

Light Box Photography

The light box is essentially a means to provide soft lighting for small objects. It can also be provided with a seamless background.

The box has large holes on all sides which are covered with a transparent diffusing material. The camera looks through the front and the sides, top, back and bottom can be used for lighting to shine through to light the subject.

The Box

The size can be whatever suits but the box should be white as any other colour will reflect onto your subject preventing the ability to obtain the correct colour toning in your image.

Light Source

Don't use the flash on your camera as this will shine through the front where there is no diffuser and will defeat the use of the light box.

Small flashguns at the sides, top or bottom are ideal. Depending on your technique these could be wired/radioed to your camera or could be fired manually by pushing the test button on the flash unit. If using manually operated flashguns, the room you are using needs to be dark as the shutter speed setting on the camera needs to be long, say about 15 – 30seconds to give you time to fire the flashguns. This long shutter speed will allow other unwanted light in the room to be recorded also which could ruin the image.

LED lights are also good. These have a white balance similar to daylight and as the light can stay on "what you see is what you'll get". For this reason LED lights are often easier to use than flashguns. They are easily obtainable from hardware or sports stores and are cheap to buy.

The distance your light source is from the light box will affect your exposure as well as the contrast and diffusion of the light. The further away your light is the more diffused it will be and less contrast and the more exposure needed.

If you use more than one light source make sure they all have the same white balance. That is use only flashguns or only LED lamps so you can control any white balance adjustment later in post processing. You can use mixed lighting for art type image creations but these will be very difficult to adjust later if they are not quite what you would like.

Diffusers

For normal lighting these should be white or a light grey. Tracing paper is ideal and if your light box is small enough then the plastic of supermarket shopping bags works well also.

Colour Filters

Put any colour filter you would like to use on the flashgun or over the LED lights. Coloured cellophane can be good for this. One layer will give a light colour but the colour will become more saturated by adding more layers of cellophane.

Background

Any coloured paper can be used depending on what would best suit the object being photographed. You could paint your own background if you would like a special effect. Try using an image on your TV for a background.

Black Box

This is for black backgrounds and it is placed behind the subject so that when you look through the viewfinder all you will see in the background is the black inside of the box. The box is a light trap and prevents any light that might be in the room at the time of the exposure from being seen by the sensor in your camera.

When lighting the subject during the exposure the light travels across the front of the box with only minimal amounts being deflected inside where the black will absorb it.

For more information contact: -

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or google "Light Boxes, Photography" for tutorials and lightboxes to buy. Alternatively, you can make your own or ask Peter to make one for you.