

Making a Studio Photograph of Your Bowl

*using a seamless backdrop paper with three lights
setup.*

Fred Williamson, for CVW 3/19/2024 demo.



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The overall setup



Mike Sorge photos in this month's newsletter. Perhaps Mike should be doing this demo!



Another Mike Sorge shot with his new lighting system.
Andoer Softbox Photography Lighting Kit, adjustable LED bulbs \$139 Amazon



Jeff Corwin's fine vessel. The white background works, and the table is not too distracting, plus it gives scale. But the piece is essentially backlit by the shadow.



There are many alternative setups. Here is a simple one which I tried out with limited results, but Barbara Dill uses something like this to good advantage.

Dim the outside light







Various backdrop papers to pull down



Full spectrum bulbs. 65W, (I use 45W) 13W overhead, and cell phone camera remotes



My table with plywood enlarger than can be slid out.



Plywood adjustable table surface pulled out



Ready to place a bowl.



Bowl shot with basement fluorescent and window daylight



Bowl shot with overhead warm light bulb



Bowl shot at f20 aperature, window light too



Bowl at f32 smallest aperture....deep focus but very long exposure ... window light too.



The next 4 shots are unedited of bowls with this setup



Here I am featuring the void in the bowl, with the inside light helping a lot.



Which is better, the head on or this side profile shot? It is dramatic too, especially with the shadow.



Shot with Pixel Android Phone. Obviously the color balance is all wrong.



Use a camera remote to eliminate shake.



One of my favorite bowls, but shot on light background which has been hard to deal with.



A more successful globe shot.
Notice globes and vases are best shot head on, turned so the upper lip shows.



A figured maple after it is cropped.



The same maple after Photo Shop. Notice front is in focus, back is not.



This is the first bowl show I made with a lot of light focused inside. The gallery owner liked it so much that I took notice, and have gone for this effect whenever I can.



A recent sweet cherry showing the light from above effect too.
Notice the light spot in the shadow in front, a nice detail.



One last vase photo, showing good background fade, and that the two light reflections don't spoil it that much. Again, note the light on the lip.



Here is an open form, with focus totally on the front where the drama is.
But you can still see the whole top edge all around.



For a salad bowl the camera does better being up a little, to show the inside.
Here you can see the focus is more towards the back.



The overhead light is what makes this one pop.



Here I went even higher to show more of the figure. It is hard to do justice to a piece like this. The unaided eye can roam all over it and put the whole effect together



The same bowl on from above (actually propped up on the paper)
Notice how different the same background paper appears. All because of longer exposure here.



A dramatically figured oak burl, but does it look round? It could be a plate for all one could tell. Perhaps if I'd lit more from one side the depth would have shown.



This sugar maple platter shows its shape better from an elevated rather than overhead shot.



Sometimes you want a group shot for interest and variety. From a hollow red maple, looking down to show more.



One time I carried a set of smaller bowls down to my basement photo area stacked inside of a larger bowl. Setting it down, I was inspired to make this shot.



Here is a group shot that didn't work. Way too busy.



This is a set with a pen for scale.







A parting shot. This is good cropping for a medium size bowl. I leave more space around for a smaller bowl, and crop close on big ones to make them look big. Also notice that there is a bit more space above than below the bowl. I prefer it that way, but there are no rules.

The End



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