

Using Dragonframe to Photograph Stills



Dragonframe can be used with the animation stand to photograph stills

Turn on the animation stand-mounted DSLR, and open Dragonframe.

Begin a new project by selecting New Scene, naming your scene and choosing a location to save it (for example, the desktop).

Dragonframe will open, activating the camera (you should hear a reassuring click from the camera when the connection is made).

Place an item you plan to photograph on image surface of the animation stand.

You should see it in the capture window of Dragonframe.

It may actually look upside down. As you look at the camera on the animation stand, you'll see that makes perfect sense- the camera actually is upside-down to you, as you face the stand.

If you are comfortable placing the images so that they appear correct in the capture window, spin the picture on the stand 180 degrees and continue on- it will save you a step later.

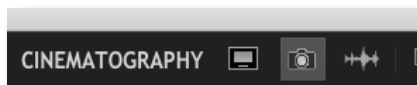
If you will be more comfortable placing the images on the stand so that they are not upside-down to you as you place them, go to the top menu and choose View>Orientation, and check "Rotate".

It should now look 'right-side up' in the Dragonframe capture window.

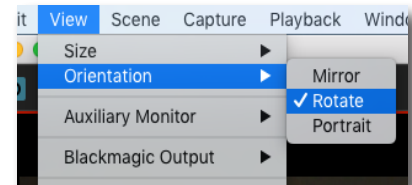
Currently we are using the "Animation" pane.



To work with our camera settings we will switch to the "Cinematography" pane.



Select the 'camera' icon.



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If it isn't already, twirl open the Camera Settings window from the options listed on the right.

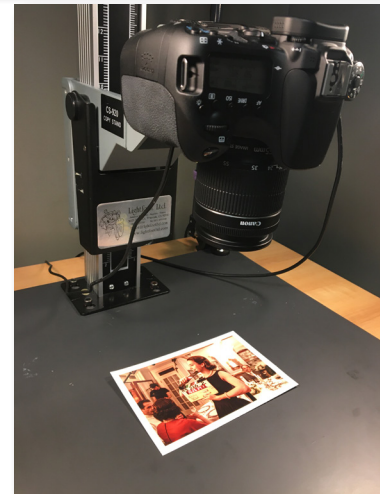
First, manually adjust the camera so that you will be capturing as much of your image target as possible.



Moving the camera physically as close as possible will give an advantage by shortening the focal length of your zoom lens.

This will give you a wider depth of field (less chance of something being out of focus if, say, your photograph is not completely flat) and it will allow you a wider aperture setting, so that you can have a lower ISO setting.

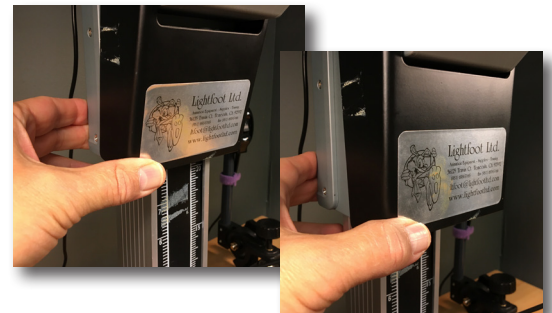
Lower ISO settings are desired as there will be less 'noise' in the captured image, resulting in a more detailed picture.



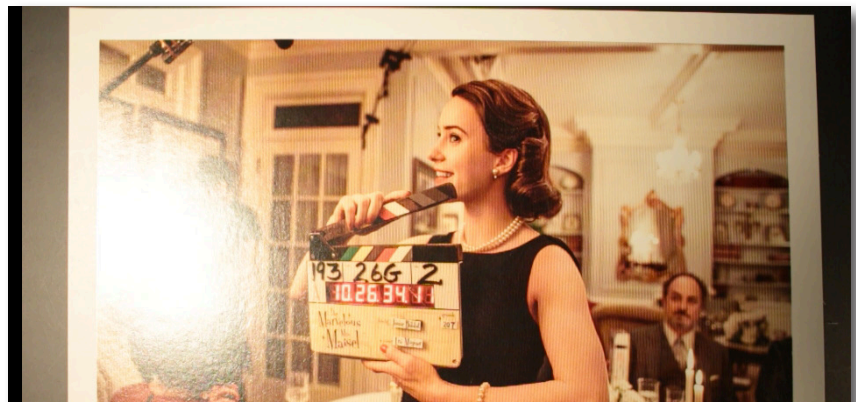
To adjust the camera height on the animation stand, squeeze the lock plate in, and gently slide the camera up or down.

Releasing the lock plate will secure the new position.

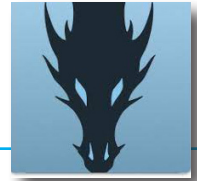
Reposition your still, zoom in more if need be, and focus the lens.



Adjust the lights so that the image is lit evenly, and there is no reflection visible.

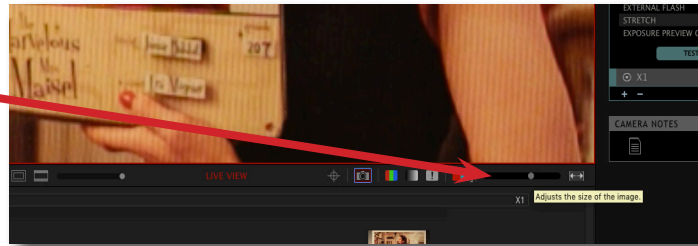


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Now, to get the image captured as clearly and with the best exposure possible.

You can use the digital zoom slider to help you check your focus.



You can control your Camera Settings via this window.

The shutter does not have to be very high, but something above 30 is preferable.

The higher the aperture the better, as it will focus the light more and give you a wider depth of field.

The ISO should be as low as possible to avoid noise, or extra 'grain' in your final image.

The balancing act between these three options that will give you the best exposure and resulting image.

As you see the changes, make sure your image is not too bright (blown-out whites) or too dark (no whites at all).

Picture Style can be set to "Faithful".

Image Quality can be set to "Large Fine JPG" if you only need JPG's to work with.

The lights on the stand are Tungsten-balanced, so set that to "Tungsten".

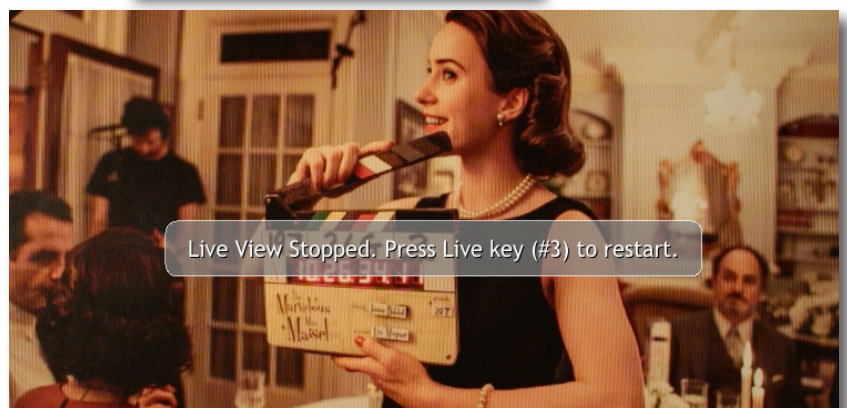
External Flash can be set to "Off", Stretch to "None" and the Exposure Preview Offset can be set to "0".

With all of that set, return to the Animation pane.



It's possible that while you were working, Dragonframe lost connection with the camera.

Using the number pad on the far right of your keyboard, press the '3' key to restart Live View.





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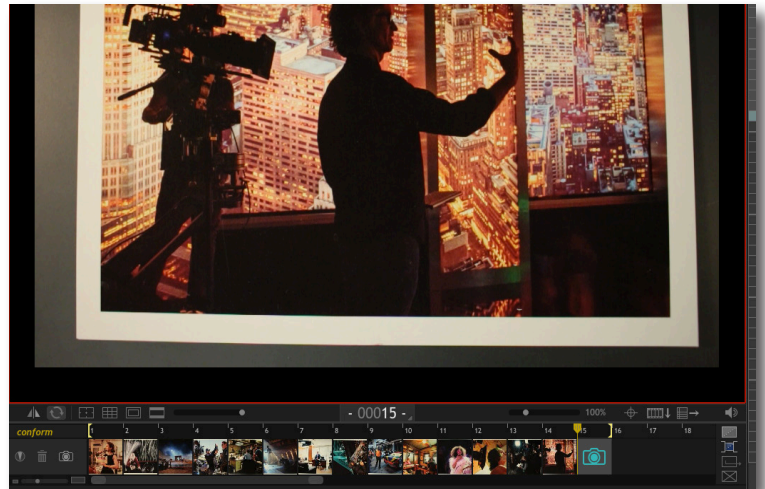
With the lights and camera set, position record each image by pressing the 'return' or 'enter' key on your keyboard. If each item is the same size, you shouldn't have to adjust anything.

If you need to zoom to reframe, you should not have to change the focus. If you do need to raise or lower the camera, you will need to check the focus, and perhaps the lights.

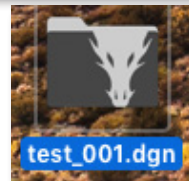
Because of this, it's advisable to record the same size images at once, so that you don't have to change settings each time to capture a shot.

As you take your shots, you will see each image appear in the timeline below the viewing screen. If you need to redo one, you can select it in the timeline with your mouse, and with it highlighted, delete it- then retake the shot.

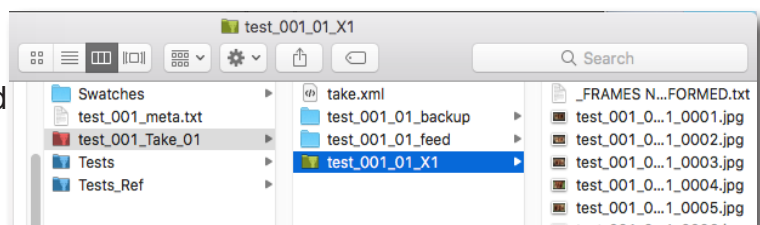
Each of these are being saved in a folder within the project (perhaps you saved it to the desktop). After capturing all of your images, let's go retrieve the resulting jpg files.



Locate the Dragonframe project folder. In this example, it was called 'test'.



Open the folder, and you will find several folders within it. We are looking for the 'red' folder- within it is a 'green' folder, and inside that are the captured jpgs.



If you captured them without using the 'rotate' option, your images should be ready to use.

If not, you will see that the images have been captured upside-down, and will need to be rotated later. This can be done one by one, or as a batch using an Action in Photoshop.

