



# Photographing Glass

## Techniques and Lighting

by

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# Glass Photographing Techniques



Taking good quality pictures of glass objects can initially seem difficult, but there are some simple techniques which can be used to obtain dramatic results with minimal effort.

The following examples show several basic setups:

1. This is a favourite of many professionals who need to get instant, fast, clean shots of clear glass.
2. The second and third techniques illustrate dark field and light field photography - don't worry about the terminology, the techniques are actually quite simple.
3. The final technique is called under lighting and can give very dramatic, impressive results.

The technique you choose depends on the style you prefer the results you are trying to achieve, and the equipment you have.

To simplify the setup, a light tent such as the 'Cubelite' by Lastolite is used to diffuse the light and provide a seamless background (other light tents are available!) The main light source is daylight balanced bulbs (5000K) and a daylight balanced illuminated flat panel for bottom lighting. It is very important that all light sources match and have the same colour temperature.

# Graduated Background

A simple shortcut popular and commonly seen on trade magazine covers, is the use of a graduated continuous-tone background.

The background creates the illusion of light falling off into blackness. These backgrounds are custom made to fit the 'Cubelite' perfectly; they are longer to fill the 'Cubelite' from top to bottom & no trimming is required.

This background is also fantastic for making short-work of shooting clear glass.



# Photographing clear glass crystal on light backgrounds



Place the illuminated flat panel inside the 'Cubelite', beneath the nylon sweep and align the illuminated flat panel so that the longest side is running from the front of the 'Cubelite' to the back.

Place the glass on top of the sweep, over the light panel, 1 inch from the front of the light panel, so that most of the light is behind the glass. This will illuminate more of the glass, from the bottom on up.

Add lighting from both sides - outside the 'Cubelite' so it will be soft and diffused without harsh light reflections.

Insert black paper as rolled tubes, on either side of the stem. This adds nice black reflections back into the stem, to help define the shape. Adjust the paper until you can see the black reflections appear where you like them.

Photograph using a tripod to avoid blur. Set aperture f8.0 for a maximum depth of field, and exposure compensation of E.V. +1.0 to lighten the background still more.



Glass edges disappear against a light background



Black paper adds definition to the edge of the glass



Two Lights position on the side

# Photographing clear glass crystal on a dark background



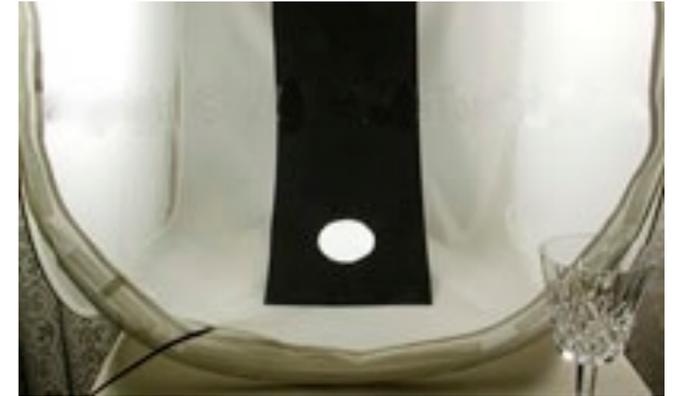
Place the illuminated flat panel inside the 'Cubelite', beneath the standard nylon sweep.

Cut a hole in a piece of black, matte paper from an art shop. The hole should be *slightly smaller* than the base of the stemware.

Place the stemware on the paper, over the light panel, aligned with the hole so the light can shine through the hole and illuminate the glass. The paper should continue on up following the curve of the sweep, creating a seamless black background.

Add one light source from behind the 'Cubelite', and be sure to shoot over the top of the paper just a little. This will help illuminate the upper rim.

Photograph using a tripod to avoid blur. Set the aperture at f8.0 for a maximum depth of field, with a exposure compensation of E.V. -0.7 to darken the background still more.



Black paper with hole



Align stem over cut hole



Single light position in back

# Shooting a glass goblet using underlighting to create a graduated background with an illuminated effect



The orientation of the light panel will effect your image. Pull it forward, push it back, rotate it, until you see the effect you desire.

In the image on the left there is a shorter, dramatic transition from white to grey created by aligning the light panel sideways.

In the image on the right there is a smoother, longer gradation of white to grey. By rotating the light panel lengthwise more of the glass, shown right, is illuminated.

In both cases, position the goblet toward the front of the light panel. With more of the light panel behind your glassware, the higher the illumination effect will travel up your glass.



6x8" Illuminated panel in a horizontal position



Daylight balanced illuminated flat panel



Illuminated panel rotated 90 degrees, the illumination travels further up the goblet.

# *Thank You!*

This presentation will also be available on the

WillinghamPhotoClub

website:

<http://www.willinghamphotoclub.org.uk>

# Q & A



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