

Photo Tutorial or How to get great photos, of your books, posters, etc. for web-sites, catalogs, &c.

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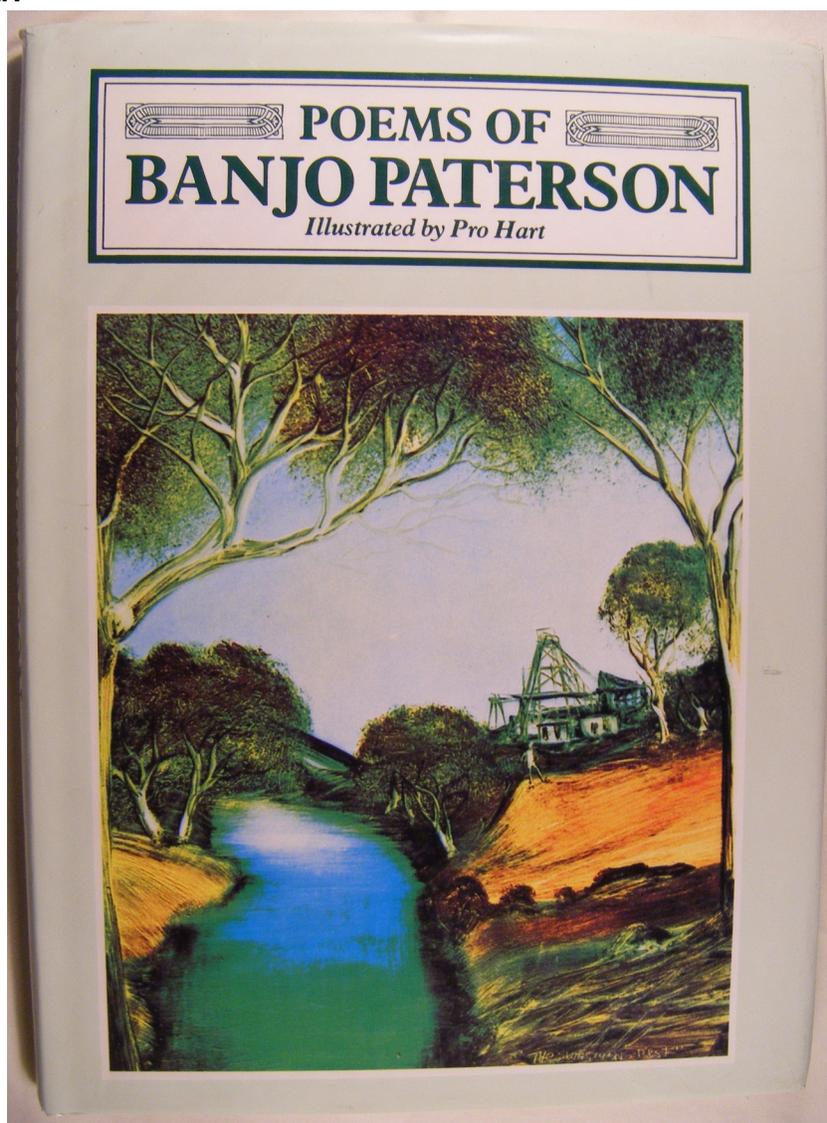
A simple photo setup can be created by using just two lamps, a flat surface, and a contrasting background (towel, pillow case, etc.)



High-intensity lamps work the best, but almost any lamps will do. Just place the lamps so that they shine at approx. 45-degree angle onto the book surface (this helps eliminate glare). Camera can be a simple 'point-and-shoot' or even your 'smart phone'.

Rotate the camera so that the long edge of the viewer is parallel with the long edge of the book. Zoom in close to get as much of the book in the photo as possible. If your camera has a 'macro-mode' (for close-ups), it may help to use that mode. Shoot the photo in a fairly high-resolution mode, with the camera straight over the book.

If you have photo-editing software, you can rotate the image (if necessary) and also crop it so that there is almost no background.

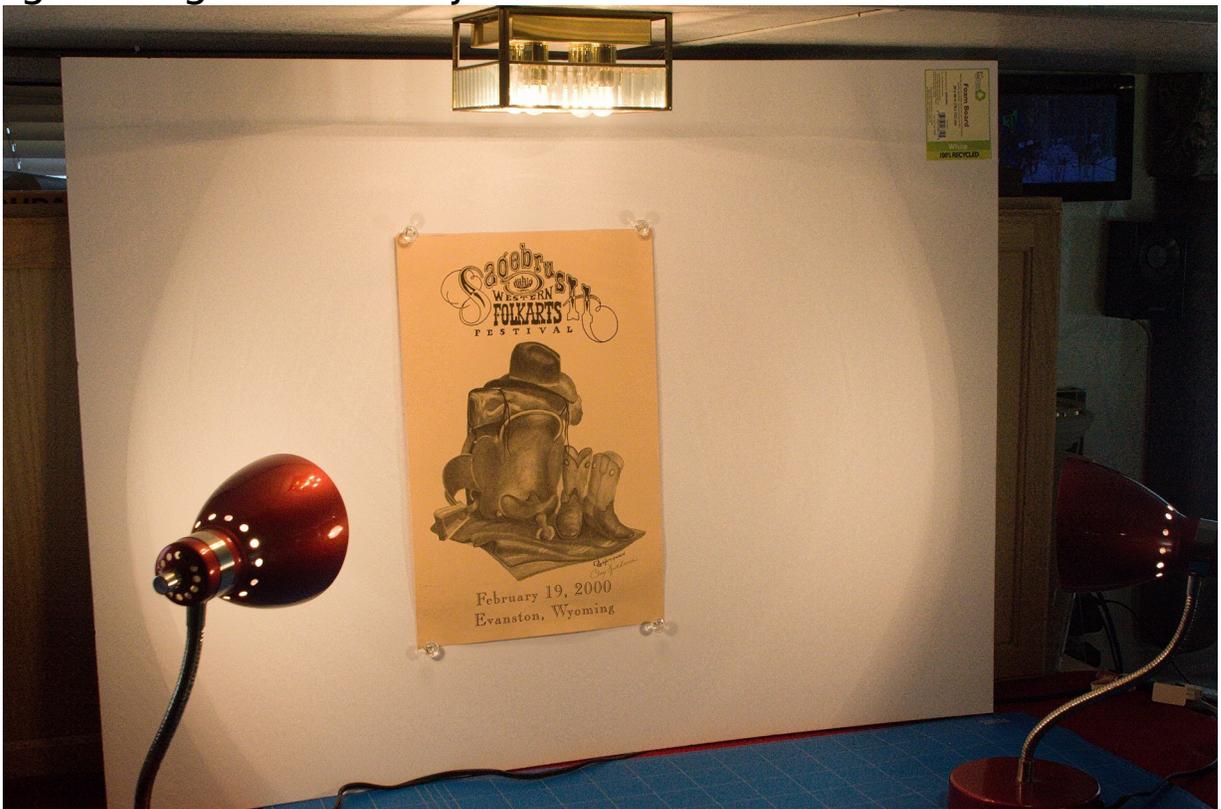


Advanced techniques on next page:

If you have at least two flash-units, and your camera can control those, you can use those instead of the desk-lamps shown in this tutorial.

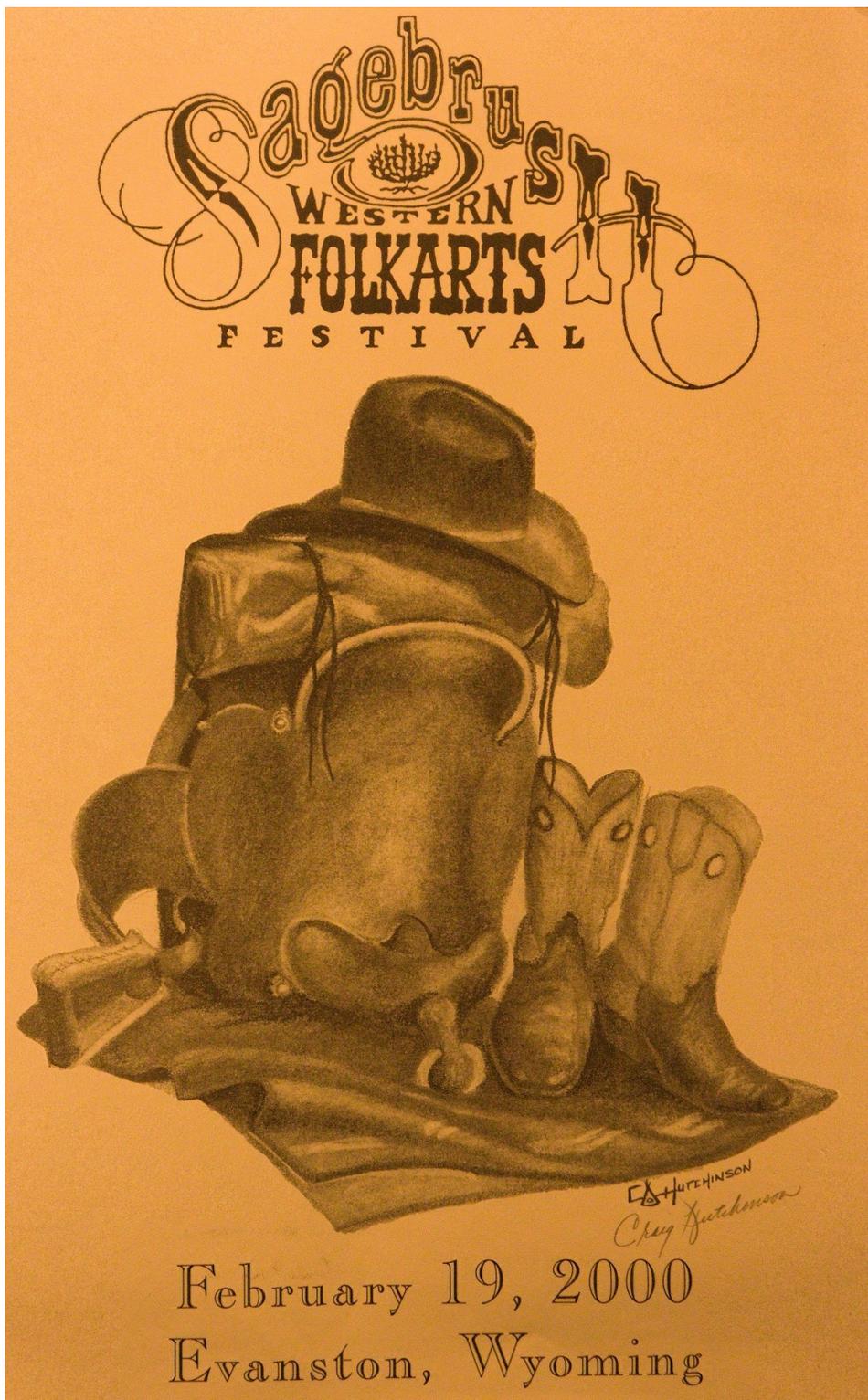
If you have a poster, art-print, etc. where you can't get the entire object in the camera frame with the simple set-up mentioned above, this next technique may work well for you.

Mount the poster to some foam-core, cardboard, etc. and prop vertically against a wall or cabinet. Use the same basic light set-up mentioned above, just point the lamps at the object to be photographed. The important considerations are to keep the object evenly lit and keep the lights at about a 45-degree angle to the object.

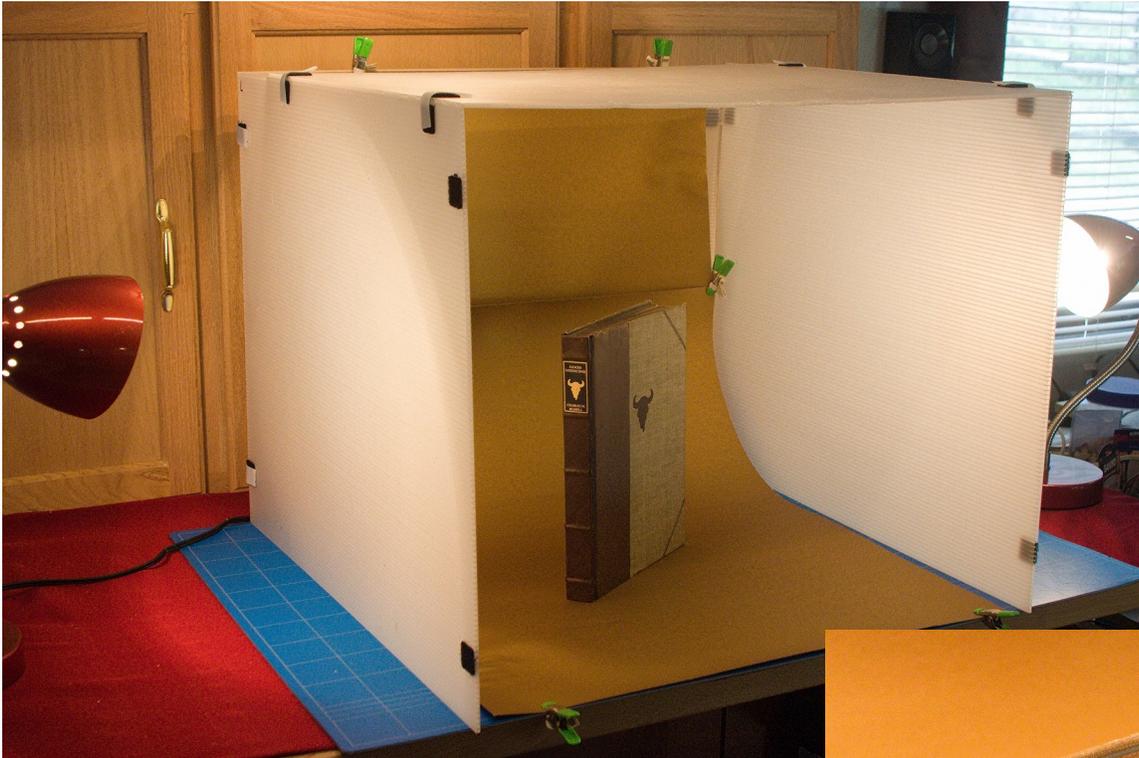


Depending on the size of the poster, you may need more than two lights.

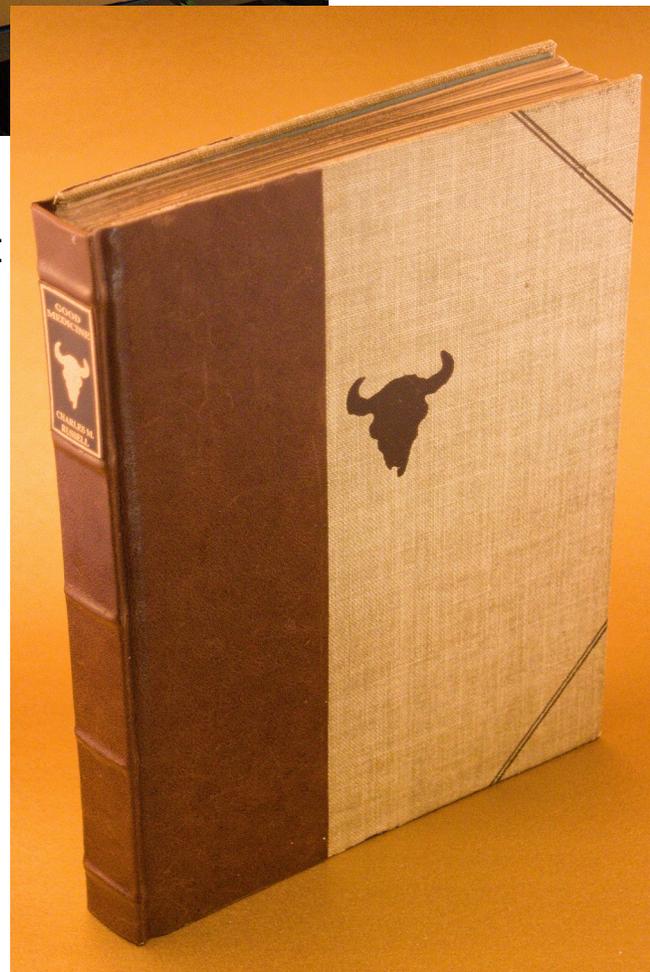
Resulting image after cropping and a bit of editing:



If you wish to be able to show the 3-dimensional aspects of an item, a light tent will aid greatly in getting nice images. The light tent that I have is a home-made DIY unit made from translucent corrugated plastic panels, and using poster board for a background. This setup provides a nice diffused light with no harsh shadows.



Sample image after cropping and a bit of editing:



Recommended software for image processing.

For simple cropping and re-sizing, XnView (www.xnview.com) is a good choice. It's available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. There is a paid license for business usage, there is also a Freeware version (donations accepted). All software has a learning curve, but XnView is relatively 'novice-friendly'. XnView is great for creating 'thumb-nail' images for web-site usage.

For more advanced processing, GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program) (www.gimp.org) is also available on Windows, Mac, and Linux (and other Unix-like systems). GIMP is free of charge, donations accepted. A steeper learning curve, but a very powerful program. A common usage is to adjust the image white-balance.

Regarding white-balance. Depending on the light source used, the image may have an undesired color-cast. Photos shot using incandescent light may have an orange cast; fluorescent light may produce a greenish cast. GIMP has a tool (found in 'Colors:Auto:White Balance') that may correct the issue.

For high-end processing, look to RawTherapee (www.rawtherapee.com). Free of charge (donations accepted) and available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. RawTherapee has a very steep learning curve, but has just about every photo-processing tool one may need. It has a great tool for adjusting white-balance. Just shoot a white object (i.e. a piece of white copy paper) under the light source you will be using. Use the white-balance selector on that image and then save the profile to be applied to your item images.

You may wish to mark your images to make it difficult for others to use your work.

Add text, such as this, to the image. By adding it, at an angle, it would be difficult for someone to remove your information. Just don't cover up so much of the image that your customer can't see the major elements.

Note that you aren't claiming 'copyright', just that the image is your property.

