

IDG Portrait Studio 2 Bundle User's Guide

Overview

The idea behind this project is actually a combination of three separate products that grew together, merged and blended to become more than the sum of their parts. The 1st idea was to create a fully realized and realistic Photographer's Studio, a set that would provide multiple opportunities and shooting locations. The 2nd idea was to create a dedicated, built-in and yet still flexible, set of lights. The kind of thing you may find in a dedicated studio environment. The 3rd idea was to create a set of portrait props, and poses designed to interact with those props. Together these three ideas entwined and grew into the product you see now, taking the original idea behind the first Portrait Studio, and elevating it to the next level. At its heart, Portrait Studio 2 has been designed to be quick and easy to use (and render) with a variety of premade, predesigned scene segments that can be easily combined together in a multitude of ways, while still giving the experienced user lots of options and controls to customize our creation to meet your needs. Hopefully, Portrait Studio 2 is everything you have come to expect from IDG Designs. While we really see this as once single colossal project we felt it has grown too large to be one single product. So we decided to split this into a pair of products with the studio & lights in one and the poses & props in the other. This user guide is designed combining information on both products

IDG Portrait Studio 2 - Poses, Props and Shaders

Obviously this set includes the poses, props and Shaders but there are also a few extra features that we included to help and make these poses easier to use with the Photographers Studio and the lights.

Pose Sets

The Pose Sets are scene subsets, and they are the perfect starting point. The pose scene subsets will load the Genesis 3 figure(s), and corresponding props, and have everything properly posed and ready to go. All items load up parented to a null, called a pose helper, so that the entire scene subset can be easily moved around your scene, without breaking the interaction between the figures. This is very useful when using "Go-To" poses included in many environment sets, as it will take the figures and any props to the new location. Have the pose helper selected in your scene tab before using any "Go-To" positioning poses, or before moving the figures with the parameter dials as desired. Each Pose Set includes a dedicated camera with our suggested camera angle view of the poses. Obviously, this is just a suggestion and the needs of your scene or vision may require something different, but we included it as a starting point.

Individual Poses

The individual poses are great when you already have a figure set up with clothing, hair, and such, and want to apply the pose to that figure. There are separate poses for the figure(s), and poses for the props. Make sure the proper item is selected in the scene tab before applying a pose preset. If you need to change the location of the figures and props after posing with the individual poses, parent the props to the figure, and then move the figure as desired.

Materials & Shaders

Each of the 13 props has a set of detailed material options, and we have also added a set of universal shader presets that can be used on just about anything. There is a selection metals, woods and paints to customize the included props, or make any prop in your library blend with the materials used in the photographer's studio. In

addition, there are 15 grungy partial surface presets to add dirt, dust, drips and splatters to any surface. Using a shader preset is easy. Just have the item selected in the scene tab, and also select the surfaces that you would like to apply the shader preset to in the surfaces tab. The grungy partial surface presets will only change parameters of the Top Coat. Utilities are included to tile the entire surface, just the Top Coat only, and turn off the Top Coat layer. All shader presets use the Iray Uber base shader that comes with Daz Studio 4.8+.

IDG Portrait Studio 2 - The Photographer's Studio

This interior, warehouse like set, is designed to be an upgrade over the simple design included in the original Portrait Studio. The Photographer's Studio gives you more realism and more flexibility. To help with that flexibility, the studio has been designed as a figure so that you can turn off or move out elements of the set that interfere with your camera angles. The studio was also designed to allow in natural light so that you can also use Iray's environment lighting. There are high set windows in the left and right walls, plus ceiling #2 has skylights. If you want to only allow light in from one or two directions, you can simply apply any shader to the window glass blocking (or restricting) light from the environment.

Shooting Locations

While there are a lot of different possible locations available, we built the Studio (and the Lights) around 4 primary shooting locations. Each one has its own unique features with a dedicated set of "Go-To" poses to help you zero your figure, or pose set, for each location, and a basic set of cameras designed for each location.

Location 1

Facing towards the left wall, shooting location 1 gives you lots of depth, allowing you the greatest freedom to move your camera in or out of your scene, but side to side movement can be restricting. The windows are in front of you and behind you giving you lots of natural lighting options if you want

Location 2

Facing towards the back wall and offset to the left, shooting location 2 is much more restrictive in depth, in fact there are many times that the wall will feel way to close. This is intentional, pushing you to try different camera angles (like through the door, etc). If that isn't what you want, you can turn off the Studio wall. Location 2 does give you more lateral freedom compared to the other locations. Windows to either side gives the most opportunity to allow outside natural light options.

Location 3

Facing to the right wall, shooting location 3 is designed to be used with both Whiterooms 1 & 2. This may seem like the most restrictive location, as you don't have much room to move your figures around, and camera/lighting angles are somewhat limited. With both parts of the Whiteroom in place, natural lighting options are also pretty much eliminated. All that being said, you can get some of the nicest results by working within these restrictions.

Location 4

Facing into the back-right corner shooting location 4 is primarily designed to be used with Whiteroom 1. It is not as restrictive as the full Whiteroom while also giving you all the advantages and disadvantages of shooting into a corner.

Other Locations

While we have only provided presets for four locations, there are quite a few other shots that you can capture with a little creativity. We didn't end up doing anything with the office or the doorways, and the garage door is a great option to shoot in or out of.

Props and Materials

The Photographer's Studio has a variety of props to add background interest to a scene. The Studio Furniture is a wall mounted cabinet with drawers, counter top with sink, and mirror. A small stool fits under the counter, or morphs up to the height of a bar stool. There are 2 different ceiling designs for the studio, with skylight and without skylight, along with one for the office. Plus, there is also an option for each type of ceiling to load with, or without, working emissive recessed ceiling lights installed. These lights use IES profiles to better simulate real world ceiling lights. The main function of the Ceiling Beams is to give the included Light Tress a place to physically attach to. Other props include a large backdrop curtain, a divider curtain with open/close morphs, a wall mounted paper roll, and a large enclosure called the "Whiteroom."

Sample scenes

In the folder with the Go-To poses and Camera Presets are several premade sample scenes that load up the Studio, plus lights and other combinations of props just waiting for you to add your figures to help show you some of what is possible with Portrait Studio 2.

The Studio Lights

The Lighting Tress Design

Instead of using some of the more traditional lighting tools that are built in to Daz Studio, the Lighting Tress uses emissive materials to turn parts of itself into light casting objects. This can help create more realistic looking, and acting, light. The Light Tress also uses a variety of methods to turn itself into an array of different light sets. It's sort of a Swiss Army Knife of lights. Exactly how it does this is harder to put into words than it is just learn how to use. If you are familiar with any of my Photo Studio or Point & Shoot light sets the concept behind the lights in this set will seem very familiar. If not, I'm going to take you on a crash course in lighting. 1st load up the Lighting Tress and select the base of the figure. Look at the figure in the Parameters Tab. You should see different entries for Light 1, 2 3, 4 etc. Select Light 1 and you should see a grouping of parameters that has every available control for moving and posing Light 1. In that list is an entry that says Light 1 Type and its value should say 'Default Shape' That value is actually a pull down menu. Open it and select one of the light options on the list. You should see a change in the Light Tress figure as the chosen light type appears. Now try a different type of light and then try using the other dials to move and adjust the position of Light 1. Then move on to playing with the parameters for the other lights. Now you have a good idea just what this single figure can do. But sometimes that's like staring at a blank canvas. Millions of things you could do but where to start?

Note: The Light Tress can be used in any room or set with space for it. It is not limited to only being used in the Photographer's Studio. Since the end use location of the Light Tress can vary, the default position when it loads into the studio is "hanging in space" so to speak. It is in the correct position for when the ceiling beams are in use. If you use the Light Tress in another space, you may need to manually position it with the XYZ translation dials to attach to the structure's ceiling.

Premade Light Setups

To give you a good starting point we have included a big selection of premade light setup presets. These were designed to match up with the 4 shooting locations of the Photographer's Studio and each scene will move and position the lights to match these shooting locations. Simply load the Lighting Tress into your scene, and with it selected you apply any of these presets. Each Preset will move the Lighting Tress into the correct position, performs any geometry switching needed to change the type of light being used, pose the Tress to put the lights in the right location, and apply the correct materials to adjust the emissive materials of the lights. Each premade scene will override any previously made changes to the Lighting Tress or attached lights. While all of the premade light scenes provide excellent results without any adjustments, please consider them to be starting points that you can customize as your scene requires.

Props and Settings

The Lighting Tress has a variety of presets to aid in its use. The Settings presets will allow you to adjust the intensity and color temperature of each light individually. These presets will affect the selected light even if that light isn't in your scene so make sure you are adjusting the right light. There is also a selection of different props designed for each type & position of light. Barndoors are an adjustable figure that can help focus and direct the light from Spotlights or Floodlights. By default, they load up sized to fit Spotlights. To size them up to fit Floodlights there is a size adjustment pose, and also one to size it back down to fit a Spotlight. Grids help direct the light from Soft boxes and Octa boxes. These props will load up regardless of what type of light you have in your scene, and even if there are no lights. Load any light focusing props last.

Changing the type of light will not change the size of the Barndoors or Grids parented to it, so watch out for size/shape conflicts. Generally, it is best to decide on a set of lights before you start fine tuning your setup by adding Barndoors or Grids. For ease of use in positioning the light's direction, a set of dummy Spotlights acts as light pointers. When used, they add their light pointer visual tools to the viewport and you can also use the 'look through' feature to see just what your light is seeing (on the camera pulldown menu.) Be sure to use the parameter sliders to move the light, and not the camera controls as the camera controls will only end up moving the Light Pointer and not the light itself.

Light Types

There are four designs of lights included in the Lighting Tress. Originally, I had designed several other different types of light to include, but for the sake of simplicity and usability, I scaled everything back to the four most versatile (and quickest rendering) designs. These four designs can be broken down into two subgroups: direct lighting and soft lighting. Spotlights and Floodlights are direct lights. That is, whatever they light up is exposed directly to the source of the light. While they render quickly they can give you harsh shadows and bright, defined highlights. Octaboxes and Softboxes are both soft lights. That is, indirect lighting. In the real world the light from these lamps passes through a diffuser material softening the highlights and shadows created by the light. There are also technical differences in how each type of light is set up to work but everything has been done to make this set as simple and easy to use as possible. Under the hood the numbers may all be very different, but each light will produce the same amount relative brightness. This means that if you switch between different types of light, you will still get the same 'amount' of light created, regardless of the type of light used without you having to make adjustment to compensate every time you switch between light types.

Design Notes

In an effort to make this guide as easy and accessible to new users we have tried to make this guide more of a walkthrough instead of an in depth technical analysis, especially when it comes to the inner workings and design of the Lighting Tress itself. We understand that will please some people while other will be left wanting more information. Every effort has been put into making this light set as easy to use and as seamless as possible. Pretty much every possible movement control dial has been added to the base of the figure so you don't have to go hunting and searching for the right bone to adjust. At the same time there is a lot on the Lighting Tress that is hidden away, like the scissor arms that seem to move up and down with lights 1-4. To get them to move together as they should require a delicate dance of interconnected properties that can be very easily thrown out of balance. Plus, altogether they add over 50 more bones to the figure in the scene tab utterly cluttering up things unnecessarily. The lights themselves also have a lot of things happening under the surface. Plus, how Daz Studio handles alternate geometry can be a little weird when you take a serious look at it. Technically the direct lights and the soft lights actually use different emissive surfaces (Light for stops & floods, Light2 for the boxes) with vastly different Luminance settings but I have these differences build into the intensity presets. Still I'm sure somebody is going to want to know just what the difference really is. Basically the soft lights are set to $\frac{1}{4}$ the strength of the direct lights. Due to a quirk in Daz Studio the surfaces tab only shows the surfaces of currently active geometry. All the surfaces are actually still there; Daz Studio just hides them away. All the included presets will adjust and modify them even if they aren't actively showing up in the surfaces tab.

When I started designing the original Portrait Studio I was obsessed with creating the most realistic set of real world photography lights possible. While I'd like to think I was successful, some of my designs, while physically accurate in design and results, ended up taking forever to render cleanly. The big Soft and Octa boxes were the biggest offenders. These physically accurate lights gave wonderful results but clean renders came at the cost of prohibitive render times. This time around I tried to compromise between being physically accurate, the quality of light created and the render speeds. While the new boxes are not quite as perfect as the ones in the first set, they render in less than a quarter of the time. The tradeoff seemed worth it.

I think that's everything. At least I hope so. As a designer it is sometimes very hard to have the right frame of mind to be able to tell you about something I know so well without managing to forget something simple and basic. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us through PMs at the Daz forums.