

# Off camera flash

Lighting techniques in photography

## Pegaso automobiles

The [Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona](#) inaugurated an exhibition on the iconic cars [Pegasus](#). The curator, the artist [Francesc Torres](#), had contacted me about making to the catalog.



Pegaso Z-102 Spider Rabassada (1953)

Like [Josep Ramoneda](#) says in the exhibition catalog: *"... It was probably also this power of fascination of the car that attracted Francesc Torres and made him convince us - the CCCB- of the interest to rebuild this rare burst of beauty in the sinister political and cultural universe during Franco's rule. "*



It was a very interesting challenge because Francesc did not want the photographic treatment of the cars to be like an advertising image, instead he wanted each car to be treated as a work of art, almost like a living sculpture. They needed three or four photos of each car, one long shot, always from the same perspective and three detailed pictures that gave us some clues about the car's anatomy.



Pegaso Z-102 Spider Pedralbes (1954)

The operational problems were many. On one hand, only authorized staff could touch the cars, clean them and position them for each shot. On the other hand, we could not take pictures outside of the premises of the museum. Neither could we have access to the showroom to take pictures since the carpenters and electricians worked to place pallets and lighting in the room that was needed for the exposition. As can be seen in the picture above ... The session had to be performed in a typical rental tent for weddings and other events!



We had to put black interior curtains that covered the ceiling and the walls, to that way be able to control the reflections from the cars.  
On the wooden floor of the tent we placed a white vinyl floor, seamless, 6 meters wide and 12 meters long, to have a single continuous surface where the cars could slide. On the wall in the back a very thin gray fabric was placed, stiffened and stuck on a wooden frame that was 3 meters by 6 meters.



## How to illuminate these cars?

All the bodies of the cars shone very much and the finishes were very different, but what really conditioned the work and how to illuminate the cars was the need to photograph 4 cars per day, each of them with one long shot and three more additional detailed photos.



Pegaso Z-103 Berlineta Touring (1956)

For the long shot image we decided to use a large light box by Bowens that had the same size as the car and we placed it very close to the frame. All cars were to have the same position to the camera's perspective and this way an uniform illumination was achieved. We used two [Wafer 200](#) light boxes – of 1.40 x 2.00 mts. By putting them together horizontal, one next to the other, and position them in the structure of a Wafer Bank ... They turned into a light box of 1.40 x 4.00 mts. !



I thought about putting a canopy in front of the light boxes – a diffusing surface – of 6.00 x 6.00 mts – to generate softer borders and gradients of the direct reflections of light on the body of the car, but the height of the tent did not allow it. To model the details I had two [Wafer Strip 140](#) windows and another Wafer 200, which together with the Wafer Bank allowed me to shape the reflections effectively and fast. More than the subtlety in the treatment of the light, it was about trying to find a set of functional illumination.



The reflections from the light sources would have a defined edge, hence once chosen the point of view from which we would make the photo of each detail, we had to move the Wafer Strip until the reflections were good and putted the attention on the forms of each car.



Pegaso Z-102 Spyder Touring (1953)







Sometimes the details were not in the shape of the vehicle but in some detail of manufacturing such as the more than 1000 rivets that [Giorgio Giorda](#) had placed on the body of the cars that made the prototype Rabassada, the first official race car form Pegasus.

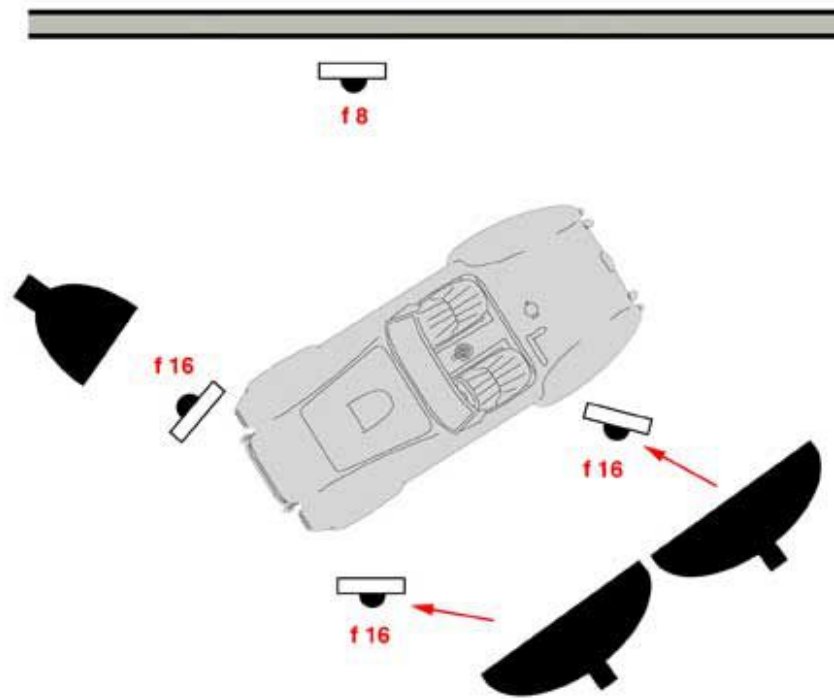


The choice of a white floor helped to make so many photos per day, because its color and the glossy shine reflected the light bouncing from Wafer Bank in the floor and reduced the overall contrast of the shot. In turn I used large black cloth on the white ground to mark up til where I wanted the reflections to be seen in the car.

Finally, ... Now we only needed to take the cars away again and dismantle the improvised studio in the tent!







ISO 100  
f 11  
1/125

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