The Very Silly and Playful Guide to Photography

by:
Photographer
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Introduction:

Some learn by means of repetition and memorization, others visually, and yet others by means of silly experiences that remain with them forever.

This guide is for the latter category. Written for a dear friend of mine inside a Moleskine notebook, scanning these pages seemed like a good arts project at the time, and I sincerely hope that it will come in handy to some, as time goes by.

I apologize in advance about my handwriting and welcome feedback from anyone who wishes to take the time do leave some.

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"The pen is mightier than the sword"

-Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1839)

Some basics of photography:

When a photograph is taken, the following happens:

① in an SLR (a single lens reflex camera) the light comes in through the lens and bounces off of the main mirror then goes into the view finder where it bounces off of a second

mirror and exits into the photographer's eye.

(2). When the picture is taken, at the pressing of the shutter button, the main mirror flips up, the shutter gate in front of the film opens up and the light hits the film creating an image on it.

Variables that influence photos:

Photos are produced by light burning an image onto the film. There are 3 things we can change and so influence how pictures look.

- APERTURE : I
  how big the opening of the lens is
- SHOTTER SPEED : II
  for how long the camera takes the picture before it closes back.
- ISO : III
  how sensitive the film is to light (does it take a lot of light to make an image or little?)

APERTURE: I

- the lens can open up or close down to different sizes
- the size of the lens opening is measured in f: numbers. a big number means a small opening and small number means big opening

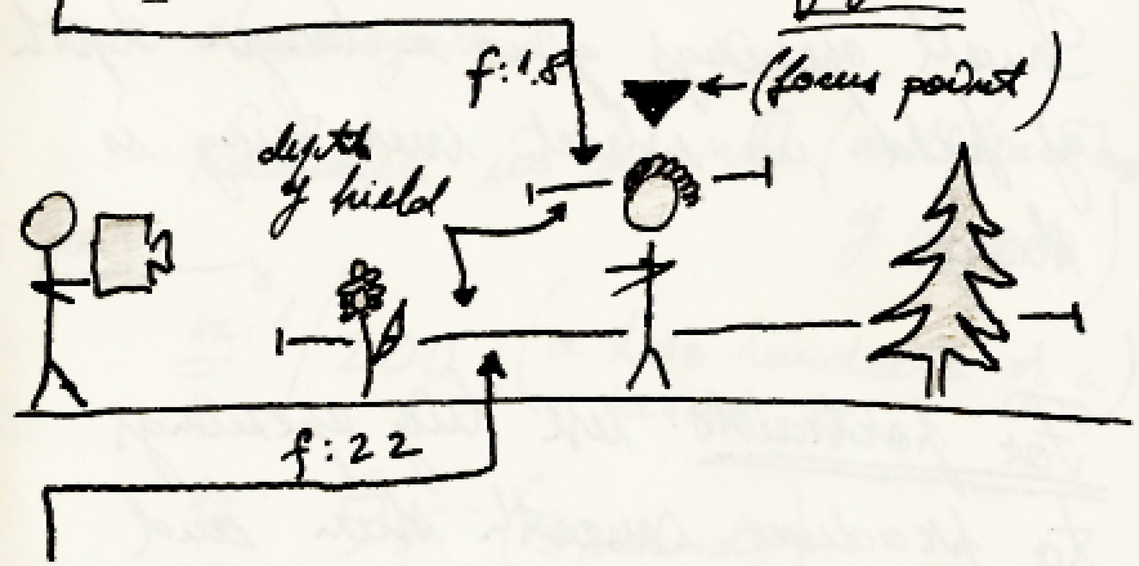
  f: 1.8 — big opening

  f: 22 — small opening

- different opening sizes have different effects on pictures

BIG OPENING: ex f: 1.8

- a lot more light comes in
- smooth skin
- blurry background (small depth of field)
-



SMALL OPENING:

- less light comes in (need longer exposure time)
- crisp details
- wide depth of field

DEPTH OF FIELD: a space a bit in front and a bit behind the focused subject that ends up being sharp.

A big opening makes for a smaller area that is sharp and things soon get blurry as they go away from the focus point.

Small openings give a larger depth of field in which everything is sharp.

For portraits: use big openings to produce smooth skin and blurry background.

For nature: small openings give you a larger range of sharp objects.

Evening at low light: large openings will help at light better

SHUTTER SPEED : II

- the time period from when the film starts to be exposed to light and until the gate closes again.
- measured in seconds (and fractions of seconds)

fast →

ex: 1/200 - (a two hundreth of a second)

ex: 3/1 - (3 seconds)

slow →

FAST: - can freeze fast moving objects

- avoids shaking of hands (1/100)

SLOW: - leaves blurry traits on moving objects

ISO : III

- a number that measures how sensitive to light film is

ISO 100 – not sensitive and needs more light to make an image

ISO 1000 – sensitive and can make an image with very little light

ISO 100 (low) : clearer details and mixed colours

ISO 10 000 (high) : the higher, the more noise (pixels) there is and colours look dull

good for low light

Balancing aperture, shutter speed and ISO is really what taking photos is all about.

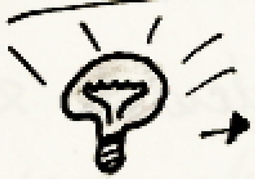
→ sometimes you have preferences like you want blurry background so you start with f: 1.8 and you want good colours so you choose a small ISO (100) and then the camera will calculate the shutter speed.

→ or you start with 1/100 shutter speed cause you are holding the camera and let the camera calculate the rest.

The fourth musketeer: light

→ generally the variables you can work with to influence how pictures look are 3: aperture, shutter speed and ISO but sometimes you get to also influence the light you work with

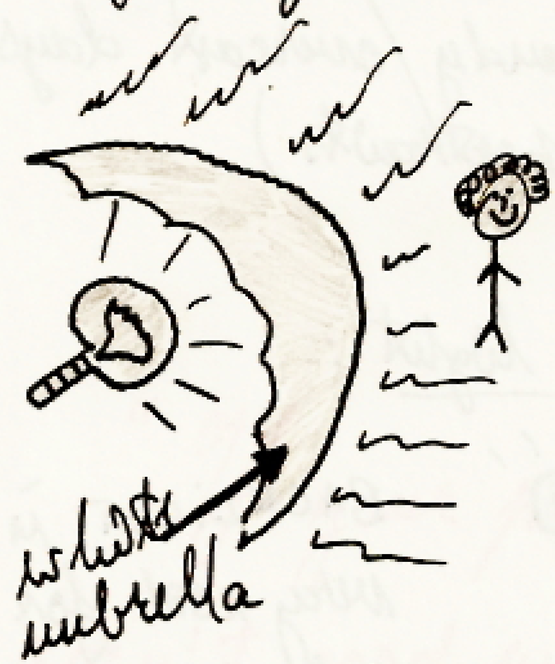
I. harsh light:



→ light directly from a bulb; sunlight during noon with no clouds...

→ causes: shadows; harsh contrasts (areas very bright and some very dark)

II. soft light:



(sorry for the terrible drawing)

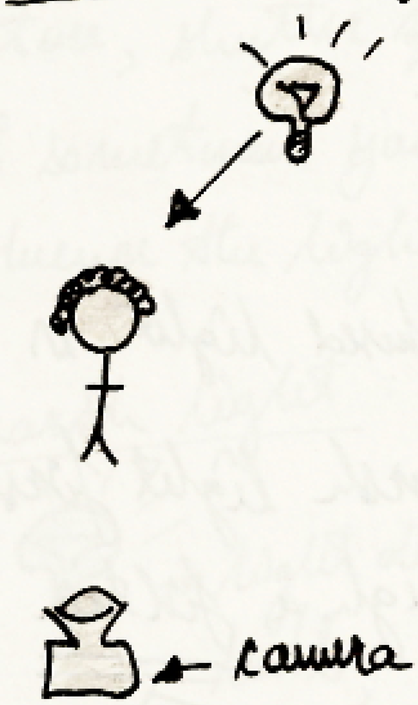
→ soft/diffused light is when harsh light first goes through a filter

- a piece of material (curtain)
- sun light through clouds

→ produces: very soft shadows (almost none)

and very low contrasts.
(that is why cloudy/overcast days are great for portraits)

III. directional light:



BACKLIGHT is very cool for defining the model. when the light source shines at the back of the model the light surrounds the model making it glow.

"If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough."

-Robert Capa