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Speedlitter's Handbook: Learning To Craft Light With Canon Speedlites



Synopsis

Getting your Canon Speedlite to produce the light you need can be a real challenge. For those new to flash photography or for anyone who has previously given up out of frustration, *Speedlites Handbook* is a revelation. Photographer Syl Arena takes you on a journey that begins with an exploration of light and color, moves through a comprehensive discussion of the Canon Speedlite family and all of the accessories and equipment available to the Speedlites, then settles down to crafting great light in one photo shoot after another. Whether you want to create a classical portrait, shoot an event, or simply add a little fill light to a product shot, *Speedlites Handbook* shows you how. A fantastic in-depth resource illustrated with over 500 images, *Speedlites Handbook* covers: how to see the various characteristics and properties of light itself, as well as the differences between how your camera sees versus how you see all the buttons and dials of the entire Canon Speedlite family the basics of on-camera flash and the necessity of getting your flash off the camera how to beautifully balance flash with the existing ambient light all the equipment necessary for great Speedlite shots how to get amazing shots with just one Speedlite how and when to use E-TTL versus manual flash the use of color gels to balance color, as well as create dramatic effects how to tame the sun or any really bright light with hi-speed sync and much, much more Whether you're shooting portraits, events, or sports, *Speedlites Handbook* is an essential resource that teaches you how to craft the light you need for any type of shot you want.

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Customer Reviews

Syl Arena studied commercial photography at Brooks Institute and fine art photography at the University of Arizona. Over the years, Syl has shot for newspapers, magazines, and catalogs. He has been recognized for his expertise on color-critical workflow and his ability to turn noon to night by firing off a dozen Speedlites simultaneously. Syl covers the world of photography on his blogs, PixSylated.com and Speedlighting.com, and he serves as the Director of the Paso Robles Workshops.

I was fortunate to participate in a 2 day workshop with Syl in the lead up to this book, and now I have the book in my grubby little hands, I can heartily recommend it for anyone who is trying to get something more from their speedlites than Canon seems to think they are capable of. If you've just bought your first speedlite, then this book will walk you through everything you need to know to get it off the camera *and* keep the wonderful ETTL functionality that so many people misunderstand or seem to dismiss as gimmicky. If, like me, you've got a couple of speedlites and had already got them off the camera, then there is *still* material in here that will help you up your game and expand what you are able to make these wonderful little lighting gadgets do. My biggest revelation in off camera ETTL speedlighting? Buy a long ETTL cable :) Syl turned me onto what can be achieved if I get my master speedlite off the camera, on a cable so I can trigger my slave anywhere, including behind my model. So simple, yet I never thought of it. There are tons of full color photos in the book that cover every topic covered in writing, making it perfect for us visual learners. Did I mention, it's Canon specific? So little has been written for us ... all those "brand independent" books I've read and purchased in the past still assume only Nikon is able to handle off camera flash work, never really giving Canon their due. Finally, something I can simply follow along with the buttons on my own system and understand the same terminology. Simply - *the* book to buy if you want to get better at what we do in the Canon world.

I've decided to write this review in terms of what I'm getting out of this book. To put it in context, I'm a Canon shooter (just stepped up to a 60D) and have, of course, Canon flashes. I've wanted to do more with flash, but the details (with explanations of why, not just how) of using the 580EXII (for example) are very hard to find. As a result, 90% of my images are landscapes and I've shied away from using flash. No more. Until now, the only things I could find were a few online tutorials and a very good book by NK Guy. Although that book is excellent, this one is better (buy this one first, but

if you can afford it, get both.) Top Ten benefits (for me) of this book.

1. Great explanations of using light. By that I mean to create shadows and give definition. On the opening pages there's a picture of a white square against a black background. Next to it we can see that the square was simply a sheet of copy paper. We can see that because the author crumpled and then straightened it, giving it texture that the light could use to create those shadows and make it obvious. In two pictures and two paragraphs, the author said more about using light than hundreds of others tried to do elsewhere.
2. Great explanations on how to manipulate the buttons on the Canon flashes to make them do what you want. [Note: some of that is quite tricky, such as the need to hold a button down for 2 seconds in order to get into a specific configuration mode].
3. Great tips, such as telling you that if the flash modifiers are not 100% secured into the flash head, the controls won't work.
4. Excellent step by step instructions through the menus on both the flash units and the camera bodies.
5. Clear and understandable explanations about master and slaves, groups, channels, etc.
6. Clear and understandable explanations about ratios between flashes and how to set and control them from both the flash and the camera.
7. Some very useful tips for using Canon-compatible flashes and even non-compatible ones.
8. Good descriptions of studio lighting, and of combining (ganging) flashes.
9. A very nice section on flash modifiers (scrims, gobos, snoots, etc). That reminds me, there are sidebars that explain all the jargon. Very useful, indeed.
10. Several chapters at the end that put it all together, including one that explains the cover shot.

This is a long awaited, MUST BUY book for Canon flash users. By the way, the author maintains a blog that's well worth following, too. It's at speedlighting.com. Also, check out another great book of his, *LIDLIPS. A LIDLIPS Lessons I Didn't Learn In Photo School: 100 Modern Insights On Photography*

Simply put, the best book/reference tool that I have seen to date on speedlighting (regardless of brand). So much great information, presented in an easy to understand manner, and with terrific explanations as to the why behind Syl's methods and choices. Canon shooters in particular will absolutely love this volume. The author clearly spent a great deal of time and effort creating this book which is evident in the amount and quality of examples, both the photos and the fabulous "syllustrations". Great reference books only come from a combination of knowledge and passion for the subject, and it is clear after reading this book over the last two days that Syl has both in abundance. Worth every penny.

Speedlites Handbook: Learning to Craft Light with Canon Speedlites

I'm digging into Syl Arena's book on Canon Speedlite's and it is great. If you are a Canonista you

want this book! It's specific to Canon flashes and cameras, but also covers lighting in general. It starts by covering how light interacts with the thing you are taking a picture of, and how it effects the image you end up with. A big takeaway is that the shadow parts of your picture are just as important as the light parts. The book really explains how lighting equipment works, including the specifics of Canon Speedlites along with studio equipment along with specific recommendations. It answers questions like "What's flag?" or "When should I use a CTO?" For me this is great stuff, it's really taking the mystery out of lighting techniques for me. Then the book has a ton of example images, each with a description of how the lighting was setup for the image and why the lighting was setup that way. It also shows what happens to the image when you setup the lighting the wrong way. It covers everything from "How do a make a portrait with one Speedlite." to "What do a do when the sun is in front of me." My plan is to use these as a lesson plan to practice using my Speedlites, and I sure can use the practice. Super book that covers everything from the aesthetics of lighting to how to use a guide number. Highly recommended.

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