

Riverside Community College
Photo 14 Lighting & Portraiture
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Assignment 9: Low Key

Due: Apr 27th

Format: Digital | B&W or Color

*"I wish more people felt that photography was an adventure the same as life itself
and felt that their individual feelings were worth expressing.
To me, that makes photography more exciting."*

Harry Callahan

Both High Key images and Low Key images make an intensive use of contrast, but in a very different way. When approaching a shoot of a dramatic portrait, the decision of making it a High Key, Low Key or "just" a regular image has great impact about the mood that this picture will convey. While High Key images are considered happy and will show your subject as a tooth-paste poster; Low Key portraits are dramatic and convey a lot of atmosphere and tension. Let's explore those two dramatic lighting alternatives.

In Low Key images the tone is darker, and the controlling color is usually black. There will be lots of dark areas in the picture. It is very common for Low Key images to give special attention to contour lines, emphasizing them with highlights.

Low Key images are also notable for a great deal of contrast that they display. Most notable is the rim light. A light surrounding the subject illuminating only the contour of the shape. So the contrast is between dark shape and bright contour.

High Key, Low Key and mood – usually, High Key images are considered happy. They convey positive emotions, while Low Key images are darker and present drama or tension.

This assignment is to create a dark and moody image or low key image. It can be either B&W or color and a portrait or still-life. This assignment can be either horizontal or vertical. The narrow dimension for this assignment is 9 inches.

Dark Food Photography - SHOOTING and EDITING | 17:16
https://youtu.be/qX_Gy69U41I

Low Key Portraits: Gavin Hoey | 10:48
<https://youtu.be/Ba1Hiq3w3kc>

