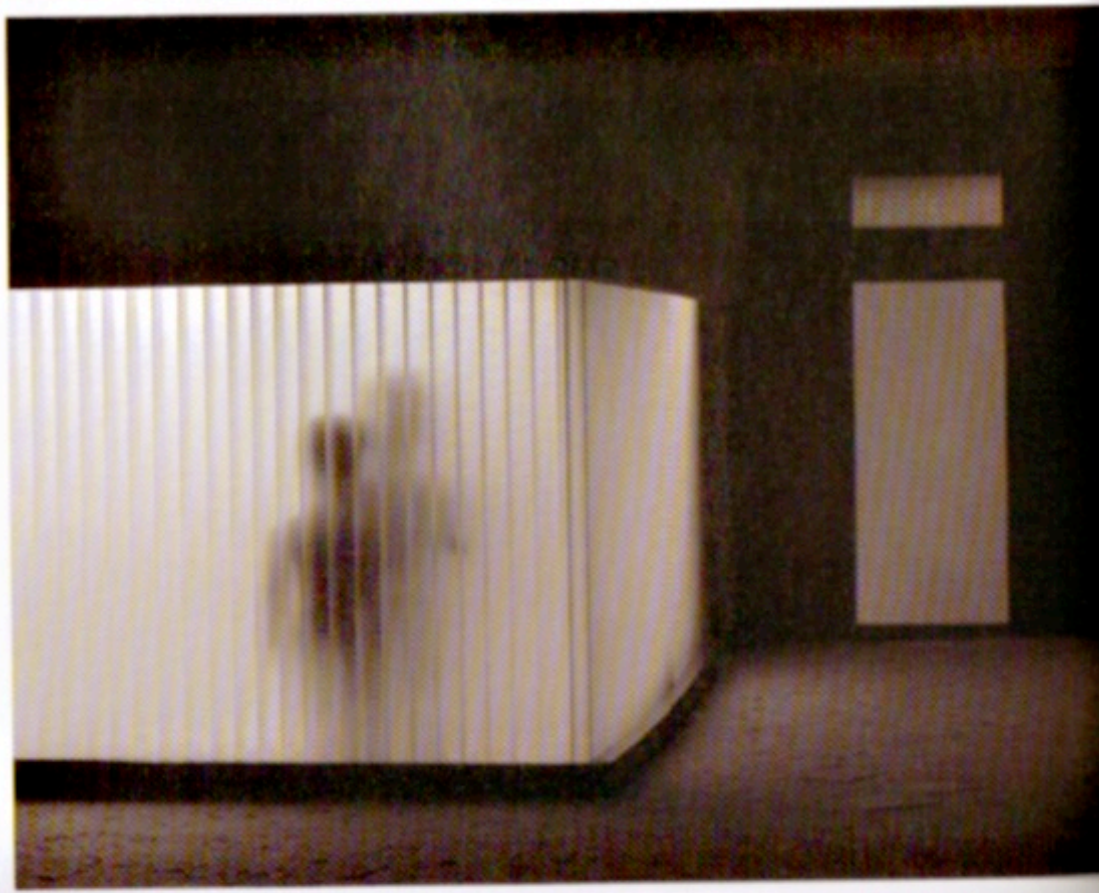
5.10 © Michael Bosworth. *High Side Light*, 2006. Dimensions vary. Digital file.

Side Light



5.12 © Michael Bosworth. *Top Light*, 2006. Dimensions vary. Digital file.

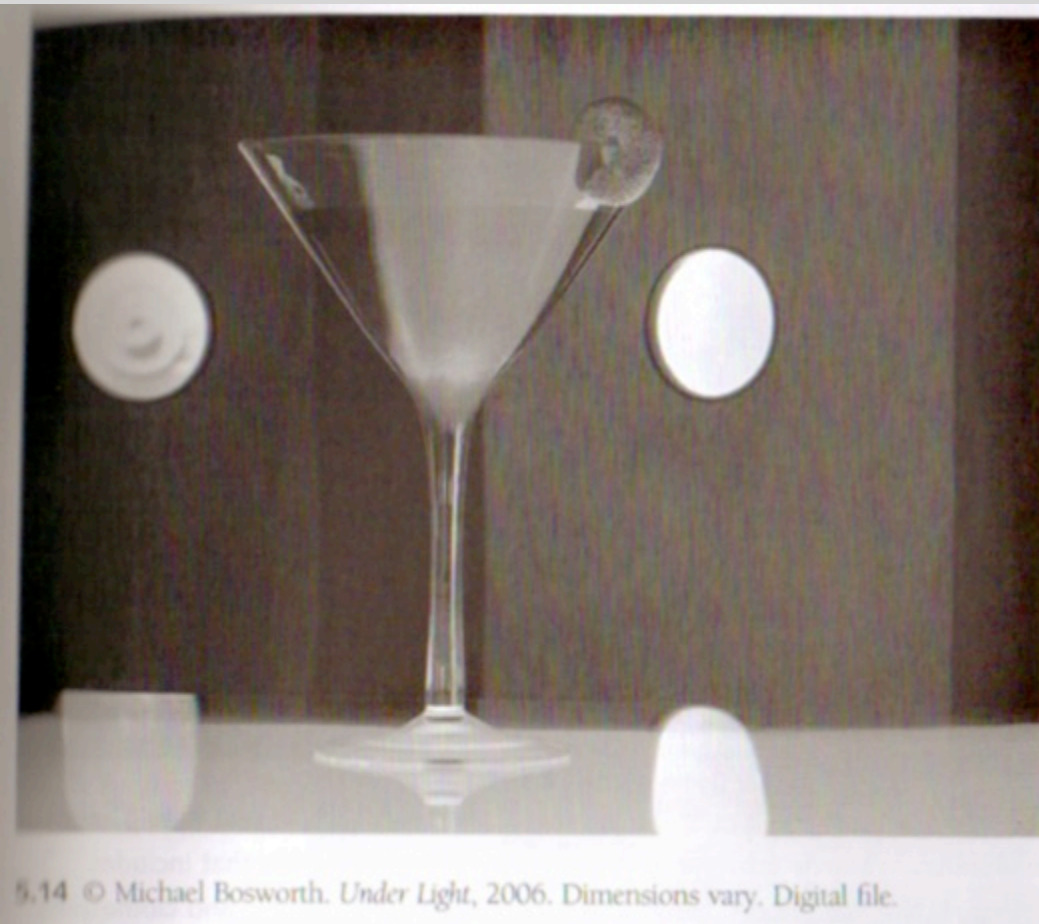
Light from above.



5.13 © Michael Bosworth. *Back Light*, 2006. Dimensions vary. Digital file.



Back light



Basic Lighting Methods:
7. Under Light--.