

'In The Frame'

Introduction to still life photography. Learn how to set a scene using household objects to create the perfect photograph

Still life photography is a genre of photography used for the depiction of inanimate subject matter, typically a small group of objects.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Smart phone or camera

Window

Small table or chair

White household objects

White sheet or tablecloth

Step 1

Lighting



You don't need anything fancy to light a still life. Natural light from a window will do the trick.

Select a group of white objects. Look in your cupboards. Teapots, cups, plates etc. Circles are great to work with, for example, plates, bowls, mugs, apples, particular flowers, a slice of lemon, etc.

Cover a chair or small side table in a white sheet or fabric.

Place your table or chair in front of a window. This will provide indirect light.

A net curtain will act as a diffuser and will make the light softer. You can tie this back to give stronger light.

Step 2

Composition



Good composition skills go a long way with still life, and is as important as good lighting. With still life photography, if you just keep moving your arrangement around, you will find one that works.

Keep your background neutral so as it's not distracting.

Place your most important object on the table slightly off center. Begin placing other objects around the main object. Keep your eye out for empty gaps, or too much going on. Placing an item at an angle will lead the eye in that direction. Add an object or remove one. Take your time to observe. Look for pattern, cast shadow and repeated shapes.

Step 3

Photography



Use the camera on your device to begin photographing your objects from all different angles.

Try to keep your camera or phone as steady as you can while doing this.

The light from the window will cast interesting shadows. Pay special attention to this and rearrange objects or lighting until you feel a pleasing photograph is emerging.

Step 4

Reflection & Selection



Look back on your photos from the first to the last. You will see the development of your creativity. You will see how you put together your composition and how your perfect photographs finally emerged.

Choose a set of your favorite photographs. You can go on to edit these or put them in an album to show others. You could even have your favorite photograph printed out, framed and hung on your wall.

I took 72 photographs to find four that I was pleased with. These are my four.

Left to right.

1. I like the way this photograph seems almost fluid. Repeated shapes and cast shadow.
2. Taken from above. The circle theme works really well here and the dark background is almost theatrical.
3. I love the big shapes repeated by the shadows. I like the wavy edge of the plate in contrast to the harder edges.,
4. Initially I found the flower and the cake to be somewhat distracting but they seem to work together in this composition to tell a story.

