

What is a picture? (Photograph or painting)

By Carol McCoy

It is capturing light and shadow to create dimension of an image.

Approach each new situation with an open mind the way an artist confronts a virgin canvas, you should approach each image as a unique event. Evaluate the limitless variations and modification at your command

As artists and photographers we have the ability to capture a singular moment in time with incredible detail- and preserve it for years, or even centuries. For this reason alone, dedication becomes its own reward. I'm going to try to explain how to see light and shadow in portraiture.

My training began in college with an art minor and as you know that doesn't usually guarantee a career. But I had an opportunity to work in Minneapolis for a professional photographic finishing company. My job consisted of fixing dust spots on prints before they were sent to the customers. This involved mixing dye to match the color of the surrounding area to fill in the white spot. My supervisor told me I had a good eye for color so I was promoted to working on corrective art on photographs such as fixing zits, removing braces opening eyes and in general making the photo look good. Remember now this was all BC, before computers, we worked with liquid concentrated dye, colored pencils and oils. I did this for eight years, getting to study faces for flaws and fixing them. After a while I decided I would like to be the photographer and create images, not just fix them. So I went to photography school and opened a studio in my home and that is what I did until I retired.

So now down to business!!

Light has certain intrinsic properties that you can rely on. The two most significant of these is that light travels in straight lines, and light can be redirected by reflection. This provides a foundation from which to begin, analyze and grow. In that context, they should be accepted.

There are two types of light, natural and artificial. As artists we have the total power to control the direction of the light, if you don't like the way the light looks on your subject. Change it! That may mean you have to change the position of your subject if your light is from a fixed source. So I am going to give you the basic lighting patterns that fall on the face and try to explain how they affect the shape of the face.

This will be directed at the painters in the group today, because in photography, light can be controlled with many pieces of equipment and I will be doing a presentation in the photography sig later in the fall with all the toys we have available. Today will be for painters assuming you don't have a million dollars worth of gadgets.

There are 4 basic light patterns that if you can visualize, you should be able to duplicate.

I will show you a single light source method and single light sources with fill.

The first type is single light source. And it tends to be harsh, and gives dark shadows on the subjects face. The location and

direction of the shadows depend on the direction of the light and the orientation of the subject.

The first is:



1. Broad lighting

Illuminate the side of the face, facing the camera (you). Used to widen thin or narrow faces.



2. Butterfly lighting

Light coming from directly in front and slightly above the face casting a shadow directly beneath the nose and chin. Also known as "glamour lighting" due to its wide use in the early days of the cinema.



3. Short lighting

Also known as narrow lighting illuminates the side of the face turned away from the camera. Used to narrow the face.



4 Rembrandt lighting

So called from Rembrandt painting in his studio having a high skylight. Using a combination of short and butterfly lighting. The light is positioned to one side of the face turned away from the camera.

The 4 types of lighting covered so far only had one light source and now I will show you how you can modify your image with reflected light (One light source and a reflector)



1. **Modified Rembrandt lighting**

This is coming from both sides of the face. Use one strong light, and the other a fill. This creates a triangle shaped shadow on the cheek. This technique bisects the face and makes us look at each side differently than we would with an even overall light. This is effective because it emphasizes one of the subtle aspects of every face. The two sides are different. This is also a good way to use window light.

There are dozens of lighting techniques in the photography studio and outdoors, and it is not possible to do them all in this session, but if you have the basics under control you can do wonders to make your subject look good.

I have included some corrective lighting techniques for you. Whenever it says camera, remember it is your eyes I am referring to (the angle you see the subject).

Prominate Forehead-

Tilt chin upward and lower camera position

Long nose-

Tilt chin upward, position face directly toward lens, lower the main light and lower the camera position.

Narrow Chin-

Tilt chin upward.

Baldness-

Lower camera position, blend the top of the head with the background.

Angular Nose-

Minimize feature by turning the face directly toward the lens.

Broad face-

Raise the camera position, use short lighting turn the face at a 3/4 position.

Narrow face-

Lower the main light, use broad lighting.

Wrinkled face-

Use diffused lighting, lower the main light, use a 3/4 pose.

Double chin-

Raise the main light, tilt chin upward, use high camera position.

Facial defect-

Scars, birthmarks, keep hidden on the shadowed side of face.

Prominate ears-

Hide far ear behind the head, keep near ear in shadow, consider using a profile view.

Glasses-

Lower or raise chin slightly, use a small light source.

Deep set eyes-

Lower main light, use lower light ratios.

Protuding eyes-

Have subject look slightly downwards.

Heavysset figure-

Use short lighting, use low key lighting, use dark clothing, blend body with background tone.

These methods are for improving how a subject looks. If you are doing a character study then paint them as you see them.

Any question?? Carol McCoy