

For CVW demo March 19, 2024.

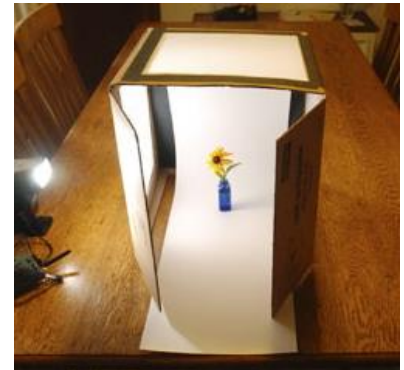
Overall plan Goal, backdrop setup, lighting setup, tripod and remote, cropping, editing to use online.

**Goal of taking good photos:** Clear image, no distractions, highlight most dramatic features.

First used for applying to craft shows, then for website and general online sales. Early craft show applications highly favored good photography, so big incentive for me to learn. Used to be take film shots, send in to be developed for slides and prints, and only then find the color or exposure were way off. Now digital is massive improvement, can see results of settings immediately.

I've tried many different setups, from the photo box to the reflecting umbrella to old fashioned photo bulbs (very hot and fragile). Now I use 5000 K daylight CFL bulbs, 45 Watts for side lights and 13 Watts for overhead. Two sources for camera and lights supplies are [B&H Photo](#) and [Adorama](#).

I use layers of a polyester diffusing cloth over the lights soften the shadows a lot. Link: [B&H product](#)



Mike Sorge introduced me to his new lighting system, the Andoer Softbox Photography Lighting Kit Professional Studio Equipment with 20"x28" Softbox . The LED lights can adjust from 2800 to 5700 Kelvin warmth, and are quite reasonable at \$139. [Amazon](#)

This three lights and a seamless backdrop paper do the job for me, and allowing for all kinds of easy adjustments for each bowl.

For the seamless backdrop paper, I have tried light gray, medium gray, and dark gray, using the very dark for light colored bowls. But when posting or displaying a series of photos, varying backgrounds are distracting. So I've settled on one medium neutral gray color.

Depending on exposure it will look brighter or darker, but it generally stays in the same range. (show gallery of past work) The closest to what I use now is [Savage Paper, Fashion Gray #56](#). Mike uses Thunder Gray for his background.

### **What to look for in composing your shot:**

Tell the story of your bowl. Not literally, but still, it's a round bowl which you want to show to advantage. It was once a spinning piece of tree that has become a finished product. It's a round object with depth and character. You should feature a continuous upper edge in the image to show that it's an open vessel. An overhead light will make that edge brighter and

easier to read. An overhead light also casts a shadow of the whole piece, which to my eye seems adds depth.

I've had no luck getting rid of all glare reflections from the lights. Multiple layers of diffracting cloth over the lamps help a lot. I think a bit of glare spots add to the sense of depth.

I use a Canon XTi SLR camera which has a screen to preview my shot, which makes all the difference. I am using a cable connection from my camera which will allow its screen to be shown on the monitors. This will let you see the effects of changing the placement of the lights, both the angles and distance

It occurs to me that most people won't have this kind of camera, but they will have a cell phone. I will try to duplicate this process using my android Pixel phone The iPhone is probably superior for this.

I set my camera on aperture priority of f20. A larger F stop number means a smaller lens opening, ie the diameter of the hole the light comes through. Most cell phones are aperture f1.5 to f2.4, fairly large, so they can get the most light on the sensor. The f20 requires a lot longer exposure, therefore the necessary tripod and camera remote. But the smaller aperture means more depth of field , ie the back of the bowl being in focus as well as the front. It's a challenge.

A pinhole camera has a huge depth of field. My demos should let you see this effect, I may even go to f 30.

Setting the color balance is very important. With the Canon I can take a shot of a white piece of paper and use that as my custom color balance. I find I have to add a bit of darker white to the copy paper to make it more accurate. The iPhone might well do better in achieving an accurate color balance. You may even find you get better results using warmer light bulbs.

My PowerPoint should illustrate this whole process. But in the live demo you can see the effects of moving the side lights closer or farther away, and lower or higher up. The overhead is very important to set right, especially to highlight the upper rim without too much glare.

Finally, take a little time to rotate your bowl to the best side, and set back to check the lighting and glare. Then shoot and check your results.

**Editing.** Once your photo is made it is time to work with it on the computer, or on your phone. I do it all on my desktop computer, using several programs.

First I go to [Digital Photo Professional](#), a free Canon program, that has a nifty Block Editing feature. I can select a whole set of images, choose to re-size them, and save to a new folder, making the images I upload to the website smaller and thus quicker to load, without losing any noticeable definition. I use 2,000 pixels wide.

I then go to Image Expert, a very OLD Sierra program that came with an Epson digital camera. I use it for quick cropping and then renaming them to something identifiable to me for uploading. In the cropping I try to leave a little space around the bowl, more if the bowl is small, less if it is larger, and to leave less at the bottom than on the top. Cropping and re-naming is something you can do with the program of your choice.

Finally I use PhotoShop to make any needed corrections in color, or to dodge out pesky spots in the background. It has a **Levels** selection that can really make a photo pop if the exposure is too far off. Jeff Fleisher demonstrated this for us years ago. Sadly, Adobe Premium Elements with PhotoShop is pretty expensive. A free alternative is [Photopea](#), an online editing program that is remarkably similar to photoshop. I will try to demonstrate it if I have the WiFi for it.

Finally, practice makes perfect. Keep trying variations until you get results that satisfy you.

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