

# PORTRAITS

## in Broad Daylight

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Portraiture is a very popular subject among photographers. What most of us tend to imagine when we allude to this category is a model ensconced in an air-conditioned studio, facing a camera on a tripod with an array of artificial lighting embodied by strategically placed flash units and projectors with reflectors to match. Photographers are free to change background colors from one frame to the next if needed. Once everything is in place the model poses and the shooting begins.

A studio is suitable for a commercial photographer. However, studio photographic equipment is expensive and unaffordable to many of us. Also, a studio has its constraints on several levels, such as: you have to invite the model over to your studio, and this is not always met with great enthusiasm on his or her part. Furthermore, the model may live far away from your destination (say, in another state or country) and may not be available. Instead of the static, restricting studio environment let us consider searching for subjects in everyday situations. This allows you to photograph the subjects, in their own comfortable environment, using natural light—in other words, in broad daylight. Move around your subjects seeking a favorable angle without posing them. How does one accomplish this?

Simply go out on the street, searching for interesting faces. This might sound impossible because the person in question will soon pose the inevitable question: Which newspaper are you working for? If you are not working for an established, well-known newspaper, permission will not be forthcoming—especially if your subject stands to reap no financial gain from the situation (some do ask for payment to be photographed). On the other hand, trying to explain that you are photographing for artistic, not commercial, purposes does not always



*Yemenite Girl*



Nigerian woman



Young girl from Israel



Portuguese youth

sound convincing and might even be met with suspicion.

But, do not give up. How do you get around the situation? A possible solution: follow the media's announcements about forthcoming special happenings such as religious events, national feasts, festivals, parades, carnivals and so on. Naturally, these occasions attract the written and electronic media's photojournalists. Hence, those attending these events will take it

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*Young Ethiopian girl*

or inappropriate lighting conditions, or if you stand to lose the picture with passing time, activate phase two: approach the subject but do not press the shutter. Go through the motions of a photographer, moving slowly around the subject, who, naturally, begins to visually follow your movements. This action will alert the subject to your intentions and will give them an appropriate amount of time to respond. When conditions are favorable start shooting several pictures. Finally, always thank the subject for his or her cooperation.

After shooting portraits for many years the photographic equipment has changed dramatically, but it has always included a SLR system. An auto-focus camera may greatly facilitate your picture-taking in terms of sharpness and speedy camera response. After experimenting with several lenses, the 105 mm seems to work the best for portraits. Whether using a film or digital camera, shooting candid portraits can be an exciting kind of photography. 📷

Note: Written permission is often important when photographing people: be prepared with model release forms.

for granted that photographs will be taken. And a spirit of cooperation will replace the air of suspicion. All of a sudden, everybody wants, and is willing, to be photographed. If some people are unwilling to be photographed, accept and respect their wishes without any fanfare.

Upon arrival at an event, mingle with the participants as well as the onlookers. Scan the crowd for interesting faces—preferably with attire to match. When you find an interesting subject, act in two phases. Phase one: put some distance between you and your subject, make sure the area will be free from intrusive crowds and, most importantly, that the light is suitable. If satisfied with the conditions, approach the subject and take the picture. If you encounter problems inherent in undesirable intrusions



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*American woman*