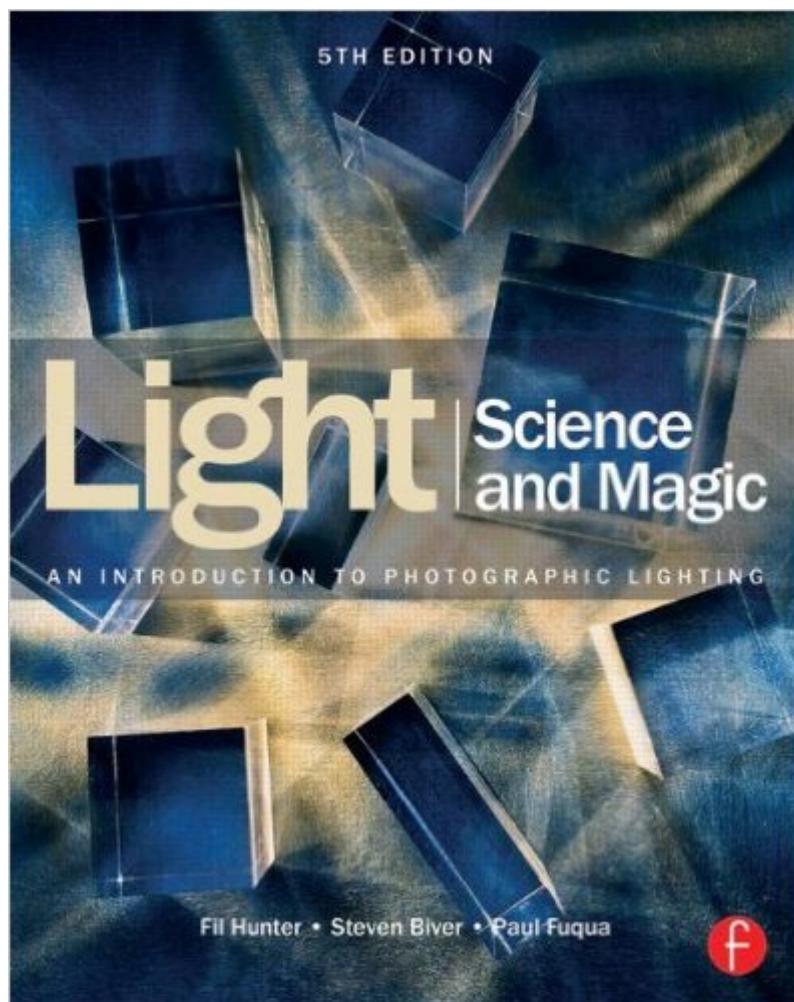


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# Light Science & Magic: An Introduction To Photographic Lighting



## **Synopsis**

Photographic lighting is a topic that will never go out of style, no matter how sophisticated cameras and other technology get. Even with the most high-tech gear, photographers still need to put a lot of thought and vision into lighting their photographs in order to get great results. This key skill has the power to dramatically and quickly improve photographs. *Light Science and Magic* provides you with a comprehensive theory of the nature and principles of light, with examples and instructions for practical application. Featuring photographs, diagrams, and step-by-step instructions, this book speaks to photographers of varying levels. It provides invaluable information on how to light the most difficult subjects, such as surfaces, metal, glass, liquids, extremes (black-on-black and white-on-white), and portraits. This new edition includes: All new chapter titled "Setting Up Your New Studio" A re-vamped and expanded chapter 8 now titled "Making Portraits" New appendix of reliable photo gear sources Over 100 new photographs and informational sidebars Updated information about advances in flash equipment, LED panels and fluorescent lights Styles of lighting continue to change, but the nature of light will always remain the same. Once photographers understand the basic physics of lighting, they can apply that knowledge to a broad range of photographic styles.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I consider myself a professional photographer. I don't make my living at it, but I do earn enough from it to pay for all the equipment I own. I am a lover of flash photography, and regularly use about

a dozen different strobes, lights, flashes, and controllers. I also own well over 100 books on photography. They are divided into two groups. The first is a small shelf in my office that holds maybe 15 books, the other is a large shelf in the attic that holds the remainder. This book has earned a place on the small shelf-it is that useful.

**The Good Points\*** The title is somewhat misleading. When I bought the book I was expecting a collection of lighting tricks designed to produce nifty special effects. That is not what the book is at all. Rather it is a review of many standard lighting techniques useful in everyday situations. There are tips on portraits, still life, product photography, and even some basic theory of light.\* Everything is kept simple. The authors don't go out of their way to impress you with how brilliant they are, they avoid the use of jargon, arcane terms and other vocabulary designed to show off rather than inform.\* The book shows real examples, and shows the lighting setup used and the results obtained. The lighting drawings are somewhat inexact, but certainly detailed enough to understand and duplicate the setup. They also do not go out of their way to specify exact exposure details, and instead direct the reader to "experiment". I have watched several photographers who I could consider first-tier professionals use the same technique-set up the light, take a shot, fix the lights....repeat until you get what you want.\* The examples they use are generic enough to be useful on a wide variety of subjects. As an example, some of the specific lighting challenges which the book covers include a glass of beer, glass vases and decanters, chessboard, a black prop on a black background, and metallic and shiny surfaces. While the book is certainly not a cookbook for every possible shot, if you master these techniques you are halfway home for just about any lighting assignment.\* While not a scientific work by any means, the authors do provide some basic theory of light (such as polarization) which should be detailed enough to help out any level of photographer understand what is going on.\* None of the material is in any way specific to any particular brand or style of equipment.

**The Not So Good Points\*** This is not an introductory book. There is almost no information on setting up camera exposures, flash modes. Knowledge of histograms is assumed, as are some very basic Photoshop techniques for analyzing/correcting photos.\* The book ended too soon. I love the format of showing the same photo, lit with multiple techniques along with a lighting diagram for each photo. I would love to see a book of just photos and diagrams in the same format as the authors used. Some of my most challenging photo assignments (such as jewelry) were not discussed, and I could use the help.\* The lighting diagrams are not very detailed. No dimensions are given, nor is actual exposure information disclosed. Even with the diagrams and the book in front of you, a successful photo is still going to require some additional knowledge of lighting as well as a bit of experimentation.

**Overall\*** I found the book useful, and I already thought I knew quite a bit

about flash lighting. A true photo beginner would probably struggle with the book unless they already have knowledge of how to set up flash exposures. I would have liked to see another 200 pages of specific examples, but there was a good range of material shown, and it is in a format that I can easily find and use.\* I recently had a client who wanted a picture of a decanter of red wine, with several glasses, shot on a glass tabletop. I wish I had this book before that photo session...countless hours of profanity might have been prevented.\* I would not recommend the book unless you own an SLR, at least one strobe or flash unit (preferably at least two), maybe a reflector or two, and a couple tripods. All of the tips in this book involve placing light sources in specific places-tough to do without some minimal amount of equipment. If you just have a small on-camera flash, there isn't much in this book that is going to help you.

I have both the third and fourth editions.I don't think there is enough new stuff to bother buying this edition if you already the third edition.They update stuff to meet the modern digital age and go a little more into lighting when outside and extreme white, black, and mirrored backgrounds.If you don't have this book than get this newest edition, if you have the thirdyou are fine.

First, I want to be clear that while I am also a photo book writer, I don't personally know any of the authors of this book and I am not affiliated with the publisher in any way. I say that because I have to rave a bit about the quality and content of this book: it's one of the best books on studio lighting that I've ever come across and if you are a professional photographer (or have a desire to become one) and if you work with product photography (particularly glassware) then you should own this book. And while I single out glassware (because the book does such a stellar job of discussing and teaching it) the book deals with a lot of subjects (various reflective products, shiny wooden products, portraits, etc.) and it covers each of them in a very thorough and practical way.The book starts out with a short but good (very good) lesson on the basic concepts of both natural and studio lighting. The second chapter goes further into light and discusses the topics of brightness, contrast, color, reflection, etc. A very nice chapter. (And some good tips on photographing flat art--very useful basic techniques that will save you a ton of time and wasted energy.)The bulk of the book, however, consists of photographs of various subjects with diagrams on how they were lit. For years I wrote the "Lighting Masters" column for PDN (Photo District News), a magazine for professionals, and this is exactly what my column was: an examination of how a particular photo (or series of photos) was made and I gave specific diagrams of what the lighting plan looked like. This book is like a compendium of those columns (another writer, Jack Neubart, later took over the column and did, in

fact, publish a book of his workÂ Studio Lighting Solutions: Expert Professional Techniques for Artistic and Commercial Success (Pdnpros). That book is out of print, I think, but you can buy it used. There is so much useful and practical material in this book that I simply can't imagine being a studio shooter--even an experienced studio shooter and I have quite a bit of experience--and not owning this book. For me, the pages on photographing a shiny gift box were worth the price of the book. The authors talk about the trick of shooting the product on a translucent surface with a dark background below, for example, and that is a very clever and useful bit of info. The portrait pages are also very informative. You won't find a better book on studio lighting techniques and tips. If you have a friend or perhaps a child thinking of a career in the studio, they'll thank you forever for buying them this book. My parents bought me a ton of photo books when I was younger and they're among the best gifts I ever got.

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