The F Stops Here.

Essentials of Portrait Photography

Joe Klocek, Instructor

The Photography Cheat Sheets

- Specific settings to plug and play
- Simple directions
- Link to instructional video
- 31 cards on all variety of topics
- The best tool to use in conjunction with classes and instruction

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Landscape (handheld)

- Aperture set to f/8 or f/11
- Shutter speed set between 1/125 and 1/250
- Set ISO to auto (manual mode with auto ISO)
- Focus mode set to AF-S
- Focus area set to single focus point
- White balance set to daylight or cloudy day, depending on conditions
- Evaluative metering mode

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Landscape (handheld)
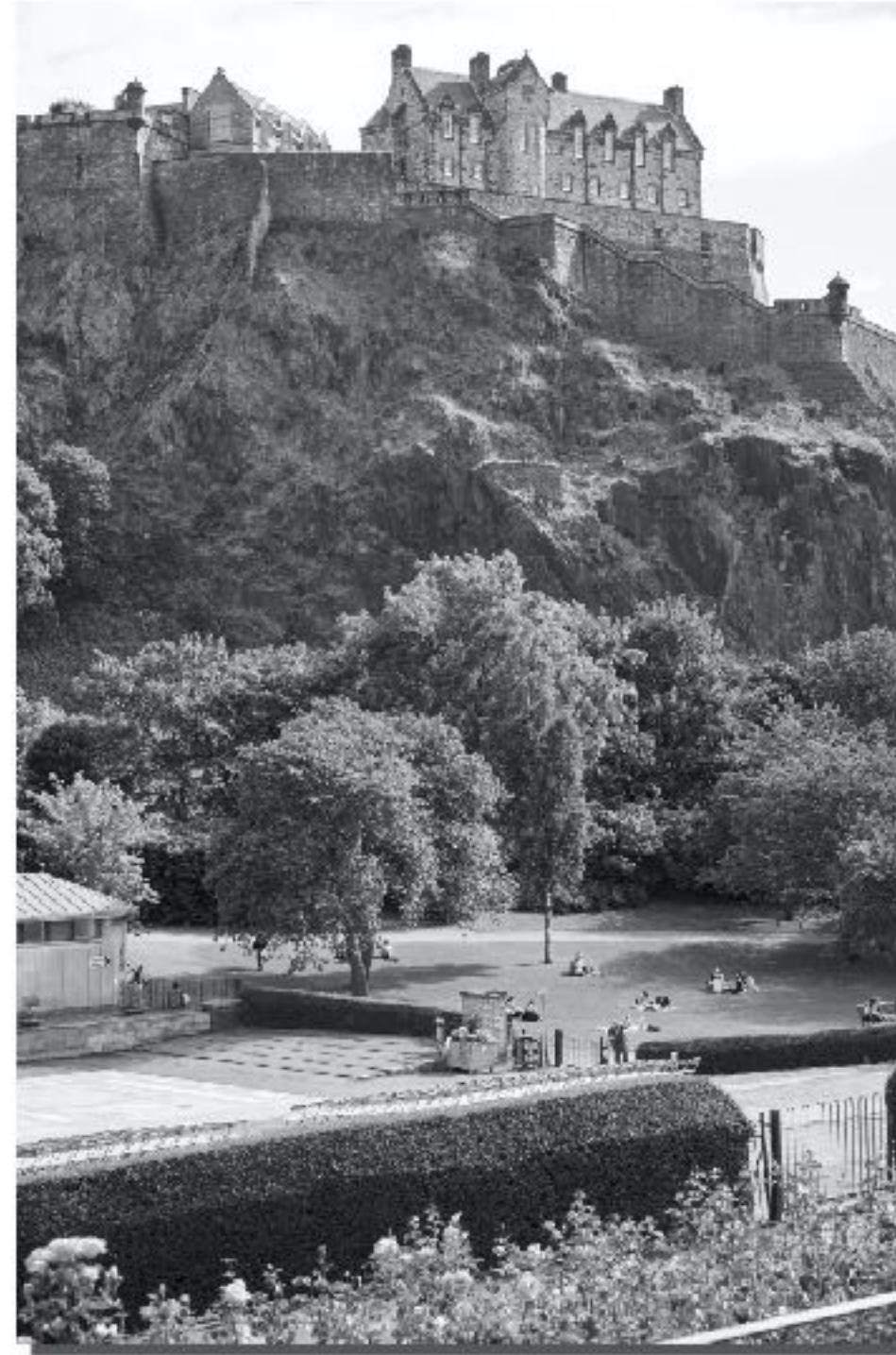
Directions

Navigate focus crosshair over the subject and acquire focus before shooting. Check that there is no motion blur captured in the frame. You can improve many compositions by placing an interesting object close to the camera. Try to shoot at advantageous times of day, such as sunrise and sunset, to get the best shadows and color. In order to achieve both the appropriate aperture and a fast enough shutter speed to hand-hold the image, use the RAW exposure technique and don't be afraid to raise the ISO if needed.

This lecture is available as a PDF

www.TheFStopsHere.org

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* gear
* environmental portraits without adding light
* environmental portraits while adding light
* interior portraits
* working with subjects

portraits

"A photographic portrait is a picture of someone who knows he is being photographed, and what he does with that knowledge is as much a part of the photograph as what he's wearing or how he looks."
Richard Avedon

gear

gear: tripod

gear: lenses

1. Range

2. Aperture

3. AF speed

gear: lights

1. flash

2. strobe

environmental portraits

14
Fill the frame, and wait to capture personality. You job here is patience. Assume it will take several minutes for a subject to become comfortable with the idea of a camera pointed at them.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/2.5

ISO 100

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15
Engage with the subject
and be ready to shoot at
any time.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/400

f/5

ISO 100

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The environment really matters with these shots. Place the subject somewhere they enjoy and with which they can interact.

Sony A7Riv

Tamron 28-75 f/2.8

56mm

1/250

f/2.8

ISO 100

light positions

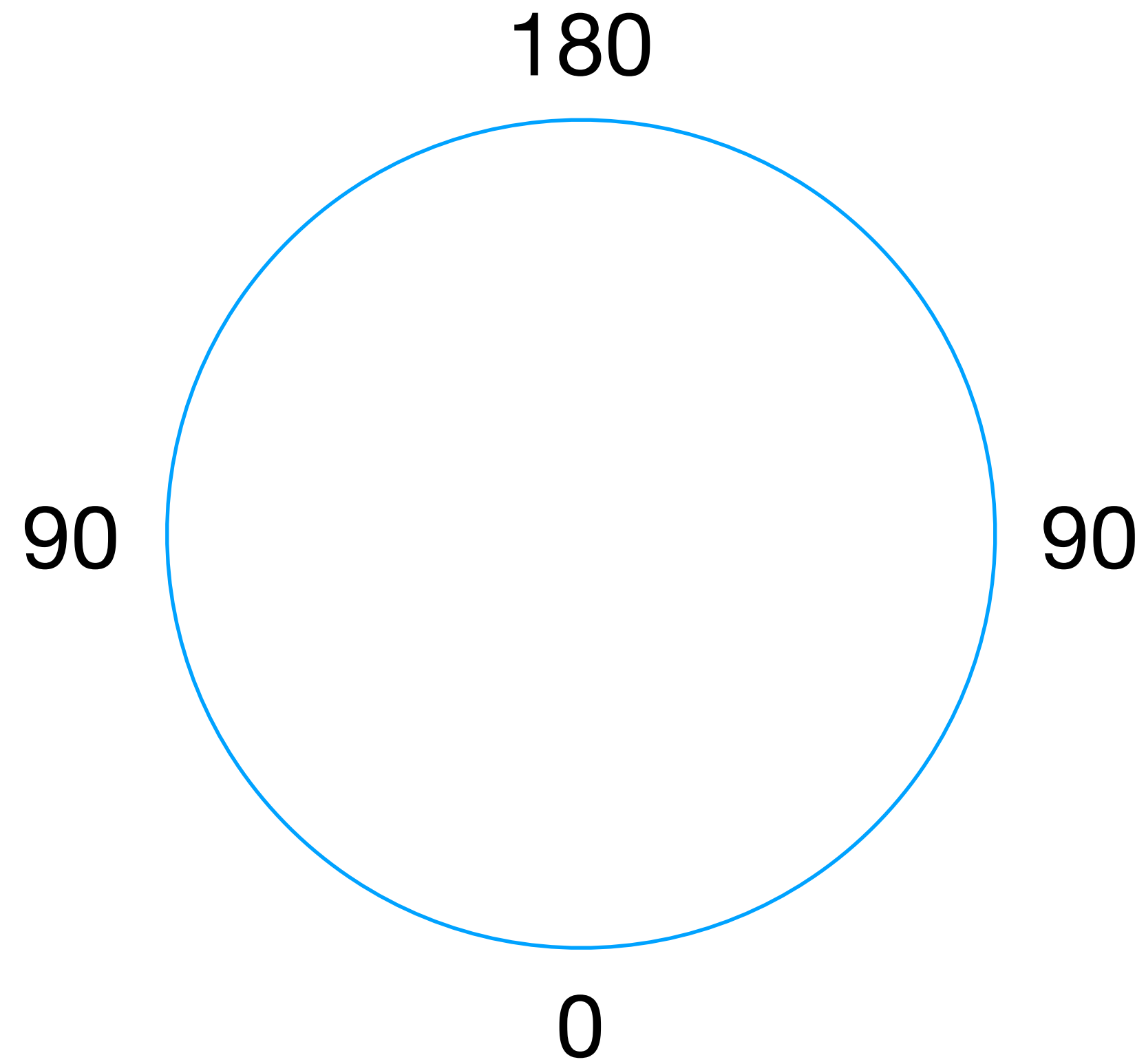Front light emphasizes detail at the detriment of contrast and separation.

Side light emphasizes contrast at the cost of detail.

Back light has the least detail , but emphasizes separation and contrast.

180

90   90

0

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18

Without a flash we will oftentimes place a subject in direct sunlight to create even light.

Nikon D850

Tamron 24-70mm f/2.8

35mm

1/400

f/2.8

ISO 100

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19
When shooting without a flash you can still place the sun behind the subject for even light, though they will be underexposed.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/400

f/2.8

ISO 200

20
This will still create the halo effect. Watch exposure and check histogram often.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/500

f/2

ISO 100

21
This will still create the halo effect. Watch exposure and check histogram often.

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/500

f/2

ISO 100
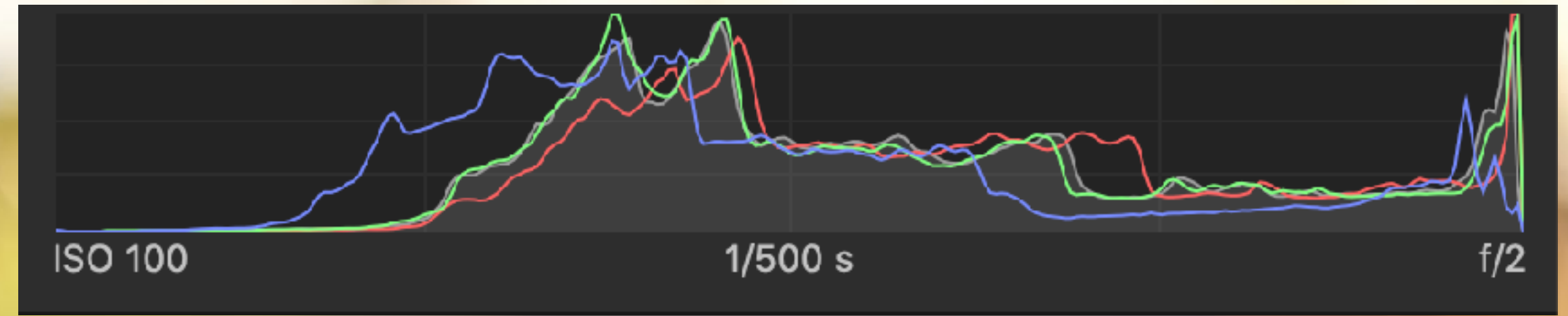
ISO 100   1/500 s   f/2

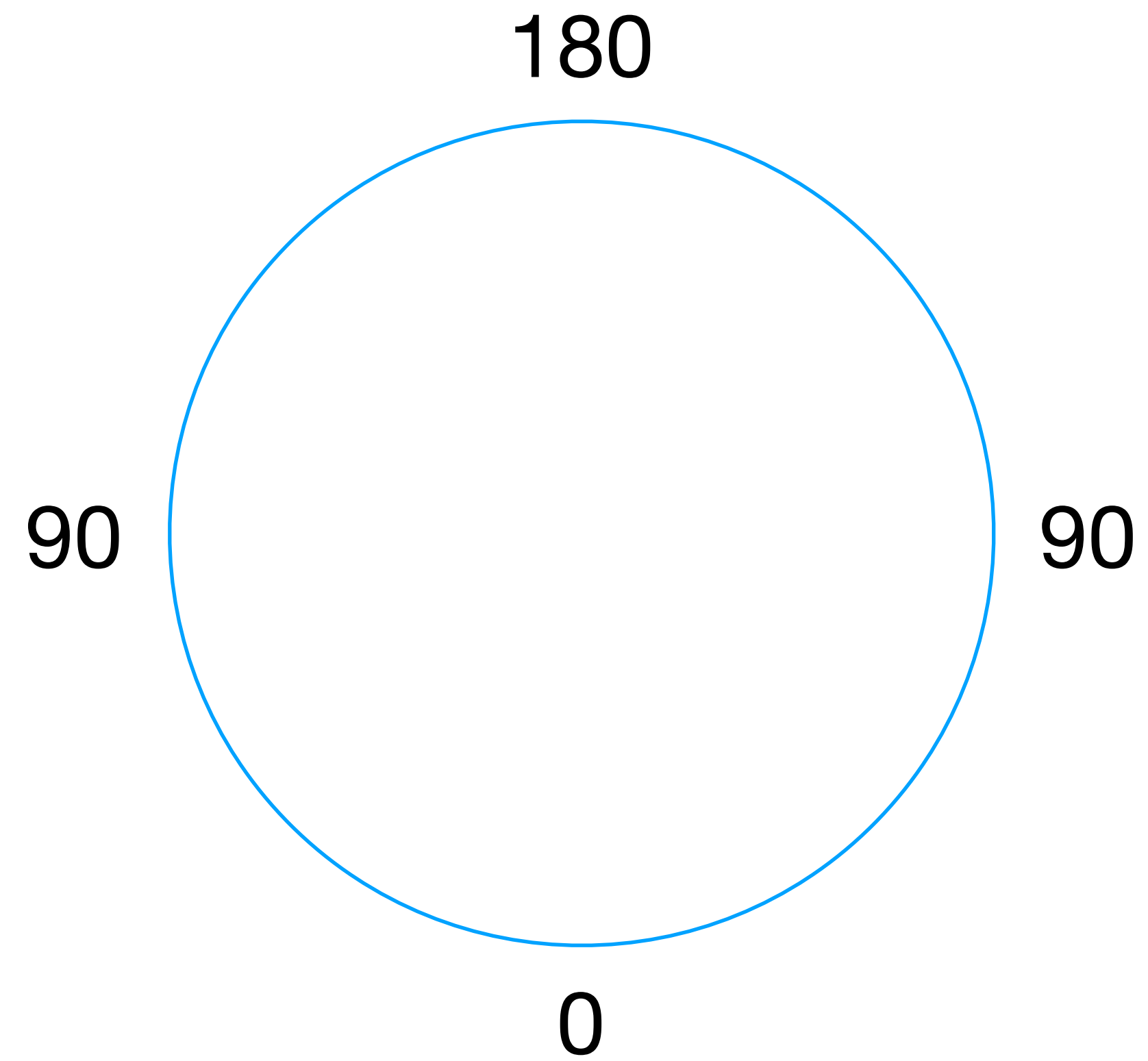# adding light to an environment

light positions

We come back to lighting positions. Now we are thinking about where we want primary light and where we want a halo light. This indicates a specific way of positioning ourselves and our subjects.

180

90   90

0

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24

Place the sunset behind the subject when lighting them.

Sony A7

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/2.8

ISO 80

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25
Place the sunset behind the subject when lighting them.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

185mm

1/200

f/3.5

ISO 100

26

That lighting position immediately creates the halo effect and gives even light on the subject's face. Then light them with a flash or strobe.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/200

f/4.5

ISO 100

working inside

28

When we work with any additional light source we set the exposure for the environment first and then add light on top of it. In an interior space this oftentimes means eliminating the ambient exposure.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100

29
Though not always.

One of my favorite ways to shoot interior portraits is to set a window behind the subject, build an ambient exposure for the subject and add light on top of it. Notice that this is the same order of operations.

Sony A7Riv

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/200

f/4.5

ISO 100

30

Sometimes we bring in the ambient exposure, underexpose it, and then add a light on top of it. In either case you build ambient exposure first and then add light on top of it. Your degree of underexposure determines how dramatic the image will be.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 320

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31
If you have a large space you might add a main light on the subject and one on the background, but we still build the original exposure for the window or the ambient light.

Sony A7Riv

Tamron 28-75mm f/2.8

34mm

1/200

f/7.1

ISO 100

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32

Now that you have your exposure locked in, you can begin the real joy of portraiture, which is creating a mood. The light quality, the background light, and the direction to the talent should be in alignment.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100

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33
Remember that costume, expression, and light are all available to tell one consistent story. So, is the way you edit the image.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/1.8

ISO 160

34
Remember that costume, expression, and light are all available to tell one consistent story. So, is the way you edit the image.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/1.8

ISO 160

35

Using lighting equipment gives you control over light contrast, either to increase it or to minimize it. This is an example of decreasing it (which is the most common technique outside).

Sony A7Riv

Sony 135mm GM f/1.8

135mm

1/1250

f/4

ISO 50

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36

This is an example of expanding it. We sometimes do this inside, but with windows we are decreasing light contrast.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/125

f/2.5

ISO 200

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working with subjects

posing

1. Don't look up her nose

2. If it bends, bend it

3. When in doubt, demonstrate

4. Talk. Often.

5. Don't give specific instructions, give mood or impression direction

6. Use props. Best are hats, fabric, and sunglasses.

7. Never look straight into the camera.

8. Crop before a joint, not after.

9. Use hands.

10. Show images. But not too much.

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First, be prepared. I find example images that I like on Pinterest and then show them to the talent beforehand that way they know what I'm trying to achieve. If they asked me to shoot the images, I ask for those example images from them.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 85mm f/1.8

85mm

1/200

f/8

ISO 100

40

Next, you must speak often and in depth about how things are going, show images from time to time, and choose focal lengths appropriately so you are not sitting too far away. You need to know what it's like to be the subject and to communicate with the photographer.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 250

41

With kids, you give them a larger space to work in and follow. Trying to get them to stay in place and smile at the camera is a fool's errand.

Sony A7Riii

Zeiss 55mm f/1.8

55mm

1/160

f/8

ISO 100

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42
Once you develop rapport you can ask for specific emotions, but I avoid specific physical directions.

Sony A7Riii

Sony 35mm f/1.4

35mm

1/125

f/2

ISO 250

Thank You