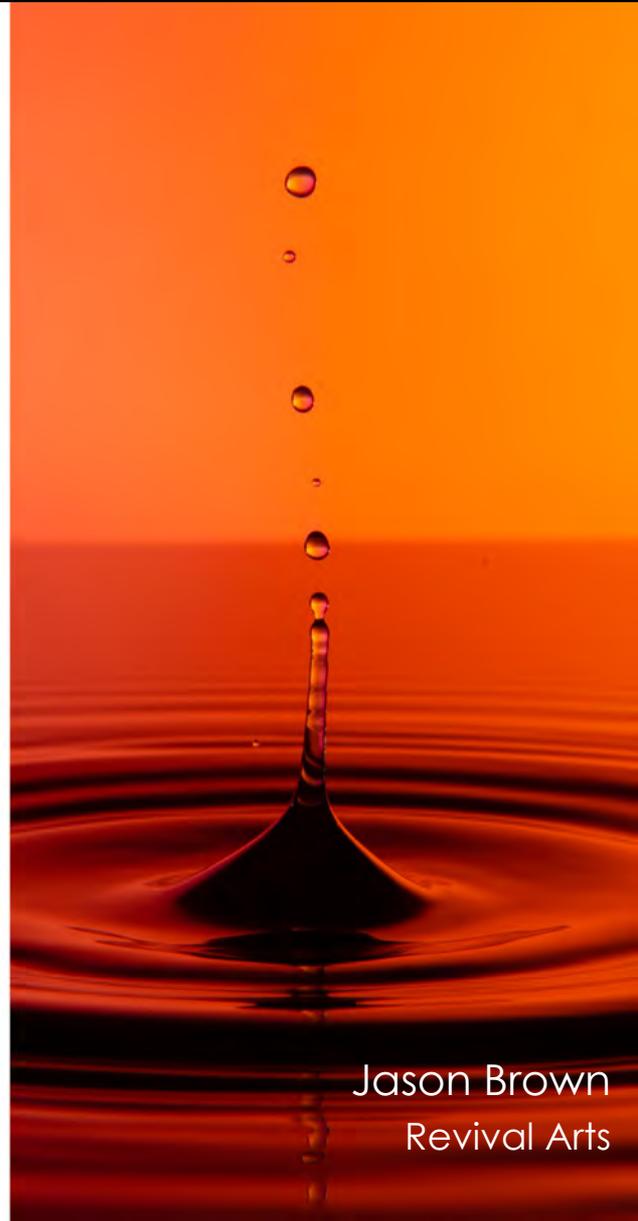


Smoke, Liquid + Light



Jason Brown
Revival Arts



- My images
- My story
- **How to photograph smoke + liquid**
- Demonstration

Water Drops

1. **Equipment & materials**
2. Setup & process
3. Samples



Equipment

- Camera with cable release
- Macro lens or lens with macro capability
- Steady tripod
- Minimum 2 hotshoe flashes
- Radio control or remote cable to control flashes
- Computer with Photoshop



Materials

- Table top, approximately 24" x 24"
- Frame to hold background/dropper
- Medicine Dropper
- Dark baking pan
- Glass bowl
- Clips
- Coloured gels for flashes
- Smooth white foamcore (16" x 20")
- Frosty acrylic sheet or parchment paper
- Coloured paper (optional)
- Food colouring
- Water



Water Drops

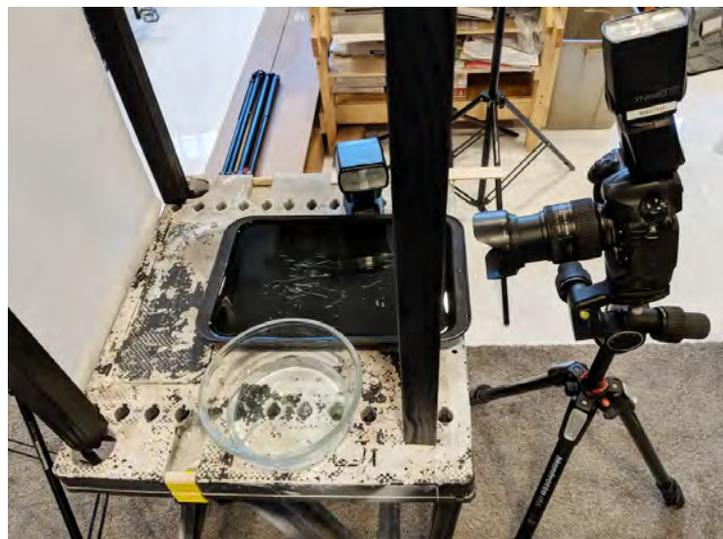
1. Equipment & materials
2. **Setup & Process**
3. Samples



Setup & process

- Set up table and place dropper frame centred on top
- Secure translucent background material to frame and set flash with gel + radio trigger on a stand behind it OR secure foamcore to stand for background and set a flash with radio trigger on tabletop so that it fires towards the middle-bottom of the background
- Place clear glass bowl or dark baking pan on tabletop, centred under dropper and fill right to the rim with water
- Place second flash pointing from middle of table to hit drops and create catchlights
- Set camera on tripod and place so that lens is as close as possible to where drops hit the water surface, but not too close to get splashed. Angle camera down slightly to be able to see the ripples well.







Setup & process

Camera (this is only a guide – feel free to try other settings)

Aperture: highest possible – ie: f32

Shutter: 1/20th second

ISO: smallest possible, ie. 100 or 200

Format: RAW or JPG

Speedlights

Trigger: Use a cable, radio transmitters or flashes with built in transmitters.

Power: it depends on your flashes and setup. I started with around 1/16 power on both.

Gels: experiment with different gel colours, or none at all.

Lens

Macro: If you are not using a macro lens, set lens to macro mode if available.

Focus: Use a ruler or something straight that can span the bowl and place it where the drops land, then manually focus on the ruler and remove.



Setup & process

Photographing the Drops

- To photograph the drops, squeeze the dropper for several drops in succession and trip the shutter at different times to see what you get. This is the fun part – trying to get one good shot out of many. You will fill up media cards and use up batteries, but when you get the perfectly timed shot, it's totally worth it!



Setup & process

Tips

- Check the front of lens element periodically for splashes – the less spot touching later, the better!
- Try varying the angle of the lens towards the splash and the angle of the light hitting the background. It is amazing how much of a difference it can make.
- Using the glass bowl, photograph drops with the water surface perfectly level and framed at the middle of the lens. You can capture cool images of drops as they go beneath the surface.
- Try photographing the water drop at varied times after initially hitting the water surface.
- Use food colouring: try using one colour for the dropper and another colour for the water in the bowl or baking pan.
- Change up the background – try different coloured paper or gels.
- Experiment and have fun!



Water Drops

1. Equipment & materials
2. Setup & Process
3. **Samples**

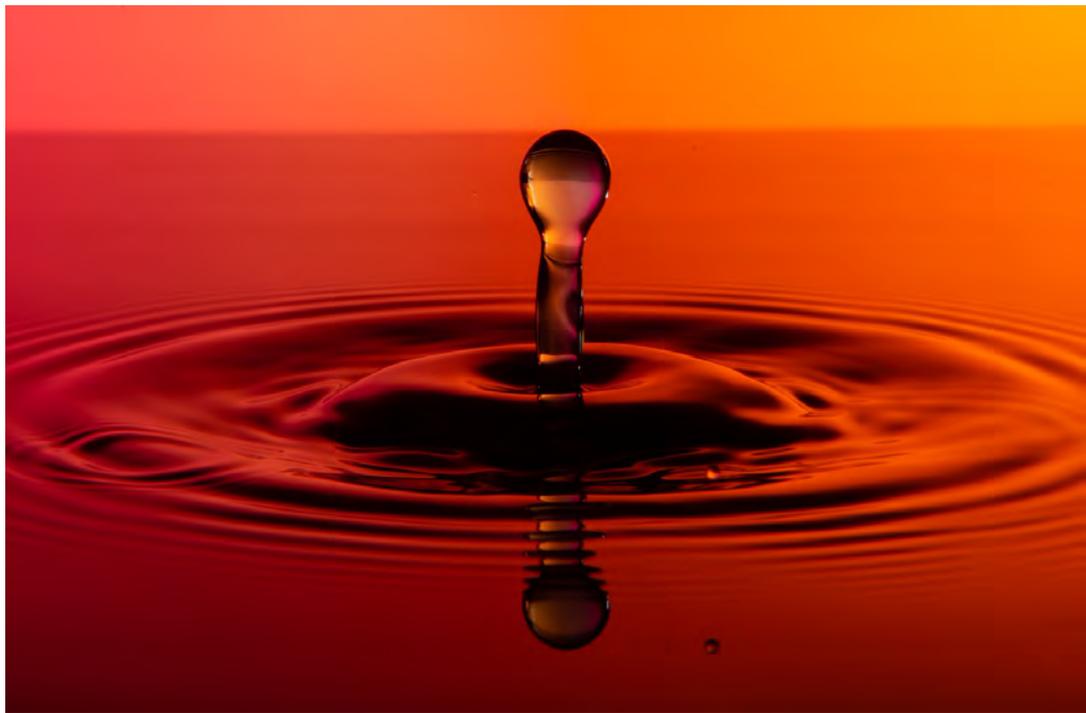




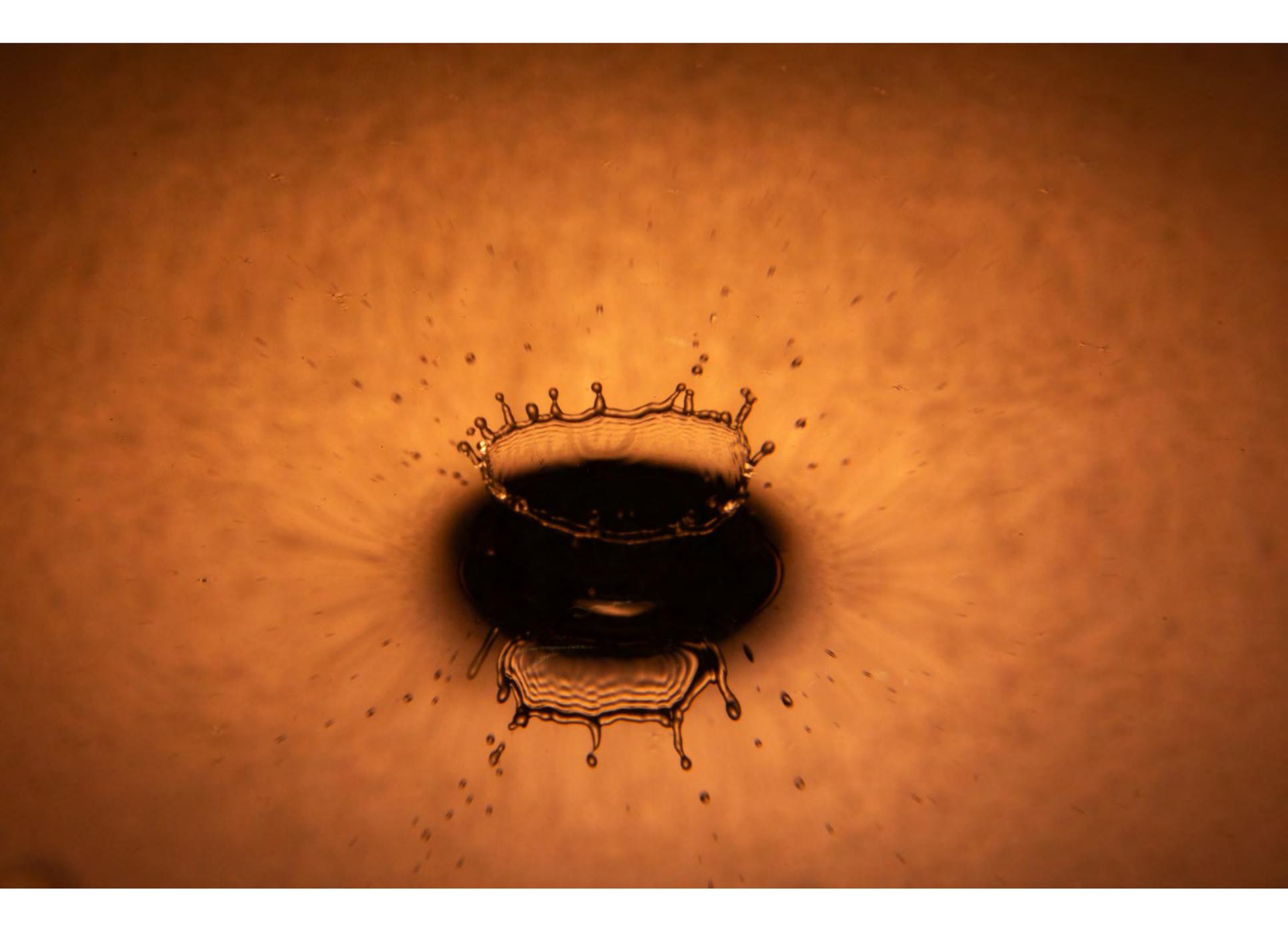




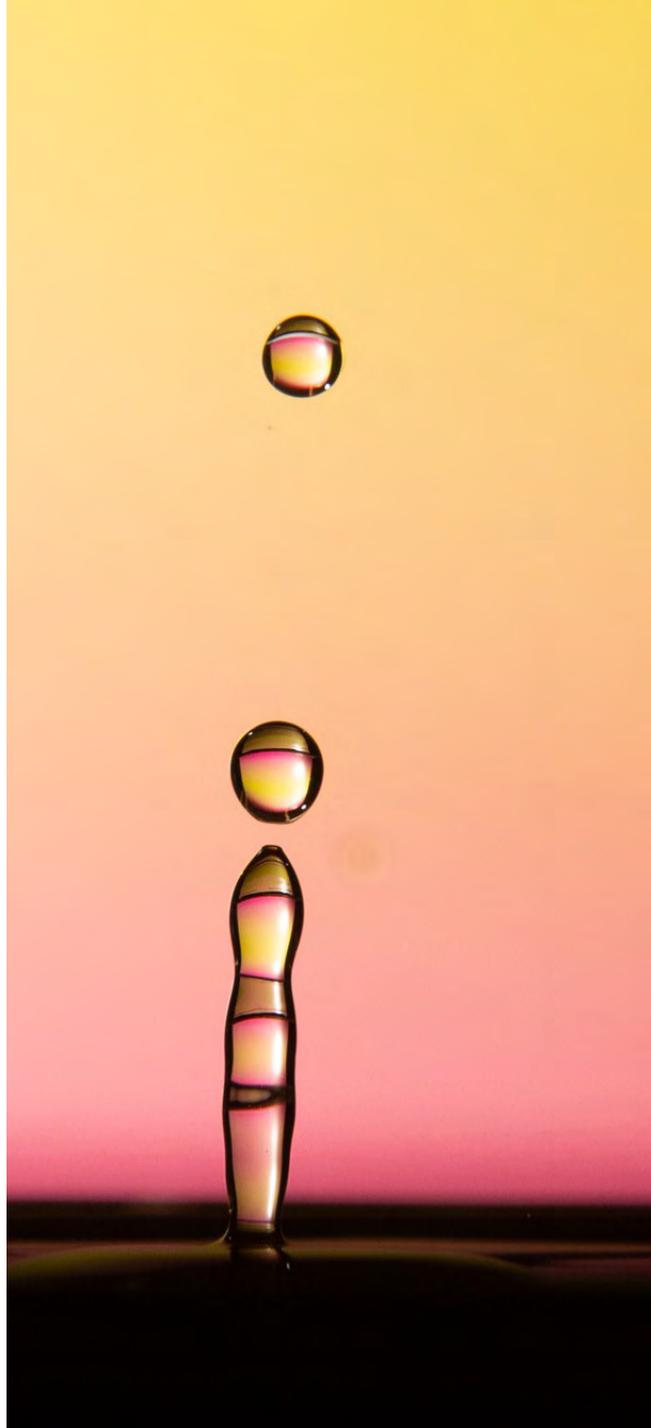
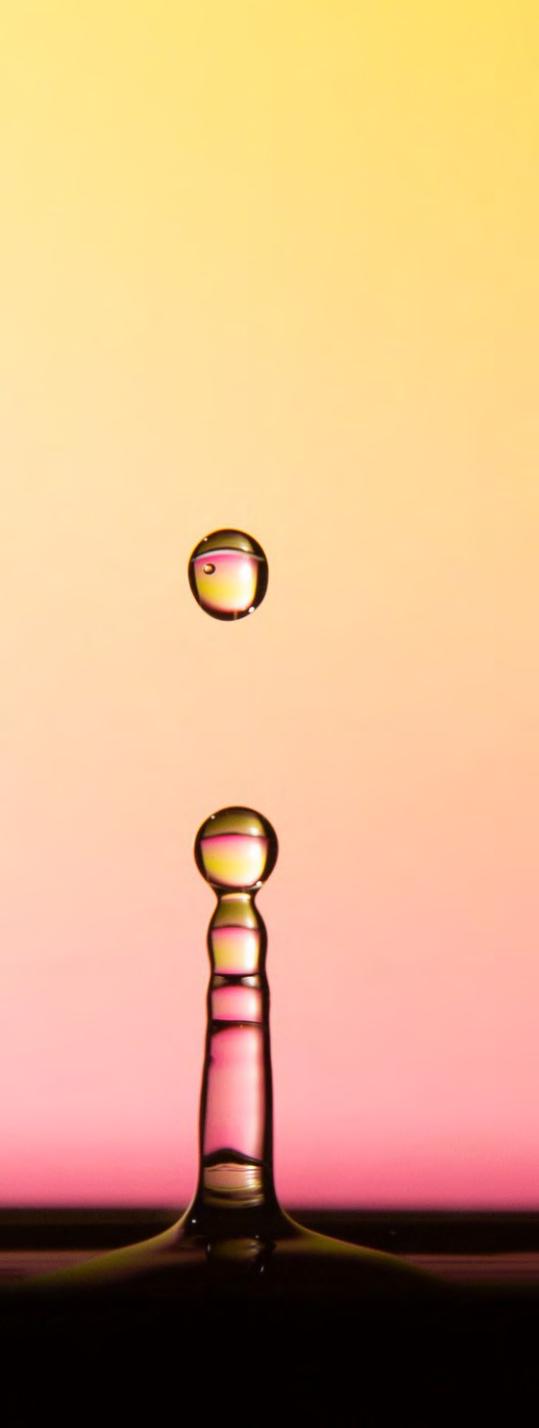














Water Splashes

1. **Equipment & materials**
2. Setup & process
3. Samples



Equipment

- Camera with cable release
- Macro lens or lens with macro capability
- Steady tripod
- One or two hotshoe flashes
- Radio control or remote cable to control flashes
- Computer with Photoshop



Materials

- Stand to hold background
- Ziplock bags for flashes
- Large, deep Rubbermaid bin
- Painter's plastic sheet
- Old towels
- Paper towels
- Smooth white foamcore for background (16" x 20")
- Food colouring
- Water in milk jug
- Water in small water bottle



Water Splashes

1. Equipment & materials
2. **Setup & Process**
3. Samples



Setup & process

- Secure white foamcore to a background stand with clips, as needed
- Set a flash on the floor pointing to the centre of the background, and cover with a clear ziplock back
- Lay the plastic sheet on the floor in front of the background and place the Rubbermaid bin on top. Keep old towels and paper towels on hand to clean up overspray.
- Place second flash, if using, on a stand to the side of the large bin pointing directly to the center, facing where you will throw the water splash, and cover with a ziplock bag
- Set camera on tripod and place so that lens is as close as possible to large bin, level, centered and perpendicular to the background.







Setup & process

Camera (Again, this is only a guide)

Aperture: highest possible – ie: f32

Shutter: 1/20th second

ISO: smallest possible, ie. 100 or 200

Format: RAW or JPG

Speedlights

Trigger: Use a cable, radio transmitters or flashes with built in transmitters.

Power: Depends on your flashes and setup. I started with around 1/16 power on both.

Gels: experiment with different gel colours, or none at all.

Lens

Macro: Not necessary, more difficult to capture the splash if on macro. A medium zoom lens is fine.

Focus: Place a light stand in the center of the bin.

Manually focus on the light stand and remove.



Setup & process

Photograph the Splashes

- To photograph the splashing water, get ready with your shutter with one hand. Have a water bottle or milk jug filled with water in the other hand.
- Simultaneously trip the camera shutter and throw the water out of the container towards the flash opposite the large bin, making sure to aim across the center of the bin. Check periodically to make sure you are aiming in front of the lens.
- Similar to photographing drops, you will have to make many, many images to get some decent splash images. Once you have several splashes within the frame, you can bring a few into photoshop and play around with stitching them together or removing parts to simplify them.



Setup & process

Tips

- Check the lens to make sure there are no stray drops on the front element.
- Use food colouring for different looks.
- Change up the background – try using black instead of white, or experiment using colour gels for the background.
- After some time check the floor to make sure you are getting most of the water into the Rubbermaid.
- Use a table top and a martini glass and create splashes by dropping olives/onions into the glass – for more of a commercial product shot.
- Don't give up, the timing takes practice!



Water Splashes

1. Equipment & materials
2. Setup & Process
3. **Samples**









SMIRNOFF

**CRANBERRY
& LIME**

**CANNEBERGE
ET LIME**

Smirnoff

PREMIUM VODKA MILDLY SWEET

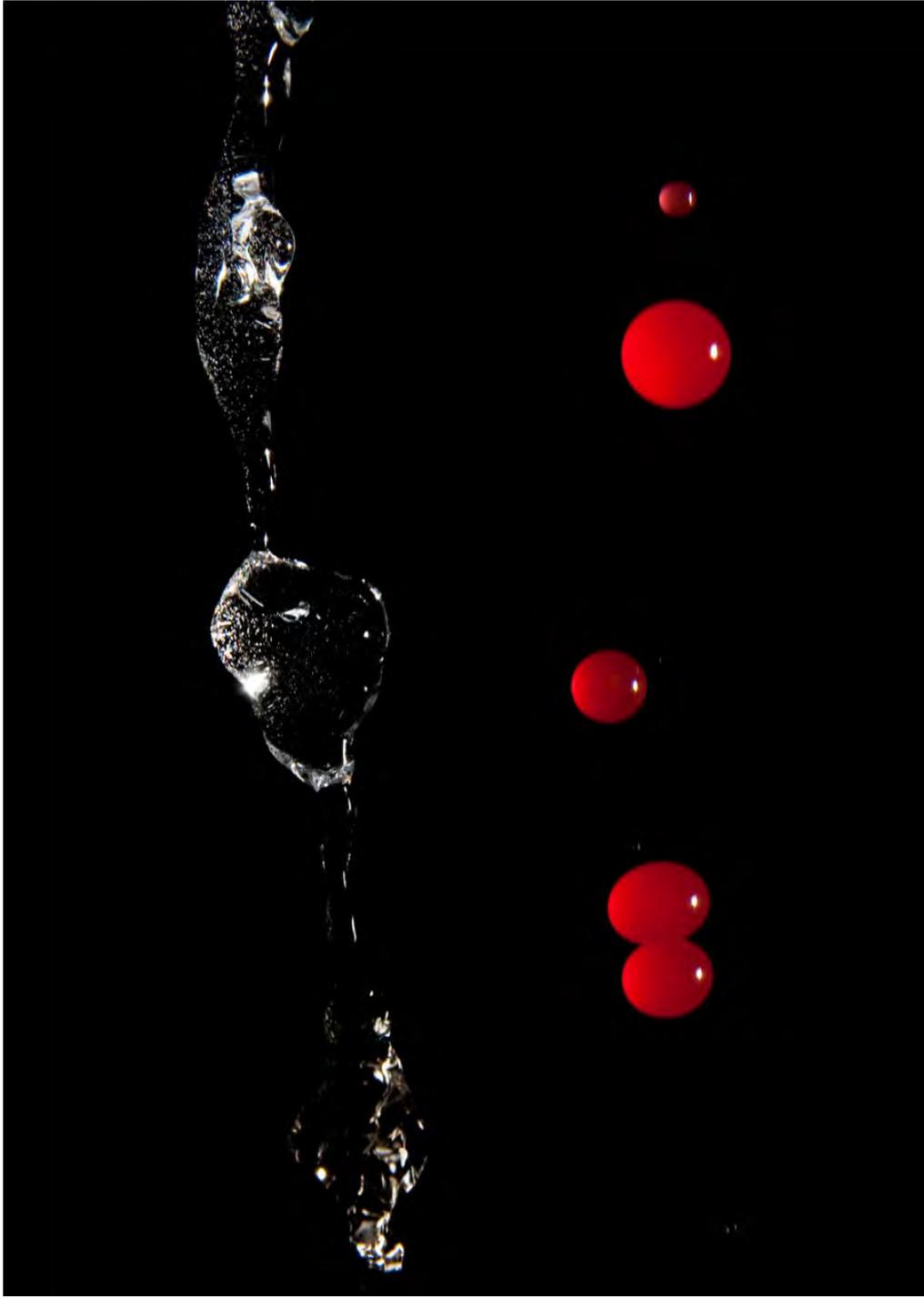
MIX & LA VODKA

DE QUALITE SUPREME

300 ml • 750 ml







Smoke

1. **Equipment & materials**
2. Setup & process
3. Samples



Equipment

- Camera with or without cable release
- Medium zoom lens
- Steady tripod
- One hotshoe flashes
- Radio control or remote cable to control flash
- Computer with Photoshop



Materials

- Table top, approximately 24" x 24"
- Black foamcore (16" x 20") for background
- Incense sticks
- Incense holder
- Barbeque lighter



Smoke

1. Equipment & materials
2. **Setup & Process**
3. Samples



Setup & process

- Secure white foamcore to a background stand with clips, as needed
- Set a flash on a stand aiming it towards the middle of the table, with the direction almost perpendicular to the camera
- Set the incense holder sideways on the middle of the table and place a stick in the holder
- Set camera on tripod and align the height of the camera a little higher than the incense stick so that it is just out of the frame







Setup & process

Camera (this is only a guide)

Aperture: highest possible for sharpness – ie: f32

Shutter: 1/20th second

ISO: smallest possible, ie. 100 or 200

Format: RAW or JPG

Speedlights

Trigger: Use a cable, radio transmitters or flashes with built in transmitters.

Power: Start with around 1/16 power and see what you get.

Gels: experiment with different gel colours, or none at all.

Lens

Focus: Manually focus lens on the incense stick and then reframe so that it is below the frame of view.



Setup & process

Photograph the Smoke

Photographing the smoke is as simple as looking through the viewfinder and pressing the shutter when you see interesting shapes or patterns. There may be a smoke image that is striking at this point. But the fun part is seeing the results of mirroring images on top of themselves in Photoshop.

Post production in Photoshop

- Open an image in Photoshop and do a basic levels adjustment to increase the contrast and darken the background, as needed.
- Duplicate the layer
- Flip the layer horizontally
- Set the layer mode to 'screen' (this works best)
- Move the top layer around until you like what you see or else start over with another smoke image
- From the abstract smoke image, new recognizable images will appear – like faces, creatures, etc.



Setup & process

Tips

- Blow on the smoke or use a piece of cardboard or your hand to gently fan it – this will agitate the smoke and create more diverse patterns
- Use a gel on the flash for coloring the smoke – if you don't want to have to deal with colouring in post production
- Make sure you choose a scent of incense that you like!

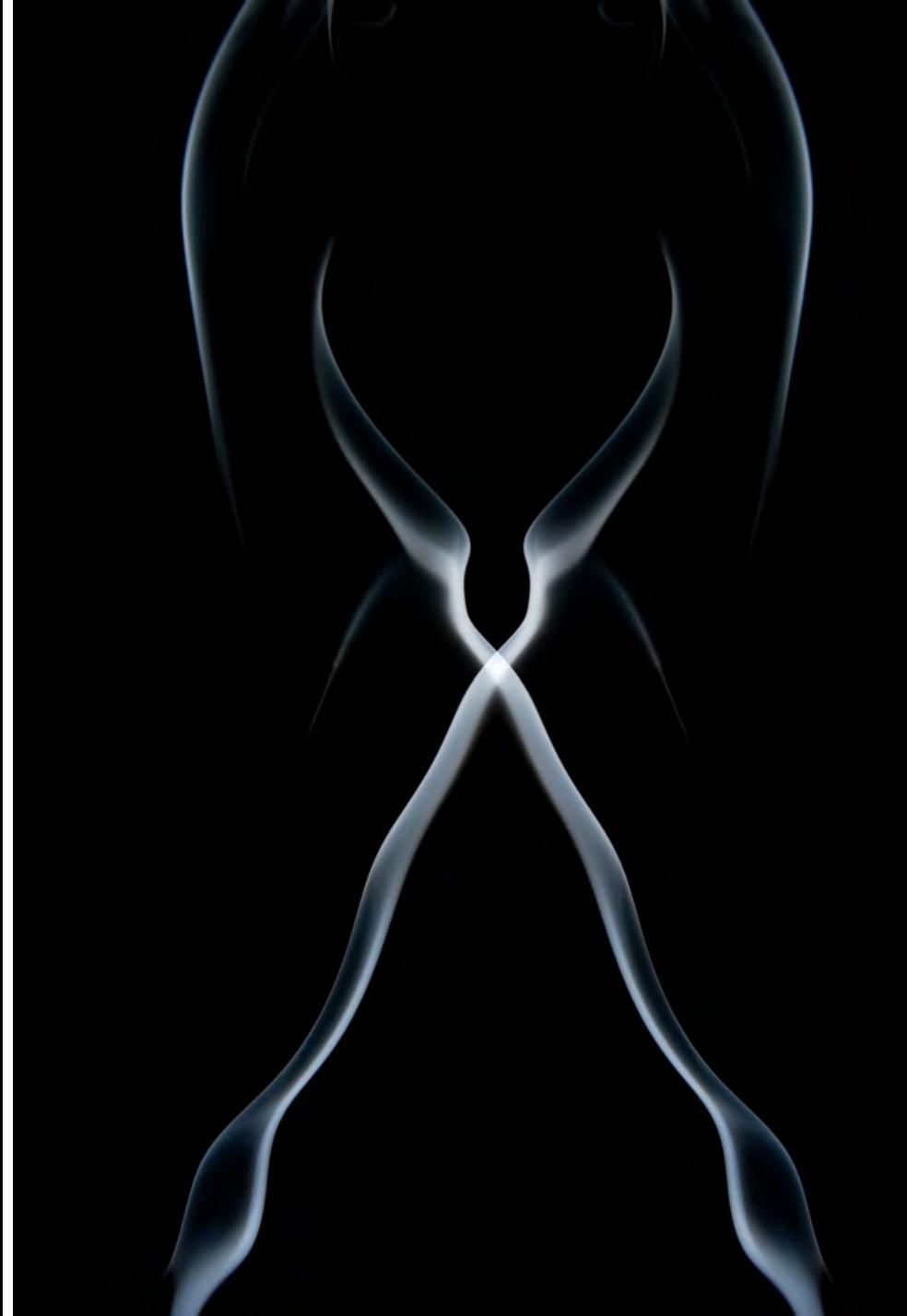
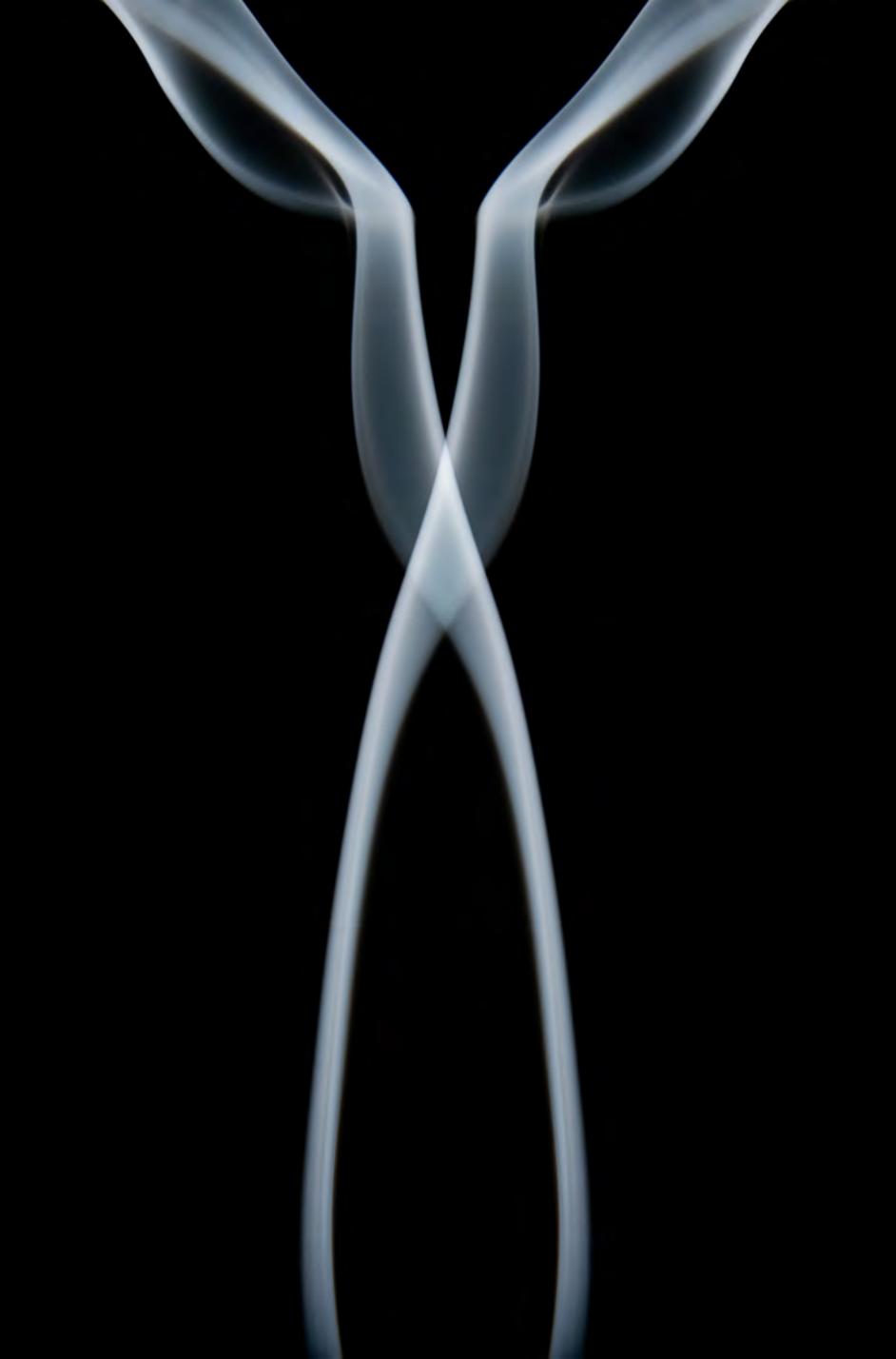


Smoke

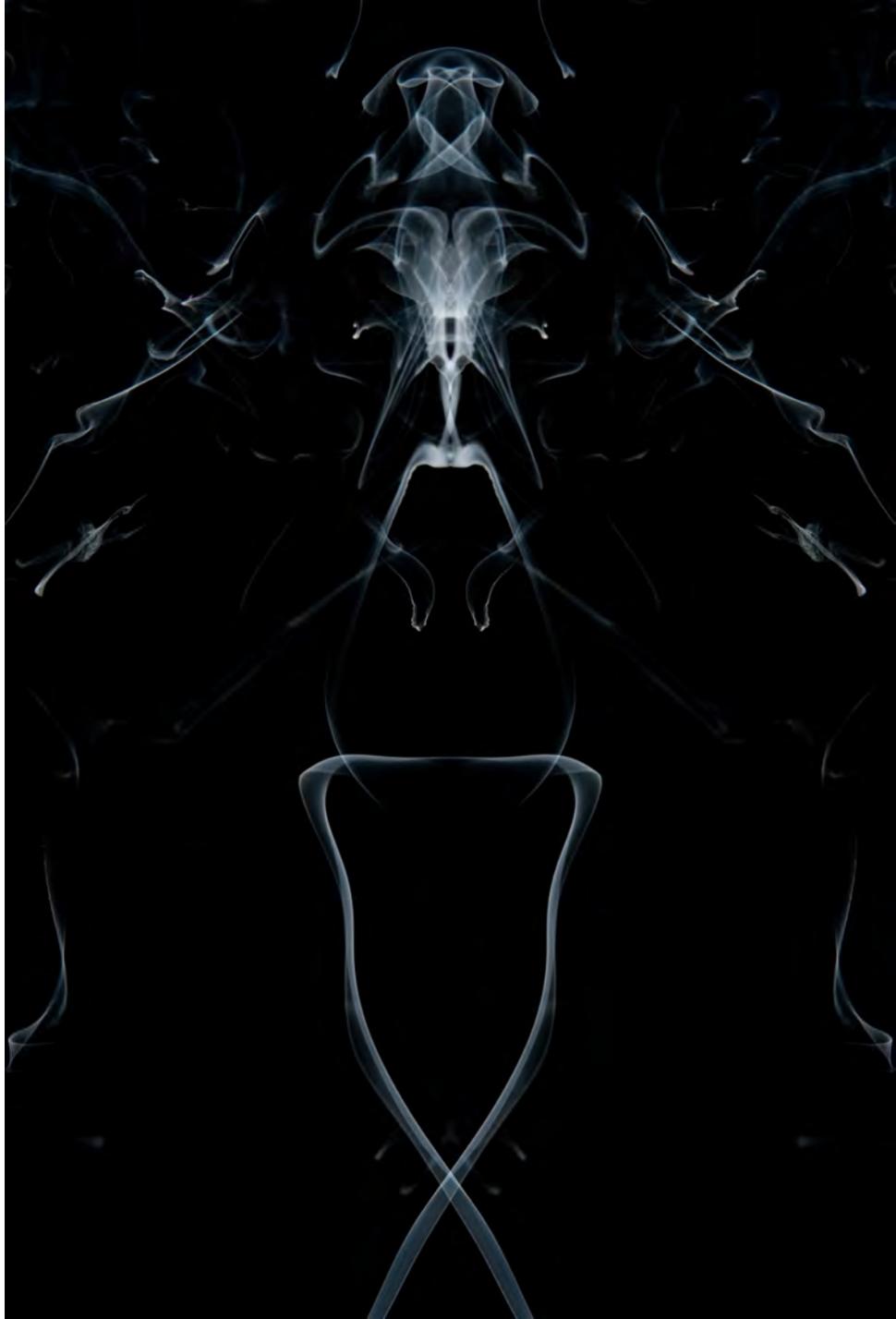
1. Equipment & materials
2. Setup & Process
3. **Samples**













Nine



Nine



Smoke, Liquid + Light

- My images
- My story
- How to photograph smoke + liquid
- **Demonstration**



Resources

- Liquid Splash Photography: Alex Koloskov
<https://www.koloskov.com>
- Liquid Drop Art: Corrie White
<https://www.liquiddropart.com/>
- **Google Images & Flickr** for Ideas & Inspiration