



Portraiture

a brief introduction

Geoff Shaw & Helen Warnod



Outline

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Introduction to Portraiture | 11/02/21 |
| 2. Light for portraits | 25/02/21 |
| 3. Working with a Model | 11/03/21 |
| 4. About Models | 25/03/21 |
| 5. Camera and Lighting | 08/04/21 |
| -- equipment and techniques | |
| 6. Post-Processing for portraiture | 22/04/21 |

Module 4 Homework

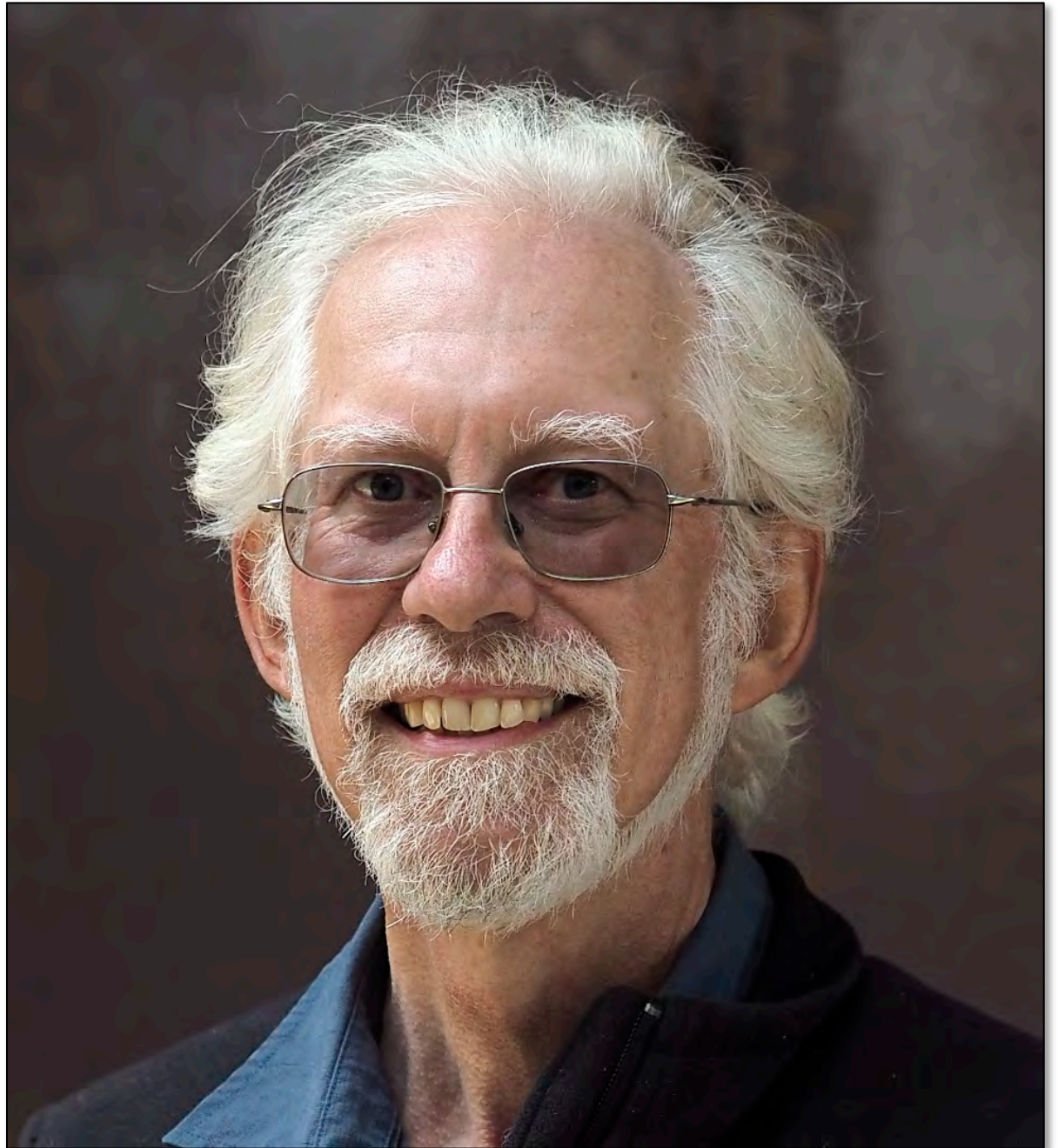


Module 2 Homework

Geoff Brown

My primary intention was for a sharp image and a connection between the model and the camera, primarily through eye contact and a clear facial expression. This was an opportunistic shot. Others may have asked you to stand there but I had not made any requests.

At the workshop I learned that the background can significantly influence my portraits even when using spot metering and spot focus. For example, the dark brown panelled external wall in this shot seemed to influence your skin colour in the photo - but I'm not yet proficient with my photo software to counter this. One of my workarounds was to crop from a half body shot to a head shot, which at least removed the dominance of the wall. I found the same with a portrait of another member under a yellow leafed tree.



Module 2 Homework

Stephen Hilton: I was going for the casual, relaxed and confident look with these. The sun peeked out from the clouds briefly, which made a nice diagonal on the wall in the second photo.



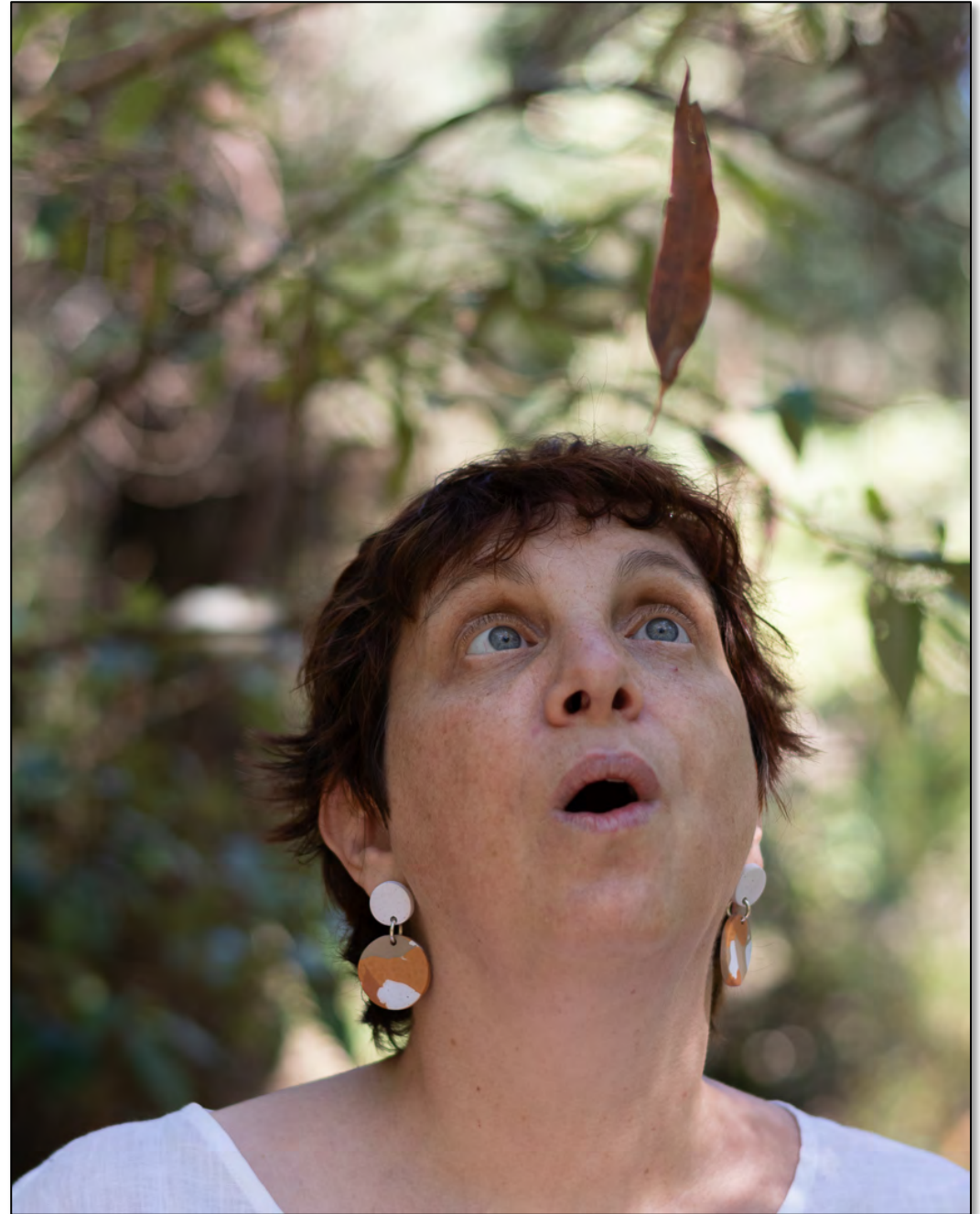
Module 4 Homework

Colleen Singleton:

Photo Jen

I thought going up into the hills would give me lots ideas and the light would be softer, how wrong could I be. Got some photos but realize that there is so much to take into consideration like don't cut the toe of the shoe off or the fingers, but fun and a good laugh was had.

Question: The hanging leaf was spinning on a spiders thread, if I focused on Jen and then moved the camera to the leaf, would both be in focus



Module 4 Homework

Colleen Singleton:

Photo Megan

Can not work the speedlight so go desperate.
Learnt that there are many shades of black. Not
sure if this worked but tried to do a bit of abstract
when I could not get the lighting right.



Module 4 Homework

Jill Shaw:

Both were taken with the sun behind the subject (top left) but slightly filtered by leaves.

This gave some annoying bright spots (both shots)- but other than that it worked better than I had expected.

In both portraits the background is more in focus than is ideal. However if the subjects had stepped forward they would have been in sunlight & I did not want to have a too shallow depth of field.

The fence was not an ideal background, but in the photo of Tim I feel that his apparently sombre mood is picked up and enhanced by the spiky low colour background plants.

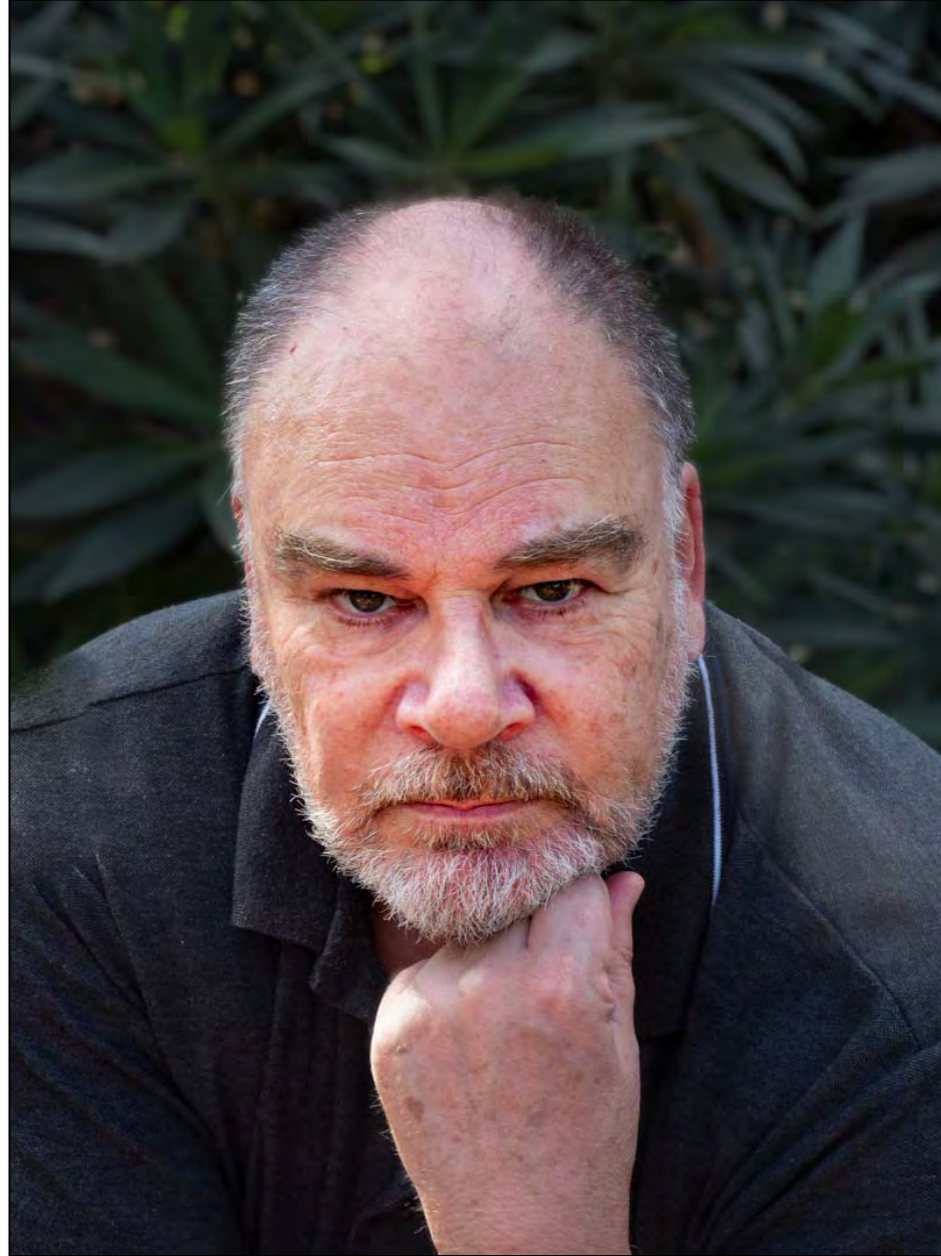
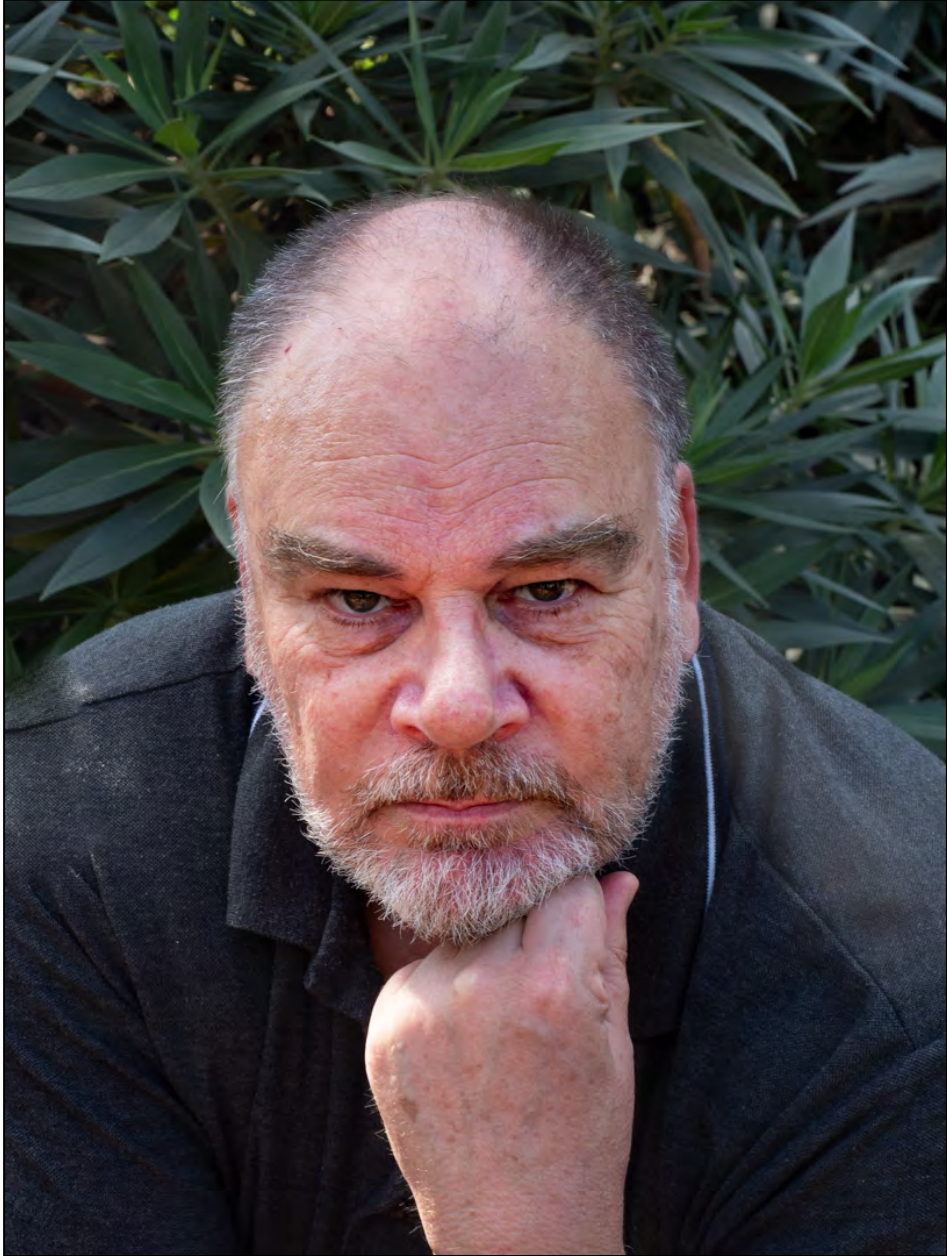
In both cases my subjects were kneeling so they were at approximately my eye-height. For me that is unusual, but I think it works.

The images were both taken towards the end of the session & that was not by chance- as everyone became more relaxed (less stiff & photo phobic) at the end of the session.



Module 4 Homework

Jill Shaw:



GS edits

darkened and blurred the background

tidied up hotspots behind head

reduced hotspots on hand

subdued shadow under eyes

slight adjustment to brightness and colour balance on face

Module 4 Homework

Ken Barnett:
I279-PW4-Angela.jpg Not as sharp as
I would have hoped. I like the casual
look, no smile.



I279-PW4-Angela Meeting.jpg Nice
casual shot with head tilted to one
side



Module 4 Homework

Ken Barnett:
I279-PW4-Steve Head.jpg Glasses too dark and
need to see teeth with smile. Looks forced



I279-PW4 Jenny Su.jpg The red shirt would look
good without the pink Jumper. Should take away or
tone down the stain on the wall



Module 4 Homework

Richard Pilcher: Olivia – She tells me that amongst other things she wants to be a pop star when she grows up. I said in that case you will need to learn how to pose for photographers. Normally she is a bit camera shy however I managed to get her to be her natural self. The photo was taken outside using a reflector. Looking at the shot now I should remove the stray hair on her forehead and darken the bright spot on her shoulder.



Module 4 Homework

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GS edits
– brightened face/body
– sharpened face



Module 4 Homework

Richard Pilcher:

Mark – My son visited over the weekend. Unfortunately I did not have a black backdrop with me which I think would have worked better. The photo was taken with an off camera speedlite flash with a Magmod reflector attached. Of all the shots I took I thought that the folded arms worked best, however would appreciate feedback.



Module 4 Homework



Elaine Whitton: These shots in the Dandenongs. The sun was quite bright from frame left so I used a fill-in flash on frame right which is operated from my on-camera flash (which is set at lower intensity than the main flash). I have cloned out the catchlights on the glasses as they were distracting but left the ones on the eyes. The hat shadow is still strong on his left forehead. The one with folded arms has a branch out of his head which is a bit distracting but wanted to compare arms folded versus head and shoulders only.



Module 4 Homework

Vira Vijovich: My aim was to practise posing Ava and using my flash to not get harsh shadows.



Module 4 Homework

Johnny Kuo: adults easily understand instructions and look in my direction, but my daughter wasn't looking at the camera and son was distracted by the flame display near crown. And when I thought my kids hands were in frame, my daughter suddenly moved them into her pockets.



Module 4 Homework

Nihal Basanjake: This is my granddaughter, I took this image at the local park. no use any lighting equipment.



Module 4 Homework

Nihal Basanjake: This is my granddaughter, I took this image at the local park. no use any lighting equipment.



GS edits:

tighter crop
darken top right background
brighten face

Module 4 Homework

Nihal Basanjake: This is my granddaughter, I took this image at the local park. no use any lighting equipment.



GS edit

... tighter crop

Module 4 Homework

Gallery with Comments <https://photos.app.goo.gl/f7VQivMo78oiRtZTA>

Gallery from Portraiture Workshop on 28th March is at
<https://waverleycc.smugmug.com/Workshops/Portraiture-Workshop-1/>



Module 5

Equipment for Portraiture



Cameras



size
convenience
manual vs auto controls
lens aperture
image quality

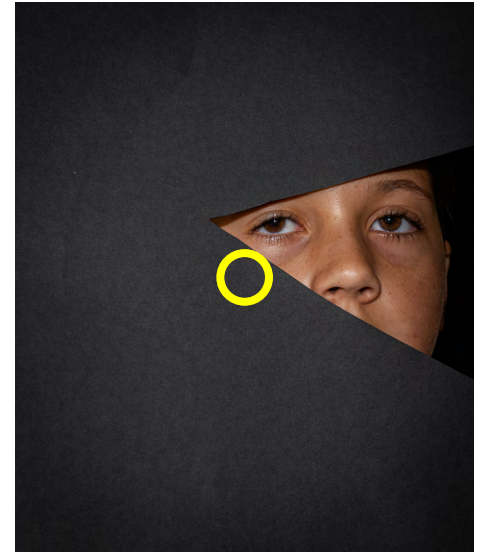
most important ... the person driving the camera!



Understand your camera's functions

- Manual vs Auto exposure
- Metering modes
 - spot
 - centre weighted
 - evaluative / matrix / multi-pattern / electro sensitive pattern
... meter reading computed from multiple areas on sensor
- Focus –
 - AF or manual;
 - one-shot / continuous / face detect

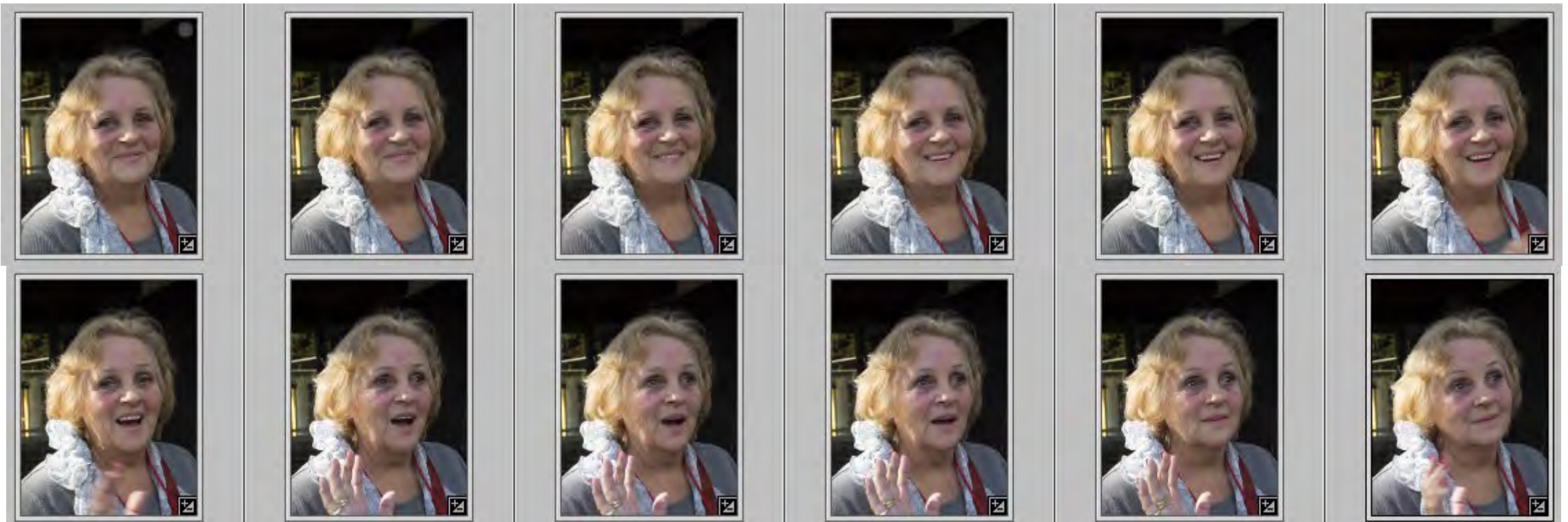
spot metering



Catching that transient moment

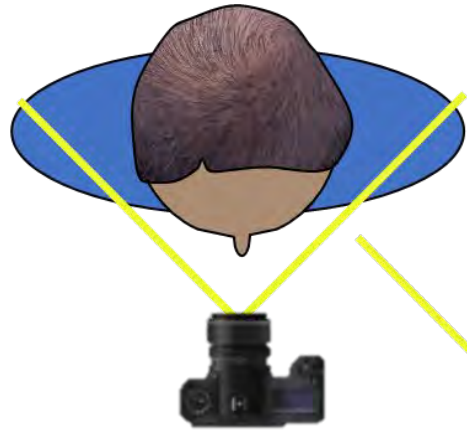
- in a dynamic situation, using a continuous shutter release might capture that split-second of perfect expression on the face of your model

12 frames per second. *Photo sequence by Jill Shaw*

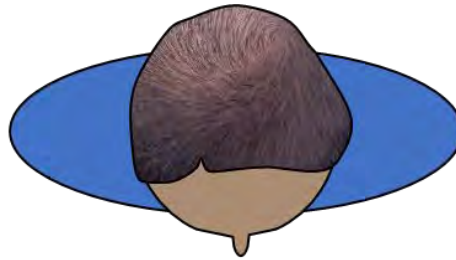


Lenses – focal length

- distortion:



Wide angle lens, close up.
Nose is much closer to the lens than the rest of the face, so looks enlarged in the image



Wide angle lens, at distance.
Nose and the rest of the face, are about the same distance from the lens so perspective looks normal, but the face is relatively small in the whole image.



Telephoto lens, at distance.
Nose and the rest of the face, are about the same distance from the lens so perspective looks normal. Face fills most of the image.



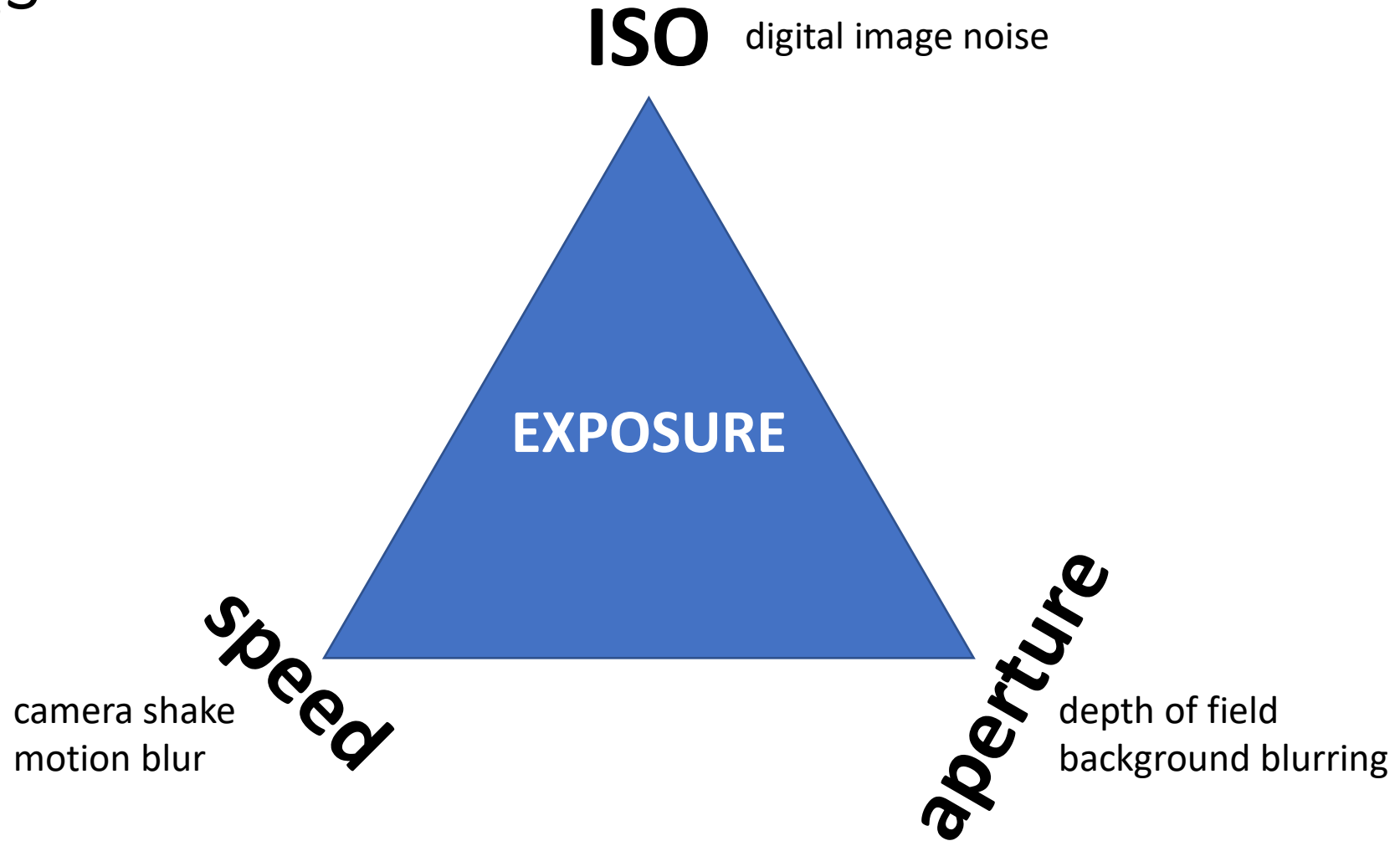
Lenses – examples of common portrait lenses

- “Prime” (single focal length) lens
 - 50 mm f/1.4 or f/1.8 (nifty fifty)
 - 85 mm f/1.8
 - 100 mm f/2.8
- Zoom lens
 - zoom 24-70 f/2.8 or 24-105 f/4
 - zoom 70-200 f/2.8 or f/4
- ... and lots more



Balance
size/weight
versatility
image quality
cost

Settings





100 ISO



400 ISO

ISO

1:1 snips



1600 ISO



5000 ISO



12800 ISO

Aperture

Depth of field affected by *aperture, focal length, sensor size, and final use.*

Choose aperture to get desired depth of field

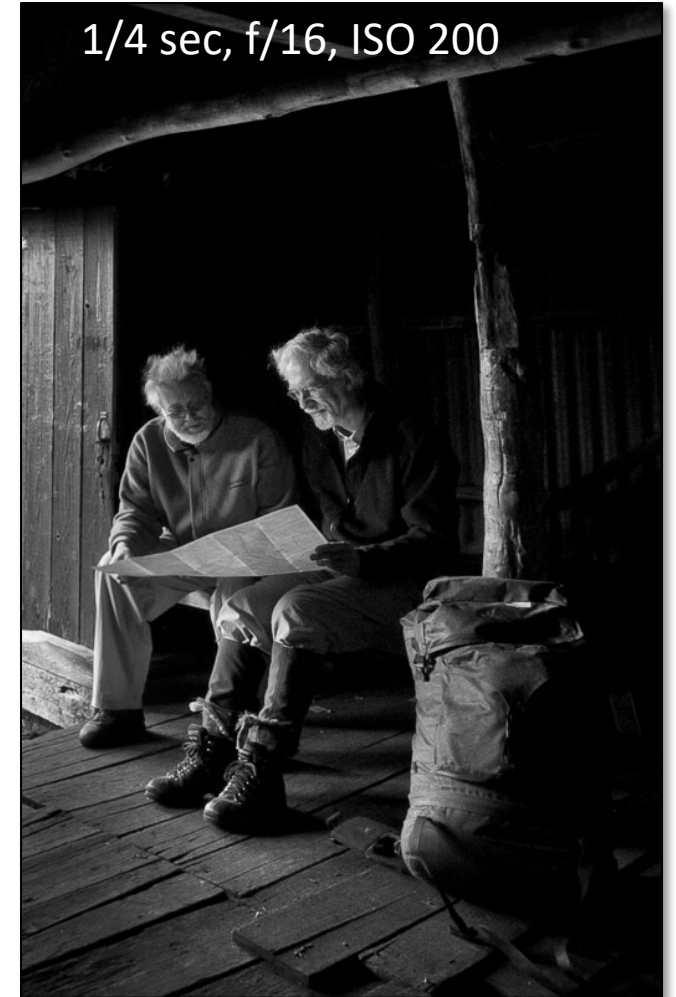
- background blur
- all of subject in focus



Apparent depth of field depends on final “magnification”.
thumbnail → sharp
enlarged → blur evident

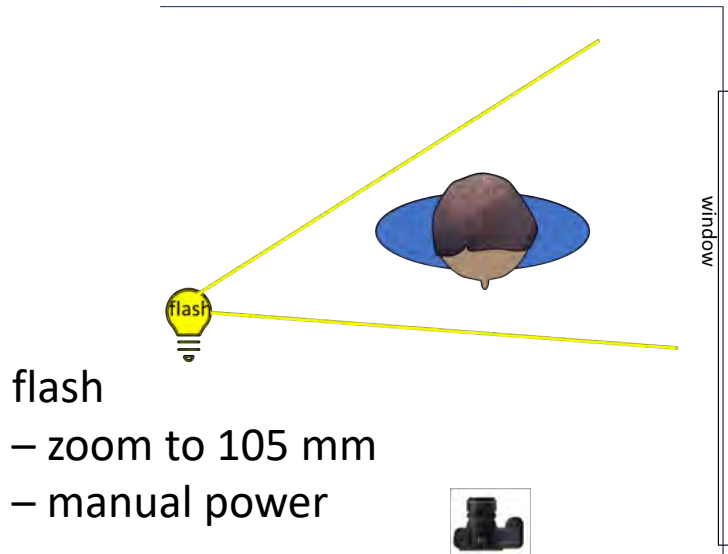
Shutter speed

- camera shake
- subject movement
- max flash sync speed – varies with camera
 - 1/160; 1/200; 1/250
- adjust shutter speed to balance ambient with added flash light
- flash with high shutter speed can hide things lit with ambient light



a tripod can help with slow shutter speed

Shutter speed – balancing ambient and flash



F/4.0
ISO 400

1/10 sec



flash + ambient

1/60 sec



flash + ambient

1/200 sec



flash + ambient

Tripods



- camera support
 - saves fatigue with heavy camera and lens
 - tethered shooting
 - self portraits

Not so flexible with a moving model and dynamic situations

Also make stable stands for off-camera flash, holding reflectors etc.

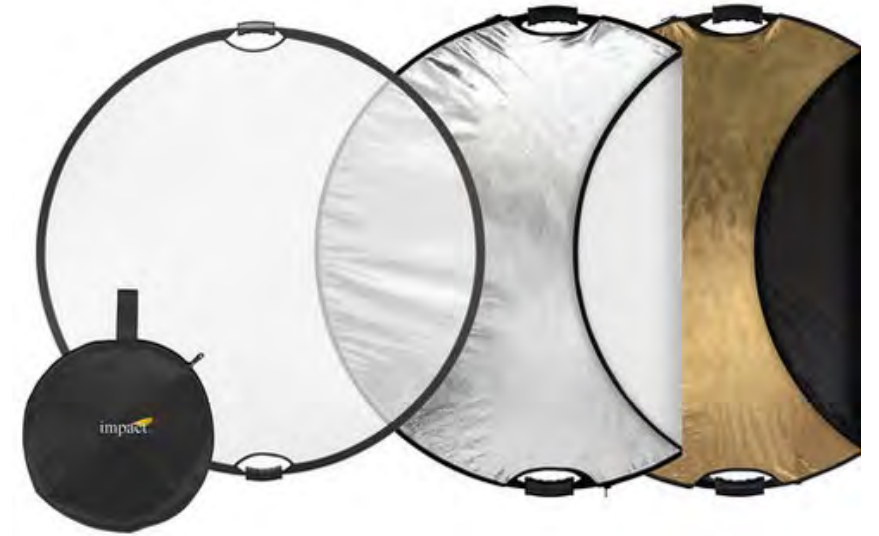
Backdrops

- provide a plain background
 - come in many colours and with mottling and patterns
 - improvise with bed sheets, tablecloths, canvas drop-cloths, cheap fabric etc.
- green-screen
- can also use as reflectors or black flags
- may need light stand, or improvise one.
- weights to stabilise the backdrop stands and/or light stands and/or tripod, if needed



Reflectors and Flags

- modify lighting.
- white/silver/gold
 - reflect light to fill shadows / reduce contrast
 - something to bounce flash off to get softer lighting
- Black reflector/flag
 - portable shadow to stop stray light
 - adds contrast by blocking light from one direction (opposite of white reflector)
- Diffuser – soften light shone through it (eg direct sunlight -> partial shadow)



<https://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-control-and-modify-your-lighting-with-flags/>

Lighting



- Colour balance
- Continuous lights
- Flash/strobe/speedlight
- Studio Flash
- Light Modifiers



Flash / Speedlight

- portable
- battery power
- automatic/manual power setting
- may have off-camera capability
 - wireless / IR / triggered by on-camera flash
- may be relatively cheap (not OEM)



flash with
bounce
head

stand/tripod
mount



LED lighting panels

- continuous light
- adjustable brightness
- battery powered
- may have adjustable colour temperature
- lower light levels than flash



Studio Flash

- mains or battery powered
- high flash power (adjustable)
- usually have lower powered modelling light (adjustable)
- designed for use with umbrellas, softboxes etc
- often supplied in a kit with stands, softboxes etc.
- can be expensive, especially high powered battery units (but prices falling)



Soft Boxes and umbrellas

- used to diffuse light over a larger area → softer shadows
- umbrellas are cheap and portable
- softboxes more efficient in spreading light
- mounts available to use with speedlight or studio flash
- usually used with a light stand



Directing light

- put the light where you want it
- cut down spillage of light where you don't want it
 - grids
 - snoots
 - barn doors
 - flags



Props

- help tell the narrative of the portrait.
- give the model something to pose with
- add an element to the composition



“Hot Cuppa” by Helen Warnod



Locations

- something other than a plain background
- part of the narrative of the image
- add interest
- may add difficulties – control of lighting, other people, weather, permission.



Homework

Take a portrait, thinking about the equipment that is most appropriate for what you want to achieve.

Email to me (geoff@geoffshaw.com)

- the image
- brief reflective notes on how your equipment choice allowed you to achieve your objectives with this image (or alternatively, how the equipment available to you limited what you were able to achieve).
- A statement that you are happy to share your image and notes with the group (or not, if you only want one-to-one feedback)



Homework Example

I took this photo of one of the graduate students at the uni conducting experiments with plants. I used a medium telephoto at wide aperture to minimise background clutter. I arranged her side on to a large window (left of frame) and turned on some desk lighting behind and to the right to add a warm toned highlight on the other side of the face. I posed her at a slight angle, with her face angled and tilted down to direct the viewer to the syringe and plants in her hands. I darkened the background on the right, where a bit of white signage was distracting. I perhaps should also darken a bit on the left of frame where a strong vertical catches the light. Though the wording on the lab coat may be a distraction, I think it adds to the narrative in this context.



Next Module:

Photographic Post Processing

Geoff Shaw

Including

- cropping
- non-destructive edits
- removing wrinkles and blemishes
- smoothing skin
- bringing out texture
- dodging and burning
- monochrome conversion
- creative effects
- etc etc etc....

