A FIRST CLASS OF PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

QIWEI LI

Before going on…

OVERVIEW

Three key factors to take good photos:

- To tell a story that has a distinct theme

- To highlight the subject

- To remove any irrelevant objects or features

OVERVIEW

The four skills to take good photos:

- Subject scale

- Subject isolation
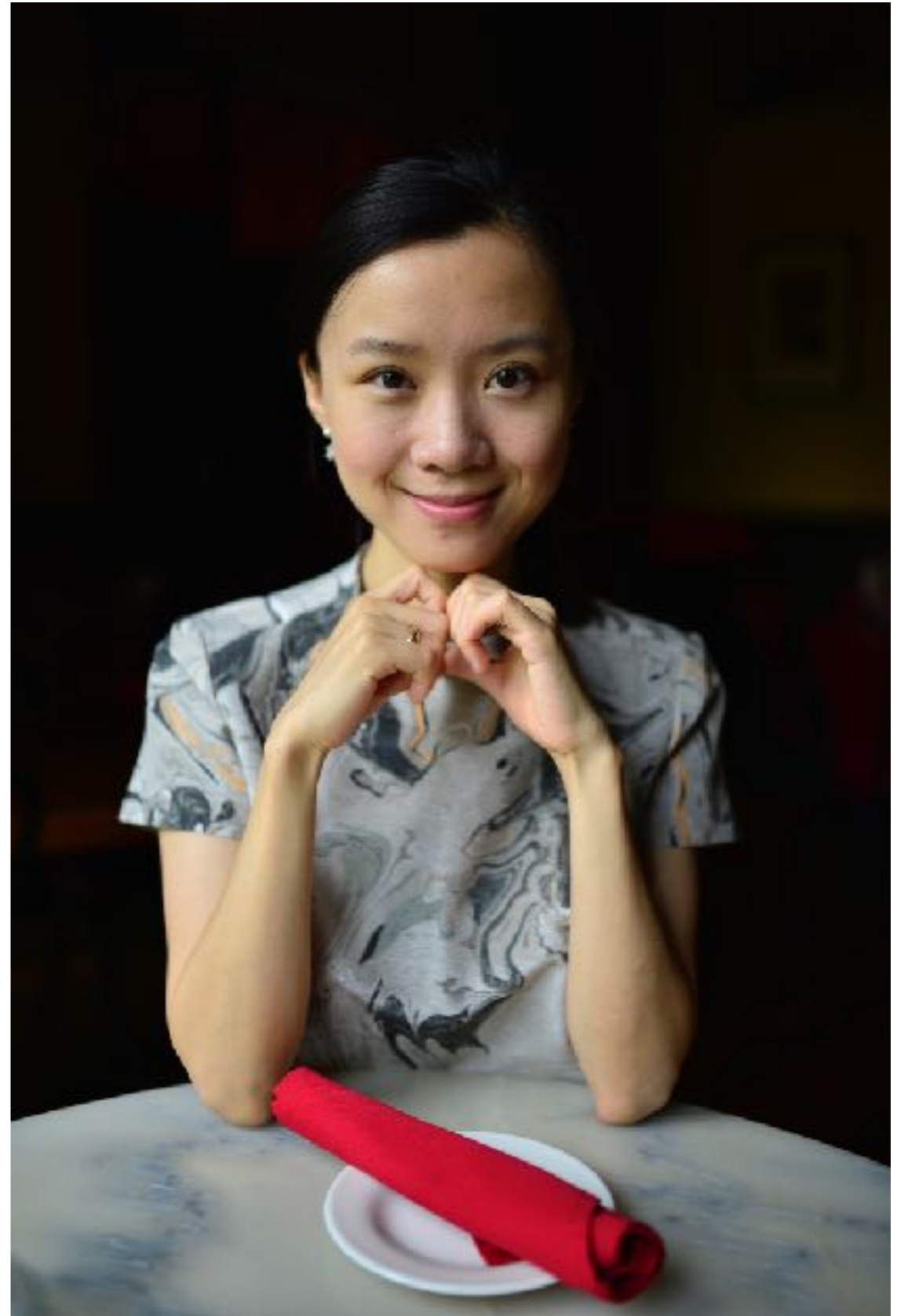
- Color

- Lighting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- BASIC CAMERA SETTING

- IMAGE COMPOSITION

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CAMERA SETTING

- Focusing on the closet eyes

  - Set the aperture priority mode: Av (Canon) or A (Nikon)

  - Change the autofocus (AF) mode to ONE SHOT (Canon) or AF-S (Nikon)

  - Aim the single focus point over the nearest eye or the left eye if both eyes are in the same plane through the viewfinder or use the face detection function through the live view screen
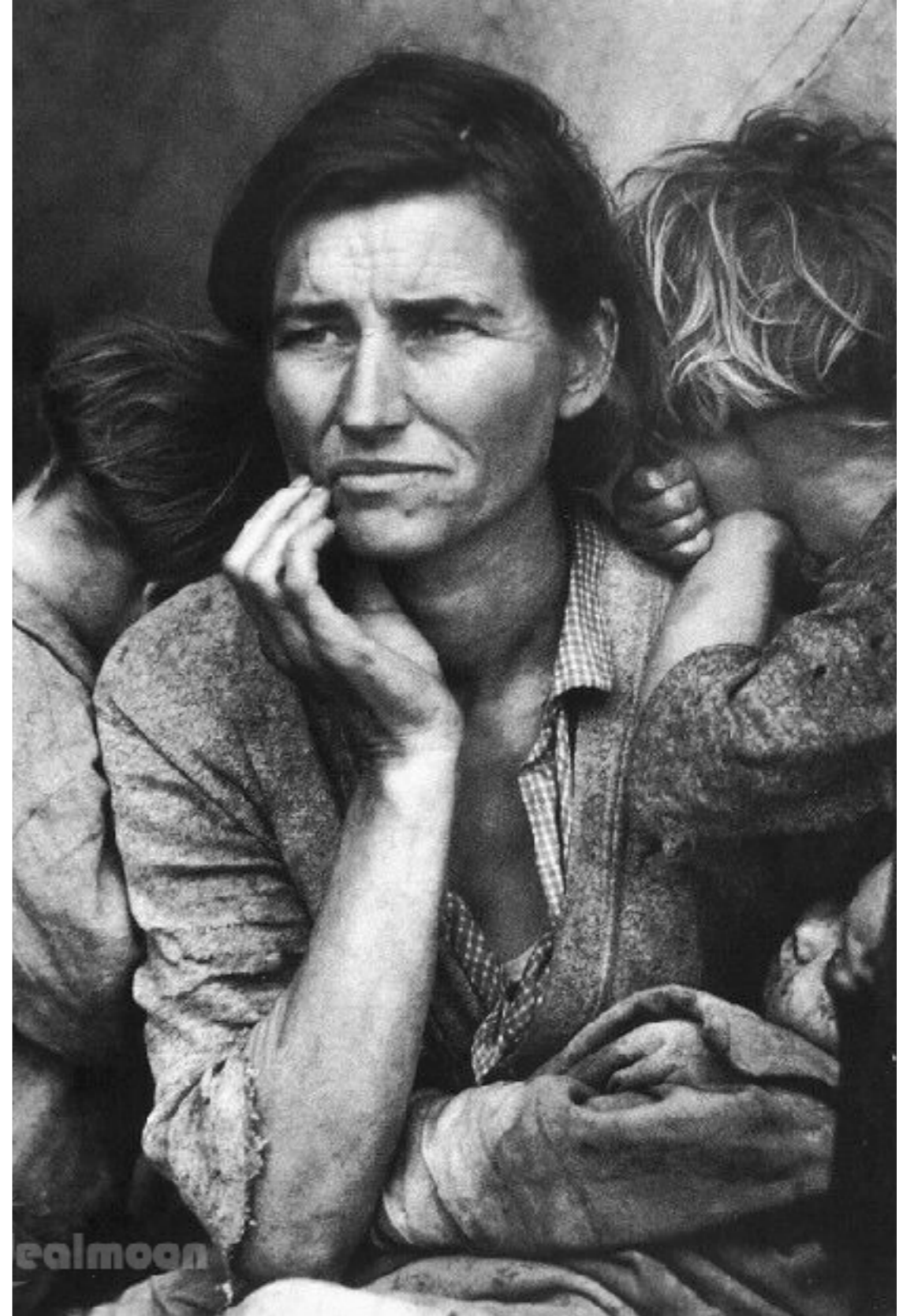
CAMERA SETTING

AF-S DX 55-200mm f/4-5.6G ED VR, ISO 400, 122mm, f/4.8, 1/200

AF-S DX 55-200mm f/4-5.6G ED VR, ISO 400, 122mm, f/4.8, 1/400
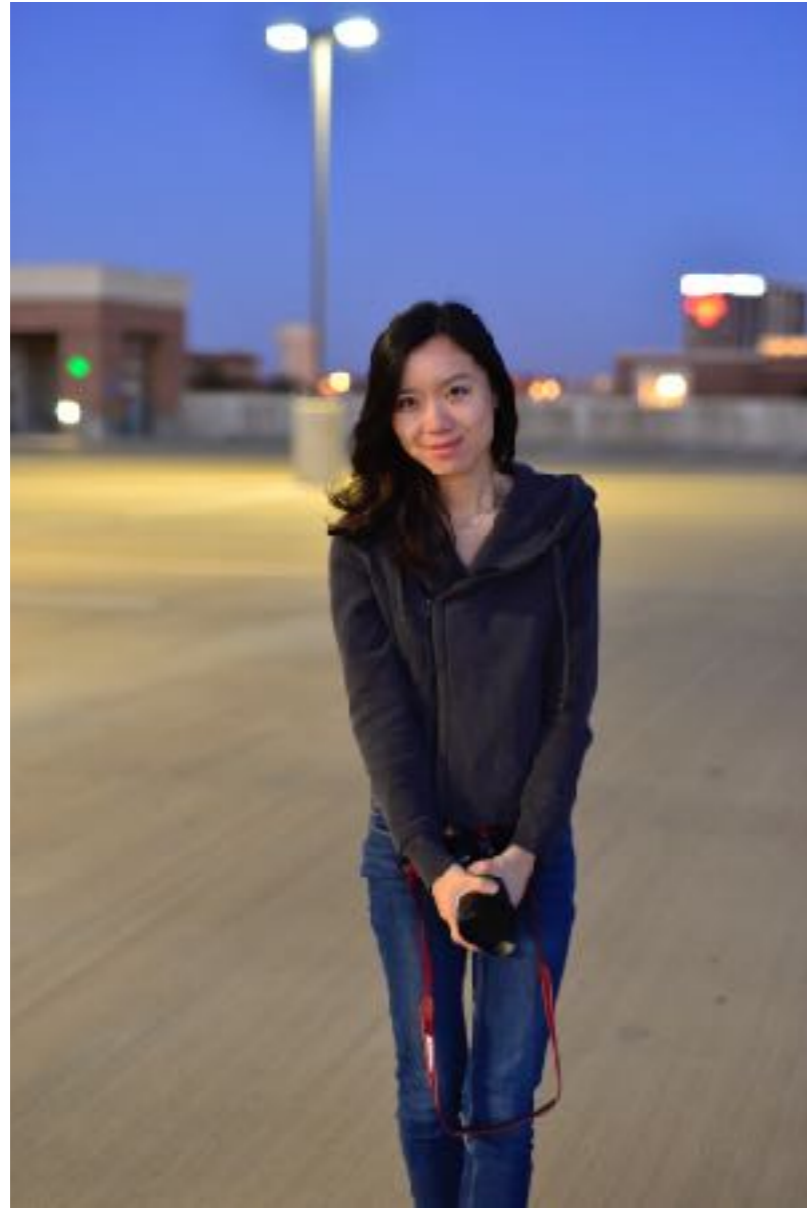
by Steve McCurry (1950 -)

by Dorothea Lange (1895 - 1965)

CAMERA SETTING

- Reflecting the skin tone

  - Choose the most matching white balance: auto, daylight, tungsten light, fluorescent light, etc.

  - Set the exposure value to +0.3 or +0.7

  - Select the Picture Style (Canon) or Picture Control (Nikon) to portrait mode

CAMERA SETTING

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 1600, 50mm, f/1.8, 1/30

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/500

CAMERA SETTING

- Freezing the precious moments

  - Set the ISO settings

  - Lower ISO settings takes longer to expose but shows less digital noise

  - Recommended settings

	Still	Moving
Outdoor	<200	200
Indoor	800	>1600

CAMERA SETTINGS

ISO 200

ISO 3200

*The illustrated figure is copied from *Photography Life* website
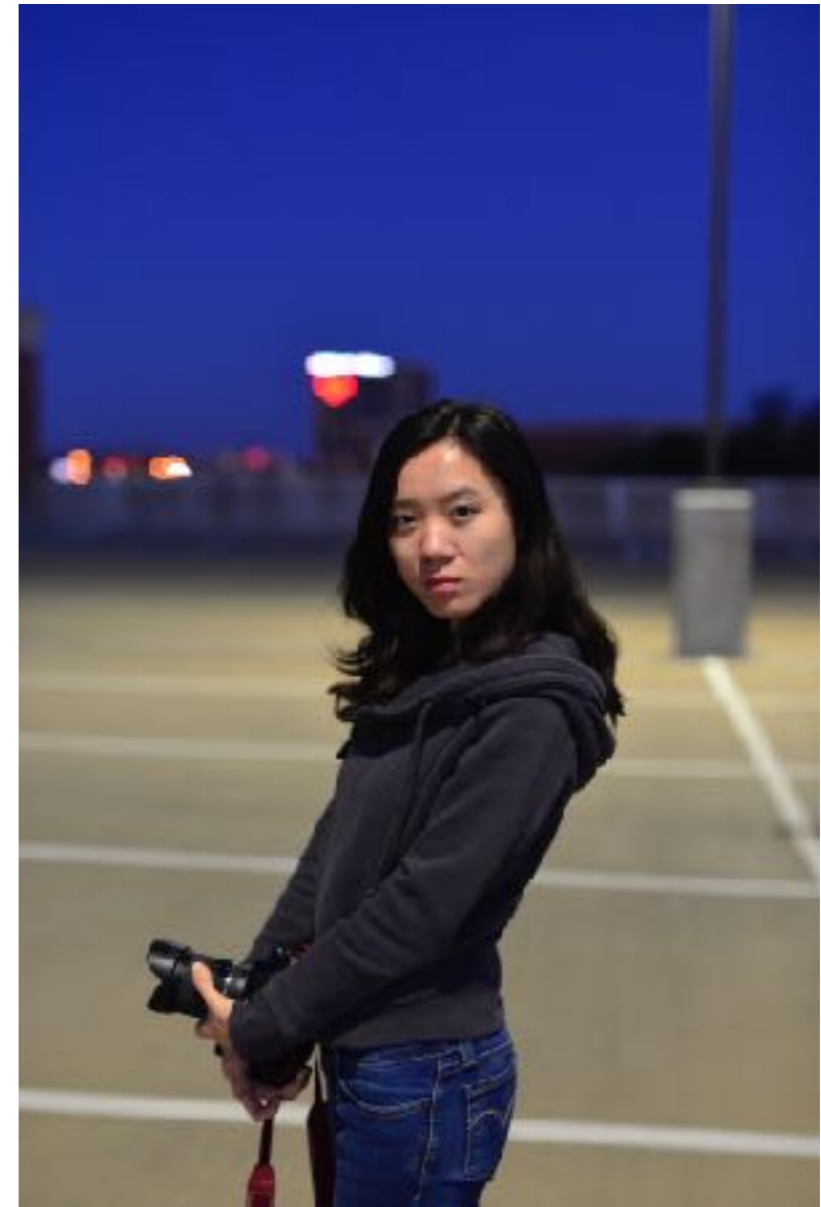
CAMERA SETTINGS

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/4000

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 1600, 50mm, f/1.8, 1/40

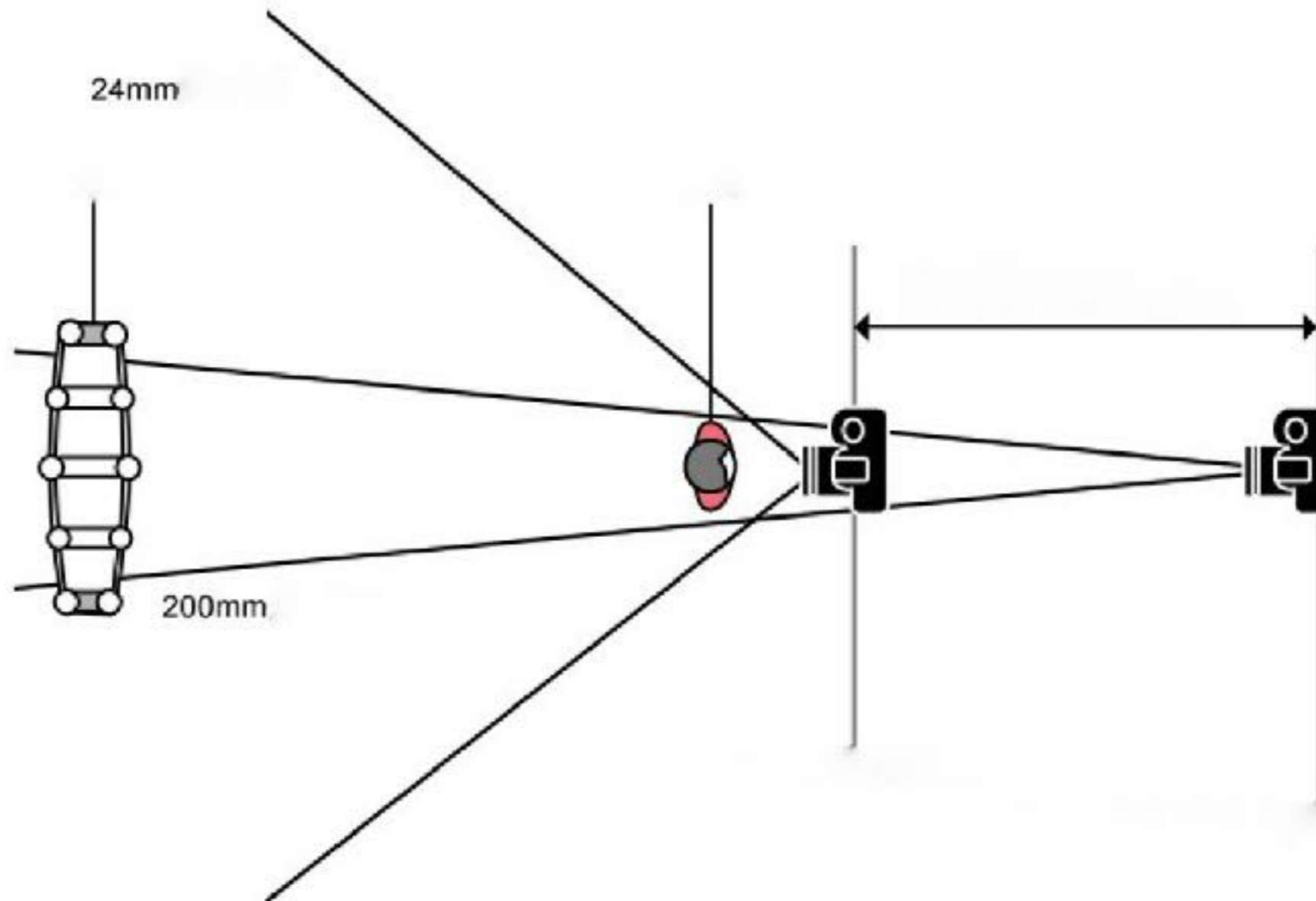# IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Focal length (angle of view)

IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Focal length (angle of view)

24mm

200mm

*The illustrated figure is copied from *Nikon Lens World Special Volume 1*
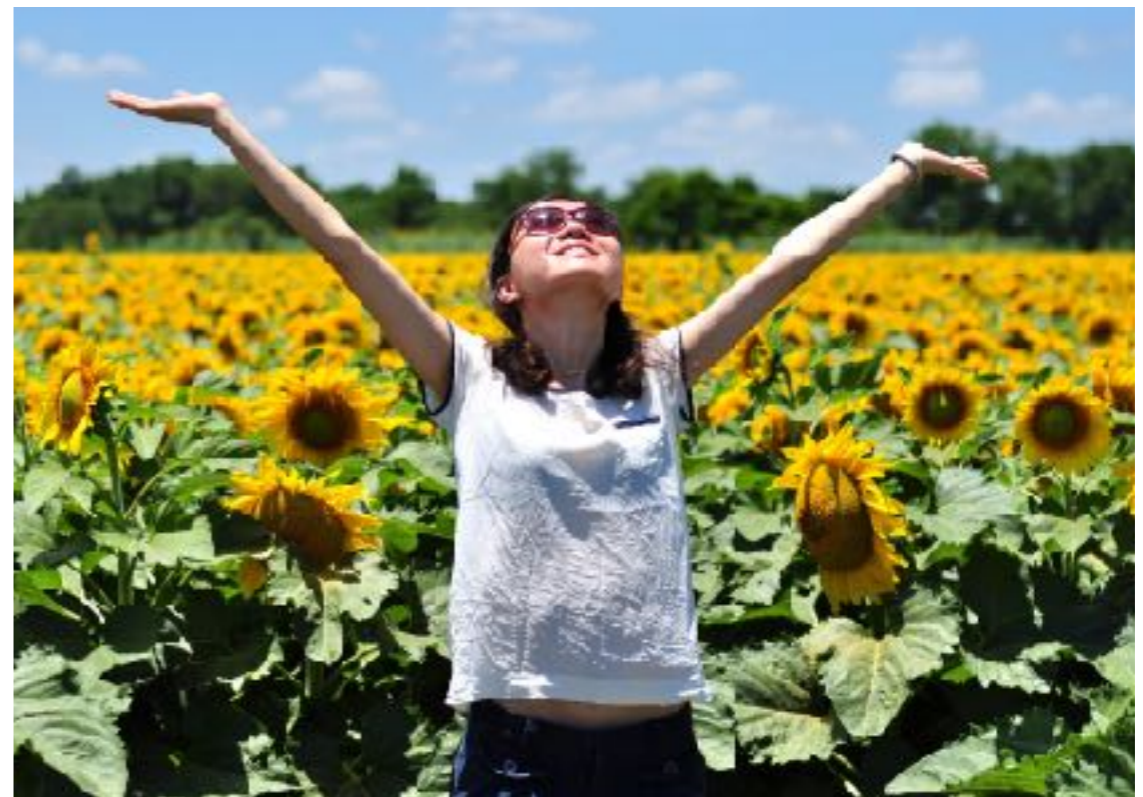
IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Focal length (angle of view)

  - 85mm is the best focal length for normal portrait shooting

  - Wide-angle lens can be used to take striking portrait photos as it distort distances

  - Head shot and environment portraits

AF-S 50mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/125

AF-S 85mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 85mm, f/2.8, 1/50

AF-S 50mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/4000

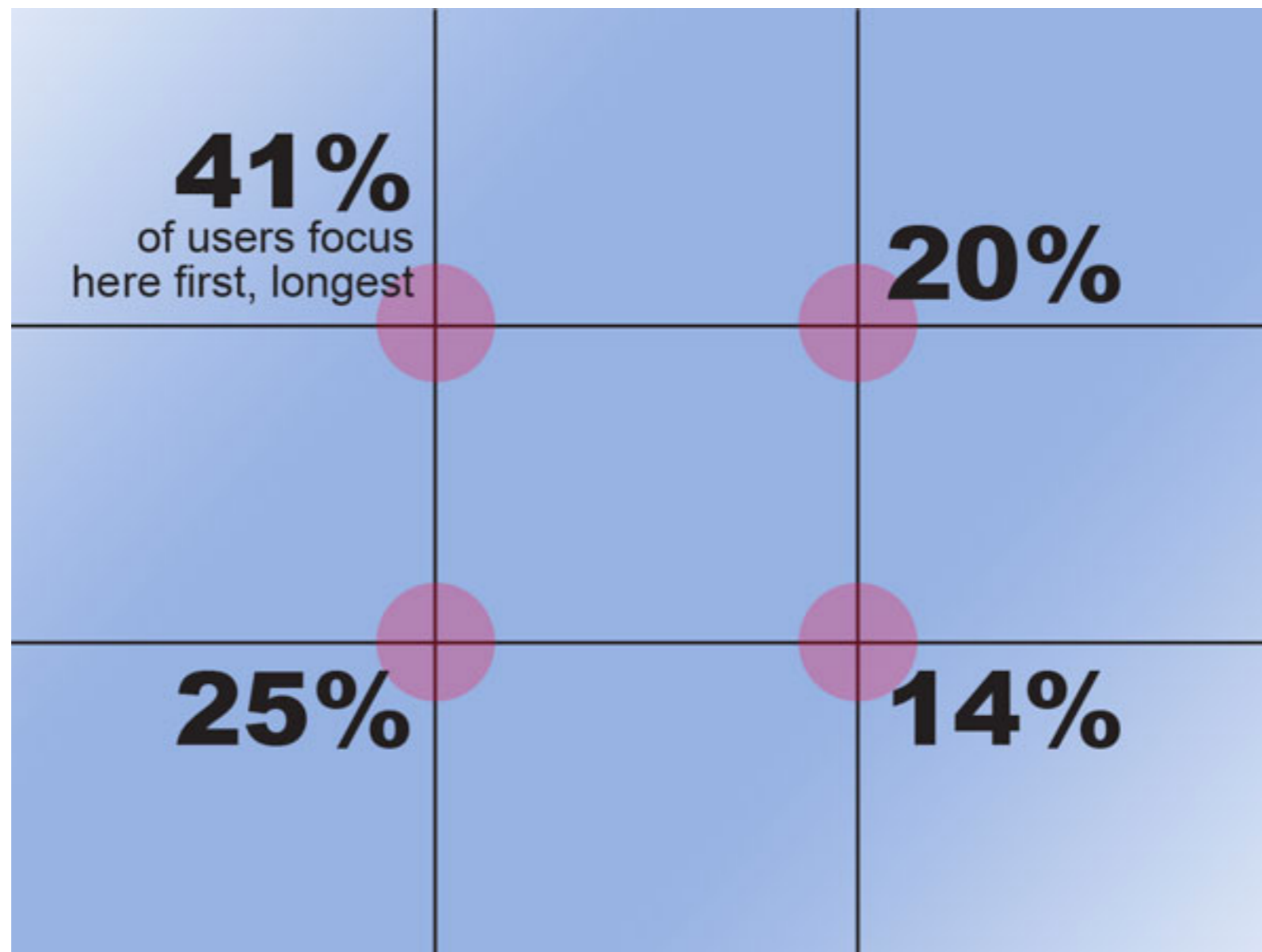AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 24mm, f/4, 1/1600

AF-S DX 12-24mm f/4G ED, ISO 200, 12mm, f/8, 1/400   AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 400, 24mm, f/4, 1/250

IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Rule of thirds

*The illustrated figure is copied from internet

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 800, 50mm, f/1.4, 1/200

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/640

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 16mm, f/4, 1/4000

IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Geometric shapes (frame)

- Story-telling

- Interesting background

- Other creative ideas

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 24mm, f/4, 1/160

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 44mm, f/4, 1/125 AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 92mm, f/4, 1/500

AF-S 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR, ISO 800, 24mm, f/5.6, 1/10

AF-S DX 12-24mm f/4G ED, ISO 200, 12mm, f/4, 1/320

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 125, 16mm, f/22, 1/10

SUBJECT ISOLATION

- Make less depth of field

  - Increase the aperture (decrease the f stop value: f/2.8 and f/4)

  - Increase the focal length (85mm)

  - Decrease the distance to the subject

Depth of Field

*The illustrated figure is copied from *Wikipedia*

SUBJECT ISOLATION

*The illustrated figure is copied from *Digital Camera World* website

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.2, 1/400

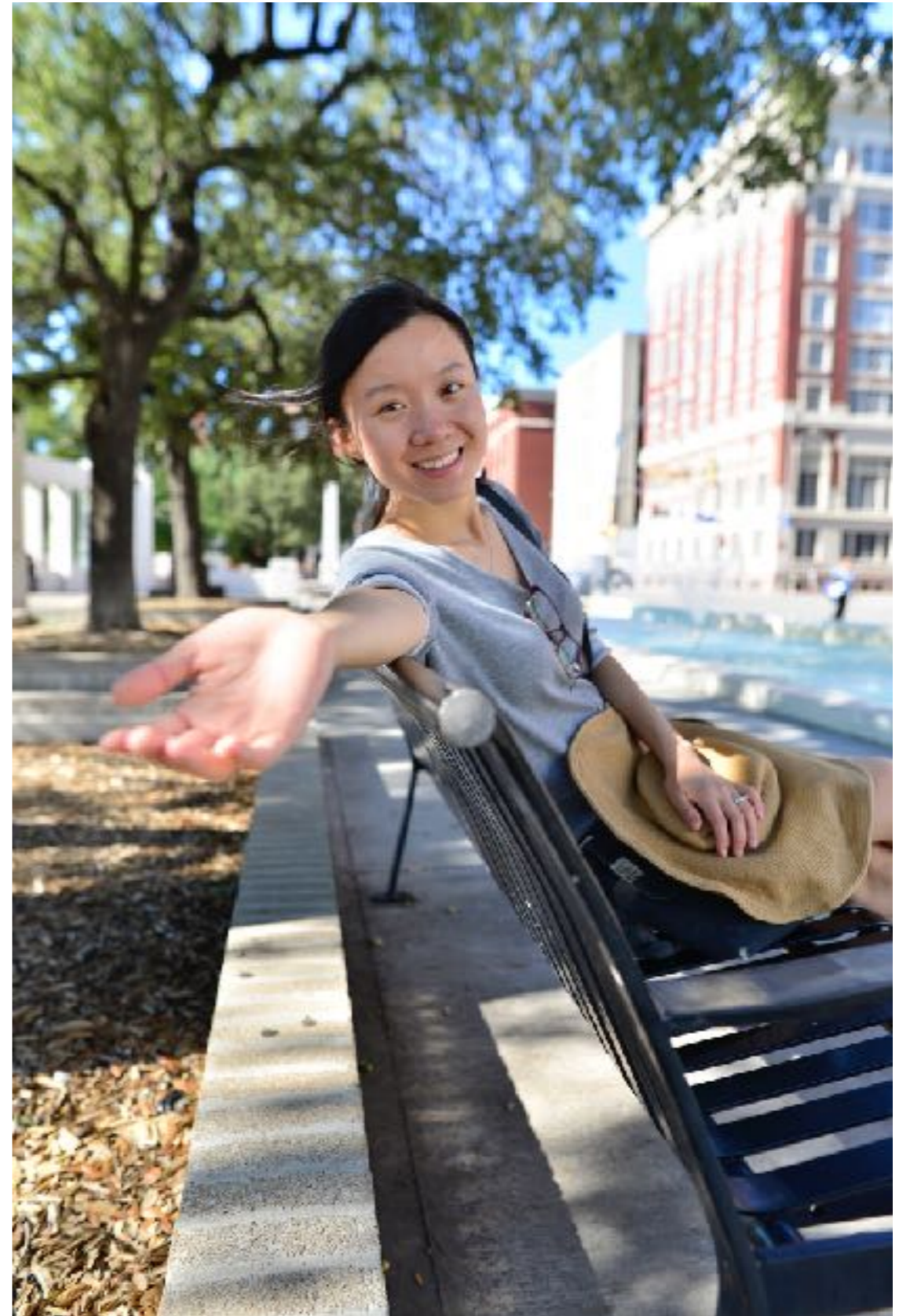AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/40

Sigma Art 35mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 35mm, f/1.8, 1/4000

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 800, 50mm, f/1.8, 1/60

Sigma Art 24mm f/1.4, ISO 100, 24mm, f/2.8, 1/800

Sigma Art 24mm f/1.4, ISO 100, 24mm, f/2.8, 1/400

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 120mm, f/4, 1/80

AF-S 70-200mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 800, 160mm, f/8, 1/640

LIGHTING EFFECTS

- Frontlighting: make brighter skin, but bring in shadows

- Backlighting: make shining hair and soft skin, but overexposure

- Semi-backlighting: most widely used

AF-S DX 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G VR, ISO 200, 22mm, f/3.8, 1/1250

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 92mm, f/4, 1/800

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/2000

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 125, 16mm, f/22, 1/10

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.2, 1/250

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 800, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/60

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 16mm, f/4, 1/1250

AF-S 70-200mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 70mm, f/4, 1/80

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/500

Shortcut to professional

FIGURE

- Facial expression

  - Cute

  - Cool

  - Smiling

  - Grimacing

  - Hard-looking

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 125, 18mm, f/4, 1/160

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/800

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 24mm, f/4, 1/640

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 24mm, f/4, 1/1000

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 35mm, f/4, 1/2000

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 800, 35mm, f/1.8, 1/30

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 500, 35mm, f/2, 1/50

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 800, 55mm, f/4, 1/40   AF-S 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR, ISO 800, 45mm, f/4.2, 1/5

Sigma Art 35mm f/1.4, ISO 400, 35mm, f/2, 1/800

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 35mm, f/3.5, 1/3200

AF-S 70-200mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 800, 70mm, f/4, 1/1250
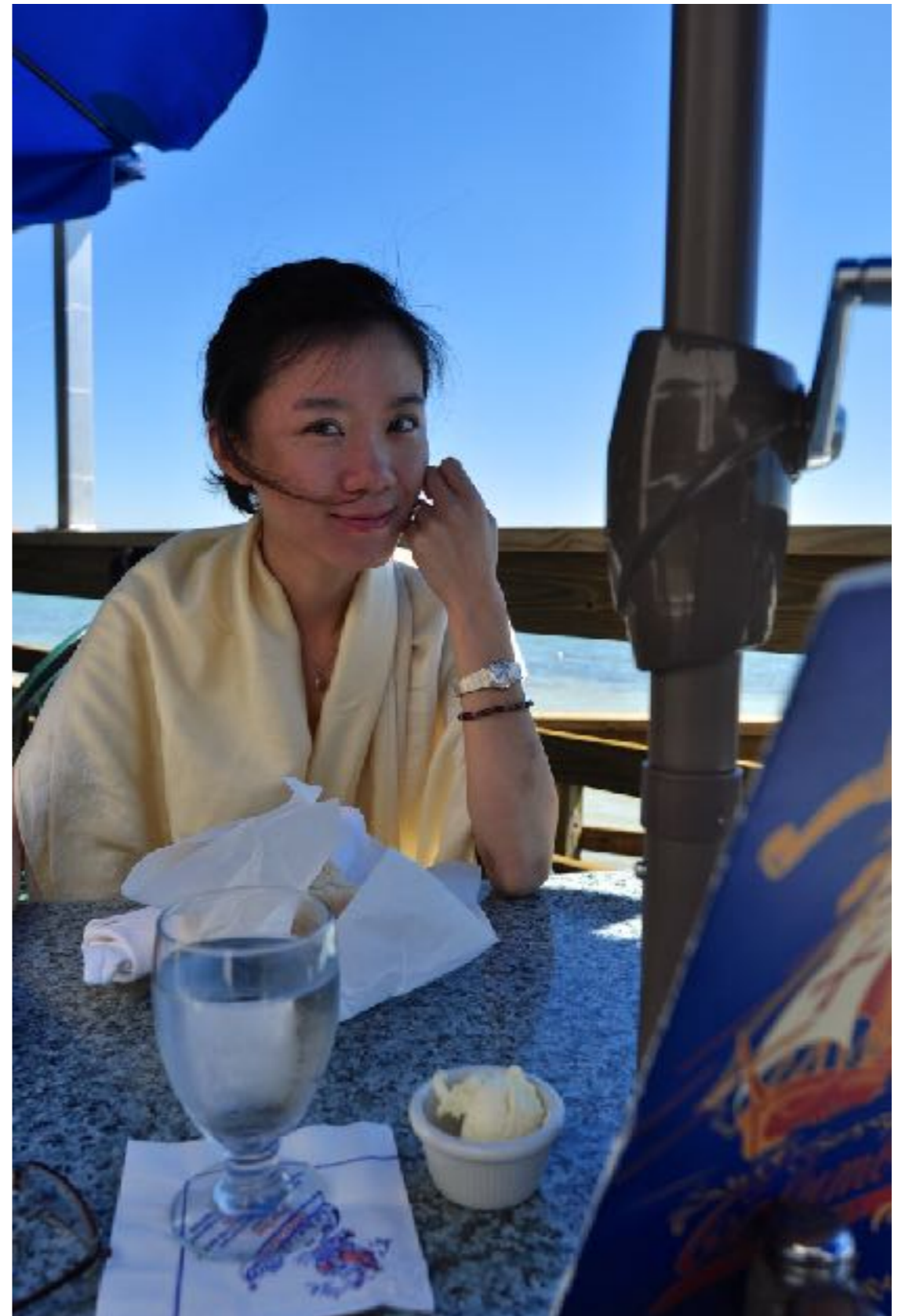
AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 46mm, f/4, 1/125 AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 16mm, f/4, 1/1000

FIGURE

- Body pose

  - Cute

  - Straight

  - Diagonal

  - Freestyle

AF-S DX 55-200mm f/4-5.6G ED VR, ISO 200, 70mm, f/5.6, 1/320 AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 160, 35mm, f/4, 1/1600

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 100, 16mm, f/4, 1/1000   AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/200

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/500

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 800, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/20

AF-S 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5G ED, ISO 100, 18mm, f/8, 1/500

AF-S 85mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 85mm, f/2.8, 1/320

AF-S 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5G ED, ISO 100, 18mm, f/8, 1/400

SURROUNDINGS

- Cartoon

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 400, 35mm, f/1.8, 1/60

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/1.8, 1/500

SURROUNDINGS

- Pet

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 120mm, f/4, 1/80 AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 38mm, f/4, 1/320

SURROUNDINGS

- Food

AF-S 16-35mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 800, 16mm, f/4, 1/30

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 400, 35mm, f/2.2, 1/30

SURROUNDINGS

- Book

AF-S 35mm f/1.8G ED, ISO 800, 35mm, f/2.5, 1/320

AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 200, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/400

SURROUNDINGS

- Art poster

AF-S 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G ED VR, ISO 800, 52mm, f/4.2, 1/25   AF-S DX 35mm f/1.8G, ISO 800, 35mm, f/2.8, 1/20

SURROUNDINGS

- Vehicle

AF-S 70-200mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 400, 70mm, f/4, 1/2000

AF-S 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5G ED, ISO 100, 18mm, f/8, 1/320

SURROUNDINGS

- Gear

Carl Zeiss Planar T* 50mm f/1.4 ZF.2 ISO 200, 50mm, f/2.8, 1/50

Sigma Art 50mm f/1.4, ISO 800, 50mm, f/1.4, 1/50

SURROUNDINGS

- Flora

AF-S DX 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G VR, ISO 400, 55mm, f/5.6, 1/13

AF-S 85mm f/1.8G, ISO 100, 85mm, f/2.8, 1/3200

SURROUNDINGS

- etc.

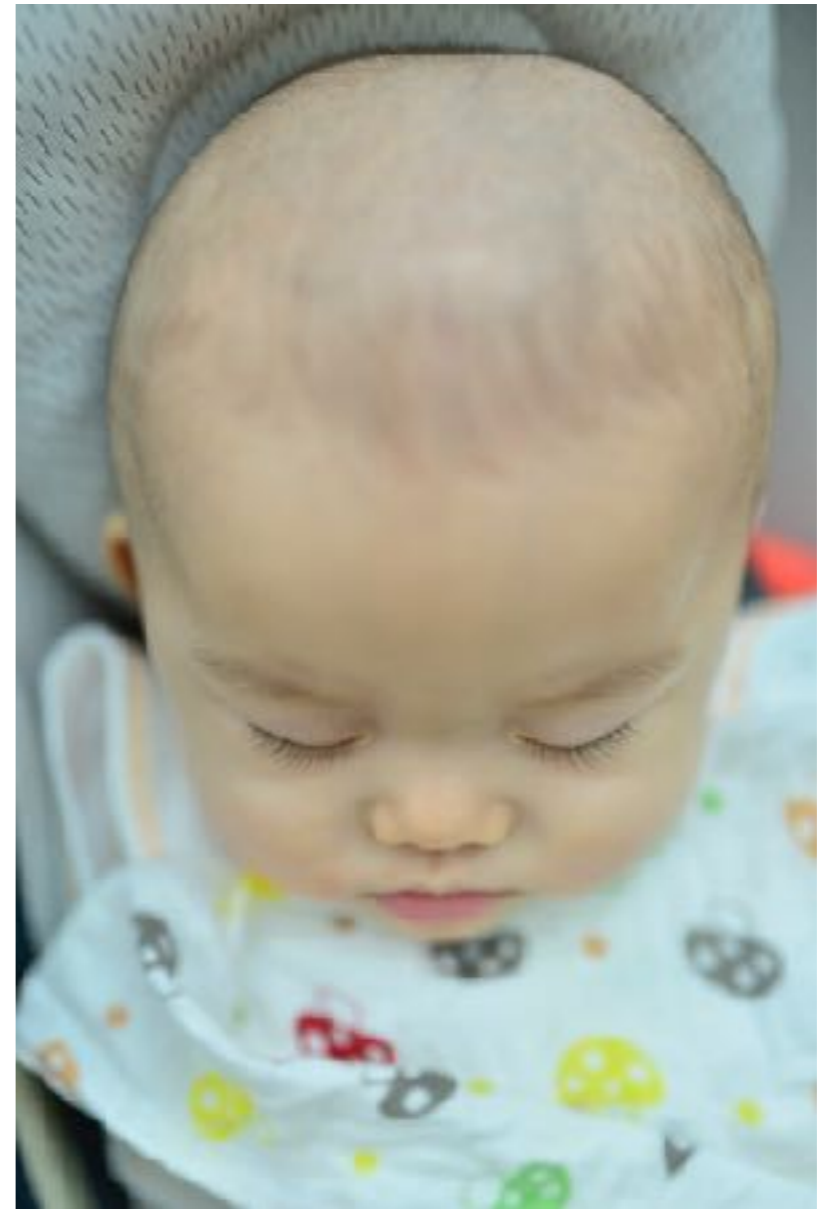AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 800, 24mm, f/4, 1/20

Sigma Art 35mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 35mm, f/1.4, 1/200

CLOSE-UP

AF-S 24-120mm f/4G ED VR, ISO 200, 66mm, f/4, 1/125

Sigma Art 35mm f/1.4, ISO 200, 35mm, f/1.8, 1/640

COMMUNICATION

- Don't be shy

- Don't keep silent

- Do chat

- Do show the photos to your model

- Do get feedback

- Do praise your model

SUMMARY

- Camera

  - Change the AF mode to ONE SHOT (Canon) or AF-S (Nikon)

  - Set the exposure value to +0.3 or +0.7

  - Select the subject's optimal image characteristics to portrait mode

  - Change the aperture f stop value to f/2.8 or f/4

  - Change the focal length to 85mm (full-frame) or 50mm (APS-C) for head shots

  - Select the right white balance

  - Place the subject on one of the four points of intersection through the gridlines in the viewfinder

  - Aim the single focus point over the nearest eye

SUMMARY

- Environment

  - Find out the light source and consider the lighting effects

  - Choose the lens

  - Look for the best background or surroundings

  - Move around to get the best distance to subject

  - Test and adjust camera settings

  - Warm-up and communication

STATISTICS

- Select 347 best portrait photos from 50,000 photos in the past 5 years

- Use R to visualize the exif data

- Answer the following questions:

  - What's the most frequently used focal length?

  - What's the most frequently used aperture (f stop)?

  - What's the most frequently used lens?

  - What's the most frequently time?