

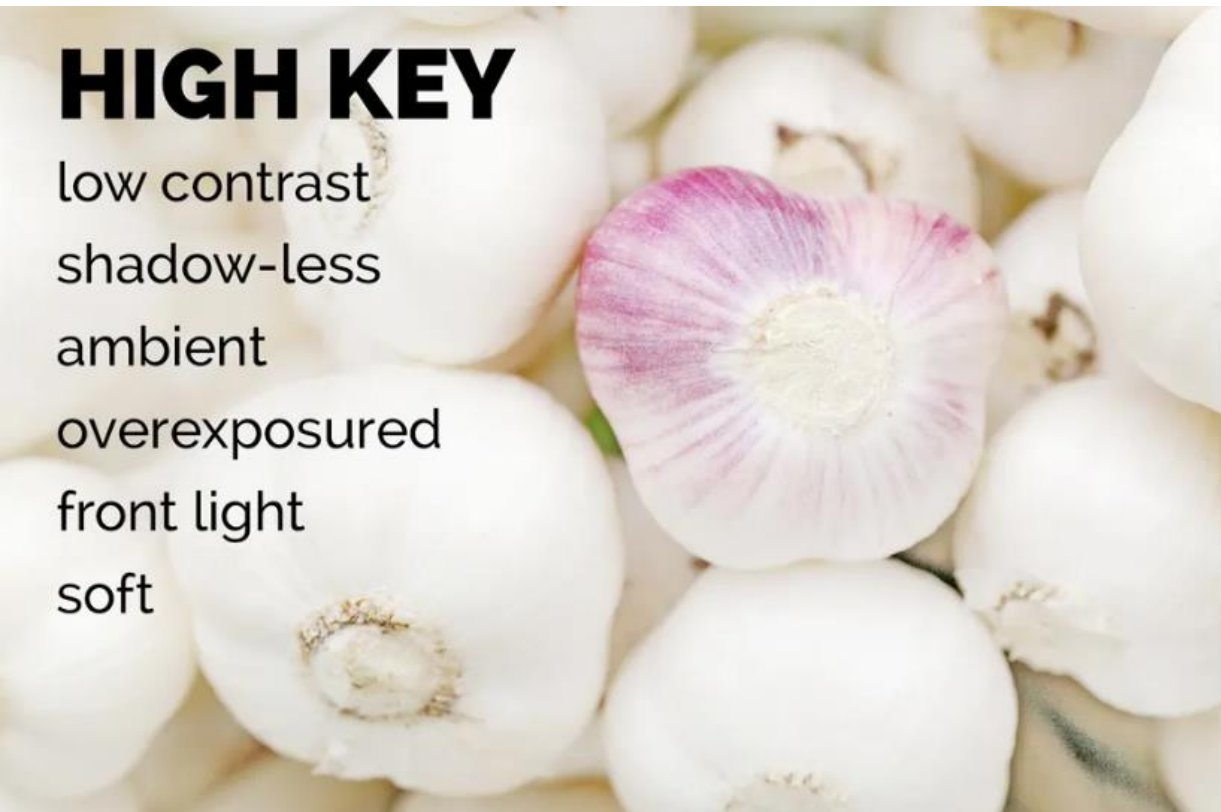
Low-Key Photography

Also called **Low-Key Lighting**



HIGH KEY

low contrast
shadow-less
ambient
overexposed
front light
soft



LOW KEY

high contrast
accent on form
direct
dark (black)
rim light
harsh



Definition:

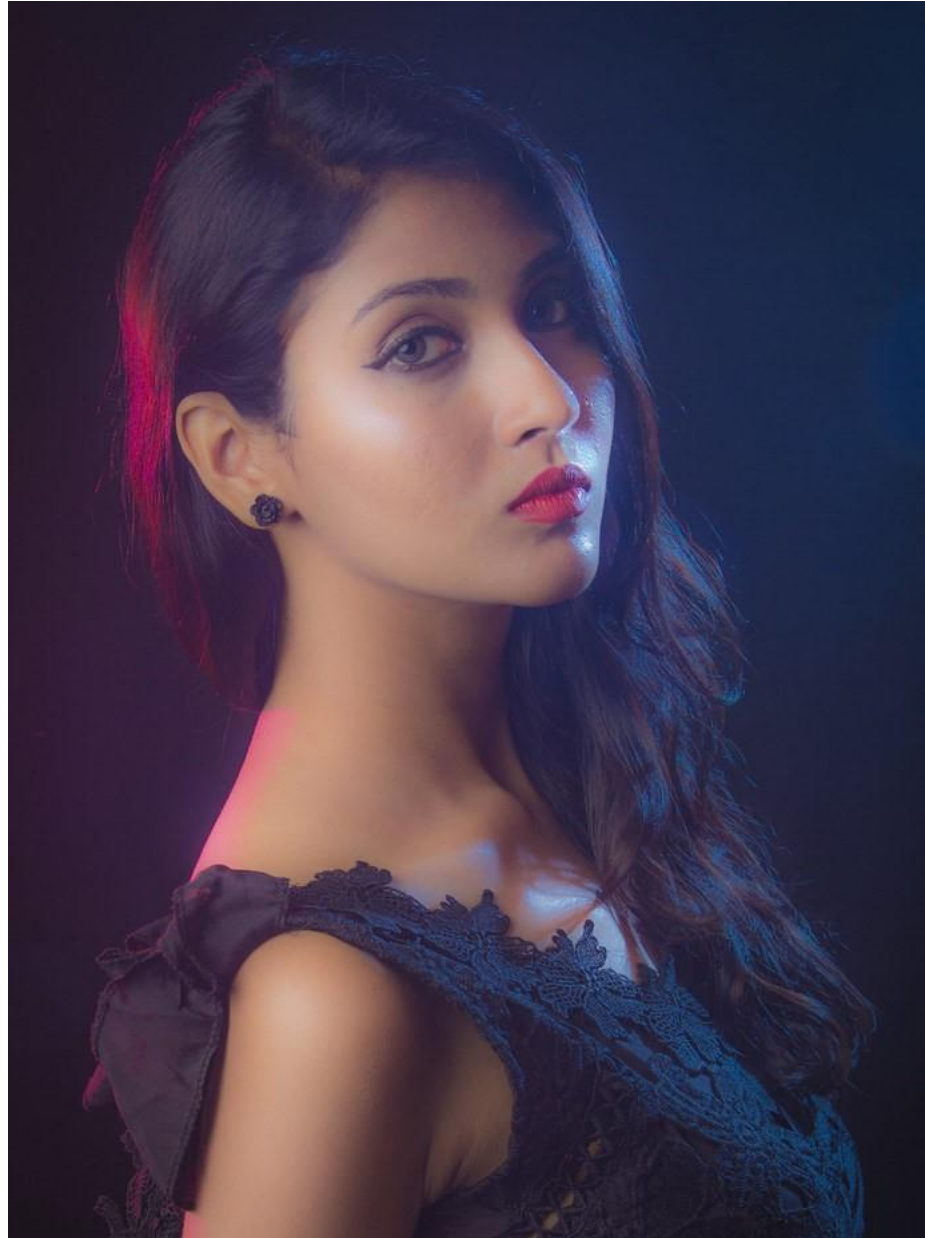
Low-key photography is a style of photography that uses dark tones, shadows, and deep black to create dramatic, high-contrast images. Photos may be color or black-and-white.



Low-key photographs are overall quite dark, often with just a small patch of light picking out the subject. A low-key image can often appear dark and moody.



When shooting low-key images, shadows can be very dark but still open, meaning you can see details in all but just the most-shaded areas.



Technique:

Low-key photography involves dimming the main light source and emphasizing specific areas of the frame with natural or artificial light.



Composition:

Low-key images often use shadows to create a sense of mystery and draw attention to the illuminated parts of the image.



Origin:

The compositional techniques used in low-key photography are similar to the Renaissance technique of **chiaroscuro**, which was used to create dark paintings.

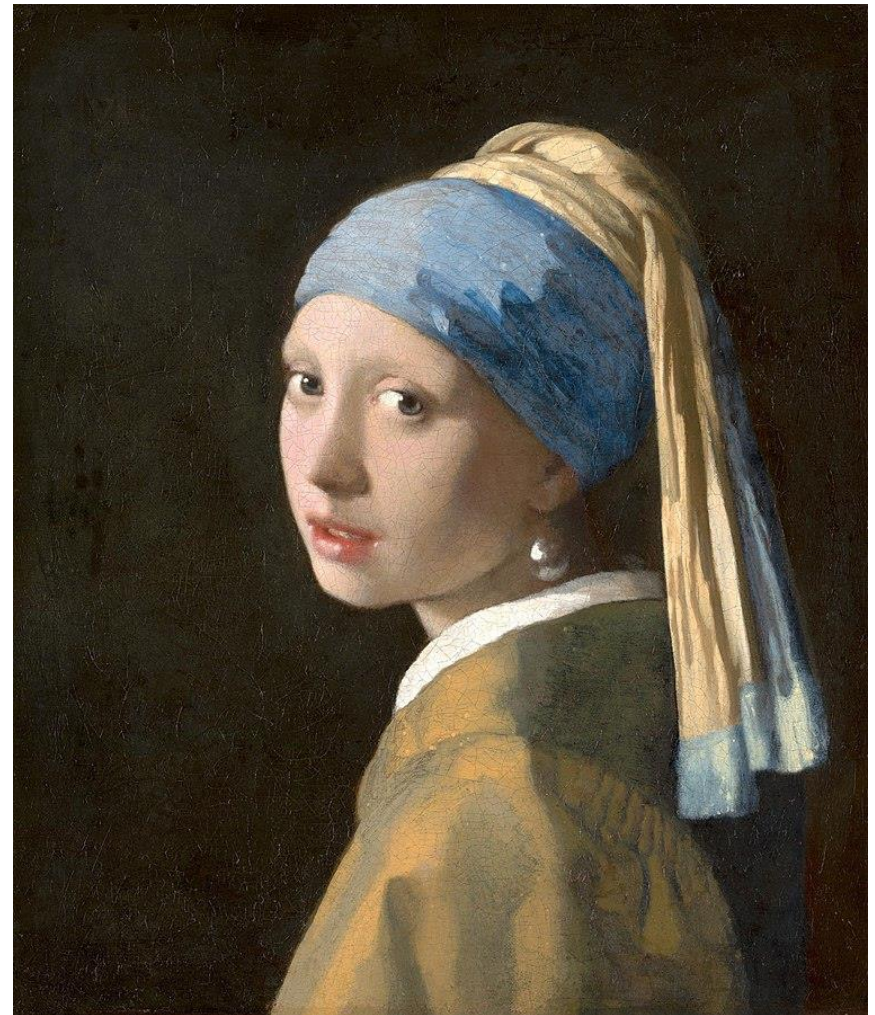


The Holy Family

Raphael
1518



Salome with the Head of John the Baptist
Caravaggio (Madrid) 1609



Girl with the Pearl Earring
Johannes Vermeer 1665

Examples:

Low-key
photography
can be used for
wildlife or **pets**.



Examples:

Low-key
photography
can be used
for **still life**.



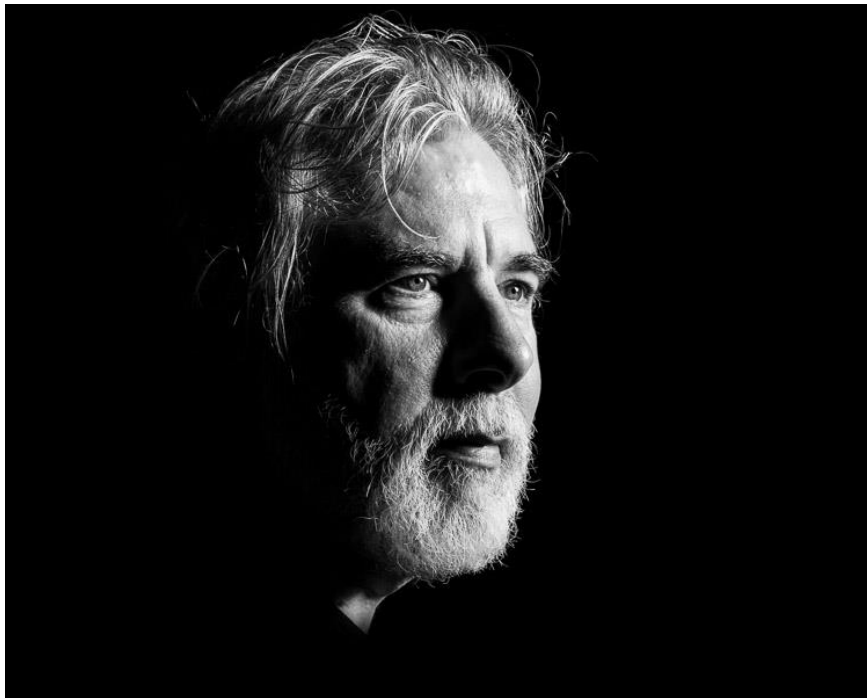
Examples:

Low-key
photography
can be used for
landscapes.



Examples:

Low-key
photography
can be used
for **portraits**.



Tips:

To create a low-key image, you need a location that is relatively dark.

Outside on a sunny day isn't going to work.

(Well, technically it can be done, but it's a lot of trouble.)

But most indoor locations can be made dark just by tweaking your camera settings.



White or light-colored walls reflect light, so a dark background is best. And, low-key images are **NOT** simply underexposed.

Many more helpful tips, including “how to” YouTube videos, can be easily found online.





Lastly, and most importantly, enjoy
the photographic adventure!