

GOLDEN SILHOUETTE

A 3-Light Fashion Setup for Warm, Sculpted Portraits
Lighting Breakdown by Siddology

THE LOOK

The goal was to create a **warm, dramatic fashion portrait** with strong golden separation against the textured brown backdrop.

Instead of using one light to do everything, the setup separates the subject from the background using **two gelled backlights**, while a large overhead source keeps the model's face and outfit soft and controlled.

The result is warm, dimensional and slightly editorial without making the lighting overly complicated.



01. KEY LIGHT

Modifier: Top Bounce Umbrella with Diffuser

Position: In front of the model, overhead

The main light was placed **in front of the model and raised overhead**, using a bounce umbrella with a diffuser.

This creates a broad, soft source that wraps around the face and body while maintaining enough direction to give the images shape.

The overhead position also helps create gentle shadows under the chin and adds dimension to the facial features without producing a harsh studio-lighting look.

The large source was important because the outfit had a lot of fabric. A harder light would have created much stronger and less controlled contrast across the clothing.



02. BACKLIGHTS

Lights: 2 lights

Position: Camera left and camera right, behind the model

Colour: Yellow gel

Two lights were positioned behind the model, one on each side.

Both lights were fitted with **yellow colour gels** to create the warm golden glow visible around the model and on the backdrop.

The two-sided placement gives more even separation than using a single backlight. It also allows the light to interact with the hair, shoulders and flowing fabric from both directions.

The yellow gel is doing more than simply adding colour. It helps establish the **warm colour palette** of the entire image.



03. FILL LIGHT

Modifier: Silver reflector

Position: Camera right

A **silver reflector** was placed on camera right to bounce some of the key light back onto the model.

This isn't a separate light source. It simply redirects the existing key light.

The silver surface gives considerably more punch than a white reflector, which helps retain detail in the shadow areas while keeping the image dimensional.

The important part is not to bring the reflector too close if you want to maintain the dramatic quality. Too much fill will flatten the shadows created by the overhead key.



04. CAMERA SETTINGS

Camera: Canon R6 Mark II

Lens: 24-105mm f/4

Shutter: 1/160 sec

Aperture: f/9

ISO: 200

The relatively narrow **f/9 aperture** gives enough depth of field to keep the model and clothing consistently sharp, particularly useful for the wider fashion frames.

The **ISO 200** keeps the image clean, while 1/160 sec provides a practical shutter speed for working with flash.

These are the settings used for this setup. Your final exposure will depend on the light output, modifier distance and shooting environment.



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by Siddology

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05. HOW TO RECREATE IT

1. Place the model a little away from the backdrop.
2. Position two lights behind the model, one on each side.
3. Add yellow gels to both backlights and aim them towards the model and backdrop.
4. Place the bounce umbrella with diffuser in front of the model and raise it above eye level.
5. Use a silver reflector on camera right to bring controlled fill into the shadows.
6. Start around **1/160 sec, f/9, ISO 200** and adjust the light power to reach your desired exposure.
7. Balance the backlights carefully. They should create separation and atmosphere without overpowering the key light.



THE TAKEAWAY

The interesting part of this setup isn't the number of lights. It's how each source has a specific job.

Key light: shapes the model.

Two gelled backlights: create colour and separation.

Silver reflector: controls the shadows.

This is a good example of how you can build a **cinematic fashion lighting setup** by thinking in terms of roles rather than simply adding more lights.

