



REVIEW

MAC ✓

PC ✓

→ PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO SYSTEM

PRICE: 2ft £299
3ft £349
4ft £399

CONTACT:

Flexion Solutions
01530 837143
www.cubelite.co.uk

FEATURES

- Cubelite tent
- White background roll
- Double-sided reflector
- Interfit tungsten head
- 500W bulb
- Lighting stand
- Carrying case

SYSTEM

N/A

FOR

- Good quality, repeatable results
- Portable and easy to assemble
- Copes well with reflective subjects
- Great for roving, photographers

AGAINST

- Restricts shooting angles
- Tungsten light is adequate, not good
- The larger the product, the tighter the fit



COMPUTER arts VERDICT

If you outsource photography to studios and the resulting images are only ever destined for Web or small print, the Cubelite is an excellent investment. Although we preferred a decent flashgun to the supplied tungsten head, the repeatability of results gives Cubelite a serious advantage.



Cubelite

A complete in-house photographic studio system – in a bag – for great and consistent shots on the go



RIGHT LIGHT

These images (right) illustrate how dramatic an influence light can have on a product shot. Notice in 1 the unsightly dark shadow and the burned out areas generated by the intense flash. In 2, a separate light source over-emphasises the shadows. Compare these two shots to 3, taken using the Cubelite system. Note how the product is lit evenly on all sides here, and the absence of burned out areas or unpleasant shadows.



→ Advances in the quality and affordability of digital photography over the last few years have proved a massive boon to businesses and designers alike. But better technology doesn't stop people taking bad photographs. Lighting is paramount in product photography, and people with little or no knowledge of studio lighting techniques, armed only with an on-camera flash, are unlikely to flatter the objects they're shooting.

The Lastolite Cubelite kit is designed as a low-cost method of achieving quality product images by providing an environment where lighting can be easily controlled. The Cubelite itself is a white nylon cube, available in sizes of two, three or four feet, which uses tensioned wires to spring up and collapse in the same way as a studio reflector.

Inside the cube are two clips for hanging a background sheet (white is supplied; other colours are available), which drops down to form

a basic cove. On one face of the cube is a removable panel, attached by Velcro. You can detach this for shooting in most cases, but it also features vertical and horizontal zippers. If the subject is reflective, the panel can be kept in place and a zipper opened to allow access for the camera lens. This way, the subject is enclosed in white, and you won't end up with a self-portrait in your kettle, boules set or hub cap.

Lighting comes courtesy of a 500W Interfit tungsten head, supplied with a stand, and a double-sided reflector (silver/white), which can sit inside the cube, if required, to fill in shadows. You can set up the kit in five to ten minutes, and the system packs down well, making it easy to store and transport.

As far as image quality is concerned, the watchword is repeatability. The Cubelite may not offer the versatility of a big studio setup, but spring the cube and set up the light and you get decent and

consistent results. It's great for the Web and fine for a print catalogue too. The Cubelite is perfect for running through large product ranges over a number of days, or for piecemeal shooting of products whenever they arrive.

There are drawbacks, of course. When shooting products directly overhead you have to flip the cube 90 degrees and there are no clips to hold the background in that position. The tungsten light is a little under-powered, too, meaning large apertures, loss of field depth or very slow shutter speeds – most digital cameras won't take a cable release.

We swapped the tungsten head for an old Canon 540EZ variable power flash and were much happier. Overall, the system is worth a look if you've lots of packshot photography to get through. It's easy to use, easy to store and transport, and quick to set up. Most importantly, it gives you consistent results that allow the products to sell themselves. **arts**

RESOURCE

Lastolite's Website offers everything you need to know if you're setting up a portable photographic studio. Additional paper backdrops for the Cubelite can be purchased in the following colours: corn, conker, black, sandstone, grass green, ivory, graphite, royal and pewter. Visit www.cubelite.co.uk