

Pro • Lighting

B E A U T Y S H O T S

A GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

ALEX LARG and JANE WOOD

RotoVision



THE PRO-LIGHTING SERIES

A GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

The **Pro-Lighting** series showcases and gives insights into the work of contemporary top-class photographers from all over the world, explaining the lighting set-ups that are essential to the success of their images. The latest three titles, **Beauty Shots**, **New Glamour** and **Night Shots**, concentrate on the specialist techniques and styles of professional photographers working within these exciting and challenging genres.

The first of these titles, **Beauty Shots**, demonstrates the variety of approaches that are possible in this diverse area. Depending on the product and the brief, the beauty photographer may need to draw on expertise in portraiture, still life, fashion photography, special effects – or any combination of these and other skills. Whatever the particulars of the commission, the key element is the lighting. For every featured photograph, the lighting set-up is illustrated by helpful diagrams, along with expert explanations and advice on potential problems that might arise, with suggested solutions.

With over 55 superb photographs and a directory of more than 25 featured world-class photographers, **Beauty Shots** is an invaluable resource manual for practising photographers and art directors alike.

Nov 90/02

Alex Larg trained in photography, film and video and has worked on commercials, feature films and television productions as well as in the field of commissioned photography. He is also interested in teaching and has worked more recently with students on a variety of visual media courses.

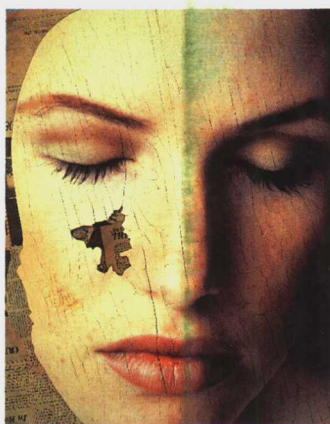
He lives in England, and is following in the footsteps of Roger Hicks and Frances Schultz as Series Editor for these latest Pro-Lighting titles: **Beauty Shots**, **New Glamour** and **Night Shots**.

Jane Wood is an editor and writer of educational and academic books.

Other titles in the Pro-Lighting series include:

Glamour Shots
Food Shots
Product Shots
Lingerie Shots
Special Effects
Interior Shots
Nudes
Portraits
Still Life
New Glamour
Night Shots

Pro•Lighting



B E A U T Y S H O T S



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S H O T S**

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THE PRO-LIGHTING SERIES



THE MOST COMMON RESPONSE FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS BOOK, WHEN THE CONCEPT WAS EXPLAINED TO THEM, WAS "I'D BUY THAT". THE AIM IS SIMPLE: TO CREATE A LIBRARY OF BOOKS, ILLUSTRATED WITH FIRST-CLASS PHOTOGRAPHY FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD, WHICH SHOW EXACTLY HOW EACH INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPH IN EACH BOOK WAS FILM.

Who will find it useful? Professional photographers, obviously, who are either working in a given field or want to move into a new field. Students, too, who will find that it gives them access to a very much greater range of ideas and inspiration than even the best college can hope to present. Art directors and others in the visual arts will find it a useful reference book, both for ideas and as a means of explaining to photographers exactly what they want done. It will also help them to understand what the photographers are saying to them. And, of course, "pro/am" photographers who are on the cusp between amateur photography and earning money with their cameras will find it invaluable: it shows both the standards that are required, and the means of achieving them.

The lighting set-ups in each book vary widely, and embrace many different types of light source: electronic flash, tungsten, HMIs, and light brushes, sometimes mixed with daylight and flames and all kinds of other things. Some are very complex; others are very simple. This variety is very important, both as a source of ideas and inspiration and because each book as a whole has no axe to grind: there is no editorial bias towards one kind of lighting or another, because the pictures were chosen on the basis of impact and (occasionally) on the

basis of technical difficulty. Certain subjects are, after all, notoriously difficult to light and can present a challenge even to experienced photographers. Only after the picture selection had been made was there any attempt to understand the lighting set-up.

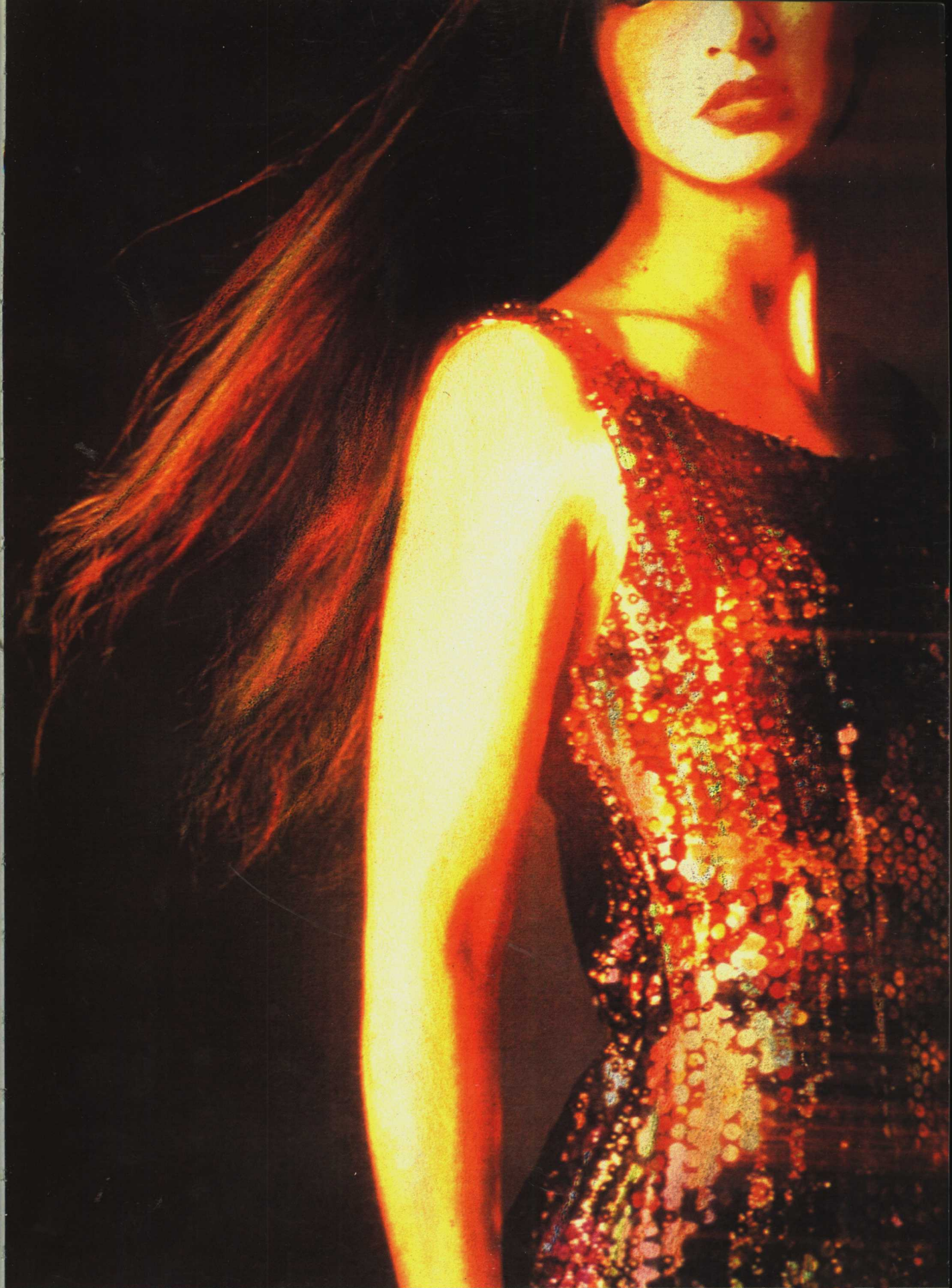
This book is a part of the fourth series: BEAUTY SHOTS, NIGHT SHOTS, and NEW GLAMOUR. Previous titles in the series include INTERIOR SHOTS, GLAMOUR SHOTS, SPECIAL EFFECTS, NUDES, PRODUCT SHOTS, STILL LIFE, FOOD SHOTS, LINGERIE SHOTS and PORTRAITS. The intriguing thing in all of them is to see the degree of underlying similarity, and the degree of diversity, which can be found in a single discipline or genre.

Beauty shots feature beauty accessories and cosmetics for a commercial market so the lighting set-ups tend to be bright and strong to give powerful, bold images to grace the pages of many a beauty magazine or advertisement. Glamour shots, by contrast, concentrate on models, often nudes, and altogether softer lighting tends to be used, though having said that, many of the bold new-style shots are deliberately stark and provocative and the choice of harsher lighting can be used to good effect in these cases. For night shots, inevitably the use of available light without much by way

of additional lighting features much more prominently than in any other book in the series.

The structure of the books is straightforward. After this initial introduction, which changes little among all the books in the series, there is a brief guide and glossary of lighting terms. Then, there is specific introduction to the individual area or areas of photography which are covered by the book. Subdivisions of each discipline are arranged in chapters, inevitably with a degree of overlap, and each chapter has its own introduction. Finally, there is a directory of those photographers who have contributed work.

If you would like your work to be considered for inclusion in future books, please write to Quintet Publishing Ltd, 6 Blundell Street, London N7 9BH and request an Information Pack. DO NOT SEND PICTURES, either with the initial inquiry or with any subsequent correspondence, unless requested; unsolicited pictures may not always be returned. When a book is planned which corresponds with your particular area of expertise, we will contact you. Until then, we hope that you enjoy this book; that you will find it useful; and that it helps you in your work.



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A more advanced use for the book is as a problem solver for difficulties you have already encountered: a particular technique of back lighting, say, or of creating a feeling of light and space. And, of course, it can always be used simply as a source of inspiration.

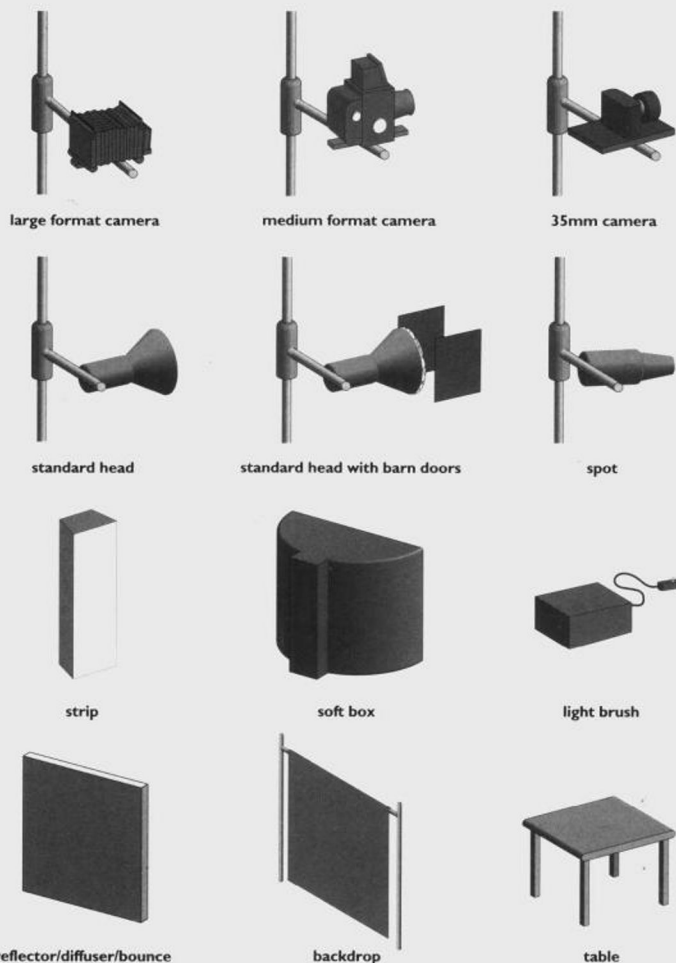
The information for each picture follows the same plan, though some individual headings may be omitted if they were irrelevant or unavailable. The photographer is credited first, then the client, together with the use for which the picture was taken. Next come the other members of the team who worked on the picture: stylists, models, art directors, whoever. Camera and lens come next, followed by film. With film, we have named brands and types, because different films have very different ways of rendering colours and tonal values. Exposure comes next: where the lighting is electronic flash, only the aperture is given, as illumination is of course independent of shutter speed. Next, the lighting equipment is briefly summarized — whether tungsten or flash, and what sort of heads — and finally there is a brief note on props and backgrounds. Often, this last will be obvious from the picture, but in other cases you may be surprised at what has been pressed into service, and how different it looks from its normal role.

The most important part of the book is however the pictures themselves. By studying these, and referring to the lighting diagrams and the text as necessary, you can work out how they were done; and showing how things are done is the brief to which the *Pro Lighting* series was created.

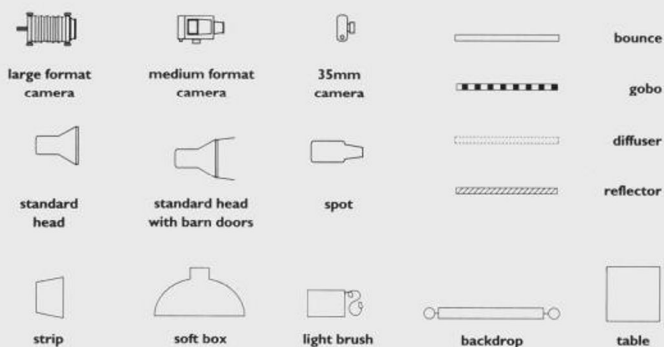
DIAGRAM KEY

The following is a key to the symbols used in the three-dimensional and plan view diagrams. All commonly used elements such as standard heads, reflectors etc., are listed. Any special or unusual elements involved will be shown on the relevant diagrams themselves.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL DIAGRAMS



PLAN VIEW DIAGRAMS



GLOSSARY OF LIGHTING TERMS



LIGHTING, LIKE ANY OTHER CRAFT, HAS ITS OWN JARGON AND SLANG. UNFORTUNATELY, THE DIFFERENT TERMS ARE NOT VERY WELL STANDARDIZED, AND OFTEN THE SAME THING MAY BE DESCRIBED IN TWO OR MORE WAYS OR THE SAME WORD MAY BE USED TO MEAN TWO OR MORE DIFFERENT THINGS. FOR EXAMPLE, A SHEET OF BLACK CARD, WOOD, METAL OR OTHER MATERIAL WHICH IS USED TO CONTROL REFLECTIONS OR SHADOWS MAY BE CALLED A FLAG, A FRENCH FLAG, A DONKEY OR A GOBO – THOUGH SOME PEOPLE WOULD RESERVE THE TERM "GOBO" FOR A FLAG WITH HOLES IN IT, WHICH IS ALSO KNOWN AS A COOKIE. IN THIS BOOK, WE HAVE TRIED TO STANDARDIZE TERMS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. FOR CLARITY, A GLOSSARY IS GIVEN BELOW, AND THE PREFERRED TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK ARE ASTERISKED.

Acetate

see ~~Gel~~

Acrylic sheeting

Hard, shiny plastic sheeting, usually methyl methacrylate, used as a diffuser ("opal") or in a range of colours as a background.

*Barn doors

Adjustable flaps affixed to a lighting head which allow the light to be shaded from a particular part of the subject.



Barn doors

Boom

Extension arm allowing a light to be cantilevered out over a subject.

*Bounce

A passive reflector, typically white but also, (for example) silver or gold, from which light is bounced back onto the

subject. Also used in the compound term "Black Bounce", meaning a flag used to absorb light rather than to cast a shadow.

Continuous lighting

What its name suggests: light which shines continuously instead of being a brief flash.

Contrast

see Lighting ratio

Cookie

see Gobo

*Diffuser

Translucent material used to diffuse light. Includes tracing paper, scrim, umbrellas, translucent plastics such as Perspex and Plexiglas, and more.



Electronic flash: standard head with parallel snoot (Strobex)

Donkey

see Gobo

Effects light

Neither key nor fill; a small light, usually a spot, used to light a particular part of the subject. A hair light on a model is an example of an effects (or "FX") light.

*Fill

Extra lights, either from a separate head or from a reflector, which "fills" the shadows and lowers the lighting ratio.

Fish fryer

A small Soft Box.

*Flag

A rigid sheet of metal, board, foam-core or other material which is used to absorb light or to create a shadow. Many flags are painted black on one side and white (or brushed silver) on the other, so that they can be used either as flags or as reflectors.

*Flat

A large Bounce, often made of a thick sheet of expanded polystyrene or foam-core (for lightness).

Foil

see Gel

French flag

see Flag

Frost

see Diffuser

*Gel

Transparent or (more rarely) translucent coloured material used to modify the colour of a light. It is an abbreviation of "gelatine (filter)", though most modern "gels" for lighting use are actually of acetate.

*Gobo

As used in this book, synonymous with "cookie": a flag with cut-outs in it, to cast interestingly-shaped shadows. Also used in projection spots.



"Cookies" or "gobos" for projection spotlight (Photon Beard)

*Head

Light source, whether continuous or flash. A "standard head" is fitted with a plain reflector.

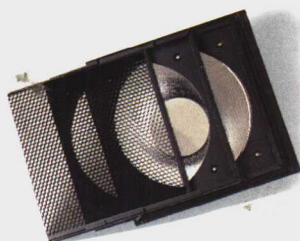
*HMI

Rapidly-pulsed and

effectively continuous light source approximating to daylight and running far cooler than tungsten. Relatively new at the time of writing, and still very expensive.

***Honeycomb**

Grid of open-ended hexagonal cells, closely resembling a honeycomb. Increases directionality of light from any head.



Honeycomb (Hensel)

Incandescent lighting

see Tungsten

Inky dinky

Small tungsten spot.

***Key or key light**

The dominant or principal light, the light which casts the shadows.

Kill Spill

Large flat used to block spill.

***Light brush**

Light source "piped" through fibre-optic lead. Can be used to add highlights, delete shadows and modify lighting, literally by "painting with light".



Electronic Flash: light brush "pencil" (Hensel)



Electronic Flash: light brush "hose" (Hensel)

Lighting ratio

The ratio of the key to the fill, as measured with an incident light meter. A high lighting ratio (8:1 or above) is very contrasty, especially in colour; a low lighting ratio (4:1 or less) is flatter or softer. A 1:1 lighting ratio is completely even, all over the subject.

***Mirror**

Exactly what its name suggests. The only reason for mentioning it here is that reflectors are rarely mirrors, because mirrors create "hot spots" while reflectors diffuse light. Mirrors (especially small shaving mirrors) are however widely used, almost in the same way as effects lights.

Northlight

see Soft Box

Perspex

Brand name for acrylic sheeting.

Plexiglas

Brand name for acrylic sheeting.

***Projection spot**

Flash or tungsten head with projection optics for casting a clear image of a gobo or cookie. Used to create textured lighting effects and shadows.

***Reflector**

Either a dish-shaped surround to a light, or a bounce.

***Scrim**

Heat-resistant fabric diffuser, used to soften lighting.



Electronic Flash: projection spotlight (Strobex)



Tungsten Projection spotlight (Photon Beard)

***Soft box**

Large, diffuse light source made by shining a light through one or two layers of diffuser. Soft boxes come in all kinds of shapes.



Tungsten spot with conical snoot (Photon Beard)



Electronic Flash: standard head with parallel snoot (Strobex)

***Snoot**

Conical restrictor, fitting over a lighting head. The light can only escape from the small hole in the end, and is therefore very directional.



Tungsten spot with safety mesh (behind) and wire half diffuser scrim (Photon Beard)



Electronic flash: standard head with large reflector and diffuser (Strobex)

and sizes, from about 30x30cm to 120x180cm and larger. Some soft boxes are rigid; others are made of fabric stiffened with poles resembling fibreglass fishing rods. Also known as a northlight or a windowlight, though these can also be created by shining standard heads through large (120x180cm or larger) diffusers.

***Spill**

Light from any source which ends up other than on the subject at which it is pointed. Spill may be used to provide fill, or to light backgrounds, or it may be controlled with flags, barn doors, gobos etc.

***Spot**

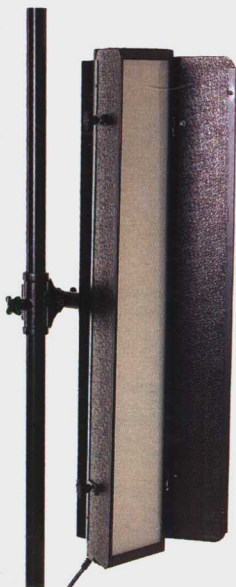
Directional light source. Normally refers to a light using a focusing system



with reflectors or lenses or both, a "focusing spot", but also loosely used as a reflector head rendered more directional with a honeycomb.

***Strip or strip light**

Lighting head, usually flash, which is much longer than it is wide.



Electronic flash: strip light with removable barn doors (Strobex)

Strobe

Electronic flash. Strictly, a "strobe" is a stroboscope or rapidly repeating light source, though it is also the name of a leading manufacturer:

Tungsten spot with removable Fresnel lens. The knob at the bottom varies the width of the beam (Photon Beard)

Strobex, formerly Strobe Equipment.

Swimming pool

A very large Soft Box.

***Tungsten**

Incandescent lighting. Photographic tungsten

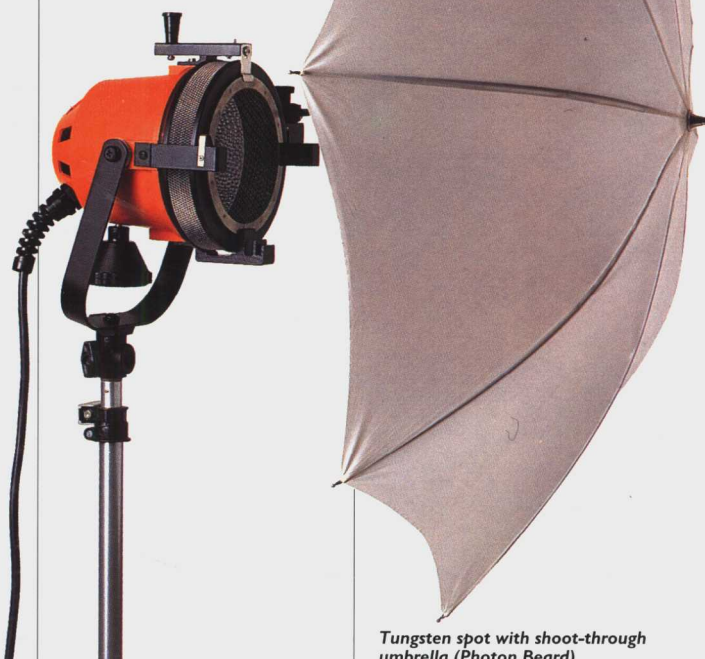


Electronic flash: standard head with standard reflector (Strobex)

lighting runs at 3200°K or 3400°K, as compared with domestic lamps which run at 2400°K to 2800°K or thereabouts.

***Umbrella**

Exactly what its name suggests; used for modifying light.



Tungsten spot with shoot-through umbrella (Photon Beard)

Umbrellas may be used as reflectors (light shining into the umbrella) or diffusers (light shining through the umbrella). The cheapest way of creating a large, soft light source.

Windowlight

Apart from the obvious meaning of light through a window, or of light shone through a diffuser to look as if it is coming through a window, this is another name for a soft box.

BEAUTY SHOTS



"**B**EAUTY IS THE SPLENDOR OF FORM SHINING THROUGH THE PROPORTIONED PARTS OF MATTER"
(SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS).

Beauty, and the nature of beauty is a theme that has run through art, literature and philosophy for centuries. Historically it has a double-edged reputation. On the one hand beauty has been associated with virtue, as in the phrases "As fair as an angel"/"As ugly as sin", but on the other hand beauty has been distrusted as a superficial characteristic, capable of misleading the unwary, as in the saying "Beauty is only skin deep". The fact that the language contains so many sayings and turns of phrase related to beauty gives some indication of its importance as a theme. Literature, from folk tales to poetry, has taken up the idea, so much so that we know in every fairy tale that the older two sisters will always be ugly and wicked and the youngest sister will be beautiful, good and deserving, whatever the detail of the plot, from Cinderella to King Lear. Keats's famous closing couplet in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is another touchstone when considering the literary history of the theme.

*"Truth is beauty, beauty truth, - that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know".*

Whatever the approach, beauty has exercised a fascination over artists of all kinds over the centuries. Of course, the history of photography only began in earnest in 1839 with the work of the likes of William Henry Fox Talbot, Nicéphore Niépce and Louis Jacques

Mandé Daguerre; but it is no surprise that from the outset those working with the new art medium of photography wanted to use the form to explore and record beauty in its many forms. Early portrait photography, such as that by Julia Margaret Cameron and Lewis Carroll consisted of elaborate backdrops, costume, posing, coiffure and so on, to show off the subjects to best advantage.

More recently, beauty as a personal concern and as an industry is of huge general interest, with advertising, magazines and books -- almost every aspect of commercial life -- all promoting beauty in its many and various forms. As far as the question of whether beauty equates with good or beauty equates with artifice is concerned, a new twist to the debate has emerged in recent years. There is now a widespread view that there has been a shift, in this post-feminist era, away from women trying to look beautiful to please men, to women wanting to look beautiful to please themselves, and for many people beauty is an expression of image, personal choice and, perhaps, of power. From a commercial point of view, the moral argument is irrelevant: beauty is merely a commodity. Whichever view we take, it is perhaps time for the old adage, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder",

to be updated to: "Beauty is in the eye of the consumer".

THE PURPOSE OF BEAUTY PHOTOGRAPHY

Beauty photography falls into several categories, most of which are to do with selling a product, image or lifestyle that the photograph is intended to convey to the consumer. In many cases where there is a direct advertising requirement, a flawless model displaying perfect features is required to set off either a beauty product or some item relatively unrelated to the notion of beauty that is being promoted; anything from a holiday to headache remedy. Product shot still lifes are also of importance, since the cosmetics industry is huge and varied, and each product and brand has its own particular requirements for promotion.

Magazine and editorial requirements are another, and larger, area of demand for beauty photography. The plethora of women's magazines, hair, beauty, fitness, diet and general interest magazines -- all need endless images of the looks and lifestyle that they want to put across to their readership. These images may appear in "how to . . ." features giving advice on cosmetics, hair styling and fashion tips, or make-over features, where the work of the make-up artist and hair stylist are of paramount

importance, or in general interest features where an illustrative image of a person may be of importance in defining the overall image and readership of the magazine. Of course decorative, fantastic and escapist images of beauty also have their place.

Occasionally the photograph itself is the saleable item. Personal beauty portraiture to commission and art photography, either for gallery exhibition or for postcards and posters, are two main areas of work in the field. Traditional and experimental beauty shots are also often done as portfolio work, whether for the photographer, make-up artist, hair stylist or model.

STUDIOS AND SETTINGS

Most of the photographs featured in this book come from studio work rather than location work, and this imbalance is representative of the work that was submitted for inclusion in the book overall.

The reasons for this are straightforward and obvious when you pause to consider the point and purpose of beauty shots. Beauty photography is a very particular art, often concentrating on precise details of features, faces and products at very close range, or striving to achieve a particular effect or illusion by whatever technical means. Since beauty photography is, on the whole, by its very nature, an area of photography with a high level of artifice, it follows that absolute control over the conditions is required. Some of the shots in the book quite simply could not have been achieved on location.

Günther Uttendorfer's "Susanne" shot (page 63), for example, needed absolute stillness of air, to the extent that the model was not even allowed to breathe for fear of disturbing the fine powder that comprised the set. Another consequence of the typical tightly cropped, close-in beauty shot is that a background or location is largely irrelevant, and probably not visible. Beauty shots tend to concentrate on particular details, not on general views, and a location setting is not necessarily a high priority.

Having said that, for a shot that emphasises lifestyle or some personal element, setting can be important to establish context to show off the product or person in a meaningful way. There is no doubt that the clothing is an important element of the shot, but the location setting successfully establishes both context and an image of lifestyle that will help to sell an item that might, in isolation, appear less appealing.

MAKE-UP, HAIR AND CLOTHES

For beauty shots even more than for most other kinds of shots, it is essential that make-up, hair and clothing should be absolutely pristine (or not, if this is the requirement!). The very purpose of many beauty shots is, after all, to promote the make-up, the hair and/or clothing. Cosmetics, hair products and fashion accessories of all kinds, colours, finishes and styles, and for every conceivable purpose, are constantly being put forward into a busy and competitive market that is worth an enormous amount of money. The consumer's on-going high level of

interest in all these aspects of beauty guarantees that a great deal of beauty photography will be aimed at meeting the needs of the market.

When shooting general stock photography, it usually pays to be wary of up-to-the-minute fashionable styles of make-up, hair and clothing, because they date a picture so quickly. In beauty photography, however, the very idea is often to show the ephemerally flitting changes of fashion. The contemporary styles of the moment, with an admittedly shorter shelf-life than less specialist stock images, will often be exactly what is required for advertising and editorial use in a market of quickly changing short-lived images.

By the same token, for a more enduring classic beauty shot, a timeless and less obviously fashionable style will be more appropriate and add longevity to the relevance of the image as a saleable item. A "period" feel can be created by the deliberate use of hair, make-up and clothing styles of another era remarkably effectively, if this is what is wanted.

Needless to say, excellent make-up artists and hair stylists are essential members of the team for a shot where the make-up and hair are under such intense scrutiny as they are in a professional beauty shot.

CAMERAS, LENSES AND FILMS FOR BEAUTY SHOTS

One might expect that medium format is the obvious choice for this type of work, yet many photographers use 35mm, either for ease of use or possibly because it gives more the "look" that