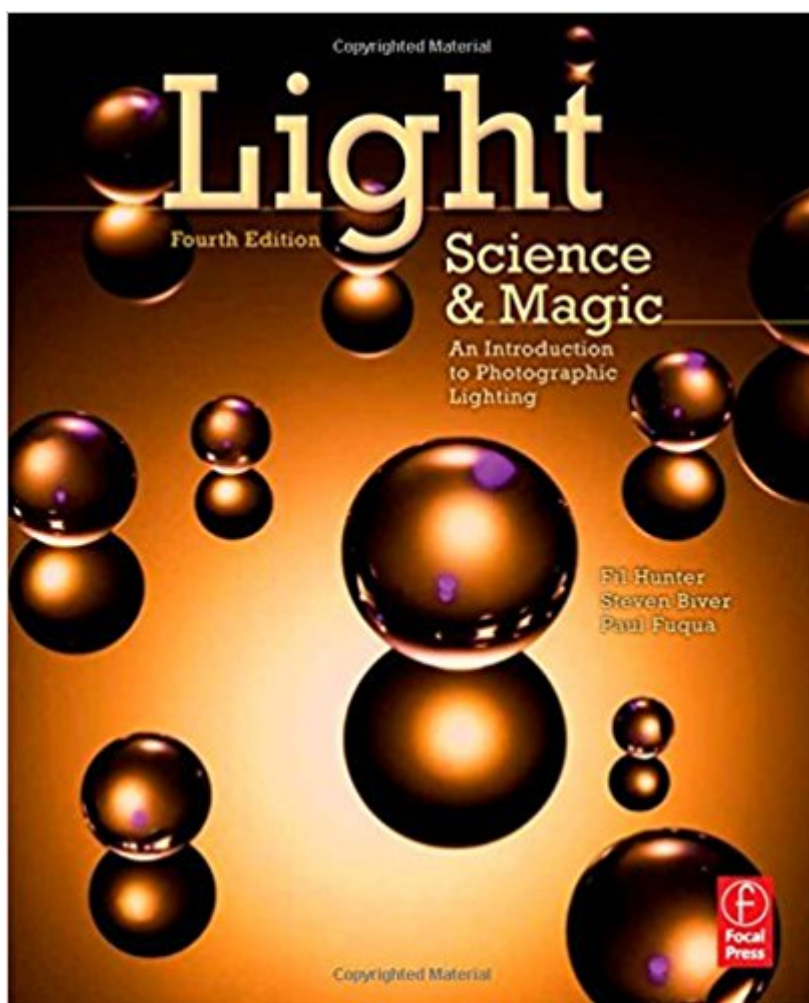




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# Light Science And Magic: An Introduction To Photographic Lighting



## Synopsis

THE *Light Science and Magic* is a book to own if you want to understand lighting! *Light Science and Magic* more than just provides set examples for photographers to follow. This international bestseller provides photographers with a comprehensive theory of the nature and principles of light to allow individual photographers to use lighting to express their own creativity. It will show you how to light the most difficult subjects such as surfaces, metal, glass, liquids, extremes (black-on-black and white-on-white), and people. With more information specific for digital photographers, a brand new chapter on equipment, much more information on location lighting, and more on photographing people, this brand new fourth edition will make it clear why this is one of the only recommended books by Strobist.com. \* THE lighting book for serious photographers\* The only book that covers theory and physics of light\* Full of brand new info, specific to digital photography\* Loaded with new and inspiring full color photographs

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Exclusive: A Letter from Fil Hunter, Paul Fuqua, and Steven Biver, authors of *Light--Science & Magic, on Lighting* Fil Hunter Paul Fuqua Steven Biver We photographers now live in a gadget-based world. If you don't believe me, just look at the Web or any photography magazine. What do you see but item after item extolling the virtue of this or that gizmo? The lighting side of picture making is no exception. In fact it has become so intense that a huge proportion of questions I'm asked are of the "How can I work without a . . . ?" or

“Will I ever be able to make good portraits without a . . . ?” Fortunately two sentences written for the first edition of *Light--Science & Magic* some 25 years ago by our co-author, Fil Hunter are just as relevant today as they were then, a quarter of a century ago: “No photographer has enough lighting equipment to do every assignment as well as possible.” and “Most photographers have enough equipment to do almost every assignment well.” To put those two pithy lines another way, it’s what you do with what you’ve got that counts. Sure, there most certainly are those times when the newest and niftiest piece of gear would make life a lot easier. But if you can’t afford it, don’t go out and shoot yourself. Instead, start trying to figure out a different way of getting the job done. You’ll be amazed at how many times you can. --Fil Hunter, Paul Fuqua, and Steven Biver

**Exclusive: An Example from Paul Fuqua, One of the Authors of *Light--Science & Magic*, on Lighting**

For the most part, my co-author, Steven, and I specialize in very different kinds of photography. Steven usually works using lights. I almost always work with only the ambient light I find where I’m shooting. But as different as these two ways of working are, the approaches we use to lighting our subjects are almost identical. That’s because no matter where you find it or what its sources may be, light always behaves in certain predictable ways. Take this portrait of my friend Howard. To make it I moved him into the “open” shade of a nearby barn. This flooded him with the kind of softly diffused light I had pre-visualized for the picture. I then positioned Howard close to the edge of the barn’s shadow. This allowed a small number of the sun’s brighter rays to fall on the camera right side of his face. The result of this slightly uneven lighting was twofold. First, Howard’s facial features were nicely modeled and second, the diffused light prevented any unattractive hard-edged shadows on it. What’s important about the above is that I was able to use the ambient light I found on a location to make this portrait using exactly the same basic approach that Steven could use to produce identical looking lighting using studio strobes. Simply put, light is light, and it always follows the same laws of nature wherever it is and whatever produces it. And that’s exactly what *Light--Science & Magic* is all about. -- Paul Fuqua

**Featured Photographs from the Authors of *Light--Science & Magic***

This glass of water was photographed with two lights--one on the background and the other in the foreground. (For more on photographing glass see Chapter 7). This dramatic studio portrait was created using three lights--a Fresnel for the hair light, a grid spot and, a strip light for the face. (For more on portrait lighting see Chapter 8). Exterior lamp on building wall shot with available light. The hard-edged shadow is a result of the bright specular light, the sun. Still life was lit with one large soft box. This type of light modifier enables you to create as soft and often

pleasing. "window light" look.

Location portrait photographed with dappled ambient light. Featured Excerpts from Light--Science & Magic Read a few sample pages on how the cover was made. [PDF] Read a few sample pages on how to photograph glass. [PDF]

"If you are a photographer of any type, especially on who does studio work, this is a must have reference." - BC Books (May 2007) "The first book on photographic lighting that is worth using as a text. Light - Science and Magic is about principles, not cheap tricks or the authors' portfolio." -Pete Christman, Savannah College of Art and Design. "I've found Light Science and Magic to be an invaluable tool." -Pointsinfocus.com "This is the indispensable guide to photographic lighting for photographers at all stages of their craft." -Professional Photographer Magazine "I believe Light: Science & Magic should be a part of every serious photographer's library, and I feel strongly about it." -Photofidelity.com

I have been reading a lot of photography books of late, on average two a month for over a year, and they usually address different concerns. This one deals exclusively with lighting and takes the problem at the root. This is the only one I read so far that starts with the fundamentals of what is light and how it behaves, and leads the reader down the thought process required for proper illumination of any subject starting from first principles. Many other books deal with the pure portrait lighting (Master Lighting Guide for Portrait Photographers comes to mind), only flash photography (Joe MacNally's excellent Sketching Light) or lighting gear (Syl Arena's Speedlites Handbook). "Light, Science and magic" is explicitly positioned as a textbook on lighting and only lighting. The reader is supposed to know his or her camera and how to get a proper exposure. There are a few useful hints geared towards digital photographers for instance on how underexposing makes sense for digital where overexposing did for film, the histogram and the effects of over manipulation, the curves etc. The only remark I would question in the whole book is on page 278, where the authors suggest that Ansel Adams' zones would be 0 on the left side and X on the right side of the histogram - that would be true if the sensor covered the whole dynamic range of the possible pictures, from pitch black to clean, sun-lit snow. The book starts with a recap of what is light. Full disclosure, I was trained a physicist and considering this book is subtitled "An introduction to photographic lighting" I was expecting heavy-handed approximations. Not so. The subject matter is exposed in a very simple yet not simplistic way. This is the first of all the photography books I read that properly explains polarizing versus non-polarizing reflections and the proper usage of polarizing filters with a very striking example (figures 4.11 and 4.13). It then addresses all the classic

problems: diffuse versus direct reflection (how to shoot shiny surfaces, flat versus round objects, from small objects to buildings etc.) and proposes a number of solutions to the usual and more unusual issues such as with white on white or black on black pictures. (I am surprised that the words "dynamic range" do not seem appear in the book.) It ends with portrait and how to manage the real world lighting indoors or outdoors, strobes and speedlights but without dwelling on such techniques as bouncing flash as much as many other books I have seen. All in all an excellent reference book on lighting, one I found myself thumbing through over and over even before I was done reading it the first time. If you are looking for an overview of digital photography including composition, exposure, color management etc., this book is probably too specialized (try one of my favorites in that category, one I open regularly: *Â Â Digital Photography Lighting For Dummies*). If what you want is a collection of hints and tips on how to get a nice picture in such or such situation, check out Scott Kelby's *Â Â The Digital Photography Book, Part 2* *Â Â* and *Â Â Part 4* *Â Â* (not part 3). If you are interested in composition, pausing etc., have a look at *Â Â Picture Perfect Practice*. However if what you want is a solid foundation for how light behaves and what are the classic thought processes when addressing lighting issues, this is the book for you.

Excellent resource for learning or reminding yourself of some of the finer intricacies of lighting. This was purchased specifically to get a better handle on lighting highly reflective and circular, reflective objects. The information and tips in this book allowed me to quickly get a grasp on some of the watch-outs so I could quickly dial in some techniques before a test shoot. Information is well organized chapter-by-chapter and easy to scan. This is a book that I'll keep in my library for a long time *ÂfÂçÂ â ¬Â â* mostly as a reference. I would recommend at least a basic understanding/practice with off-camera lighting or light technique. Some of the concepts explained later in the book reference ideas that are initially hard to grasp until you've gone through the trial-and-error of testing light on products or people.

A must have book for learning photographic lighting. Finally, I found a book that actually teaches lighting concepts instead of the common "cookbook" type guides, through a recommendation! After searching , *Light Science & Magic* didn't even show up! After practicing the techniques, you will be able to creatively light anything. While *Light Science & Magic* covers lighting concepts well, you should look elsewhere for equipment usage. There's some information about setting up a studio but it's too little to be very useful.

Light is the medium of the photographer, and this book is an excellent resource to understand how it behaves and its effect on a photograph. Unlike a lot of books that simply introduce a lighting scheme or recipe to how to achieve a certain look to a photograph, this book goes a step further to describe what is happening to the light and how it affects the final result. The examples and diagrams are extremely helpful and walks the reader through a number of modifications to the lighting of a scene so you can see exactly what is happening. This might not be a book for everyone, and I've certainly seen pros that couldn't tell you why they place lights the way they do, other than the fact that it's worked for them in similar situations in the past. This book helps you break out of those conventional schemes and helps you understand how to manipulate light both under studio and on location to achieve your personal vision. I would go so far as to say this should be required reading for any photographer regardless of level of expertise. Don't just read the book though, I encourage you to use your own equipment to work through each of the lighting scenarios and achieve the results for yourself. You'll work for your portfolio at the end of it and taken your photography by at least one level if not more by the end!

Books that are hard to put down once picked up are rare these days. Be you a budding photographer in need of education or a seasoned pro looking for a new trick or two, this book is a solid treatise on the topic of light generally and photographic lighting specifically. Topics range from light science to light placement to light polarization, etc. Lots of real examples help nail down concepts and invite the curious to try the techniques themselves. My library is mostly electronic these days. Shelf space for real books is reserved for only the most special, seasoned or useful writings. A new print book almost always never makes the grade. For photographers this book easily makes the cut. The book delves reasonably deep into topics, but is arranged so you can assimilate new methods and tips with sporadic readings. Yes... this means this is a good bathroom reader. This is certainly the best \$21 I've spent in a great while.

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