Experimenting with Bokeh

The word "bokeh" comes from the Japanese word for broke, blur, or haze. In photography we use it to refer to to photographs that have a really low f/stop. This is when the aperture is really wide and a lot of light pouring in. The result is a very small focal area with the background showing up as "broken" or blurred and out of focus. Here is a special effect to try that really emphasizes blurred lights in the background.

STEP 1: Prepare a lens cover

Use this template or create your own lens cover. Begin by printing or tracing the template onto dark colored cardstock. Cut out the rim and tape it to fit the circumference of your lens. Then, cut out the cover and leave the center square open. Tape it to the rim to create a reusable lens cover.
[Template (https://grier.instructure.com/courses/814/files/182748?wrap=1)](https://grier.instructure.com/courses/814/files/182748?wrap=1) ↓
(https://grier.instructure.com/courses/814/files/182748/download?download_frd=1)

Obtain a small square of paper wider than the center opening over your cover and cut a desired shape in the middle using an Exacto knife. You can experiment with different shapes and switch them out by taking them off of your cover. Try multiple shapes on a single square too!

STEP 2: Take your photographs!

- Arrange some twinkle lights in a room that you can get at least 8 feet away from
- Put your camera on a tripod on the other side of the room
- Set your lens to the widest aperture opening that you can (probably f/2.8 if you're using a Pentax)
- Set the speed to properly expose your image (it will probably be below 60, this is why you need a tripod)
- Look through the camera and blur the lights to be out of focus as much as you can
- Place your object in the filed of view on a table or stand so the lights are visible in the background
- Adjust the distance of the object to focus your object instead of focusing your lens so you can keep the background as blurred as possible

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Put your DYI bokeh lens cover on and look through your camera! You should see shapes in place of the circular lights. Experiment by turning your lens cover or adjusting how far away you are from the lights to get the effect desired.

Take a few pictures properly exposed, but consider trying to overexpose your image before placing the cover on too. I noticed when I tried doing this that putting the cover on really reduced the light going into the camera and I had better results from pictures where the light meter was in the positive.

WARNING! This is super addictive..... Have fun! 📷