



FLAAR Reports
Digital Photography

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EQUIPMENT EVALUATIONS

Elinchrom Strobe Lighting



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Elinchrom Strobes for Fashion Photography

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Fashion Photography is an area which has always called my attention; it is was not until recent that I had the chance to start doing it. My prior experience using lighting was totally different, I have been used to light subjects with continuous tungsten or fluorescent lighting and mainly archaeological artifacts, so using strobe lights was a complete challenge.

In the following report I will explain how I used Elinchrom strobe lighting for my first fashion photography assignment, even though I have plenty of experience using photographic equipment and other types of illumination this was my first experience as a fashion photographer.

One of the first tips to do fashion photography is that the model must have talent, other wise you would have the best equipment in the world but if your model is not good, then your pictures will not be pretty at all.

My model is Susana Membreño a close friend of mine with high aspirations to become a professional photographer. She is not a professional yet but I assure she will become one very soon, as you will see in the following pictures.

My assignment was to photograph a line of clothes of the store where Susana's mom works; this provided the proper testing ground for my first assignment.

Even though FLAAR owns other lighting systems we used Elinchrom Strobes because that's what professionals use for fashion photography and we are interested in testing it for nature photography as well.

We are using Westcott soft boxes, reflectors and backdrops, they are fully compatible with many lighting systems as well as Elinchrom; we are very thankful to Westcott for providing all the equipment.



Equipment

- 5 Bogen light stands
- Elinchrom Digital 2 Power Pack
- 1 Elinchrom Digital SE flash heads
- Elinchrom Style 1200S flash head
- 1 Elinchrom umbrella
- Westcott 10' x 22' white backdrop
- 2 Westcott soft boxes
- 2 adapter rings for Elinchrom Digital SE
- Canon EOS 5D
- Compact Flash Cards
- Sync cable
- Light Meter
- Backdrop crossbar
- Extension Cord
- Gaffer tape



The Studio Set

The “Digital 2” Power Pack with 2 Digital SE heads were placed at the back of our subject directed towards the backdrop to burn it out and a Digital SE 1200 Flash Head was placed in front of our subject at a subtle angle with an Elinchrom umbrella to diffuse the light, we used the front lounge of the store.

Two light stands were used for a crossbar to support the backdrop so it could be extended completely. We used another white cloth on the floor so we wouldn't mess our new Westcott white backdrop. It is very important to have enough space to place the backdrop and each head at each side. The light stands must be stable enough to support the flash heads, we used Bogen light stands to support the three Elinchrom flash heads.

The Digital 2 Power Pack allows adjusting the power of both heads, at the same time, the newer models allow control of power in each head separately, and once we have a new system we will be able to discuss the performance of the new digital models compatible with digital cameras and wireless control.

The Digital SE Flash head with umbrella was placed about a meter away from our subject, at a 45° angle. Power was adjusted to the minimum; we attempted several power levels before we could achieve a perfect exposure. But the best results were accomplished using the lowest power levels on both rear and main light. The light meter reading is a useful tool to accomplish proper exposure.





In order to synchronize the camera to the Elinchrom Style 1200SE flash head we used a sync cable. The Canon EOS 5D allows full synchronization with this cable. Though no TTL functions are available the flash head works like an integrated flash system. The power pack at the back is set to work with a slave system so both Power Pack heads and the Main Light are fully synchronized, the power pack must be positioned in a place where the main light reaches it in order for it to synchronize. After several attempts the best exposure was reached using an f stop of 1/8 and a shutter speed of 1/125s. At higher speeds and higher power settings the images were burned completely or not synchronized, the results of unsynchronized images can be seen as incomplete or with a half the image frame black.

The backdrop must be wide enough to allow your model to move and pose freely; otherwise you run the risk of having your model out of the backdrop making the image useless. A high backdrop allows the photographer to get shots from a low perspective.

Gaffer tape was used on the ground cloth to fix it and to prevent it from wrinkling. Once shooting the flash heads must recharge, so continuous shooting is limited to one second per shot and a one second pause, Elinchrom strobes have a beeping sound that informs the photographer the lights are charged, shorter shooting periods will not allow the Elinchrom lights to recharge.

The distance of the main light from the subject will yield different results: light near the subject will result in less shadows and a soft look, while the distance increases the shadows will become harsher. The key concept in lighting is to simulate natural sunlight.

Here are some examples of the final results, of course some images are post-processed using Adobe Camera Raw, the advantages of using raw files is that you are able to work within a range of two f-stops.

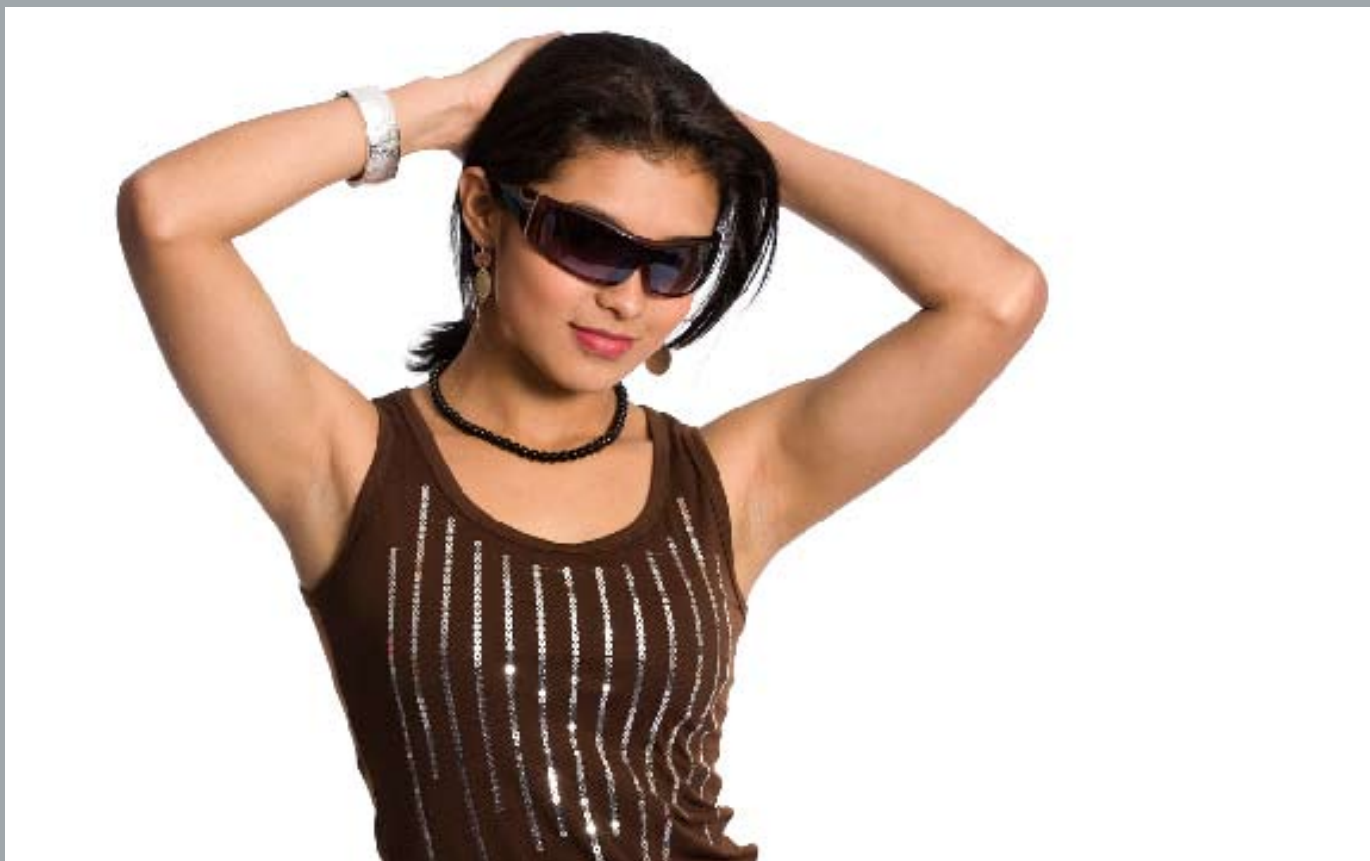




















Acknowledgments

Further information on new Elinchrom Strobe Lighting can be obtained from the Elinchrom web site www.elinchrom.com

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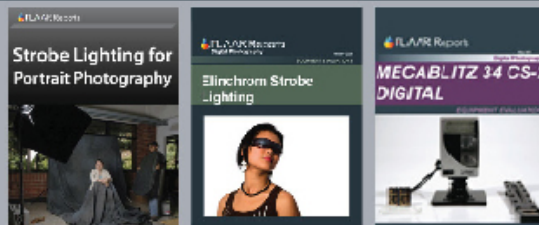
We hope this report has helped you understand better a little bit about strobe lighting.

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TRIPODS & TRIPOD HEADS



LIGHTING EQUIPMENT



RAIL SYSTEMS

