

Still Life Photography



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What is Still Life Photography

Still life photography occurs many genres of visual art and design.

A still life portrays a static (*still*) set of subjects, usually everyday objects, man-made, natural, inanimate, or plants.

There are two types of Still Life

- Still Life where the photographer arranges the subjects
- Natural Still Life that is just photographed

Brief History of Still Life

Paintings

- Egyptian
- Chinese
- Greek
- Roman
- Dutch, Flemish, Italian

Photography

- Early days
- Modern

What makes a Still Life Photo

Many photographic skills are used to create the photo.

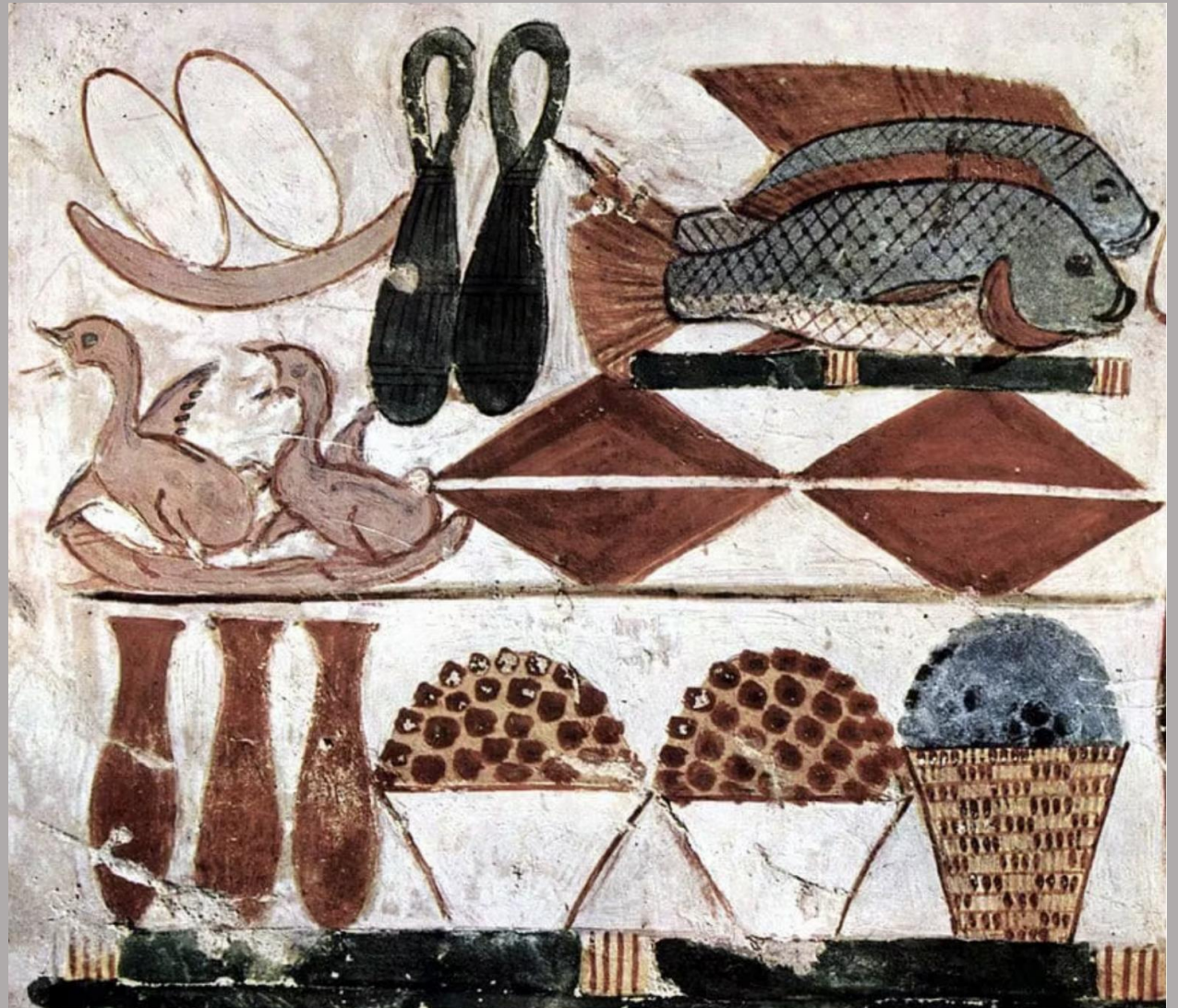
- Composition
- Exposure
- Lighting
- Aesthetics
- Colours
- Ability to use the camera

Egyptian – Tomb of Menna - many rich well preserved paintings

Menna was an official to the King and "Overseer" of agricultural occupations.

The paintings depict common foods and objects.

Paintings of food might be that the dead would have something to eat in the after-life.



A detail of an offerings scene from the burial chamber of Menna (c. 1422-1411 BCE); *Maler der Grabkammer des Menna*,

Roman - Pompeii – c 63 – 78 AD – Wall painting

Pliny the Elder wrote of a Greek painter called Peirakos.

His subjects were Barbers, cobblers, other shops and food



Roman - Mosaics

This mosaic depicts fish and vegetables hanging up in a cupboard.

Comes from a villa at Tor Marancia near the Catacombs of Domitilla in Rome.



The Dutch golden age – Independence from Spain

Jan Bruegel the Elder 1568-1625

Whilst the subject may be similar he managed to make each painting unique.

The flowers here are from different seasons which suggests that he did not paint the actual flowers in a vase.



Small Bouquet of Flowers in a Ceramic Vase (1599) by Jan Bruegel the Elder; [Jan Bruegel the Elder](#), Public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Flemish Baroque art – Frans Snyders 1579 - 1657

Luxurious food shows the opulence of life.

The dead animals suggest the shortness of life.

Perhaps, material goods are not sufficient.

Not really a still life because it has a person in the painting.



Pantry Scene with a Page (1579 - 1657) by Frans Snyders; [Frans Snyders](#), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

French Post Impressionist – Paul Cézanne,

Still Life with
fruit, bread, bottles
and baskets
overloading the
tables.



La Corbeille de pommes ('The Basket of Apples', 1893) by Paul Cézanne; [Paul Cézanne](#), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Juan Sánchez Cotán – Museo del Prado, Madrid - 1602

Game Fowl,
Vegetables and
Fruits



There are two types of Still Life photos

Created Still Life

- The subjects and lighting are carefully arranged
- And are usually photographed in a studio

Found Still Life

- Here all the elements of the photo have been found
- The photographer has not re-arranged any of the subjects
- Though the lighting may have been arranged

Equipment required to take Still Life Photos – At Home

Tripod

Camera with 55 mm Lens

Shutter, use timer no Camera shake

Background – Card, Drapes

Lighting – Natural, Spot, Diffuse

Soft Box – with white net sides



Equipment required to take Still Life Photos – Professional



Lighting – Very significant

Emphasis

- Richness
- Texture
- Shadow
- Dramatic



Types of Still Life images

Floral arrangements – Bright colours and freshness

Banquets or Breakfasts – Add elegance to dining rooms

Animals – Eyes, Fur, Feathers – Lifelike and appealing

Symbolic or Narrative – Has a theme, thought provoking

Directional Light – can add a three dimensional quality

Enhances

- Richness
- Textures
- Depth
- Dramatic



Diffuse light gives a gentle graduated appearance



Lighting is very important and can transform the mood of a photo



Spot Light – The lighter subjects seem to leap out of the photo



Gardener's Hat, Trug and cut flowers

1st Freda Longhurst - 8 Aug 2022



Animals – Dead or alive

Marion Drew



Kingfisher with Chinese cloth and strawberries.

Marion Drew.

Animals – Dead or alive

Marion Drew



Rose crowned fruit dove.

Marian Drew.

Animals – Dead or alive

Marion Drew



Bower bird Swamp hen duck.

Marion Drew.

Advertising

“YOU DON’T TAKE A PHOTOGRAPH, YOU MAKE IT.” –
Ansel Adams

“PHOTOGRAPHY IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE THAT CAN BE
UNDERSTOOD ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.” – Bruno
Barbey

“THE WHOLE POINT OF TAKING PICTURES IS SO THAT YOU
DON’T HAVE TO EXPLAIN THINGS IN WORDS.” – Elliot Erwitt

“YOU’LL MISS THE BEST THINGS, IF YOU KEEP YOUR
EYES SHUT.” – Dr. Suess

Advertising - Ian Knaggs Photography



"THE WHOLE POINT OF TAKING PICTURES IS SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN THINGS IN WORDS." – Elliot Erwitt

Advertising - Ian Knaggs Photography

Right to left version of

Richard
of
York
gave
Battle
in
Vain



Advertising - Ian Knaggs Photography

Beautifully displayed
attractive
embellishments

That would appeal to
a woman

Who would appeal to
the man she desires
and loves.



Advertising

This type of advert would appeal to a man

One of the Guinness requirements for advertising was that

"They wanted the adverts to be well done and tasteful"



Still Life used as a narrative

Still Life Photos as Narrative

One way in which still life photography is used, especially in artistic contexts, is as a [narrative expression](#). The kinds of inanimate subject matter that still lifes deal with lend itself very easily to storytelling.

Objects are arranged to appeal



Still Life – Concept of Layering – Objects are added as if they were layers

Start with the central placement of one object, the box

Gradually, add the other objects.

Aim to achieve a pleasing alignment

Avoid making the image too complicated and messy.

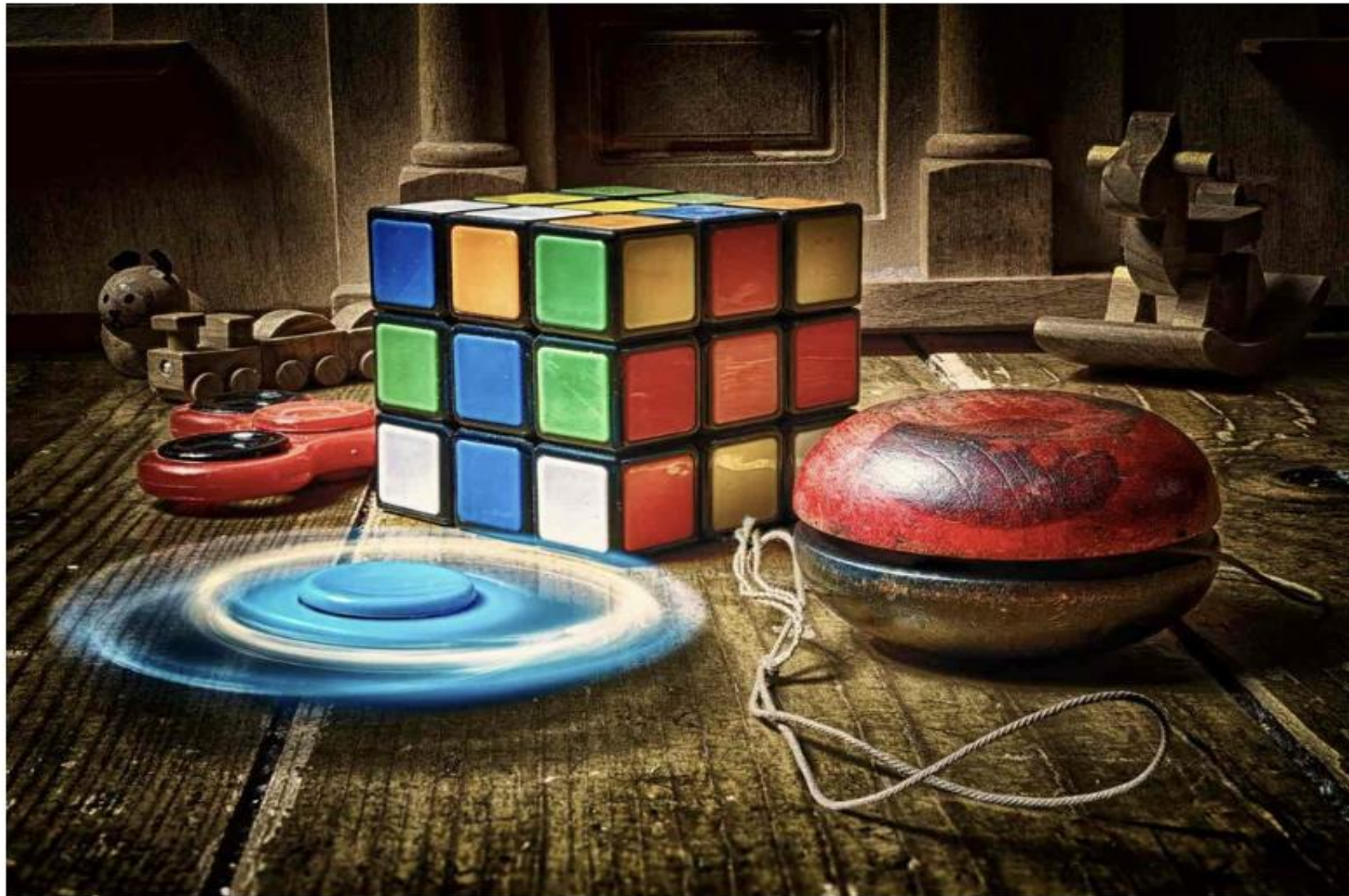


Narrative – Methods of communication are changing Alan Ranger Photography



Narrative – Toys that have appealed to all ages

Alan Ranger Photography



Narrative – The Wine connoisseur at their studies

Alan Ranger Photography



Narrative – The Days before electricity



Intriguing – The image builds in one's mind



Textures



An Attractive Sun Lounge , perhaps



Food Photography – Has a healthy appetite for photos



Acknowledgements

Alan Ranger Photography -----→
Professional Photographer and Tutor

Professional Photography
Courses and Workshops



Ian Knaggs Advertising

Marian Drew – Australian Photographer

*Do have a look at their web-sites,
which have many interesting photos*



We have seen
and spoken of
Still Life photos.

I hope you found
it interesting.

Thank you for
watching.