

Making things brighter - Record demand for flash equipment

The growing interest in digital SLR photography also generates a stronger demand for external, attachable flash units with better performance, wider angles and more flexible options for creative lighting, so Photoindustrie-Verband and GfK. Compared with 2006, sales of flash equipment rose in 2007 by almost 20 percent to 166,000 units.

Photoindustrie-Verband and GfK believe that the SLR market will continue to grow in the years to come, creating a broad basis for sales of accessories in general and flash equipment in particular. Last year, 43 percent of all SLR cameras were sold in Europe. In 2007 a growth rate of 31 percent was recorded for the SLR market in Germany. Digital models accounted for 97 percent of the 715,000 SLR cameras sold in Germany alone.

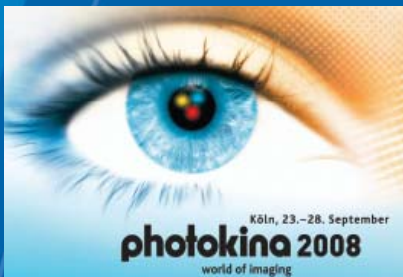
On the sunny side

Flashlight - the artificial sun - is mainly used where there is not enough or no light at all for photography. But for many creative photographers this extra source of lighting means much more: Flashlight softens shadows, reduces contrast and brightens colours. To some extent, flashlight works against colour fog caused by ambient light. Skilful lighting with external flash units - i.e. flash units operated separately from cameras - gives more emphasis to persons and objects and, quite literally, highlights selected aspects. Flashlight can "freeze" the fastest movements and vice versa, as flashlight - combined with long exposure times - leads to blur effects which suggest motion. Due to the sophisticated control technology

of modern flash equipment, which is attuned to cameras, most flash effects can be brought about with automatic functions. For example, users of most flash units can choose between picture synchronization with the first or second shutter curtain. Photographers can also choose whether to use flashlight as main light or as fill-in light, relying on automatic functions to invariably adapt the lighting angle of the reflector to the focal length of the lens attached to the camera. Rotatable zoom reflectors enable indirect flash. Diffusers and bounce flashes see to particularly soft light. Colour filters bring about impressive light effects. Macro-flashes for expressive lighting in the close up range and ring flashes for shadowless lighting in portrait or object photography complete the wide choice of mobile light sources.

It is even possible to control - without any cables and directly from the camera - the brightness of several flash units that are used separately from that camera. Digital technology also enables adapting the control electronics of flash units to changing flash automatics of cameras, by way of firmware updates via an integrated USB interface and taking into account novelties and special functions.

The decision for flash units from systems of camera manufacturers holds the promise of perfect attunement to camera control. The alternative is system-independent flash equipment, which can be optimally adapted to different and new cameras - by means of interchangeable adapters and firmware updates.



The whole range of novelties in flashlight equipment - the artificial sun in the photo and imaging sector - will be on display at photokina 2008 from 23 to 28 September in Cologne.

