

From time to time every photographer needs to produce an image that reignites their enthusiasm and reaffirms their self-confidence

FLASHES AND SPLASHES

In this tutorial Rory Laubscher demonstrates how to use fairly straightforward equipment to create some very dramatic images

Setup

For this shot you will need a table with reflective surface, wine glass, jug for pouring water and a towel for cleanup. Your room will have a white wall to bounce light off and low ambient light (set up with adequate light, but dim/turn off the lights before taking test shots and the final image, as this image relies on flash lighting to freeze motion).

Set up the table near the white wall and place the glass on your reflective surface, near the far edge of the table. Light reflecting off the wall needs to effectively backlight the glass, this also affects where the edge of the table/reflective surface cuts through the stem of the glass.

Place your flash on the floor below the glass, aiming the flash head to illuminate the wall just above the glass, this will provide backlight for the glass as well as the water.

Compose the shot with enough negative space above and below the glass to allow for the stream of water and the reflection of the glass. Once your composition and focus is set switch your lens to manual focus.



Gear: camera, tripod, telephoto lens (100mm or longer, flash, ability to trigger off-camera flash (second flash, cable, infrared/radio transmitter), cable shutter release

Take the image

Begin with a test shot without water, checking exposure (making adjustments as needed with regards to ISO, flash power and aperture), focus on the glass, composition of the glass and vertical alignment of the stem of the glass and position of the light on the wall relative to the glass.

Using the cable release in one hand and pouring with the jug in the other hand, take your final shot. This image can be tricky simply because you have one chance to capture the pour as the water hits the bottom of the glass and timing is a big factor.

Images taken after the glass starts filling do not look as dramatic and taking further shots means drying the set, setting up a new glass and achieving focus and composition all over again. Pouring faster from higher above the glass will create a more dramatic splash, and subsequently, a more dramatic image. Be careful, as this also means the water will be more likely to splash on the floor near your flash equipment.

SETTINGS

The following are the settings I used; feel free to use them as a starting point.


Camera

- Manual exposure.
- Shutter speed: 1/160s.
- Aperture: +- f11 for adequate depth of field.
- ISO – 400.
- White Balance: Flash.

Flash

- Triggered with pocketwizards.
- Flash Power: 1/64.



Check out Rory's further creative suggestions at Dphoto.co.nz then get flashing and splashing yourself and let us know how it works out for you at pherbst@dphoto.co.nz 



These images were taken on my first attempt, and none of them impressed me enough

Rory Laubscher runs Firefly Photography in Auckland and runs teaching workshops on flash photography and off-camera flash techniques.