

# ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAITURE

shooting with natural light



# OUTLINE FOR THE EVENING

- Managing Light
  - “open” shade
  - diffusion
  - fill flash
  - reflectors
- Lens selection - wide angle / normal / telephoto
  - “crop” sensor impact
  - impact on bokeh - depth of field
- Posing vs. Candid
  - age dependent
  - avoiding the dreaded cheese smile



# MANAGING LIGHT

- Open shade is found under tall mature trees or in urban areas with widely spaced somewhat reflective buildings
- Diffusers act to soften harsh direct light resulting in reduced dynamic range and softer shadows
- Reflectors redirect light to provide “fill” and “catch” lights





GREAT PICTURES HAPPEN  
ANYWHERE!





**DIRECT SUN (NO FILL FLASH)**

VERY DIFFICULT TO GET GREAT RESULTS





# DIRECT SUN (W/ FILL FLASH)

VERY DIFFICULT TO GET GREAT RESULTS, BUT THE CATCH LIGHTS ARE A BIG IMPROVEMENT OVER STRAIGHT SUN





# OPEN SHADE (W/O FLASH)

BETTER, BUT A LITTLE FLAT AND NO CATCH LIGHT IN EYES





OPEN SHADE (W/ FLASH)

MUCH IMPROVED, SHADOWS ALL BUT GONE





# REFLECTED SUN (W/ FLASH)

NOTICE TWO CATCH LIGHTS, REFLECTOR AND FLASH, NO  
FEASIBLE FOR CANDIDS OR FAST MOVING SUBJECTS





# REFLECTED SUN (W/O FLASH)

FUZZY FLECTOR MAY HAVE WORKED BETTER SQUINTING  
BECAUSE THE REFLECTED LIGHT WAS TOO BRIGHT!





# DIFFUSED SUN (W/ FLASH)

AMONG MY FAVORITE WAYS TO SHOOT, NOT FEASIBLE FOR  
CANDIDS OR FAST MOVING SUBJECTS (CHILDREN)



# LENS SELECTION

- portrait lenses are typically 50mm on upward depending on your objective and desired working distance
- the preferred focal lengths for portraiture are based upon 35mm standards
- cameras with less than full frame sensors “crop” the image resulting in a more telephoto effect
- multiply the focal length by the crop factor to determine the effective focal length - 50mm on Nikon dx camera  $50 \times 1.5 = 75\text{mm}$  effective
- wide angle lenses tend to expand the subject while telephoto lenses compress





# 200MM AT CLOSE DISTANCE

AMONG MY FAVORITE WAYS TO SHOOT, PEOPLE LIKE WHAT THIS PERSPECTIVE DOES TO THEIR FEATURES.





# 50MM SAME HEAD SIZE

GREATLY DECREASED WORKING DISTANCE...TOO CLOSE  
FOR COMFORT FOR MANY SUBJECTS NOT FLATTERING





## 24MM SAME HEAD SIZE

EVEN LESS WORKING DISTANCE...TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT FOR ANY SUBJECT FREAKISH LOOKING



# POSING VS. CANDIDS

- there are strong arguments for both
- I enjoy shooting both, each can be quite moving
- if you want to capture candid don't review images on the back of the camera too often, instead wait for the unguarded moments
- shoot in open shade with a flash and watch your backgrounds
- practice, practice, practice - don't try this stuff for the first time at a momentous occasion
- talk to your subject, get out from behind the camera and help them relax, tripod is helpful for this



# RESOURCES

- [photo.net](http://photo.net) - great place to learn
- [dpreview.com](http://dpreview.com) - consistently well done reviews
- [bhphotovideo.com](http://bhphotovideo.com) - reputable, great prices, fast
- [luminous-landscape.com](http://luminous-landscape.com) - get lost for hours here
- smugmug detroit meetup group
- Scott Kelby books, NAPP, Training - off the wall sense of humor, I love everything he does
- Me - call or write with questions | Individual lessons centered around your specific needs \$60/ 90 minutes