

CAMERA CLUB

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

STILL LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY



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If it moves, it's not still life

What is still life photography?

Capturing an image of an Inanimate object or a collection of inanimate objects arranged in such a manner in order to tell a story, and/or evoke an emotional response

The true skill lies in the ability to take something mundane and everyday out of its normal habitat and transform it into something of beauty by using our skills as photographers.

Natural versus Staged

- There are two types of images we can come up with.
- The first is a group of objects that already exist. These are ones that we notice along the way or that are already in a setting, which we then photograph.
- The second type of image is something that we set-up from scratch, that is, we use objects that we have chosen, put them on a background or in a situation of our choosing, and move them around until the composition looks pleasing to our eye

There is nothing wrong with either set-up, but the important thing to remember is that nothing is perfect. So feel free to move things around a little to get exactly the image you want

Background and Lighting

- ***KEEP IT SIMPLE***

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Background

- Roll of paper
 - Mount board
 - Old cloth
 - Brick wall
 - Wood panel
-
- Whatever you choose, make sure it compliments your subject

Background and Lighting

KEEP IT SIMPLE

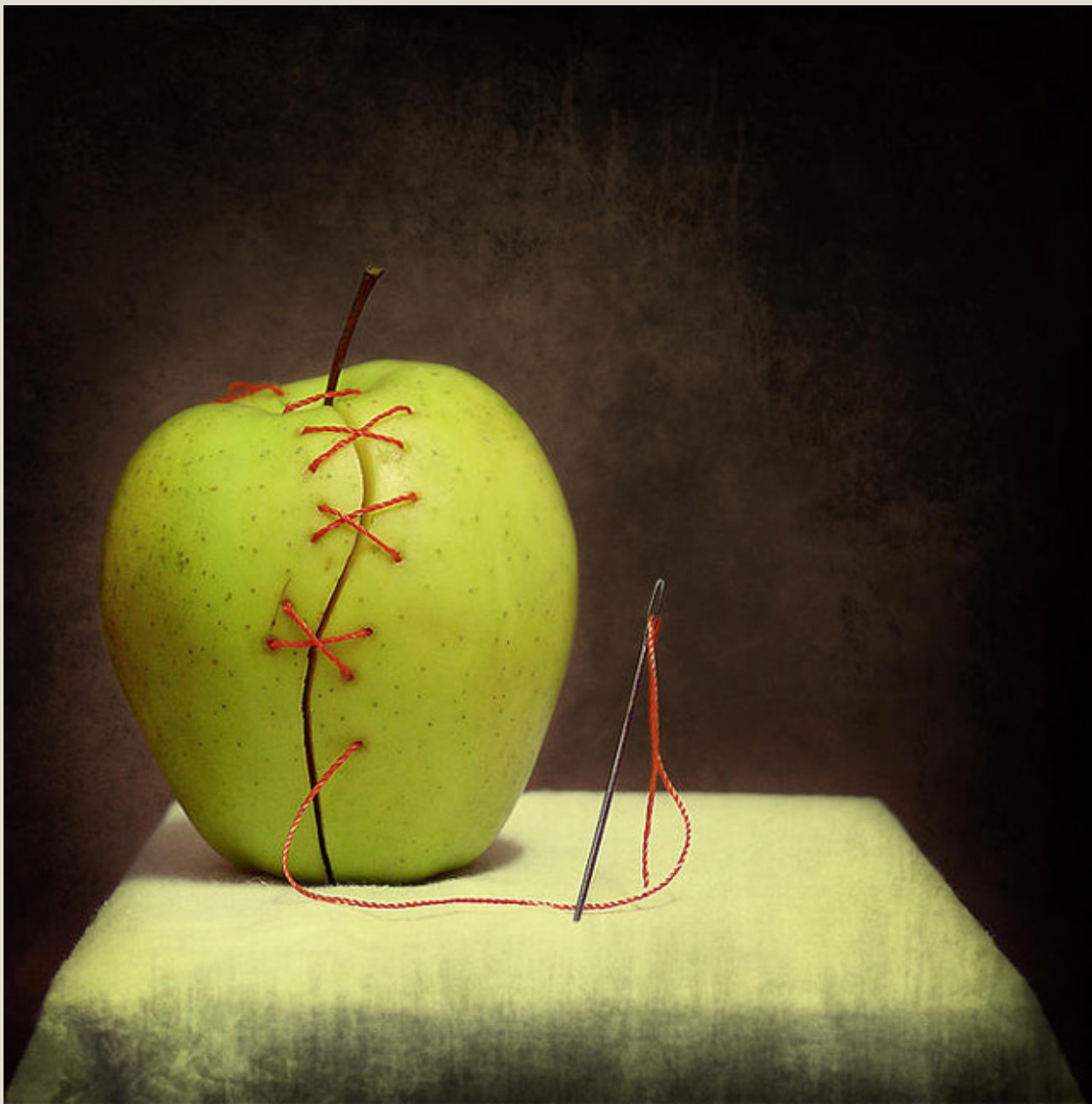
- ***LIGHTING***

- Natural lighting
- Reflectors
- Diffusers
- Studio lights
- Flash gun

SOME EXAMPLES



















Tips

- Take your time. When shooting still life you need to spend more time looking at the details and light.
- Make lots of small adjustments. Moving an element just a centimeter can make all the difference in the world to the finished picture. The closer you are, the more critical this becomes.
- Using a tripod not only helps with composition and slowing you down, it also stops camera shake to help you achieve beautifully sharp images.
- Despite the previous point, It's also recommended you experiment by taking your camera off the tripod. You never know what that little extra bit of freedom might add to your picture.

Tips

- Vary your angle. Whether shooting on or off a tripod, look at the difference a slight bend of the knees or a half step to the right or left can make.
- Don't forget your mobile phone. The results can be subtly, yet effectively, different.
- Similarly don't forget black & white. Still life is a very classical medium and lends itself well to monochrome.

Tips

- Don't worry too much about being innovative or different. Still life is a classical genre and should be treated as such.
- Depth of field can transform a still-life image, so try bracketing and see what difference it can make. The difference between $f/2$ and $f/16$ can completely change how you view an image.
- Capture texture in your images. Try to take your eye further into your subject than it would normally go.

Equipment needed

- **Tripod** A good, sturdy tripod stops your camera wobbling and aids your concentration. Keeping your camera in a fixed position will give you time to work on the set-up in front of you to make any necessary changes.
- **Reflector/diffuser** The best are the ones with a removable cover with gold/silver/white and black, and inside is the all-important diffuser, which gives you so much control over the light.
- **Light source** If it's a window, try to leave your set-up in place so that you can see what happens as the light changes throughout the day. An alternative is a small LED light put through a diffuser to achieve the same result.
- **Standard or medium telephoto lens** A 50mm or 85mm lens should enable you to shoot without distortion and keep uprights 'upright'. Wideangle lenses are not particularly suited to still-life photography.
- **Spare pair of hands** An assistant can move things while you concentrate on the camera. They are also useful for holding reflectors and/or backgrounds and bringing cups of tea when the creative urges get too much!