

Still Life Photography



What is Still Life Photography?



- Still life photography is the depiction of inanimate subject matter, most typically a small grouping of objects.
- The photographer has full control over the arrangement of design elements within a composition.



What is Still Life Photography?



- Still life photography requires a refined sense of lighting, along with compositional skills.
- The still life photographer *makes* pictures rather than *takes* them.



Inspirational Photographer: Irving Penn

- **Irving Penn** (1917 – 2009) was an American photographer known for his fashion photography, portraits, and still lifes.
- Penn's career included work at *Vogue* magazine, and independent advertising work for a variety of clients.



Inspirational Photographer: Irving Penn

- Penn's still life compositions are spare and highly organized assemblages of food or objects that showcase the abstract interplay of line and volume.



Inspirational Photographer: Irving Penn



How to take Still Life Photography

Set Up and Location

- Contrary to common perceptions, you don't need a studio or a fancy location.
- Begin by simply using a space at home, such as a table placed by a window, along with a simple backdrop



Lighting for Still Life Photography

2. Overall Lighting

- **Environment:** All white surface and surroundings without direct light source
- **Source:** White sheet, paper or some other form of drapery
- **Effect:** Using white or light colours allows light to bounce and soften



Lighting for Still Life Photography

3. Natural Lighting

- **Environment:** Using light created by a natural source
- **Source:** Take photo outside, or using light that is filtered through a window
- **Effect:** Depends on the time of day and the amount of natural light entering the location of the still life set up



How to take Still Life Photography

Choosing the Objects

- What you photograph is completely up to you.
- Search around the house for simple but interesting items
- Don't feel like you have to take photos of fruit or flowers just because everyone else does – be creative and think outside the box!



How to take Still Life Photography

Choosing the Objects

- Try to combine objects of contrasting shape, colour, texture and see what you can come up with.



How to take Still Life Photography



Composing the Shot

- Ensure there are no distractions within the frame, just the objects and the backdrop.
- Be sure to try different angles and arrangements.
- Where are you leading the eye within the image?
- Are you utilizing negative space or might it work to try and fill the frame?



How to take Still Life Photography



Camera Angles

1. Traditional or “Eye-Level” Angle



How to take Still Life Photography



Camera Angles

2. Bird's Eye view (Above the Still Life)



How to take Still Life Photography



Camera Angles

3. Close-Up Shots



How to take Still Life Photography



Camera Angles

4. Unique or different angles

