

Off Camera Flash Basics

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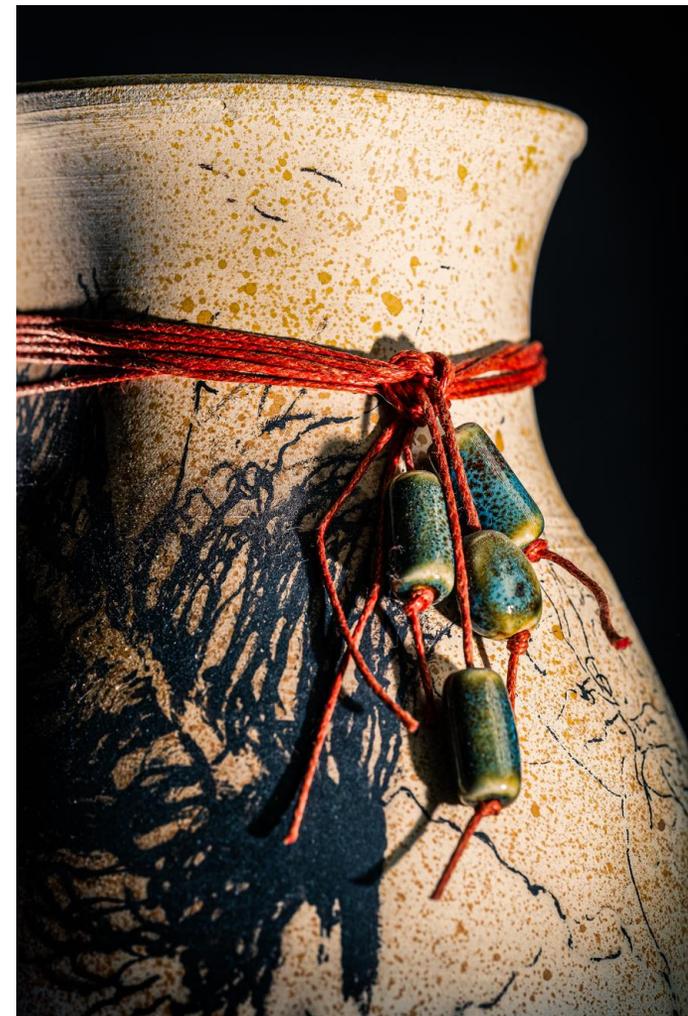
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Off Camera Flash-Outdoors and Indoors

People Images and Still Life/Macro



TTL VS Manual Control for *off camera* flash

- **TTL (Through the Lens)**

- The camera will control as much of the aspects as you wish-shutter speed, aperture, ISO or all three.
- Off camera, likely will want to control aperture to maximize creativity even in TTL. (f stop controls the flash exposure)
- TTL off camera outdoors still is often the good choice due to changing lighting conditions.
- Downside, it may be inconsistent in the exposures.

- **Manual mode:**

- You make all of the decisions on the three sides of the triangle.
- *You also have to choose the power of the flash so you'll likely have to do trial and error test shots.*
- Your settings will be more consistent in an indoor or studio setting (portrait, macro, etc.), manual often is preferred when lighting doesn't change much.

Difference for on vs off camera



- **On camera** flash does not need a trigger. The flash is attached directly to the hot shoe on the camera and the flash communicates to the camera directly.

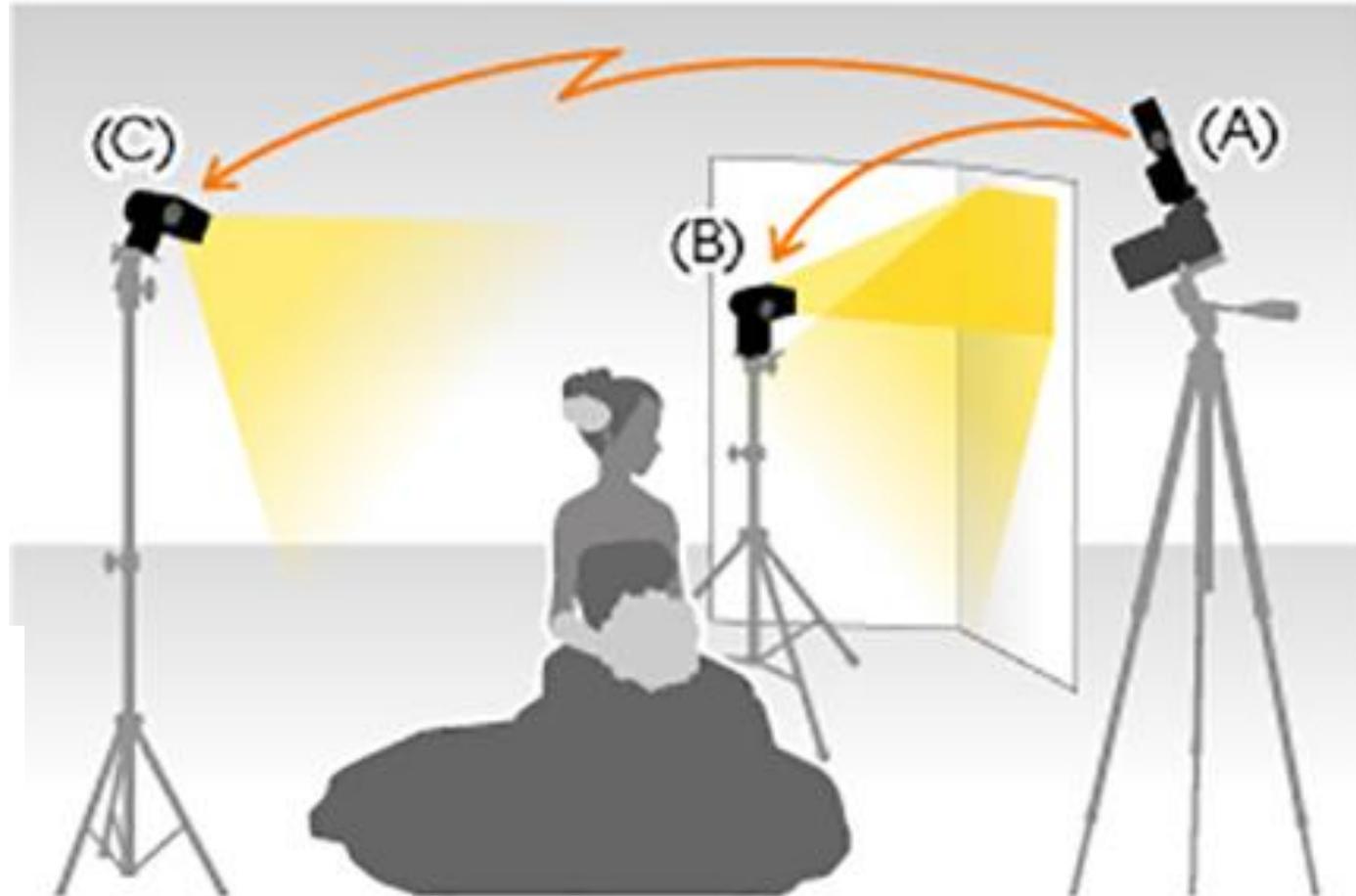
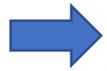
- **Off camera** requires some trigger to provide information to the flash and the camera on what to do for TTL. The trigger is on the hot shoe.
- The trigger is also necessary for manual flash too. It will provide information on when to fire. It can also control the power.

Off Camera Flash Triggers

A) For TTL:
Trigger and camera preflashes
and reads the light when you
press shutter and tells the
amount of light to produce for
lights B) and C)



Trigger
(A)



For manual use: The trigger A) can set each flash manually by the photographer base on what power to use.

Controlling Flash in *TTL*
Mode off camera is same
as on camera

Flash exposure controls only the
flash output and is *independent*
of the exposure compensation

Manual Control exposure is done by setting the power
level of the flash to match your need. When using a
triggering device, this can be done from the camera
directly or on flash itself.



On the flash



On the trigger



Simple Off Camera Flash



What's needed

Camera with a triggering *device specific to your camera*-a radio trigger or a cord



Radio trigger

Flash can be triggered remotely (almost all can do this) many of the new ones have receivers built in.

Stand (\$30)

Diffuser like umbrella (\$15)

Bracket to hold the flash and the umbrella (\$20)



Off camera flash cord

Options to trigger for off camera flash



Before the radio controlled triggers-but still an inexpensive option

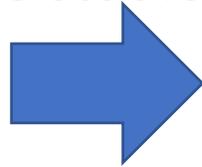


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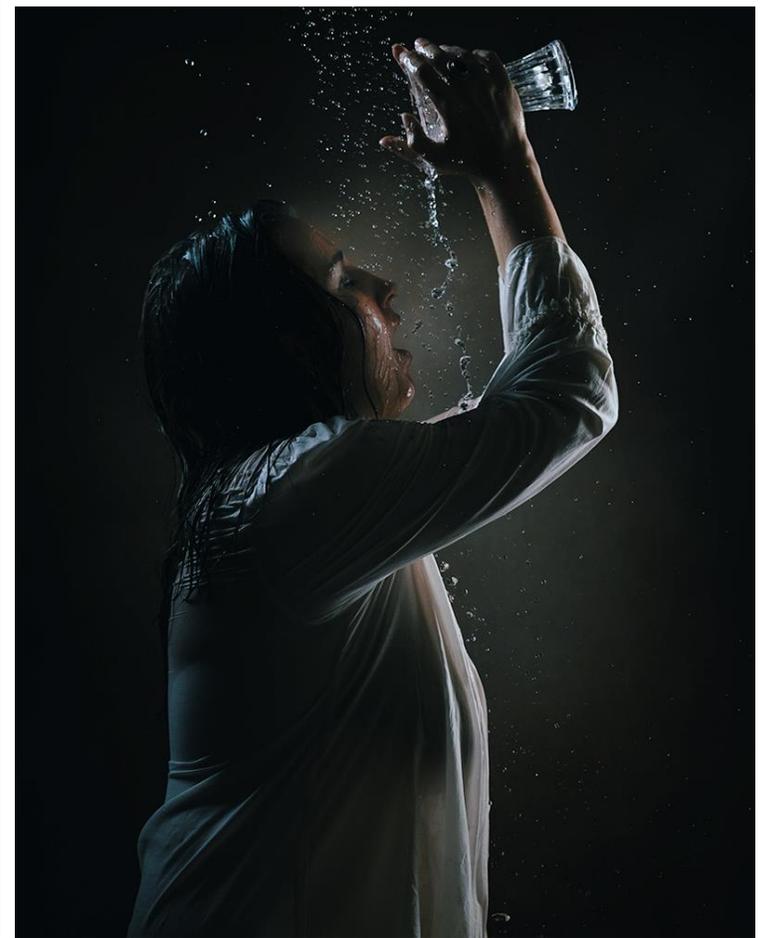
Studio arrangement with more sophisticated diffusers and sturdier light stands and one or more flashes

The camera, the flashes and triggers are the same. The diffusers are the primary differences.

Our living room becomes the studio



Images shot with this studio set up



Lighting doesn't need to be complicated:

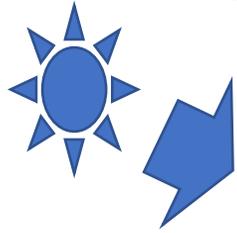
One
Flash
here

One small flash in each of
these images



A single off-camera flash can get you a lot of great images. These were done in manual mode to get more dramatic lighting

Speedlight outdoors-Mixed light



Golden hour sun



Flash

Off camera flash with a dome diffuser triggered by a remote trigger with natural light as shown. **TTL flash**



Off camera flash as shown with with him in shade **manual flash setting**



Flash here

On or off Camera Flash Modifiers



A walk through for off camera flash shot

- 1. Arrange your scene or your model.
- 2. Prepare your trigger, camera, and flash to the proper settings-
 - Decide: TTL or Manual
 - Set the flash on receiver (slave) mode (check your manual)
 - Put the trigger in the hotshoe of your camera. The trigger will be in transmit mode. Be sure the camera is talking to the trigger and the trigger to the flash
- 3. Take a test shot. Your trigger or your camera can make adjustments as needed.
- 4. Experiment!

Preparing for off camera--still life TTL

Scene without any flash



Set the camera, trigger, and the flash-changed to *receiver* (slave) mode



Trial Shot-TTL

Flash
Exposure
Compensation



Flash in same
Place for both



● Initial test shot
too bright
Due to black
background





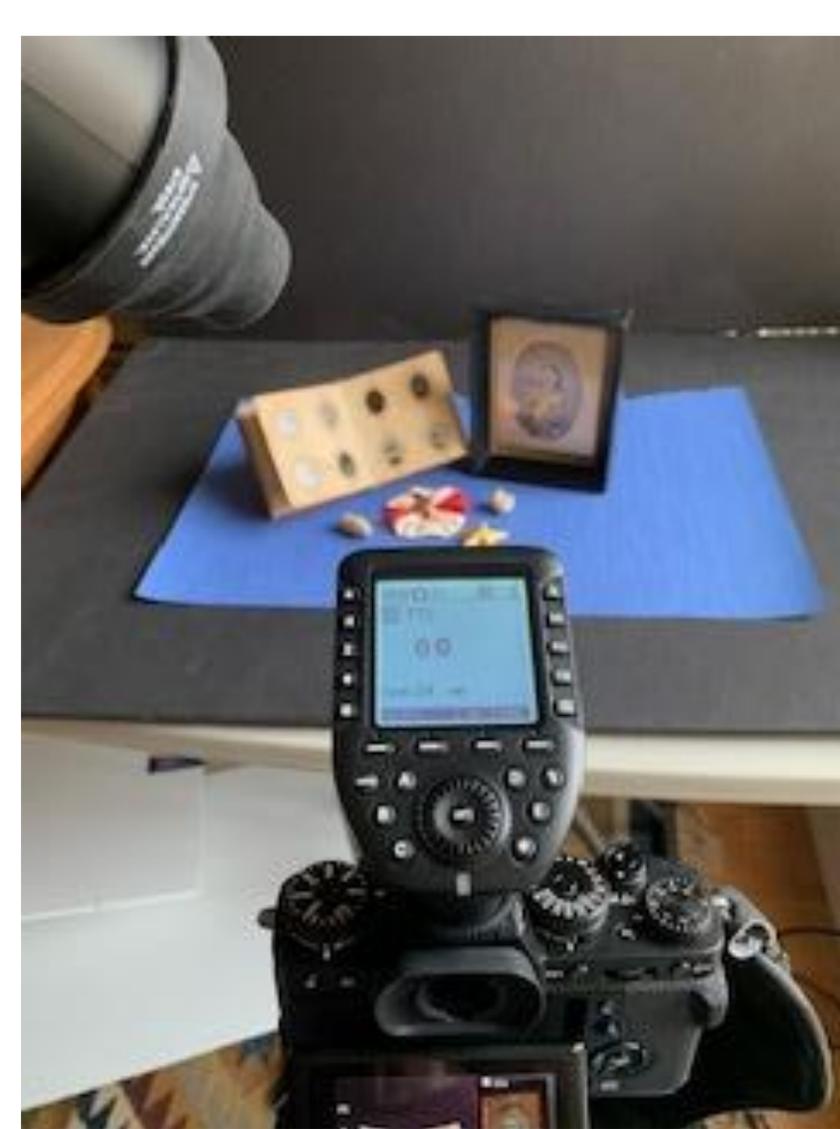
Off Camera Flash can move around the scene and TTL will attempt to compensate



Flash has the plastic diffuser

Flash shot from above
You can usually identify lighting
by where you see the shadows





Various accessories provide variety for images
Here using a snoot to concentrate the light for
impact



Using a dome or diffuser gives the best overall images

Off Camera Flash in Manual Mode-Macro

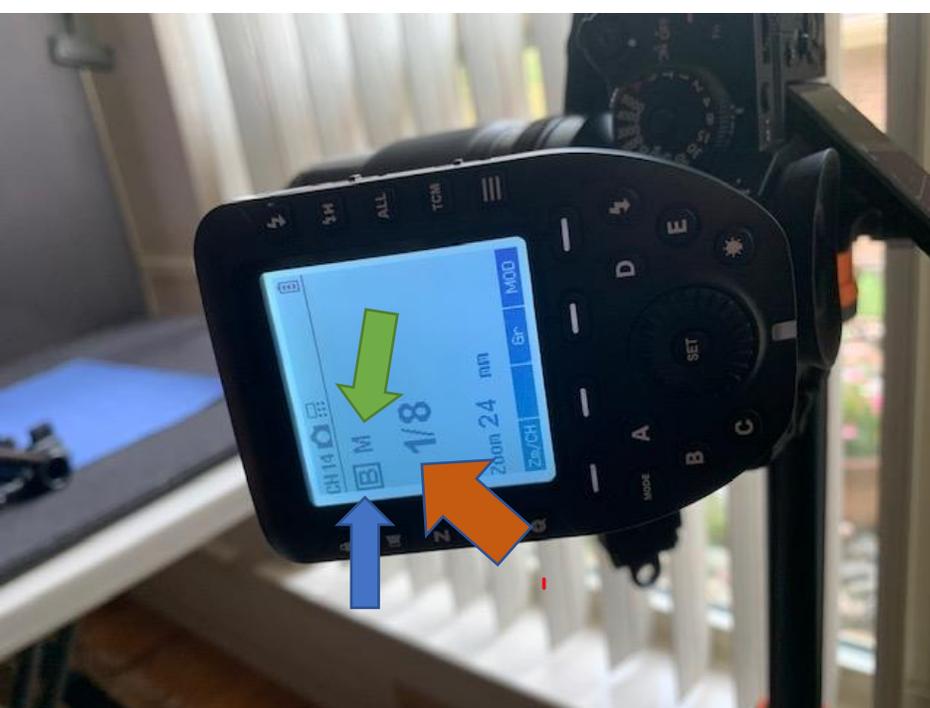


Set up:
Window on a small
table
80 mm macro lens
Flash Trigger
Two flashes both
with built in
receivers (Godox)
Settings: ISO 200, f
6.4, SS 125

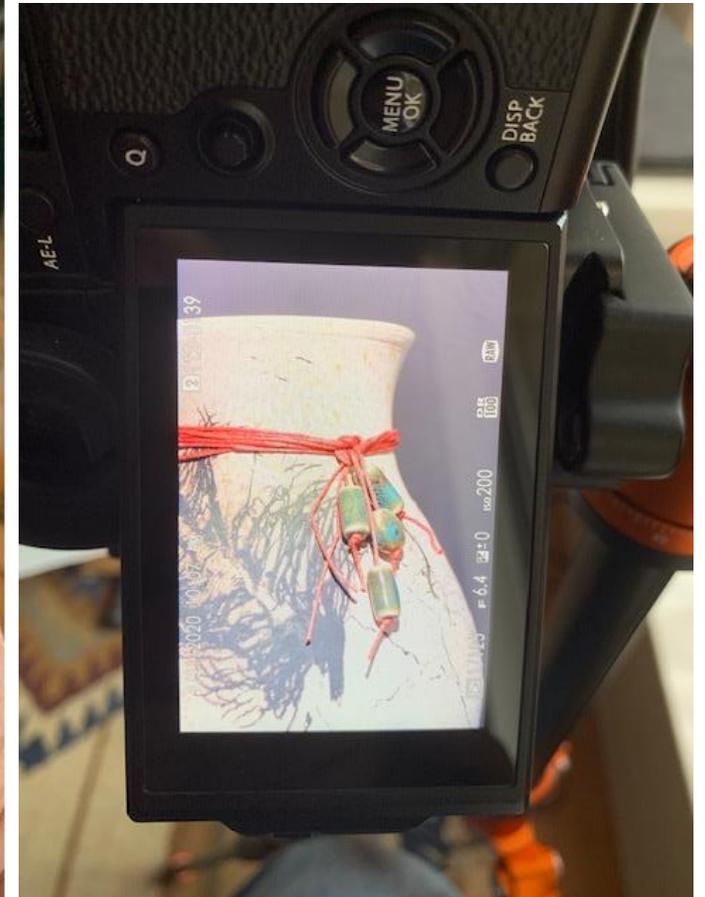
Image with
no flash



Setting up the flash and first test shot 1/8 power (1/8 or 1/16 power good starting point)

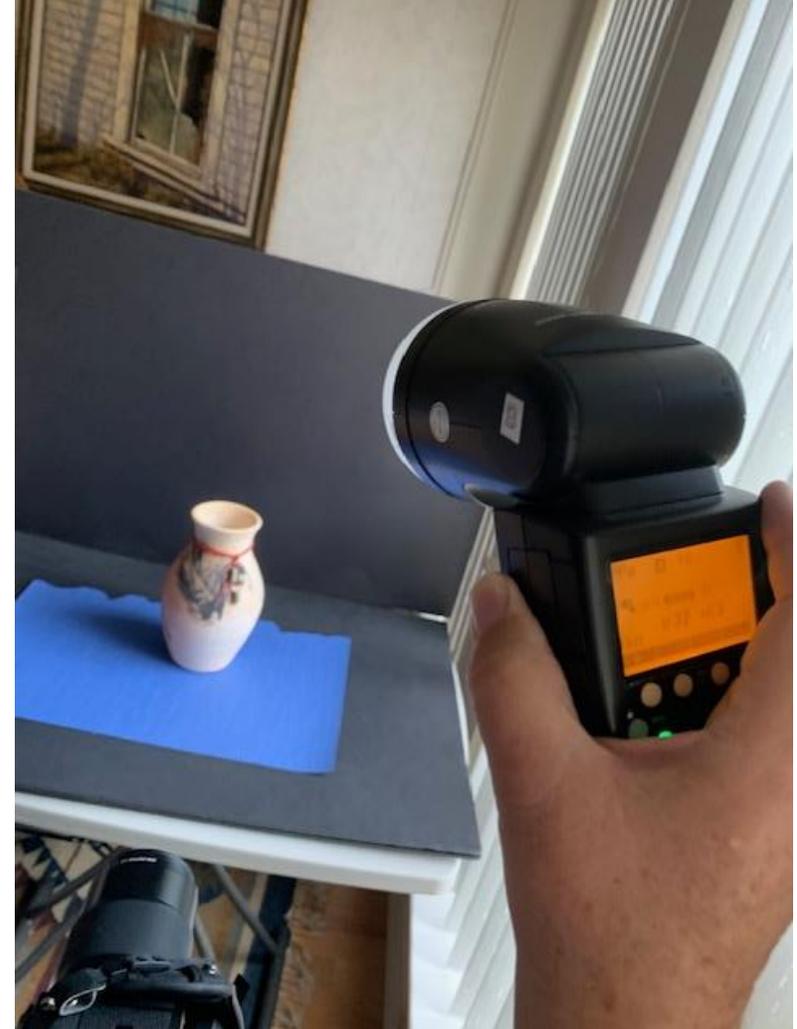
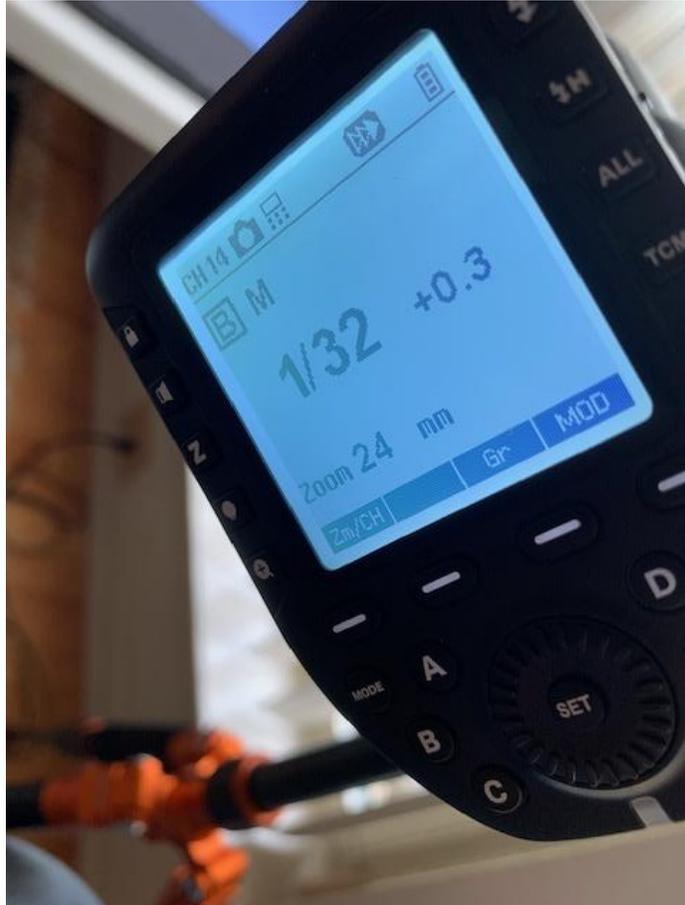


Trigger and flash in manual mode (green arrows) and the flash is on slave mode. Note both match channel (blue arrows) and power (orange arrows)-the trigger can change the power.

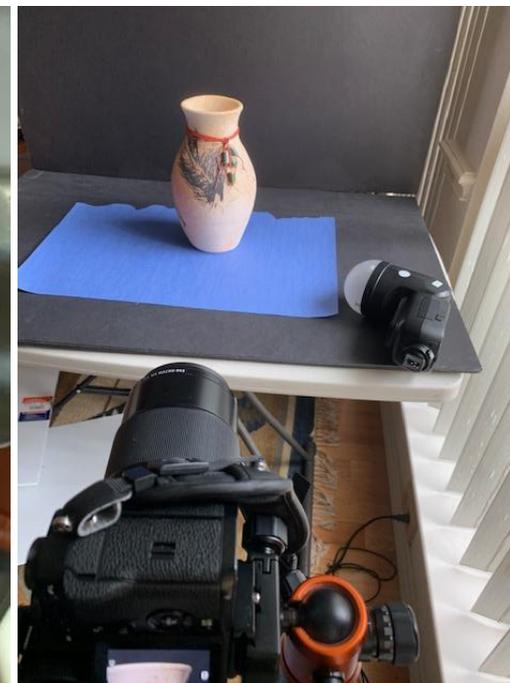
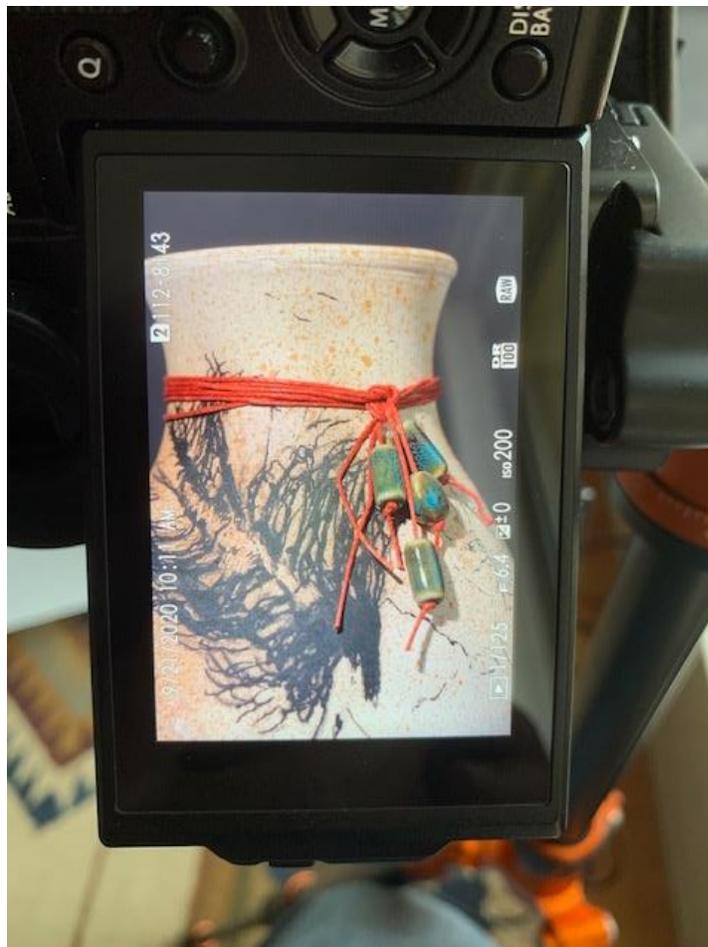


Too bright at 1/8 power

Getting the right exposure is somewhat trial and error



Experimenting with 1/32 at different angles



When you move the light, you have to adjust the power



Dropping the brightness down to $1/64^{\text{th}}$
changing the modifier



Reducing it to 1/128th power and adding a 2nd light to both-- the trigger controls them in 2 groups



Second flash
Is on Group
C. Trigger
controls both
groups at
same time



Two light placement to get a dramatic look
1/128 power as the lights are close





Final image
after post-
processing

Using OCF manually-what to expect

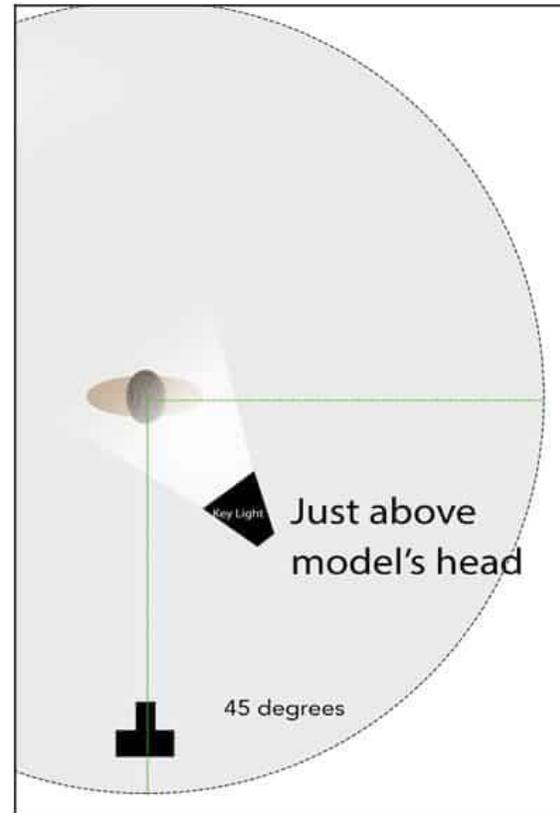
- Expect it will take a few trial and error images to get it right
- However, once you get it right, you don't need to change it, especially in a controlled light situation
- As you move lights closer or farther from your subject, you will need to adjust the power or the aperture.
- It allows for more creative control
- It requires some practice to get control of your lights, especially if you want to use more than one. There are a lot of video helps on YouTube.

Best Placements for Lights-People Pictures-Basic



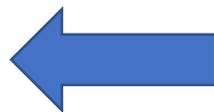
If using one light with a diffuser-main light set at 45 degrees from the camera and about 45 degrees up is a great starting place

One-Light





Both one light
Difference was
In the size of
diffusers



Using 45-45
You get a nice
nose shadow with
sculpting on the
cheek.





Set up
for headshots
and more
formal portraits
Using two
lights and two
inexpensive
umbrellas.

Main light:
45 to side and
45 up from
face

Back/rim light:
Opposite
slightly toward
him and the
background
power reduced



Resources: For Off Camera Flash

- **Video:**

- Adorama on YouTube has a wealth of free videos with great teachers—Vanessa Joy, Daniel Norton, and Gavin Hoey are excellent.
- Creative Live has courses (for purchase) on a wide variety of classes. Most very reasonable. *Scott Robert Lim* classes use very basic flashes and the classes are very reasonable.

- Links:

- <https://youtu.be/8lQGN7acs4M>
- <https://youtu.be/HyMaY4LCMJE>

- **Books:**

- Book-The Dramatic Portrait-Chris Knight (paperback and Kindle) one of the best and well explained books on off camera flash for portraits.

Summary

- Off camera flash gives a wide set of options for creative control of exposure.
- While it may at times seem a bit intimidating, the basics are easily mastered and the cost to begin are minimal.
- Once you set up your trigger and the flash, it's a quick process to be ready to shoot.
- A dedicated flash with a built in receiver and dedicated trigger makes life easier. In some cases many flashes can function as either a transmitter and receiver allowing you to have two flashes working together.

Thanks!

