

Hedler DF15 and DX15 lighting heads

Andrew Sydenham tests Hedler's compact and lightweight DF15 HMI daylight Fresnel spotlight and DX15 open-faced HMI daylight-balanced lamp heads

AT FIRST glance, HMI (halogen, mercury, iodine) lighting may appear identical to the tungsten spotlights that adorned photographic studios long before electronic flash was invented. However, it is the daylight colour balance of HMI lights that makes them such an exciting development.

BUILD AND HANDLING

At the heart of the Hedler DF15 and DX15 lighting heads is a 150W metal-halogen lamp that produces a continuous light output power equivalent to a 650W conventional tungsten halogen light. HMI lighting has long been the staple of the film industry and high-end fashion photographers, with enormous ballast packs residing next to the lighting stand and the electronics providing flicker-free daylight illumination.

In the case of the DF15 and DX15 lights, Hedler has incorporated the ballast into the lamp-head casing, making them unusually compact and user-friendly. The design and comparatively low temperature of the light beam make a cooling fan unnecessary for these lamps, and their virtually silent operation is perfect for DSLR video use with sound recording, as well as for still imaging.

Another advantage is the longevity of the lamp envelope, which is roughly 6,000 hours compared to around 75 hours for a tungsten halogen equivalent.

PERFORMANCE

The Hedler system has a very wide range of reflectors, light shapers and diffusers that can be bought separately and attached to each accessory mount on the front panel, so these lights are every bit as versatile as a monobloc flash head. The mount itself is one of the most secure and robust I have ever used, and substantial barn doors and large softboxes attach via a spring-loaded catch with reassuring ease. The heads mount onto all standard spigot lighting stands via a locking button that prevents the head being removed accidentally even with the securing screw undone.

When switched on, the electronic ballast gradually brings the lamp up to full brightness, taking about 3mins to reach maximum illumination and correct daylight colour temperature. When switched off, there is a delay of around 3mins before the unit can be switched back on as the



electronics prevent the bulb from lighting until the envelope and its gasses have had a chance to cool down. This clearly contributes to the long life of the lamp.

Both models look exquisite and the build quality is superb. They would definitely weather well in a professional environment. Although the casing gets hot during use, repositioning the lamp with the black handle on the back panel or adjusting the Fresnel focus doesn't result in a burnt hand. **AP**



The DF15 lamp head with barn doors attached – a useful accessory for controlling the spread of light

DATAFILE

DF15

RRP
£658
Colour temperature
5,800K
AC power supply
230-250V/50-60Hz
Max lighting
output power
150 watts
Construction material
Aluminium
Fresnel spot angle
12° to 65°
Weight
2,900g
Dimensions
(without U-bracket)
160(L) x 165(W) x 200(H) mm
Power cord length
3.5 metres
Electronic ballast with
thermo safety switch
Yes

DX15

RRP
£513
Colour temperature
5,800K
AC power supply
230-250V/50-60Hz
Max lighting
output power
150 watts
Construction material
Aluminium
Safety glass
Yes
Weight
2,350g
Dimensions
(without U-bracket)
160(L) x 165(W) x 180(H) mm
Power cord length
3.5 metres
Electronic ballast with
thermo safety switch
Yes

Verdict

THE REAL

advantage of continuous lighting is being able to see

exactly what the lights are achieving on the product or model being shot. Studio flash lights with a modelling lamp give only an approximation of what the final flashlit will look like. I prefer continuous lighting for difficult surfaces, such as dark carbon fibre, and for extracting fine detail in fabric and garment still lifes where minute adjustments to the rake and angle of the light can make the difference between success and failure.

Comparable in price to a premium monobloc flash head, the Hedler DF15 and DX15 lights are clearly high-end products, but their build quality, versatility and performance make them great value and easy to recommend.



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