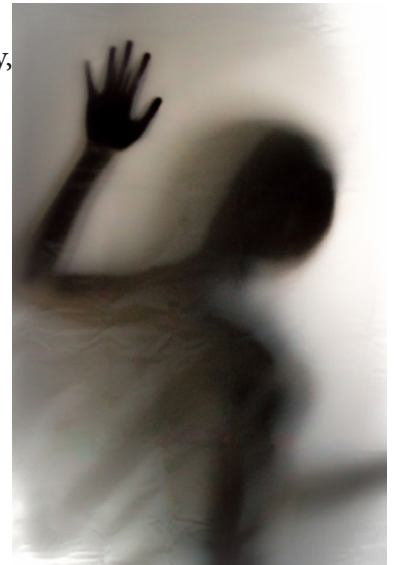


SILHOUETTE PHOTOGRAPHY

Research silhouette photography. Pinterest and Google Images will both have good inspiration. Be mindful that some silhouette photography can get a little sexy, so be aware of your specific searches if you wish to avoid that. Choose the type of silhouette photography you're interested in, and dig deeper into those examples (ex. Flora shots in front of sunset).

Select location and time. Silhouettes can be shot outdoors or indoors. Outdoor silhouettes are often positioned in front of sunrise or sunset, although there are other alternatives including night shots in front of car headlights, etc. Also be aware of when natural light will be gone and how this will impact your photo.

Choose a backlighting source. Keep in mind that you'll want to have your strongest lighting right behind the areas you want to show the most. For example, if you're shooting a portrait silhouette and you want the face and upper body to show the most, make sure you have stronger lighting higher up. Also make sure your source is bright enough to create good contrast. For my examples, I shot around 4:30 in the afternoon on a cloudy day so we had good soft light coming in through both of my bedroom windows. I also used two 110 lumen flashlights, duct taped plastic bags around them to diffuse the light, and set them up on the ground to add illumination underneath my subject.



Optional: select material to go in front of subject.

Silhouettes can be taken behind translucent material to add an artsy edge. The most professional option is Translum, a plastic sheeting that goes for roughly \$38-\$49 depending on the vendor, quality, etc. Translum is also consistently used as a light-diffusing backdrop. Since many of us aren't ready to go spend money right off, I simply used a shower curtain that I picked up for under \$10. It's important to opt for the frosted white and not clear curtain though. Also it helps to let the curtain stretch out to lose the score marks, although I know from experience those can be removed in both Lightroom and Photoshop. Stretch material tightly and secure to either light stands, a doorway, or some frame-like structure. I duct taped the shower curtain to the doorframe between my living room and bedroom for this example.

Prep and position model/subject. Especially if you are using material in front of the model, be sure to demonstrate how they will look. Show how closer body parts will appear sharper and in higher contrast. It is also important to have the model in tighter clothing that will not fuzz body lines—unless you want that for your shot. Also be aware of this as you position the model throughout the

shoot. Give them directions on how close to bring certain body parts as well as how to pose. It's also fun to have them free pose for a while and to snap whatever they come up with.

Expose camera for the lighted area. If you are shooting in front of sunset, expose your camera for the sky. Be careful to not expose directly for the sun, but aim to the side into the skyline. This will ensure that your sky looks crisp while your subject is underexposed to a silhouette. If shooting indoors like our example, be sure to darken the room the photographer is in. Expose for the shower curtain without the model. When they are added, they should show through as a silhouette. Typically a lower shutter speed is necessary, so be sure to have a tripod on hand to avoid camera shake ruining your photos.

Show feedback shots. Show the model what they look like as the shoot progresses. It's hard to imagine how a certain pose comes across in such a variable-contrast setting, and showing examples can help them envision what you are trying to portray with each pose.

