

Lovegrove Gels

The Studio Collection



How to use the Lovegrove Gels ~ Damien's technique

Here is my technique for creating striking studio portraits using a grey background and the Lovegrove Studio Collection of gels. Grid collections like the one on the left make fantastic large acrylic products or canvas prints for the home. They are easy to shoot, command high prices, and they look great in a studio shop window too. Here's how I shot the grid on the left.

The paint on the back wall of my studio is Dulux Ice Storm 2. It is as near a neutral as you can get with pigment and comes from their professional range. You will need to get it mixed for you. The computers at Dulux paint mixing centres have the recipe built in. The top light is a Bowens 1200ws head in a Wafer 140 soft box. The head is set to quarter power. The reflector is my original triflector bought in 1994. It was designed by the legend Stu Williamson. The background light is a Bowens 750ws head fitted with a Maxilight reflector. The two backlights on Henri, my model are Bowens 750ws heads with beauty dishes fitted with grids to avoid flare.

The gels were all photographed illuminating the grey background whilst Henri posed in the foreground to give a true skin tone reference. The gels were simply clipped to the flash head reflector with a single small crock clip and the power of the flash head was adjusted to reveal a range of luminance values with each colour.

I have now put together the definitive collection of gels from literally hundreds of candidates. As part of the product preparation for the Lovegrove Studio Collection I shot every shortlisted gel to see how it looked in camera. Each one has been chosen because of the mood or character it evokes in a digital image. The way a gel photographs is often very different to its visual appearance so all the assessing was done using digital files straight from camera. It's easy to see colours that work when you are looking at real photographs rather than gel swatches.

With such vibrant colours to hand, it is vital to be in tune with subtle shade and hue changes. A small hue shift can have an enormous effect on the mood a picture evokes and putting together a great collection of gels has been like creating a paint collection for houses.

I've put in a bit of hard work over the past two months to put this collection together so that hopefully you can enjoy creating beautifully lit masterpieces to transform your clients homes. If you shoot hair shots for stylists, accessories for fashion designers, make over portraits or magazine covers then these gels are for you. If you don't shoot any of the above but you want to have a bit of fun then these are for you too because for less than the cost of just one roll of background paper you could be the master of colour wherever you shoot. Each gel is 12" x 12" (305mm x 305mm). The full set comprises 37 gels and each gel can also be cut into 12 Honl sized (4" x 3") smaller gels if you want to add some colour to your Speedlight work.

For wider shots, larger studios, or to create gradient backgrounds, it is advisable to use two or more background lights and gel sets. - *Damien Lovegrove*



The image on the left (above) is my 4 light studio set up for the grid of colour shots with the background light set to quarter power.

The image on the right is the same set up with the colour gel fitted to the background light, still on quarter power.



The shot on the left (above) is with no gel on the background light and the flash head set at half power. The shot on the right is with the background flash head off completely. I use a grey wall because it will go pure black when unlit with just 3 stops less light than my subject. There is always some spill light in a studio, especially one as small as mine and white backgrounds usually turn a muddy grey when unlit. The shade of grey should be chosen so that you can recreate the two shots above just by adjusting the power of your background lights. This will give you full control over the luminance of the background colour.

