BUILD AND USE AN INEXPENSIVE LIGHT TENT

The idea for this project came from this web site where you can get more instructions and examples:

http://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-make-a-inexpensive-light-tent

Light tents are used to provide an even light source for photography of small objects.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. A sturdy cardboard box, any size you want, preferably square. It is nice to have one about the size of the poster board that will be used for the background.

2. Enough white fabric, like muslin, to cover two sides and the top of the box.

3. Poster board for a background. White works great, but try other colors as well.

4. Tape, glue, Velcro, or some other fastener to hold the fabric in place.

5. Lights, such as portable clamp lights, or for more money, daylight balanced photo lights.

6. Material, such as scrap wood, for a frame to hold the lights. You could avoid this by using adjustable desk lamps.

HOW TO BUILD YOUR LIGHT TENT

1. Cut out four sides of a cardboard box, leaving the back and bottom intact, with about an inch or two of cardboard left around each opening to support the box.

2. Cut out fabric to fit the two sides and the top. Tape it on if you want it to be permanent, otherwise experiment with temporary fasteners like Velcro or twist pins. Temporary fasters allow you to remove a panel for access.

3. Slide in your poster board and place it so it curves in the back without creasing it.

4. Build a frame to hold your lights in position.

USING YOUR LIGHT TENT

1. You will need a camera and lens capable of close focus.

2. Place lights on both sides and the top. Adjust light and shadow by using one, two, or all three lights.

3. Set your camera on the proper white balance to match your light source. For example, if using ordinary light bulbs, you will need to set your camera for tungsten light (refer to your camera manual).

4. Place the object to be photographed inside the box, put your camera on a tripod, set the lens to a small ƒ stop (like ƒ16 or ƒ22) to get good depth of field, turn on the lights, and take the picture.

5. If the object is small enough you will probably be able to photograph it full frame, but for larger objects, the sides of the box will show in the photo and will need to be cropped out.

6. Some touchup will probably be needed in a photo editing program to crop the image and to remove blemishes in the background.

7. When you are done, be sure to return your camera's white balance to its normal setting.

EXAMPLES

ABOVE - Top and left lights were used, creating a shadow on the right.

LEFT - All three lights were used, creating fewer shadows.

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