

REVIEW



1. SoLux bulb

SOLUX

Good light makes your prints appear even more beautiful. Get good light. It's one of the most essential elements in any photographic image, at the point of capture, during processing, and at the point of display.

SoLux (www.solux.net) makes good light. SoLux bulbs' Color Rendering Indexes (rating used to describe the quality of light) are 99 on a scale of 100. All SoLux bulbs are full smooth spectrum and ultra low UV and IR. SoLux bulbs come in a variety of color temperatures: 3500K, 4100K, 4700K, and 5000K. SoLux bulbs come in a variety of beam angles: 10–36 degrees. Low voltage (12 volt), SoLux bulbs fit in standard MR-16 2-pin socket fixtures and adaptors are available for regular screw-in fixtures.

While light has many important qualities, two are particularly significant; temperature and spectral power distribution.

Most prints are viewed under light temperatures warmer than 5000K, typically a mix of tungsten (2800K) and daylight (variable). Galleries and museums favor halogen (2900K). Studies suggest that more people prefer viewing artwork under higher color temperatures (3500K).

A majority of artificial light sources, including fluorescent, metal halide, and LEDs, have an uneven distribution of colors. Graphs of light sources with uneven spectral distributions display spikes in specific regions of the spectrum. Spikes limit the number of available colors in a spectrum to discern an object's color. Due to missing colors in between spikes, objects may look dull or gray. When a spectrum is uneven, hues that are found in elevated levels appear brighter while hues that are found in low levels appear duller. Spikes create an imbalance in the relationships between hues. When possible, avoid lights that have them.

Incandescent light contains large amounts of yellow, orange, and red light. Though not as extreme, halogen suffers from the same tendencies. Cool white fluorescent light may produce a white that is cooler in appearance, but all fluorescent lights have uneven spectral distributions.

How important is viewing light? Very. To many, at first glance, the differences may seem subtle. To truly appreciate the differences you need a side-by-side comparison of the same or identical objects in spikey and smooth spectrum light sources.

The curators of the Van Gogh Museum (Netherlands) visited their traveling collection while it was on display at the National Gallery of Art (US). "What have you done with our paintings?" they exclaimed. They thought they had been cleaned. "Nothing." was the reply. The real answer was in the light – SoLux. Under full spectrum light sources the paintings appeared significantly brighter, clearer, and more saturated. The Van Gogh Museum now uses SoLux bulbs. More and more museums are beginning to use SoLux bulbs as well.

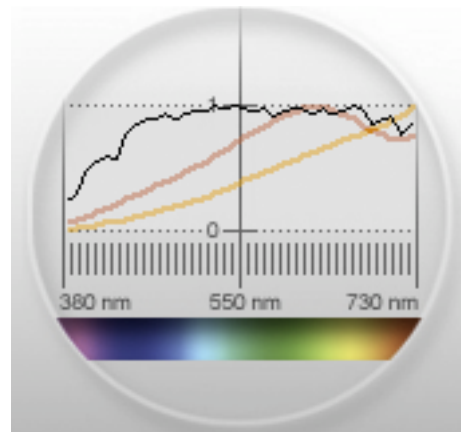
I use SoLux 3500K bulbs for my studio and gallery. I evaluate and display prints under the same light, one that most closely approximates the display conditions prints are most likely to be viewed under.

I use four SoLux Gooseneck fixtures for portable light sources; two with 3500K bulbs to evaluate display conditions and two with 5000K bulbs to evaluate color management issues (calibration, softproofing, and profiles).

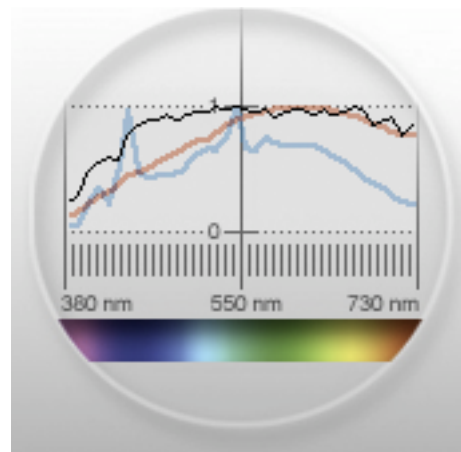
I recommend to owners of my prints that they strongly consider using 3500K SoLux bulbs for display and viewing.

To see, you need light. So it stands to reason that the light you view your prints in is extremely important. All lights are not created equally. For the best results, choose a high quality light source.

Visit www.solux.net to find out more about their products and light (there are excellent resources there on the science of light). For even more information, contact Phil Bradfield – phil@solux.net or 800-254-4487.



2. Spectral curves comparing 3500K halogen (yellow) and SoLux (red)



3. Spectral curves for 5000K fluorescent gti lightbox (blue) and SoLux (red)