

Equipment

Basics

- Dark Environment
- Camera
 - Slow shutter speed up to 20-30 seconds or longer
 - Manual focus or ability to switch off autofocus
- Remote shutter release or timer delay
- Lens
 - Wide Angle 24 - 70 mm (or anything that has that range)
 - Macro
 - Think outside the box - fisheye or extreme wide angle
- Tripod
 - Steady
 - Add weight if needed
- Lights
 - Still Life
 - Small to medium flashlights
 - Stylus lights
 - Penlights
 - Keychain lights
 - Portrait
 - any of the above will work, you will likely want a medium light for the larger areas, mix and match in one photo
 - Landscape
 - Headlamp for walking around between shots
 - Medium lights
 - Large handheld flood lights, such as Brinkman
 - Accent lights
 - Candles
 - Small lights to place inside items
 - Portable EL Wire
 - Ambient light – a little goes a long way
 - Accessories
 - Colored gels – anything transparent and colored you can shine the light through
 - Snoot – keeps the bulb from facing the camera, gaffers tape works great on smaller flashlights, or use foam or poster board for larger lights
 - Diffusers – anything semi-transparent to block some of the light
 - Honeycomb grid for 8 ½ inch reflectors to use with Brinkman type lights
 - Spare Batteries and bulbs
- Miscellaneous
 - Backdrops
 - Gaffer's tape
 - Clips

Camera Settings

Experiment – there is no one set of numbers that will work every time

To Start

- ISO: 100-400
 - Low to avoid noise and lessen sensor sensitivity to light
- Aperture: f8 and up
 - Limit the light reaching the sensor and increased depth of field
- White balance:
 - Auto doesn't always work well
 - Shoot Raw to allow adjustment
 - Every flashlight will have a different color balance
 - Start with Daylight or Cloudy and see if you like the result
 - Kelvin
 - 8,000-10,000 will warm the light
 - 5,500 approximates daylight
 - 2,500 -3,600 will cool the light
- Noise Reduction
 - For very long exposures you will want to activate the Long Exposure Noise Reduction mode.
 - This will double the time it takes your camera to process because it will take a second picture at the same exposure time. So a 30 second exposure will take 60 seconds.
- Exposure Time
 - 20-30 seconds to start
- Shutter release
 - Set for delayed shutter release or use a cable release or remote trigger
 - This avoids moving the camera, but also gives you time to get into position to start painting

Take a Test Shot

- Lights on
 - Put your camera on the tripod
 - Compose the picture
 - Focus – manual or autofocus
 - IMPORTANT – If you used autofocus to focus on your subject – TURN AUTOFOCUS OFF
 - If you forget to turn off autofocus your camera will constantly refocus based on what is being lit and as a result nothing will be in focus.
- Turn out the lights
 - Push the shutter release and wait
 - Yes, I know you want to start painting but don't
 - You are setting the baseline for your painting
 - When the exposure is done
 - Check the exposure for light leaks from ambient light sources
 - The screen should be black or as close to black as you can get it
 - If it isn't adjust your ISO or Aperture to further limit the light
 - Once you have a black exposure you're ready to paint

Making Your Still Life Light Painting

- Plan the shot
 - What lights are you going to use, have them in your hand
 - What do you want to appear – anything you don't paint with light isn't going to appear in the photo
 - Where will you need to walk to get light on the areas you want to reveal
- Push the shutter release
 - Move close to the subject
 - Don't block the camera
 - Turn on your light and begin painting
 - Keep the light moving
 - Count off the seconds until the shutter closes
 - It sounds weird, but if you don't know you put two seconds of light on something in the first exposure attempt how will you adjust the time in the next exposure.
 - Don't point the light directly at the lens unless you want to draw on your painting
 - Accent details, edges, with more direct light
 - Use a snoot to control the direction of the light, shape the light or limit the amount of light
 - A light dusting of light over the entire subject will soften the transition between dark and light areas
 - Don't think you have to use light every second of the exposure – less is more
- Once the exposure is complete
 - Check the screen
 - It's best to leave the light off so your eyes will accurately read the display
 - But your eyes will adjust to the dark and things will actually appear to be lighter than they really are when you look at them on your computer monitor in a lighted room
 - Where do you want more or less light – this is where the counting comes in handy
 - You should not need to refocus between attempts
 - Expect to make multiple exposures to get something you like
 - Compositing pictures is always an option, particularly where you have a scene with many elements
 - Experiment
 - Add different colors of light
 - Add swirls
 - Paint your main subject and shift the focus for a dreamy effect around the main subject
 - Add smoke or fog

For Portraits

- In addition to the steps above, when using a live model always be very careful where you point your light
- For focusing you may want to use a larger light and you're going to want to focus on the model's face. Tell the model before you do this so they can close their eyes. If you need to turn on the light have them close their eyes as well to limit reflex blinking when the light is turned off again.
- For stability
 - Have something visible for the model to focus on, for example , a red light on a fire detector
 - Have something for the model to lean against, sit on or touch
- Sharp eyes
 - Light paint the face first but no light directly in the models eyes, always light the face at an angle.
 - If they can't not blink, hide the eyes under sunglasses or a hat brim pulled down

For Landscapes

- The same techniques apply but on a larger scale
- It won't be totally dark, but just before sunrise or just after sunset is a great time to light paint. You will get the color and bring out the details in the shadows.
- Constantly move the light, and with Brinkman's you can flicker the light by quickly pressing and releasing the trigger
- Exposures can be much longer depending on the size of the object
- You may want to add some constant light, for example, if shooting a house or barn with a window, a light inside the structure can add a feeling the building is occupied.
- In shooting a car or other motorized vehicle you may want to flick the lights on and off quickly or tap the brake to add some accent lights.

Safety for you and your equipment

- Inside
 - Know where things are – such as the legs of your tripod
 - Keep the floor clear of debris to avoid tripping
- Outside
 - Do a site survey where you will be walking
 - Avoid holes, roots and the like
 - Put down a white towel to put your equipment on so you can see it more easily and not have to search for it when you are ready to leave
 - Take a friend, if something does happen you may not always have reception for your phone
 - Take an extra flashlight, it can be a long walk in the dark if you've drained all your batteries light painting
 - Be aware of what types of animals are out there

Avoid Common Problems

1. Always think about what you want to get before you turn off the lights, not having a plan will cause frustration and lost shooting time
2. Don't forgetting to focus
3. Remember where the lens is to avoid pointing the light at the camera or getting between the light and the camera
4. Avoid blown out areas by keeping the light moving
5. Remember less is more

Utube Examples

Digital Photographer how to & how not to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pp1tsPEwYGc>

Atton Conrad – Hennessy Commercial Shoot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNtSyJGh0S0>

Lee Morris – Light Painting a Car and Compositing in Photoshop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeRDHzVLuLY>

Lance Keimig – Finding Your Way in the Dark

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_ub72GnEVO

Andre Costantini – Tamron How-To: Paint with Light

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi74B241b6k>

Eric Curry – Painting with Light (and Compositing)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RK_tBOT8xDc

Simon Plant – Light Painting Photography and Post Processing in Photoshop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNvOjzL2mE>

Gavin Hoey – Painting with Light Photography and Photoshop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef2G3GDPMq8>

Robert Grant – Learn My Shot Light Painting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vEoUFAjKTM>

Web Sites

Dave Black

<http://www.daveblackphotography.com/>

Eric Curry – several video tutorials

<http://www.americanprideandpassion.com/>

Lance Keimig

<http://thenightskye.com/>

Fstoppers – a very complex composited light painting

<http://fstoppers.com/photographer-surprises-father-with-dream-car-for-christmas>

Learn my Shot – a good basic how to light paint

<http://learnmyshot.com/introduction-to-light-painting-photography-technique/>

Photo extremist – psychedelic light painting of water on a CD

<http://photoextremist.com/tag/light-painting>

Painting Bridges – Acadia National Forrest Bridges

<http://www.paintingbridges.com/>

Facebook Pages

Dave Black Photography

Eric William Curry

Lance Keimig Photographics

Sean Parker Photography

Everlook Photography

Books

THE WAY I SEE IT

by Dave Black, available in Hard Cover \$101.99 or eBook \$29.95(for desktop only) from Mr. Black's website, or as an iPad app \$4.99.

PAINTING WITH LIGHT: LIGHTING & PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS PAPERBACK

by Eric Curry Kindle version \$11.49, Paperback \$22.82 (on Amazon)

CRAFTING REALITY: PAINTING WITH LIGHT

By Eric Curry eBook 19.95

NIGHTWATCH - PAINTING WITH LIGHT

by Noel Kerns hardcover \$33.46

LIGHT PAINTED NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY: THE LOST AMERICA TECHNIQUE [KINDLE EDITION]

By Troy Paiva \$9.99 Kindle only

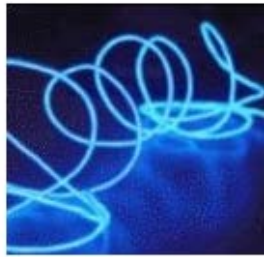


Brinkmann 800-2655-2 Max Million II Rechargeable Spotlight

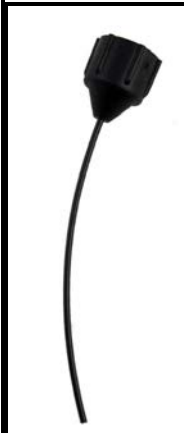
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Only 10 left in stock - order soon.
More Buying Choices
\$28.60 new (68 offers)
\$34.98 used (1 offer)



Brinkman Q-Beam Blue Filter Lens
\$4.50



Portable EL Wire 10 Feet Long (Blue)
★★★★☆ (147)
\$5.09



Strobes.
by Rosco
★★★★☆
Price: **\$14.49**
Note: This item is not available for sale in some states.
In Stock.
Sold by Kellards
Eligible for **Amazon Prime**
Want it Tuesday?
- Rosco The Store
9 new from \$7.99



Wizard Stick
by American Science
★★★★☆ 25
Price: **\$21.05** ✓Prime
In Stock.
Sold by International
Want it Tuesday, April 11?
- Blowing Smoke For
- The Wizard Stick is
effects, including rain
- Also good as a holder
of fog.
7 new from \$21.05



Stylus Pro, Black Body, White LED
★★★★★ (14)
\$22.69



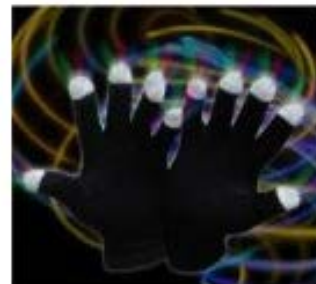
See Color & Style Options
Energizer Brilliant Beam Headlamp
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Some colors are Prime eligible



10 X Led Mini Micro Black...
★★★★☆ (212)
\$4.53



Nite Ize NIQ-07-AA Multi-Function Flashlight
~~\$8.99~~ **\$7.84** ✓Prime



LED Black Gloves Multicolor
★★★★☆ (93)
\$6.49