



Happy Snappers

Light Painting Photography

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Light painting is a photographic technique using a hand-held light source to “paint” on the film or sensor of your camera. Essentially, you’re waving lights in front of your camera, and you never know what you’ve made until you’re done, so trial and error is required. If this sounds like fun, you’ll find five light painting experiments below you can start and finish in about 30 minutes.

This technique was created in the late 19th century by a pair of physicians who were studying movement. They attached lights to humans and animals, photographed them, then studied how they moved.

Equipment required

- Camera with manual settings
- Light source (like a flashlight, glow stick or sparkler)
- Tripod or a flat surface, if you're the DIY type
- Darkness

Basic Steps to Make a Light Painting

1. Collect your light, camera and tripod.
2. Dress in dark clothing, and go into a dark room.
3. Set up your tripod and camera.
4. Set your camera to:

Mode: Manual

ISO: 100

Aperture: f/22

Shutter Speed: 6-20 seconds (but you'll vary this later)

5. Set the self-timer for at least ten seconds, and then stand in front of the camera and make your painting.
6. Look at your photograph, and then make adjustments accordingly; take another picture.
7. Repeat, repeat, repeat.
8. The simple experiments below will give you ideas, but you'll just need to vary your shutter speed based on the amount of light and the complexity of your painting.

Light painting is using a light to illuminate an otherwise dark frame

Shutter speed is the priority

Light Painting takes many forms



Light Painting takes many forms

