

# Introducing Studio Lighting and Using Social Media for Research and Feedback

IOP 2018 - 2019

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For our IOP research we were interested in exploring social media as a resource to further develop our photography curriculum. We joined a Facebook group called, High School Photography Teachers, which is a closed group of 3 million members. The group purports to be “a gathering of photo teachers to share resources and support each other” as described on their Facebook page. Areas that we wanted to focus on were lighting and professional studio techniques so that we could introduce lessons in our classes to further enhance our students photography skills.

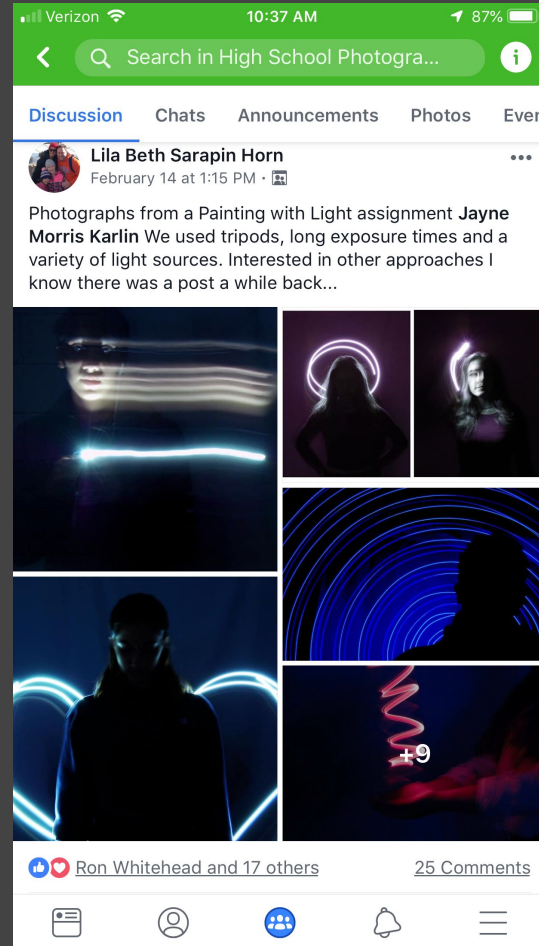
## Painting with Light Unit:

### Facebook post on February 14

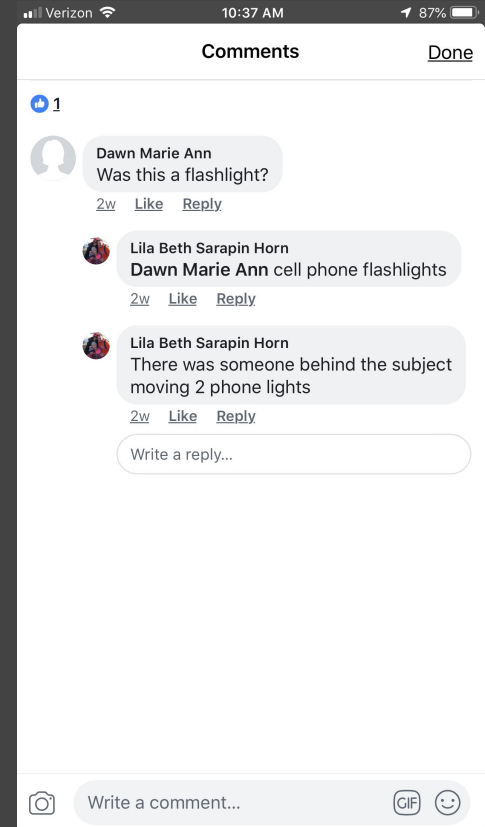
In February 2019 we posted current Byram Hills student work on the High School Photography Teachers Facebook page in order to receive feedback and collaborate with other professionals.

The 15 student photographs we posted were from our *Painting with Light* unit.

We received feedback, questions and other results from photography teachers in the group that allowed us to further explore areas that we had not previously considered such as “pop the flash” seen on the next slide.



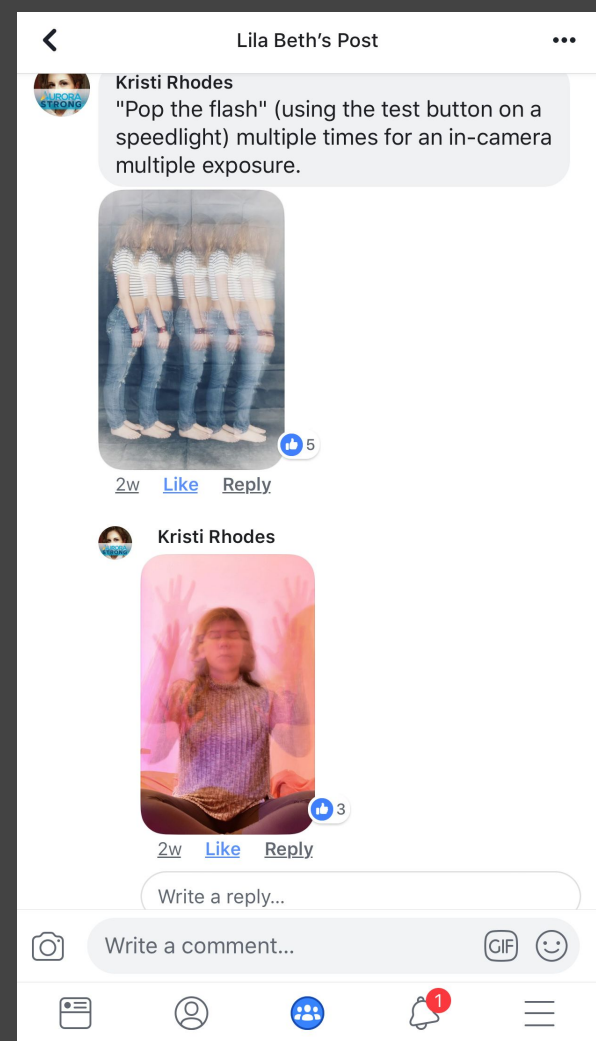
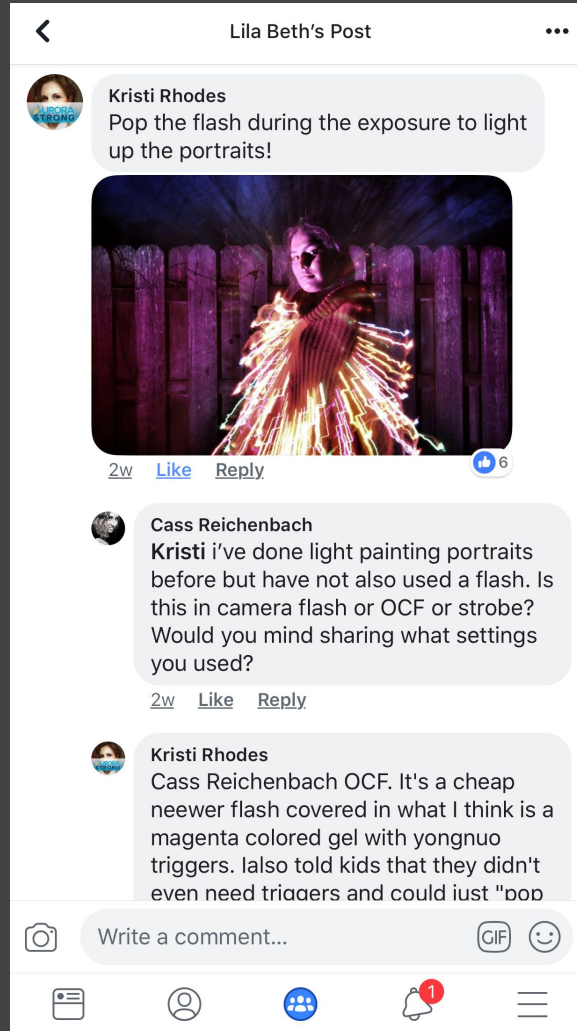
Example of some comments illustrating questions and answers from this post



## Learning New Techniques:

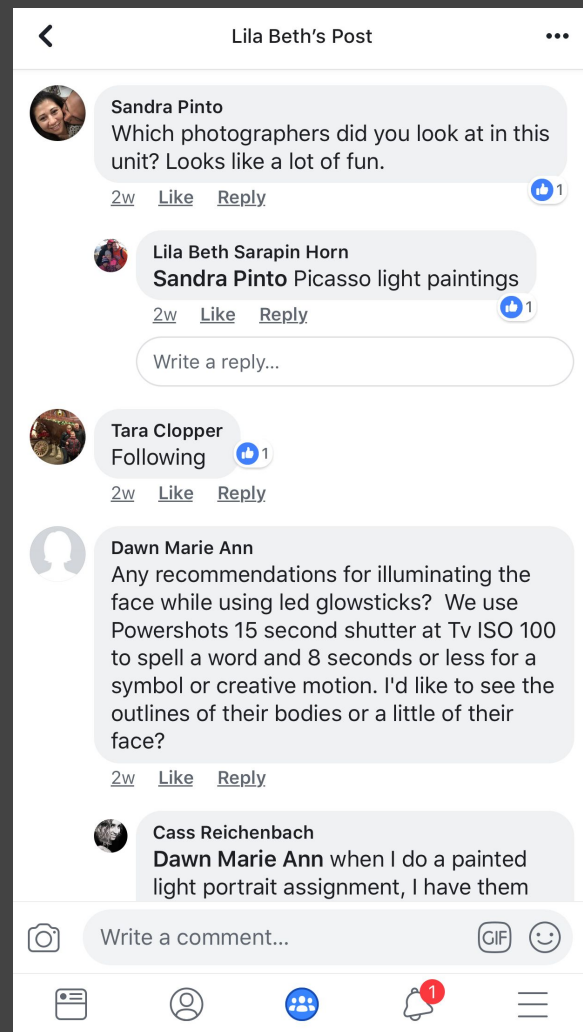
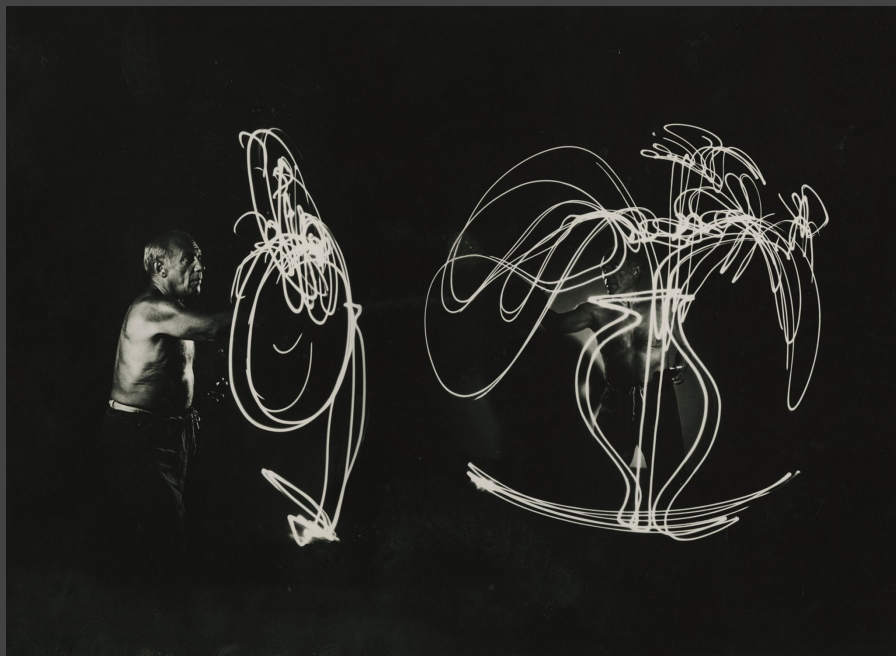
From the February post we learned about a technique called, "pop the flash."

This is a tool that we did not use with our students but after receiving the suggestion from this teacher's post we decided to do research on the technique and how to teach it to our students next year.



## Learning of New Resources:

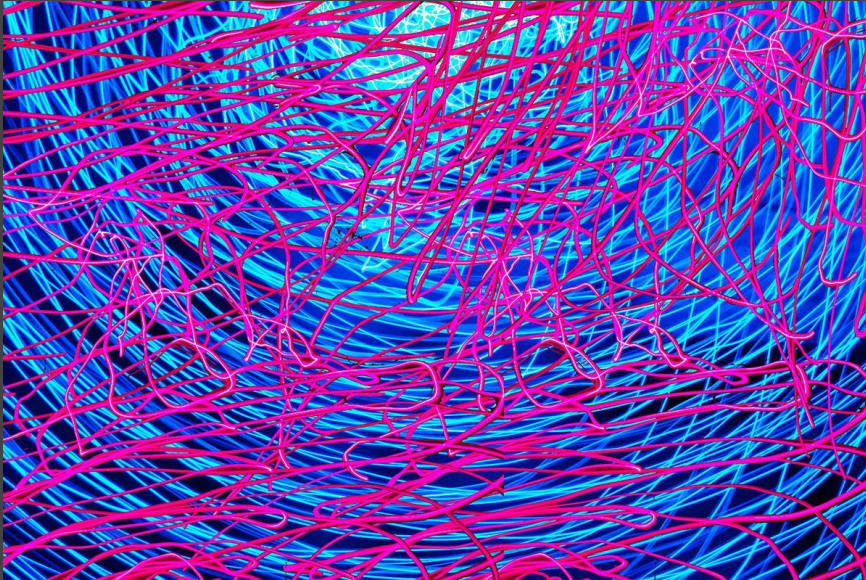
In posting our *Painting with Light* unit one teacher asked about influential photographers that we show our students; we introduced Picasso's light paintings. This further prompted the sharing of relevant materials that other teachers have used as seen below in the Picasso light painting examples.



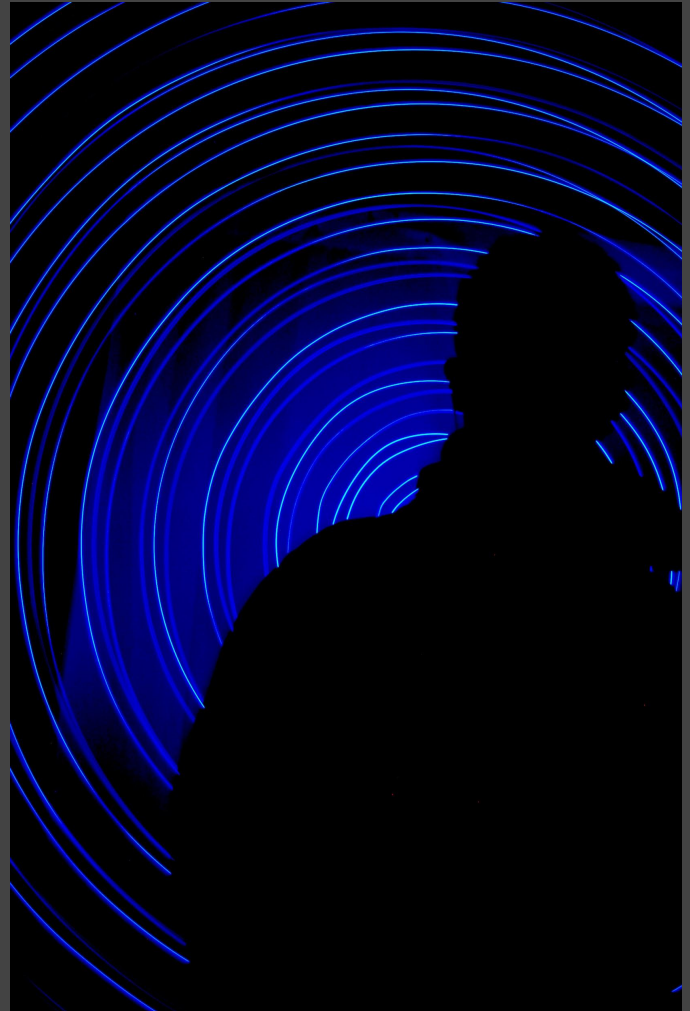


## Student using Concept for AP Concentration: Student Artwork

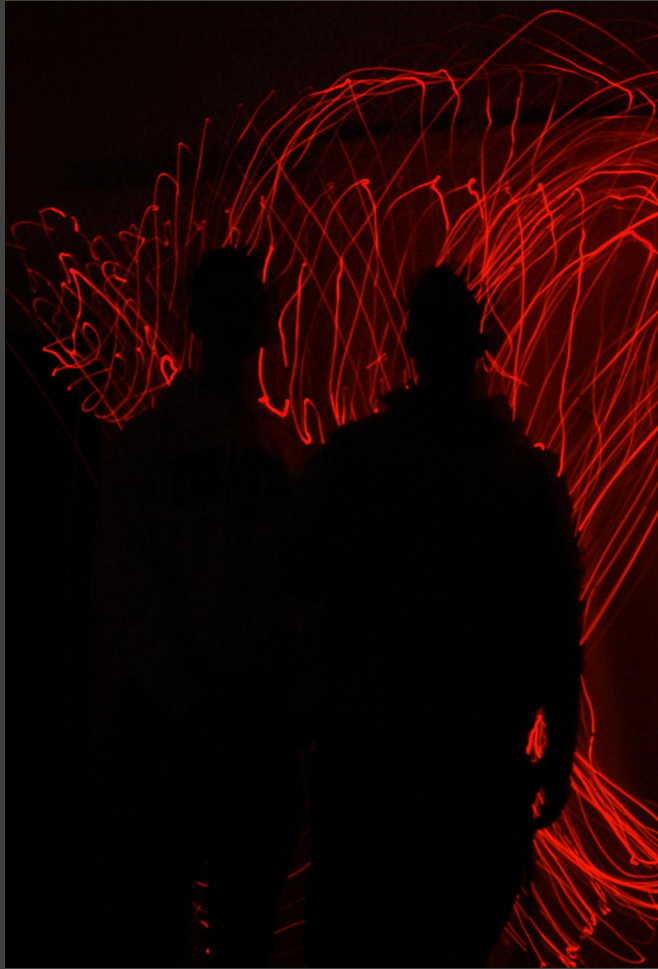
In the AP program students work on developing a Concentration or an investigation of study. Students usually come up with ideas on their own but sometimes become interested in concepts introduced in class. In the case of the lighting unit, one student decided to focus on lighting for her AP Concentration because of the positive feedback received during class critique.



More Byram Hills student work.

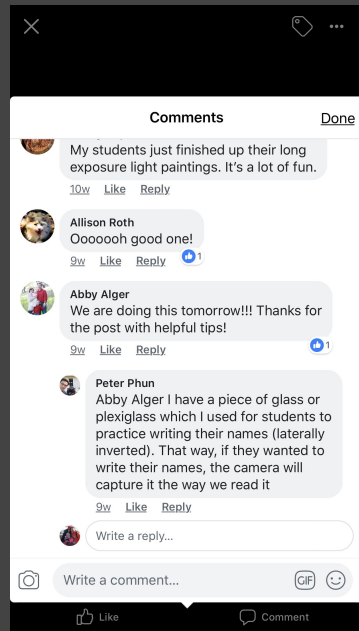
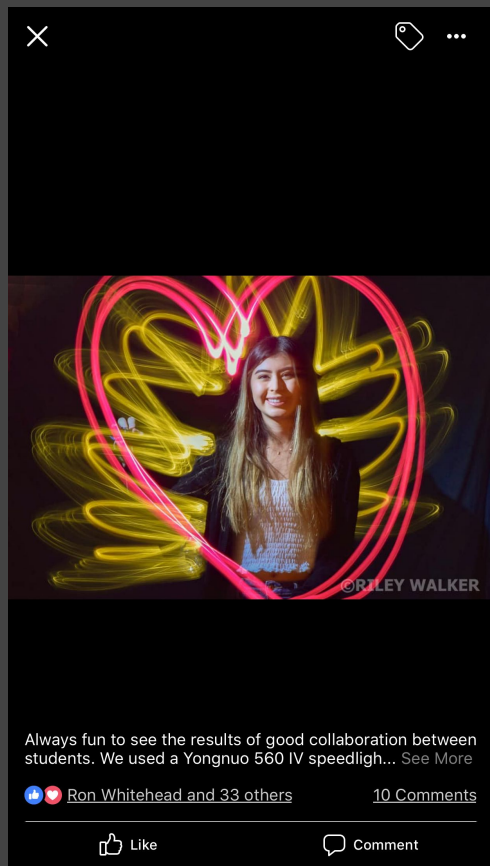






## Teachers Sharing Similar Lighting Units:

Following our post, another teacher posted his lighting unit with student examples. We learned that many times on this particular Facebook page one teacher's post acts as a catalyst, and then the next month other teachers post similar units with helpful information and opportunities to share ideas, resources and techniques.



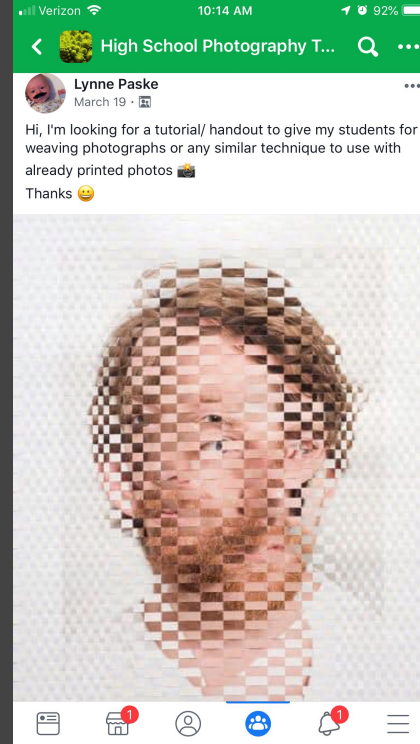
## Using Facebook Group to Help Students with their AP Concentrations:

One student was looking for ways to grow in her concentration. We were able to use the Facebook group as a resource to share examples with this student to give her ideas to use in her own work.

### Student Concentration Statement:

*“Initially, my main objective was to exhibit how dolls can act in human-like ways by reconstructing a picture of a human with the face of a doll. As seen in some of my work, I took pictures of humans doing mundane activities, but I morphed a doll’s features to the face of the human. To further experiment with my concentration, I began to add different types of media to the photos. As can be seen in some of my other photographs, I lately have been adding paper clips, thread, and collage to portray my concentration in a more compelling way”.*

**See student work on following slide.**

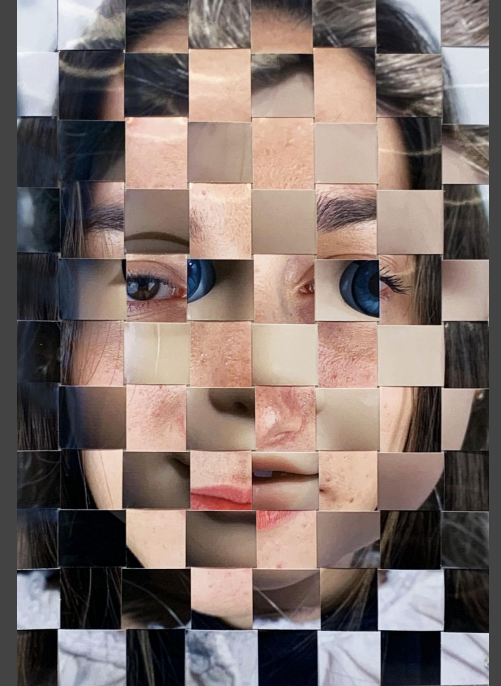


**Two resources from the Facebook group.**



## BHHS Student Work

Our student decided to create collages and weave images together based on the techniques and work we were able to share with her from resources discovered on the Facebook group.





## Portrait Lighting Unit

Initially we assigned students to shoot Portraits but without formal instruction or feedback. Students were directed to view past student work.

Students were not given detailed instructions on technique or professional exemplars before creating their portraits.

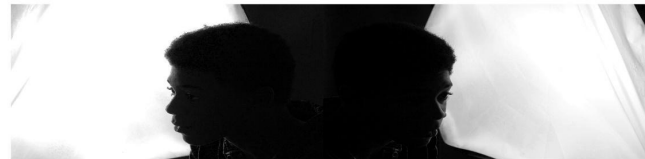
Here is the assignment as it was posted on Feb 11 on Google Classroom:

*"In class you will work in small groups of 2 or 3 and sign up for a day to work with lighting and portraits. Below you will see examples from last year. Please try to be creative as possible."*

The images on this slide are some examples of what students handed in for this assignment.

## Student Examples:

Before doing research on lighting techniques



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Before doing research on lighting techniques.



**Student Examples:**  
**Before doing research on lighting techniques.**



## Revised Unit with Formal Instruction From Resources

After gathering data and resources from the facebook group we decided to revise our unit and asked students to research and shoot their *Portrait* assignment over again based on materials shared with them.

### **New Directions posted in Classroom: Feb 25**

*“Look at the work of Richard Avedon, Annie Leibovitz, Phillipe Halsman and Irving Penn. Before shooting your next in class portraits, take an idea from a particular image of each of these photographers to emulate.*

*Choose 3 techniques of lighting to use in your work:  
Rembrandt, split, butterfly, loop, silhouette, back, broad or short*

*Please take a look at the lighting information below. You will need to shoot at least 3 of the techniques.”*

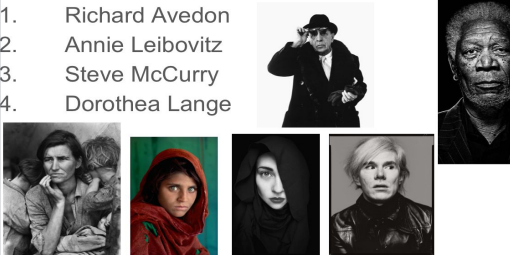
Lighting information that was shared with students in order for them to do their research and shoot again can be seen on the next slide.

# Resources shared with students from date gathered from the Facebook group on lighting:

lookaside.fbsbx.com

## FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPHERS TO LOOK AT:

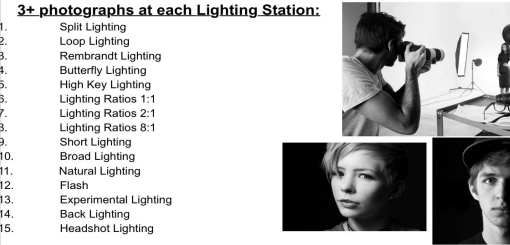
- Richard Avedon
- Annie Leibovitz
- Steve McCurry
- Dorothea Lange



### OBJECTIVE: EACH PERSON MUST TAKE 45+ PHOTOGRAPHS USING THE ALL THE LIGHTING SET-UPS

#### 3+ photographs at each Lighting Station:

- Split Lighting
- Loop Lighting
- Rembrandt Lighting
- Butterfly Lighting
- High Key Lighting
- Lighting Ratios 1:1
- Lighting Ratios 2:1
- Lighting Ratios 8:1
- Short Lighting
- Broad Lighting
- Natural Lighting
- Flash
- Experimental Lighting
- Back Lighting
- Headshot Lighting



### WORK ON:

- Applying the Correct Lighting Setup
- Compositional Layouts
- POSES, Angles, Expressions
- Correct Camera Settings

### TURN IN:

Contact Sheet of 45+ photographs


BEST EDITED IMAGE of each

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## FLASH: Built in Flash (in camera):

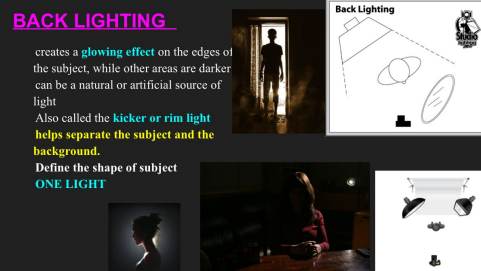
Generally not that great  
**Unnatural- washed out faces, shiny hot spots**  
 Good for "freezing action"  
 throws harsh shadow onto any surface behind them  
 creates more red-eye  
 doesn't work any further out than about 10 to 15 feet.

When using, try to **DIFFUSE** (ex. Bounce Card, reflector, placing piece of translucent magic tape over flash, etc.)  
 Bounces light off ceiling  
 Less harsh flash effect



## BACK LIGHTING

creates a **glowing effect** on the edges of the subject, while other areas are darker  
 can be a natural or artificial source of light  
 Also called the **kicker or rim light**  
**helps separate the subject and the background.**  
 Define the shape of subject  
**ONE LIGHT**

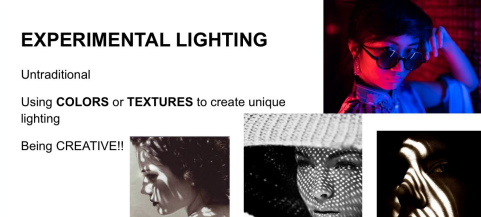


## EXPERIMENTAL LIGHTING

Untraditional

Using **COLORS** or **TEXTURES** to create unique lighting

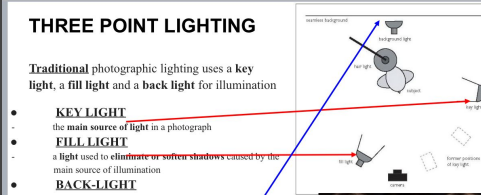
Being CREATIVE!!



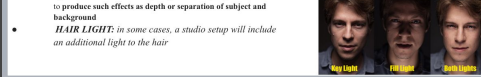
lookaside.fbsbx.com

## THREE POINT LIGHTING

Traditional photographic lighting uses a key light, a fill light and a back light for illumination



- KEY LIGHT**  
the main source of light in a photograph
- FILL LIGHT**  
a light used to **eliminate or soften shadows** caused by the main source of illumination
- BACK-LIGHT**  
light is placed behind or at right angles to an object, person, or scene to produce such effects as depth or separation of subject and background
- HAIR LIGHT:** in some cases, a studio setup will include an additional light to the hair




## Basics to Portrait Lighting Ratios

First number describes the **KEY (Main Light)** that falls on the illuminated side of the subject's face—**HIGHLIGHT SIDE**  
 Second number describes the **SHADOWS (aka FILL LIGHT)** on the other side of the subject's face—**SHADOW SIDE**  
 Further apart the two numbers, the **HIGHER THE CONTRAST**

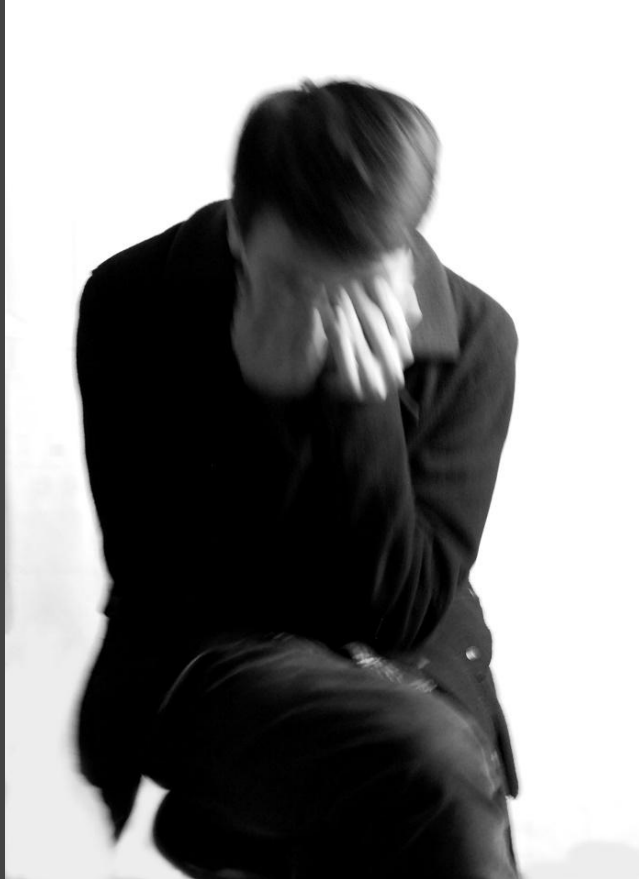
- Why good to know ratios?
- Allows you to heighten or mute detail

Ratio	Stops Difference	Description
1:1	Nil	Flat lighting
2:1	1 Stop	General color photography
3:1		General black & white photography
4:1		Dramatic Lighting, low key
8:1		Very dramatic, low key





New student work after research, feedback and class critique:

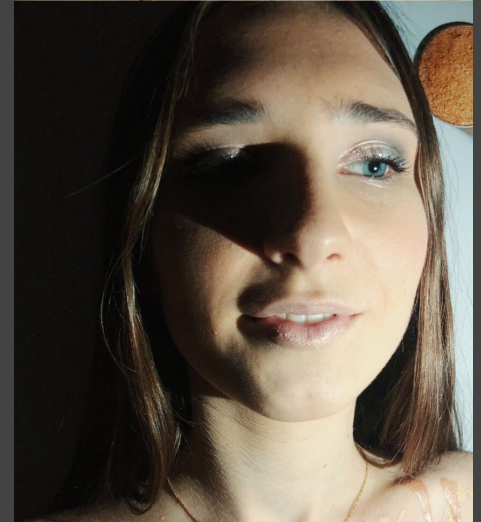
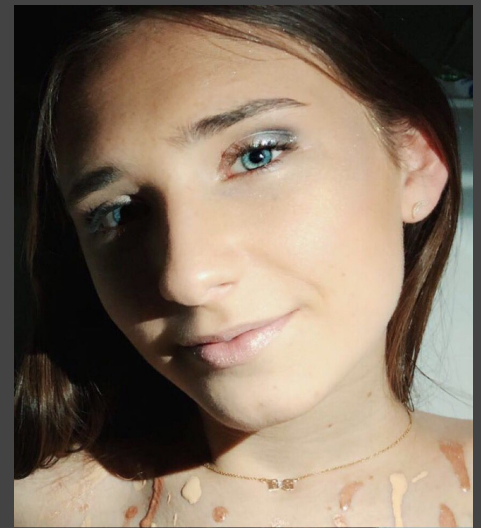




New student work after research, feedback and class critique:



### New student work after research, feedback and class critique:



### **1. What did I learn?**

We learned that being part of a professional learning community such as the High School Photography Facebook group helped us this year in becoming more effective teachers. The data and research that we collected provided us with resources that we could share with our students to help make them better artists and photographers. In our informal discussions with students we discovered that they felt they were more successful when given resources to help them in their research before shooting their work. During the *Painting with Light* unit students were initially just excited to experiment with a new idea. However, after more experimentation and feedback, students were thinking about color and composition. They felt they could be more experimental with the painting and produce dramatic, thought provoking results. Regarding our *Portrait* unit, with the first round of portraits students did not think about the technical aspects of lighting (this was not something previously taught to them) or the mood they were creating. After their independent research on photographers and lighting techniques their work became much stronger and more creative. We also found that this improved their motivation and the excitement they felt with this unit.

### **2. What is the impact of what I learned?**

We have made adjustments to the curriculum to have the students do more guided research on their own, especially in terms of technical issues like lighting. Because of our research, we have written and been approved for an Byram Hills Education Foundation grant to create a lighting studio. Our new lighting studio will provide a space and opportunity to include instruction in a professional setting during class as part of our program. We want our students to have the experience of working in a professional studio setting while learning proper lighting techniques to make them better photographers and learn real life applications and skills. We are going to continue being a part of the High School Photography facebook group and exchange ideas with other high school photography teachers.

### **3. How do I capture my learning in order to share with others?**

We will continue to document student work and collect visual examples and post on the facebook group. *High School Photography Teachers*, to get feedback as we experiment with lighting and studio photography.