

Simply Well Lit with Joe Mc Nally

 elinchrom®



Over and under Potalux Softbox

“ The classic over and under lighting combination is a time honored solution when it comes to wringing an open, clear eyed glow from someone’s face. Would that we could all walk around with a little low fill in our faces! We’d be asked to do screen tests all the time! Used in proper ratio, this combo of relatively small sources becomes effectively a wall of soft, forgiving, frontal light, eliminating shadow and line, worry and fatigue, and dispensing grace and beauty in equal measure. A light from the side here becomes problematic. All this light comes straight at her, gracefully filling her face and framing her in rich, sumptuous color. In this lighting solution, her eyes become the players. With a look, she owns the camera. ”



**Joe McNally** is an internationally acclaimed American photographer and long-time photojournalist. From 1994 until 1998, he was LIFE magazine’s staff photographer, the first one in 23 years.

His most well known series is the “Faces of Ground Zero - Portraits of the Heroes of September 11th”, a collection of 246 giant Polaroid portraits shot in the Moby C Studio near Ground Zero in a three-week period shortly after 9/11. A large group of these historic, compelling life-size (9’ x 4’) photos were exhibited in seven cities in 2002, seen by almost a million people. The sale of 55,000 copies of the exhibit book, printed by LIFE, helped raise over \$2 million for the 9/11 relief effort. This collection is considered by many museum and art professionals to be the most significant artistic endeavor to evolve to date from the 9/11 tragedy.

Some of McNally’s other renowned photographic series include: “The Future of Flying”, cover & 32-page story, National Geographic Magazine, December 2003. The story, on the future of aviation and the first all digital shoot for the magazine, commemorated the centennial observance of the Wright Brothers’ flight. This issue was a National Magazine Award Finalist and one of the magazine’s best-selling issues ever. “The Bolshoi Ballet” - This LIFE series of Bolshoi Ballet images resulted in the creation of one of McNally’s most well known images, “Ballerina on the Rooftop.” “Olympic Nude Series” - A highly touted series of black & white and color photos depicting the United States 1996 Olympic team as a series of nude figure studies, published in LIFE. The only time in the history of LIFE the magazine ran 4 separate covers in one month. As a commemorative, McNally did a photo diary of New York City Opera’s historic first tour to Japan as part of the World Expo 2005. An exhibit of this collection was featured at Lincoln Center.

McNally is known worldwide for his ability to produce technically and logistically complex assignments with expert use of color and light. He conducts numerous workshops around the world as part of his teaching activities and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Alfred Eisenstadt Award for outstanding magazine photography, as well as Pictures of the Year, and World Press Photo Foundation Award (awarded first place in Portraits in 1997), and numerous awards from Communication Arts. McNally is currently working extensively with Olympic organizers in China to promote the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Learn more at [www.joemcnally.com](http://www.joemcnally.com).

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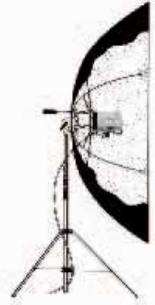
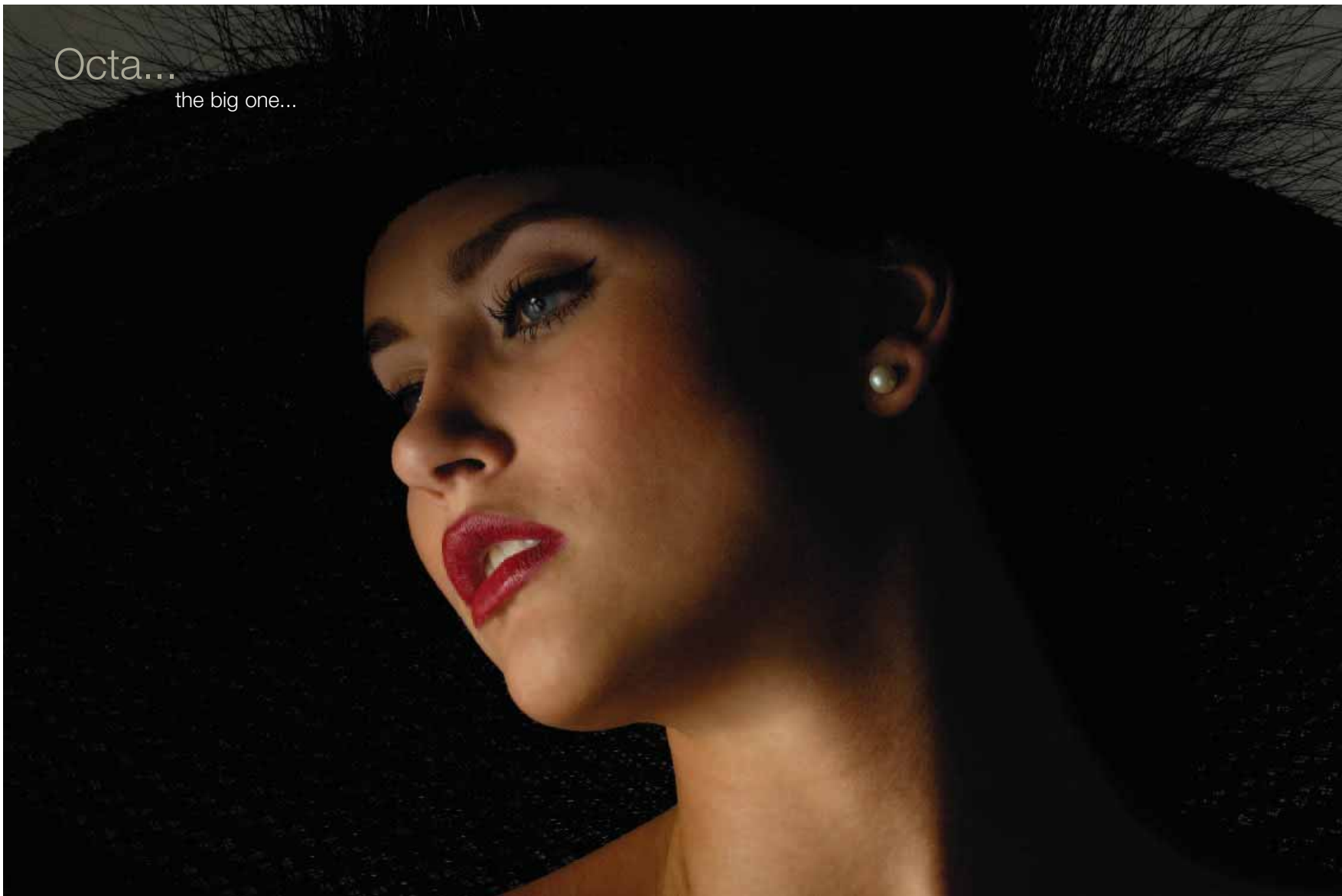
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Octa...  
the big one...



**Recta, Strip, Octa, Quadra**

Invented in 1982, their unique, patented construction and design have won these large lightweight softboxes worldwide popularity.

A lightweight die cast rigid central mounting for the flashhead inside the unit places the Elinchrom flashtube at the point of focus.

The optical result is a light source, which is so even at the diffuser surface, that many famous photographers use the Octa as a single light source for portrait photography and is often referred to as "The Beauty Light".



No direct lighting occurs as the unit points inwards.

“ The Octa has become an industry standard for any location or studio photographer who wants to infuse their pictures with beautiful, even, rich light. It is hard not to talk of this source in somewhat rapturous terms; it has a depth and an almost voluptuous luster that is hard to replicate with any other light source. Used in close, it envelops your subject in beautiful light. Use it from a distance, and it gets sharper and snaps the subject into crisp relief. I can't tell you how often taking the five minutes it takes to set this light up has saved my ass in situations that at first glance seemed impossible. ”



Octa Life Softlight without diffuser



Octa Life Softlight with diffuser



Octa Life Softlight with diffuser

# Rotalux Octa



Rotalux 53" (octagonal) EL 26184  
Optional Deflectors Translucent, Gold or Silver

## Rotalux

The easy mounting Rotalux system is probably the most widely copied of all Softbox systems. However, it is easier to copy a design than a quality and they remain the best units in their class.

What continues to make the Einchrom units unique are the sets of deflectors – gold, silver and translucent that enable the softness / hardness and color to be modified, fitting centrally over the flashtube at your chosen distance. Folding down like an umbrella, the softboxes are easily transported, or just kept clean in their optional carrying bag.



53" Rotalux Octa

39" Rotalux Octa



Rotalux Octa 53" Softbox

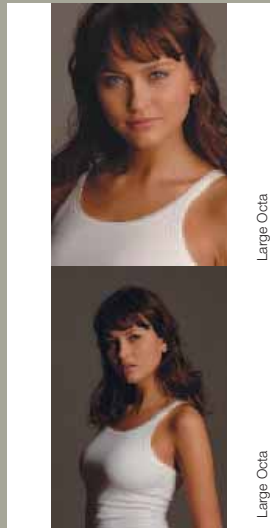


“ For the pictures here, I wanted beautiful, soft, forgiving light, but also one that has punch and drama, and not too wide an area of coverage, so the background would drop out. Used directly overhead, the 53" Rotalux covered all these seemingly disparate bases. Used from a distance as the model stands, the light emphasizes her amazing physical architecture. The light looks and feels like an exclamation point at the end of a sentence. Moved in closer as she sits on the chaise, the light goes quieter, sweeter, and more luxuriant. This softbox feels like a big light, but can also give you the edge of a smaller source. When using a mid-size light like this, one might expect a measure of compromise for it to be neither here nor there, sort of like shooting from middle distance. This light is both here and there, all at once. ”

# Large light banks



“ When I explained the concept to the model, she queried me in her rich Kazakh accent, “So I will be nude, yes?” I volunteered that she could wear the hat and the shoes, which I thought was reasonable. She smiled and went to hair and makeup. The scene is a sweet juxtaposition of the lovely curves of her skin and the elegant, slightly madcap frivolity of the hat. The only light to encompass this situation is the Elinchrom Octa. Even and luminous, the Octa embraces a scene, drenches it in beautiful light, creates rich shadows and then fills those shadows just enough. The key is the fact that the light head is facing away from the subject and into the center of a swatch of silver over 6 feet in diameter which spreads the light smoothly before it cascades through the diffusion. Used in close like this, it has a luster, richness and volume that has an almost emotional quality. ”



Large Octa

Large Octa



Octa Lite 74" Softlight with diffuser and fill



EL Octa 74" EL 26158 incl. carrying bag



EL Quadra 57 x 57" EL 26156 incl. carrying bag



EL Recta 28 x 68" EL 26154 incl. carrying bag



EL Strip 13 x 68" EL 26160 incl. carrying bag

# Beauty Dish - Softlite Reflector



**The Softlite Reflectors 17 and 27"**  
 Ideal reflectors for soft and diffused light used in conjunction with either the gold, silver or translucent deflector dish; color and softness can be modified.

- Softlite Reflector 17" 55° EL 26166, silver, incl. Deflector Set EL 26303
- Softlite Reflector 17" 80° EL 26168 white, incl. Deflector Set EL 26303
- Softlite Reflector 27" 64° EL 26167 silver, incl. Deflector Set EL 26304
- Softlite Reflector 27" 82° EL 26169 white, incl. Deflector Set EL 26304



**Deflector Set gold / silver 4 3/8"**  
 EL 26303 for EL 26166 / EL 26168



**Deflector Set gold / silver 6 1/2"**  
 EL 26304 for EL 26167 / EL 26169



“ For this shot I took a low angle. I mean the model was like eight feet tall anyway, so why not emphasize it? The approach is long lens, isolating her, clipping her out of the background and drawing attention to the splashy nature of the dress. The light follows along. Two main lights are used, one large beauty dish up high, and a small beauty dish low, near the floor. Neither light has any diffusion. Those sources have an edgy quality to begin with, and used from this distance, they don't speak quietly. They are even but emphatic, like a shout, loud as the colors in this gown. ”



27" White reflector, silver deflector

27" White reflector, silver deflector plus cloth diffuser

27" White reflector, gold deflector

27" White reflector, gold deflector plus cloth diffuser

17" Silver reflector, silver deflector plus cloth diffuser

17" White reflector, silver deflector plus cloth diffuser

27" Silver reflector, frosted deflector

27" Silver reflector, frosted deflector plus cloth diffuser

# Ringflash



“ The ring light needs to be used...carefully. It actually has gotten a bit of a bad rap, probably from overuse in those downtown magazines with the catchy names that usually last for about 2 issues and run page after page of disaffected, outlandishly dressed young people, apparently high on some form of illegal substance, staring vacantly at the camera with a circular highlight in their overlarge pupils. That's too bad actually, because used properly and occasionally, it is a pretty snappy light that edges out your subject with the clean and definitive efficiency of a drill press. Mix a little jewelry in with some sex kitten attitude and precious little clothing into the picture and it's Katie bar the door! Careful tipping it around too much, though, 'cause at an unfortunate angle it can turn even a shimmering fashion goddess into something that dropped out of the ugly tree. ”



Ringflash 3000 EL 201494

## Ringflash

A unique light source ensuring totally shadowless but concentrated illumination for high contrast or high key lighting. Very popular light source for fashion / beauty, industrial and advertising photography.



Ringflash

# Umbrellas



**VariStar Umbrella**  
VariStar provides even light distribution due to its central positioning over reflector and flashtube.

The multitailed umbrella for in and out of studio use. Easy to erect, lightweight and fits into most Elinchrom carrying bags. Ideal for industrial, portraits and groups.

**VariStar Umbrella 41"**  
EL 26381

**VariStar Kit** EL 26382

Includes:  
Wide-Angle Reflector EL 26164  
VariStar Umbrella EL 26381



**Professional umbrellas**  
Silver 33" EL 26360  
White 33" EL 26372  
Translucent 33" EL 26371  
Silver 41" EL 26361  
Translucent 41" EL 26374  
White 41" EL 26375  
Gold 41" EL 26377  
Gold/Silver 41" EL 26378



Silver umbrella



Silver gold umbrella



White umbrella



Shoot thru white umbrella



VariStar



White umbrella plus white flexfill

41" Silver umbrella with silver Lastolite reflector fill

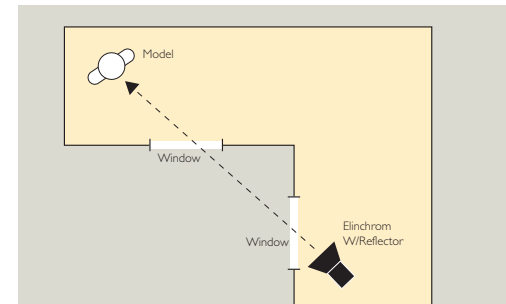


“ One very clean and simple headshot ... she just looks wonderful and has a 'girl next door' feel, though I can't remember seeing anybody looking like her living next door. It is the result of the silver skinned umbrella and a silver reflector. ”

## Reflectors - Long throw



“ Often lighting success is about putting the light in an unexpected place, or throwing it at a subject from an unusual distance. A Ranger and a long throw are a perfect complement for this type of approach. Punching a hard light through a window or a door, or from across a parking lot fulfills one of the basic tenets of lighting, that is, to use one light first and see what it does. You may have to go through no further. Various and unusual shadows can occur when you are throwing light around in mildly indiscriminate fashion. They may be surprising and pleasing. And in creating this varied landscape of light and shadow, you thus prove yet again another lighting truism.....If you want something to look interesting, don't light all of it. ”



**High Performance Reflector 10 1/4" 48°** EL 26137

A bright, high performance reflector. Ideal for general sports applications.



**Maxi Lite Reflector 16" 43°** EL 26147

Ideal for sunlight effects through windows, creates hard and brilliant highlights.

**Maxi Spot Reflector 16" 29°** EL 26149

The same shape as the Maxi Lite Reflector, but produced with brilliant, glossy reflection material for very high efficiency, throws light even over long distances. A narrow powerful beam creates deep, sharp shadows.



# Beauty Dish - Softlite Reflector



“ Every once in a while, you run into a set of cheekbones that scream for a beauty dish. This lighting tool is aptly named, trust me. Soft and sharp at the same time, it hits the human face with a clarity and definition that accentuates the haughty arrogance of extreme beauty. Wing a beauty dish at a pretty face and then look through the lens. Chiseled thusly with light, that face attains a regal, cool elegance that can make the camera quake. The cheekbones and the shoulders become sculpture and the shadows fall off like a rock dropped into a very deep pool. The silver dish, by the way, also doubles really well as a tanning board in tropical locations. I mean, you gotta kill some time waiting for golden hour and you might as well catch some rays. ”



## The Softlite Reflectors 17 and 27"

Ideal reflectors for soft and diffused light used in conjunction with either the gold, silver or translucent deflector dish; color and softness can be modified.

Elinchrom is the only system with a central umbrella fitting, which is essential when reflectors or Rotalux softboxes are used with Deflector Sets. These accessories can eliminate, soften and tone sharp shadow edges. They are very efficient with Rotalux softboxes.



**Deflector Set gold / silver 43"**  
EL 26303 for EL 26166 / EL 26168



**Deflector Set gold / silver 61/2"**  
EL 26304 for EL 26167 / EL 26169

27" Softlight reflector with cloth diffuser

# Strip light



EL Strip 13 x 69" EL 26160 incl. carrying bag

**Strip**  
A light source so even at the diffuser surface, that many photographers use the Strip as their single light source.

A lightweight die cast rigid central mounting for the flashhead inside the unit places the Elinchrom flashtube at the point of focus.



“ The strip is an elegant source, either as a main or an edge. With the strip, it is not like lighting someone, it's like writing on their body. Using this light is like putting a giant piece of tracing paper over your subject and then drawing a beautiful, luxuriant line of light just where you want it to be. ”

Octa



“ Time was, a softbox was anything but. They were tough to set up, had wands that snapped like twigs, no interior baffle, and a hot center to boot. You would pretty much point one at your subject and hope for the best. Catch them with the edge of the box, and you could have a nice result. Hit them with that hot core, and it could look like a small upgrade from straight flash. Often I would break one out on location and thought of changing the “soft” to “Pandora’s.” No more. The Rotalux system has a dependable set of locking ribs that would stand up to your average Nor’easter, and a combo of exterior and interior diffusion panels that give you a sweet spot over the whole surface of the box. Good portraiture is about setting and lighting the stage in a beautiful way, and then sitting back and letting your subject take the center of that stage and speak directly, dramatically to the eye of the camera. This array of softbox solutions is one of the cleanest, simplest way to make that happen. ”

Rotalux Softbox Family

Rotalux 39" x 39" EL 26179



Rotalux 27" x 27" EL 26178



Rotalux 39" (octagonal) EL 26183



Rotalux 53" (octagonal) EL 26184



Rotalux 20" x 51" EL 26181



Rotalux 14" x 35" EL 26180





**Credits**

Photography: Copyright Joe McNally

**Special thanks to:**

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[www.ramseypress.com](http://www.ramseypress.com)

**bogen**  
imaging

Bogen Imaging Inc, 565 East Crescent Ave, Ramsey, NJ 07446  
 Tel: (201)818-9500 Fax: (201)818-9177 [www.bogenimaging.us](http://www.bogenimaging.us)