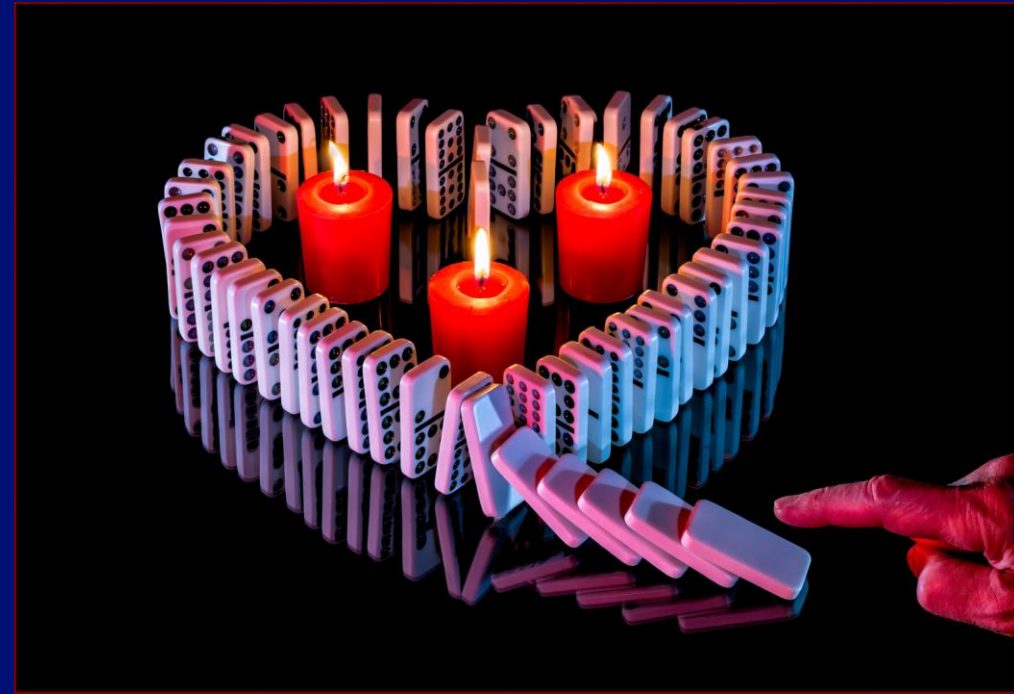# Using Reflective Surfaces Tips

A 10-Minute Mentor Night Kickoff

The dual nature of reflections - their potential to either enhance or detract!

Chane Cullens
May 1, 2025

Controlling the Reflection – Position & Presence

Camera Position is Key

- Change your viewpoint to change the reflection.
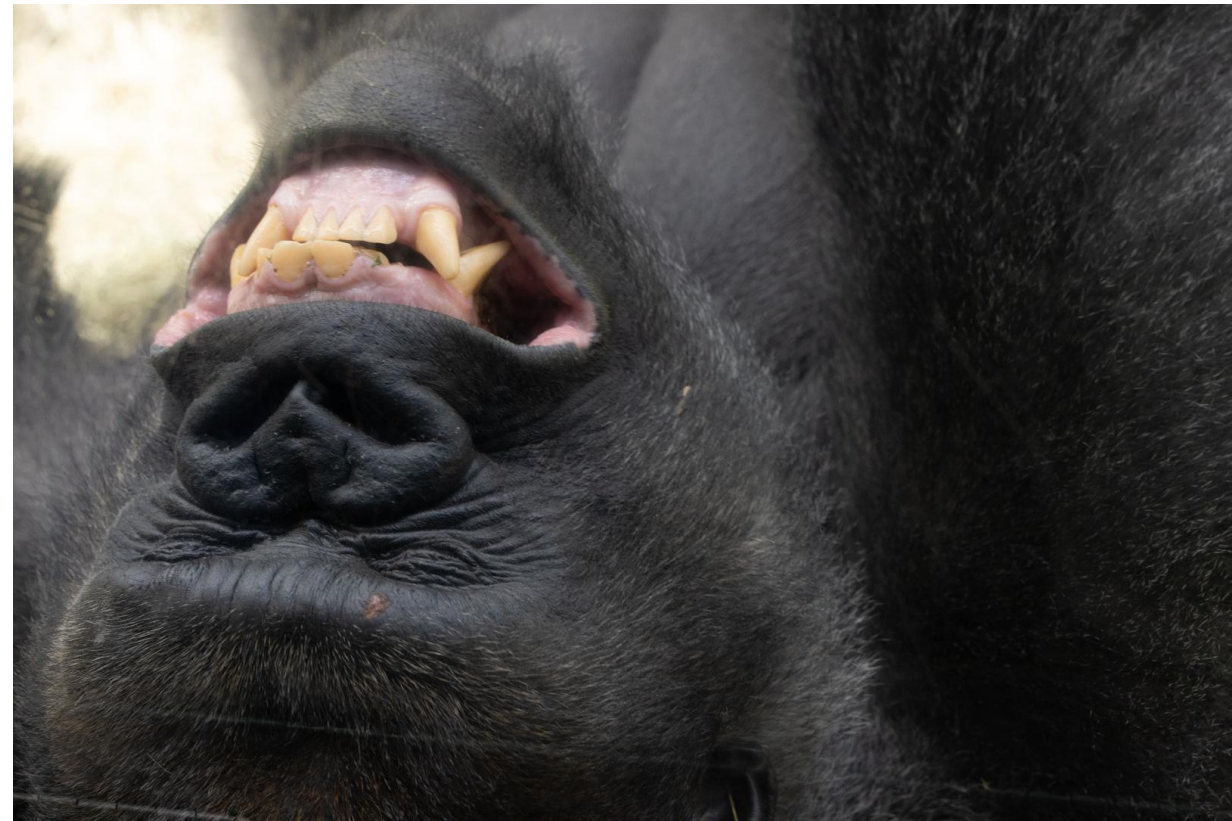- Get low and close to make the reflection appear larger.

Preventing Your Own Reflection

- When you can't angle the camera away...
- Use a large black sheet/card with a hole cut out for the lens.
- This replaces your reflection with black.

Camera Position Reflections

Move 5 feet

Camera Position Reflections

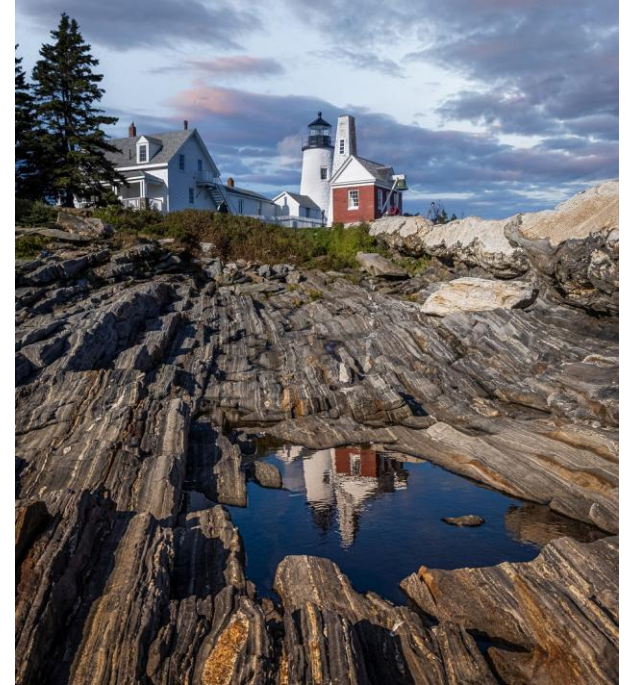Note the reflection of the face on the back of the gorilla's head

Managing Focus & Glare – Aperture & Light

Use Aperture for Focus Control

- Aperture controls depth of focus (sharpness zone).
- Small aperture number (e.g., f/1.8, f/2.8) = few items in focus
- Focus on the subject? the reflection? (further away) can become blurry.
- Large aperture number (e.g., f/11, f/16) = more items in focus

Tackle Glare

- Glare = harsh bright spots from direct light.
- Look for it in the viewfinder/live view *before* shooting.
- Solution: Change camera perspective slightly OR move the light source.

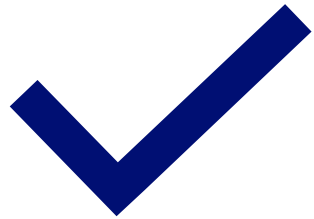# Surface Prep & A Pro Tip - Cleanliness & Gear

Keep Surfaces Spotless!

- Reflective surfaces show *everything*: dust, smudges, lint.
- Especially noticeable on dark, smooth surfaces (like black acrylic).
- Clean meticulously right before and during the shoot.

Pro Tip: Dedicated Reflective Surface

- For controlled shots (still life), use a reflective sheet.
- Example: Reflective Black Acrylic Sheet (search Amazon; "Limo" brand looks OK)
- Ensures consistent results.
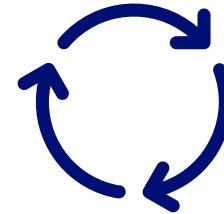
Summary & Key Takeaways

Recap:

Position: Controls reflection content & size.

Hide Yourself: Black sheet technique.

Focus: Aperture controls reflection sharpness.

Glare: Adjust camera or light angle.

Cleanliness: Essential, especially on dark surfaces.

Final Thought:

Success comes from thoughtful control of position, light, focus, and environment.

Directed Playing Helps!