

The image for this article is from a workshop I gave in California with model, Tiffany Sellers, see Image 001 and for the lighting set-up see Diagram 002. During the numerous shoots of the day, lipstick became in short supply and so Tiffany, being the ever resourceful person she is, presented a wonderful solution from her purse – a roll of Barbie™ duct tape. So the shot became less about beauty and more political as you can see from this image. At any rate, enough preamble let's get on with Part Two of 'More Basic' and as mentioned in Part One, we will be concentrating on apertures and not shutter speeds and ISO settings, so let's assume that everything discussed below is at 1/125th of a second at 100 ISO.

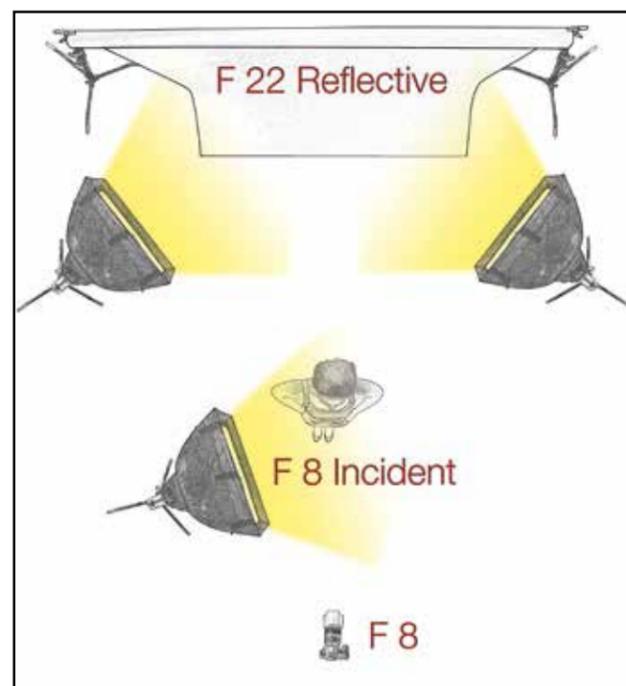
As mentioned in my last article 'More Basic Part 1' (August/Sept issue of *Professional Imagemaker*), you can, without any understanding of what is going on, get decent exposures most of the time working with your camera set to auto. With this in mind and with the best intentions, many in-the-know trainers preach that we should shoot in manual mode so we might develop some control and awareness. I always use manual mode and preach to others to do the same, but I should point out that using manual mode doesn't necessarily make us better photographers since you can still get decent exposures most of the time without any thought or knowledge by mindlessly rotating the aperture dial in manual mode until the exposure cursor sits over the middle point of the camera's internal exposure scale. This mindless way of finding suitable exposures falls short when photographers learn lighting – creating with light involves lighting ratios and so one needs to take many exposure readings, constantly comparing and adjusting. This kind of work is best done with a hand-held incident/reflective light meter. To work with these meters you do need to think and you do need to understand – there is no 'auto'. To learn a bit about working with metering and apertures, look to Image 001 and Diagram 002: in this image the camera was set to f-8 to correctly expose the subject with the main light, a reflective meter reading off the background read f-22; at f-22 what brightness will this background be in the resulting photograph? To figure this ratio out you simply compare the f-22 background reflective reading to the f-8 camera setting – a couple of helpful facts to remember is that whatever your camera is set to represents middle grey and that all meter readings are relative to middle grey. So a background that reads f-22 but is photographed through an f-8 aperture will render a background that looks three stops brighter than middle grey. Why is this the case? Well because f-22 is three stops more brightness than f-8. Photographers learning lighting and metering often mix this up and interpret it as three stops darker than middle grey. Why? Well because once again they don't fully understand the basics.

In this case they think back to their early training and think that a high-numbered f-stop means little light, and it does in terms of how much light that aperture would let into the camera relative to f-2.8 for example, but there is more going on here than just that. When you point your reflective meter at a lit surface, the meter tells you an aperture, in this case the hand-held reflective meter is telling us to set our camera to f-22 to make this surface photograph as middle grey, only we are not going to do this because we have set the camera f-8 for a correct subject exposure. So, f-22 amount of light will have to pass through the much larger f-8 aperture opening which will make this background appear in the image as three stops brighter than middle grey – know that f-8 is an eight times bigger hole than f-22 and so eight times more light will pass through the aperture than it would through an f-22 hole. In the end, photographers are getting stuck on the fact that, yes f-22 does allow less light through than f-8, but that is not the issue – when you take a meter reading you have to think about what the meter is really saying and what your camera is set at. With a higher reflective reading, such as f-22, your meter is saying, "This area reads really bright so you better use a really small hole for an aperture", but we are not setting our camera exposure for this background, we are setting it for the main lit subject. Basically you have to ask yourself, "Am I metering for exposure, or am I doing comparative readings to see the brightness differences in my scene so you can fine tune my lighting

accordingly?" Remember that whatever a reflective meter reads off, the meter will indicate an exposure setting to make that surface look middle grey. In the above scenario as in most shoots, we are not setting exposure for the background, we are setting it for the main lit subject – the reading off the background when compared to the camera setting tells you what brightness it'll photograph as, and it is that comparison or difference that is the lighting ratio. Of course if you don't like that brightness difference then you physically increase or decrease the amount of light on that surface to make it the way you want.

That's about it for controlling lighting and exposure with apertures, as I said last time, make sure you practise this knowledge right away and often, otherwise it will be more of a burden than a help. Practice is the only way to become proficient, and I believe the word professional is derived from the word proficient and not so much from doing it for money, that's just prostitution isn't it? ;)

To delve deeper into lighting, remember to check out my free on-line lighting tutorial videos at www.montizambert.com (click on "Learn From Dave" and again on "!!!!!!Free Stuff!!!!!!"); my goal is to post a new one each month or two, time and energy willing.



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Dave Montizambert lectures internationally on lighting, digital photography and Adobe Photoshop. He is also a published author having written two books on lighting and digital photography (www.montizambert.com) plus numerous magazine articles on these topics in North America, Europe, Russia and Asia. Dave also creates Lighting and Photoshop tutorial DVDs for www.software-cinema.com and www.photoshopcafe.com. Dave is available for lectures and workshops in your area and can be reached through www.montizambert.com. Also check out Dave's free online lighting tutorial videos at www.montizambert.com then click on "Learn From Dave" and again on "!!!!!!Free Stuff!!!!!!".

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