

BASIC LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

A GUIDE TO JUMPSTART
YOUR JOURNEY IN
STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY.



WRITTEN BY DANIEL NORTON
IN COLLABORATION WITH ADORAMA

CLEAN

This classic setup is great for flattering portraits and commercial type images. A large umbrella (at least 36") creates a beautifully soft and diffused key light while two umbrellas give a nice even exposure across the background. Make sure to check the exposure and ensure the background is completely white (typically 1-2 stops over exposed).



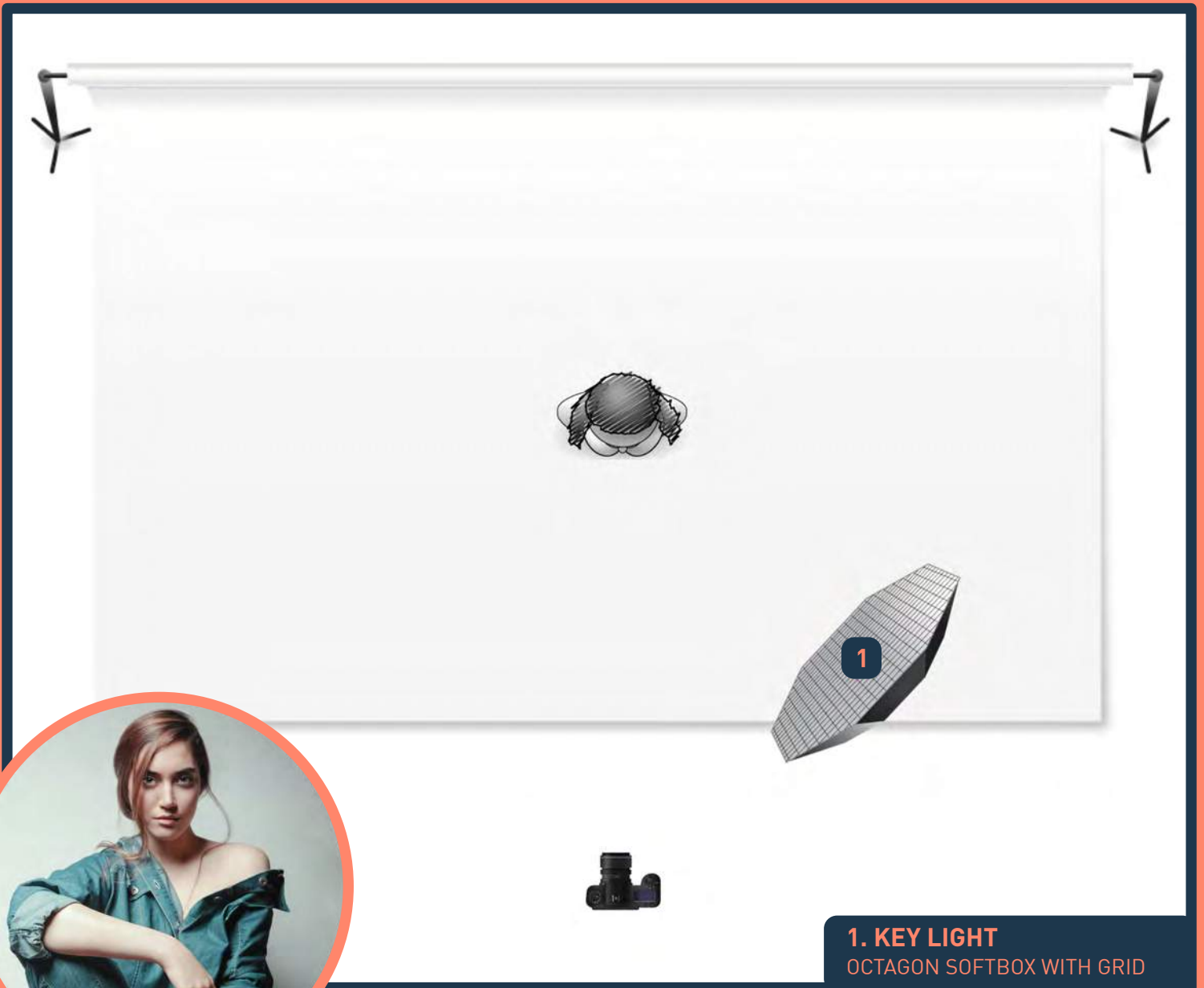
CATALOG

This is one of the most commonly used lighting styles for catalog images. A large octagon (5 ft.+) to one side gives nice “wrap around” light that needs just a little fill from a large white reflector. The background is evenly illuminated by bouncing flash into large white V-Flats which also act as flags to keep the background light from spilling forward onto your subject.



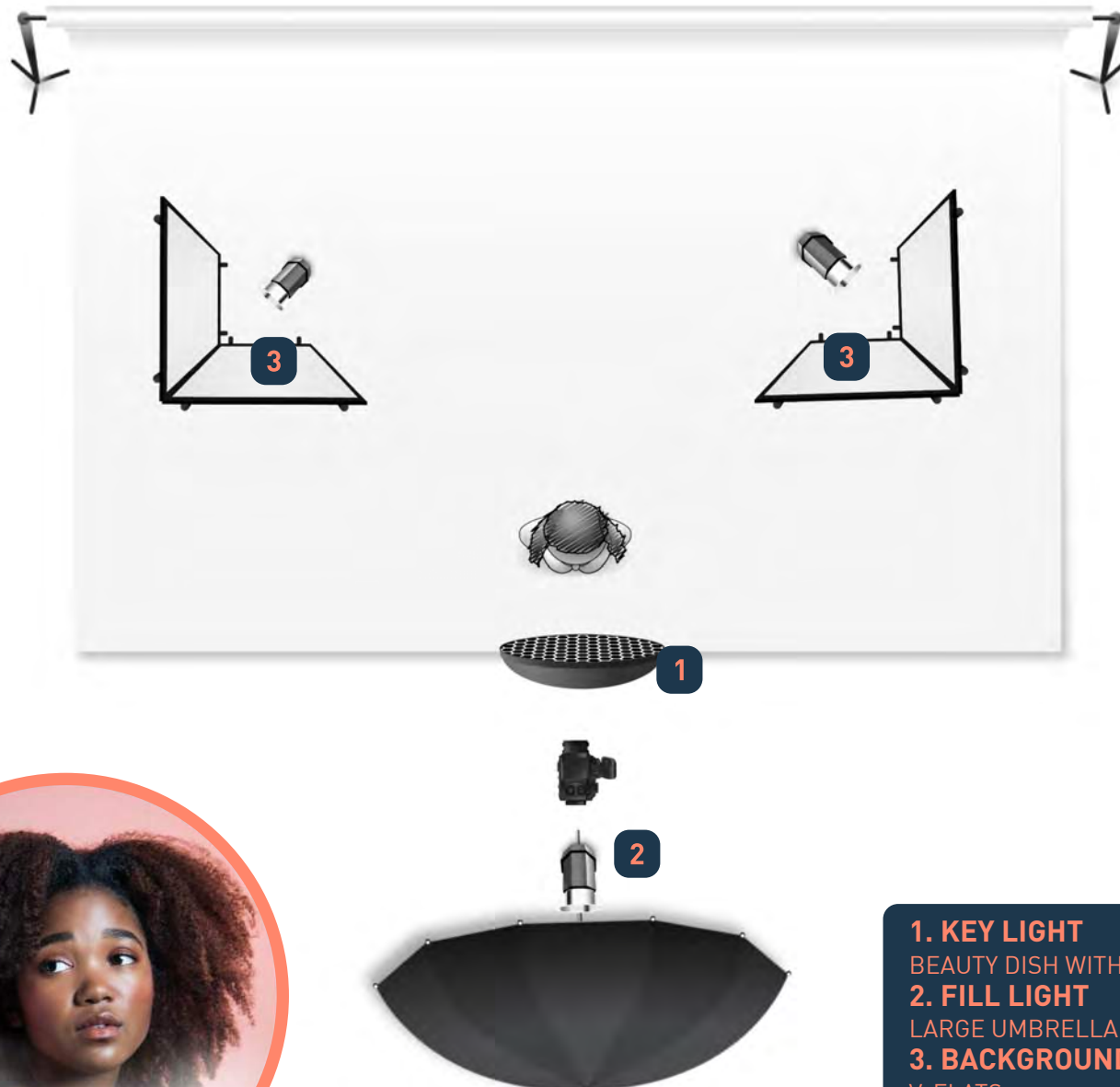
RAW

This lighting scenario is used in editorial fashion or to make interesting portraits. A medium sized octagon softbox (usually 3') is fitted with a grid. The distance from the subject to background and the angle of light create a moody dark grey background out of the white paper.



BEAUTY

In this set-up, a beauty dish fitted with a grid is used to shape the subject's face while a large umbrella behind the camera position offers a soft on-axis fill. V-Flats are used to bounce strobe light onto the background while keeping it off the subject.

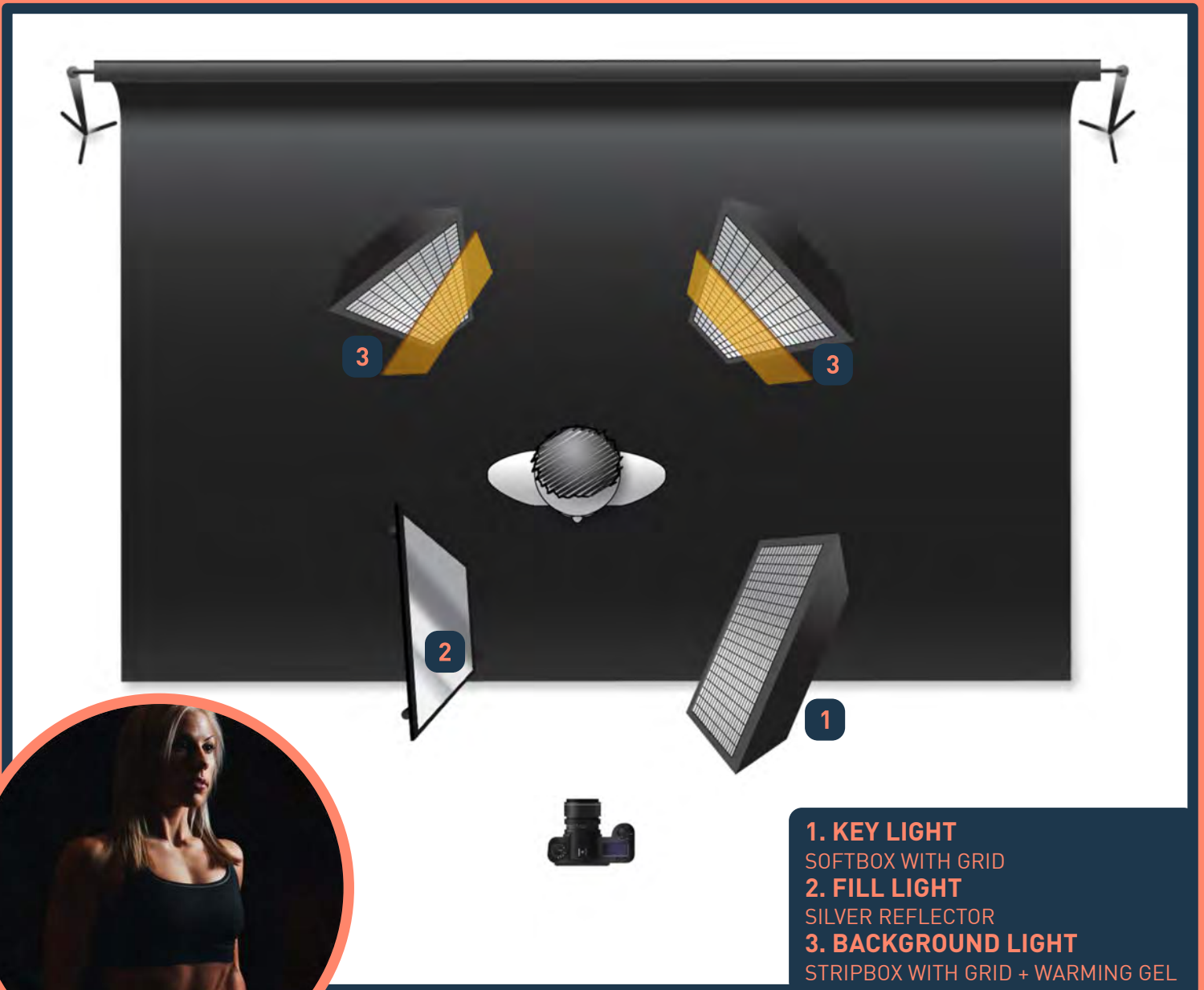


- 1. KEY LIGHT**
BEAUTY DISH WITH GRID
- 2. FILL LIGHT**
LARGE UMBRELLA
- 3. BACKGROUND LIGHT**
V-FLATS

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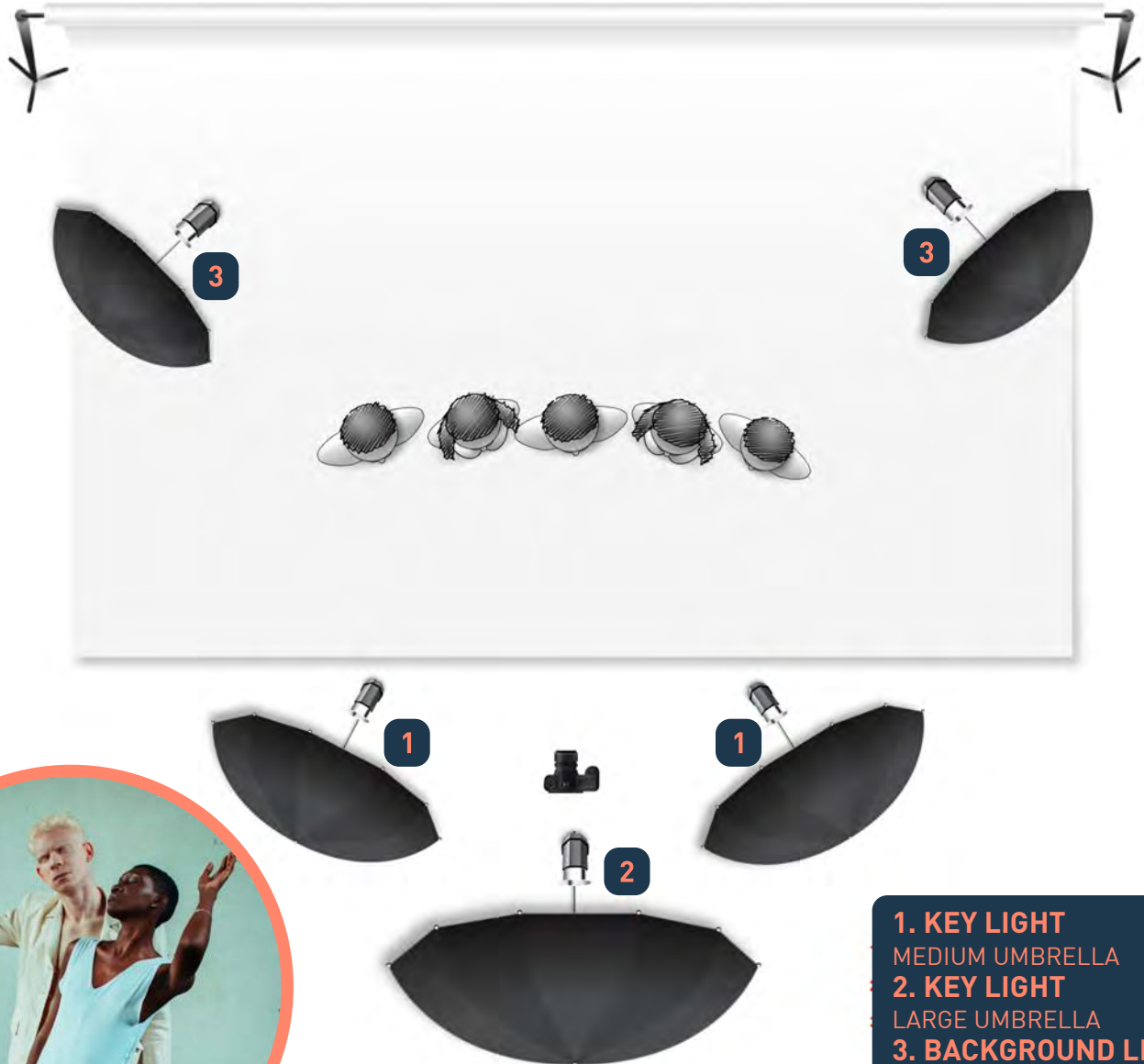
ATHLETIC

This set-up produces soft but contrasty light which highlights the strength of your subject. A softbox as the key light from one side, filled in with a grid and a silver reflector for fill shapes the subject's face while two strip boxes with grids showcase the shape & form of your subject. The background lights are warmed with a CTO gel to give both light and color contrast.



GROUP

As much as we love to create shape and form in portraits, when making a group shot; soft, even light is the goal. Umbrellas will evenly light the background and 3 umbrellas in the front are used as a key. The center umbrella should be larger than the others as it will be further away. For instance, two 36" umbrellas with a 48" umbrella in the center.

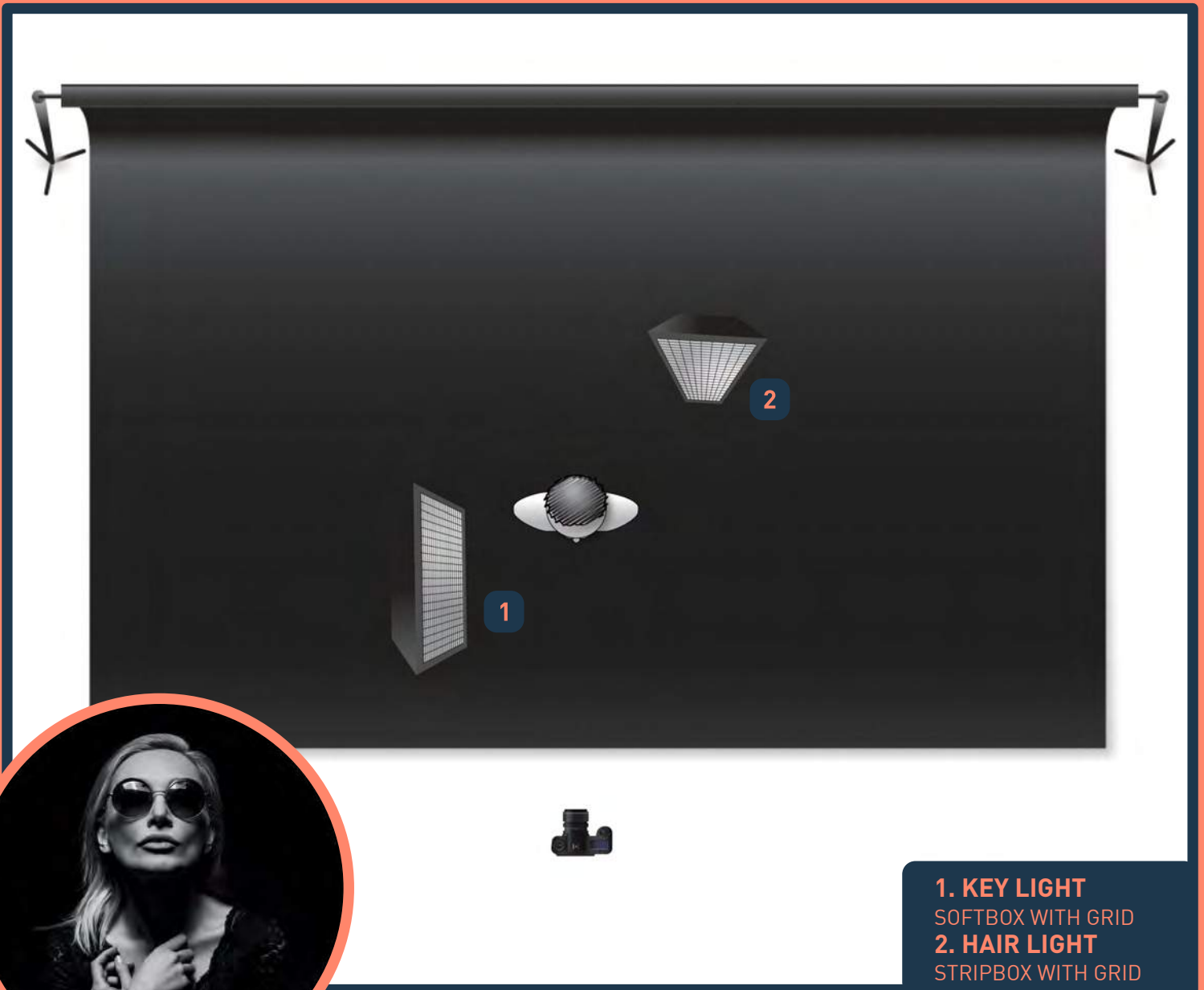


- 1. KEY LIGHT**
MEDIUM UMBRELLA
- 2. KEY LIGHT**
LARGE UMBRELLA
- 3. BACKGROUND LIGHT**
MEDIUM UMBRELLA

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DRAMATIC

A great way to add drama to portraits is to use shadows. Split lighting will create mystery and using a separation light from the back will prevent the subject from just falling off completely into darkness.



Adorama

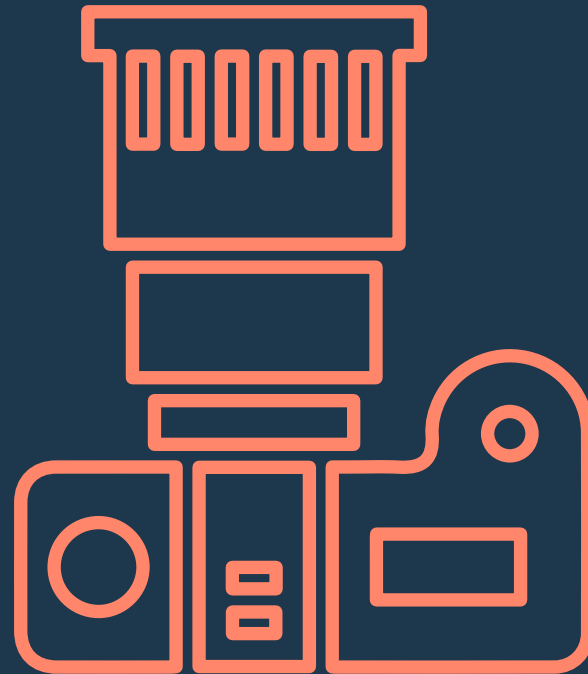


ART OF VISUALS

THANKS FOR READING

THIS GUIDE WAS WRITTEN
BY DANIEL NORTON IN
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**ALL STUDIO DIAGRAMS WERE DESIGNED ON SYLIGHTS.COM*



JUST GO FOR IT.