

Photography

Still Life Workshop

You will need:

- Everyday Objects
- Camera

Objective:

Learn how to use positive and negative space to enhance photos of everyday objects. Positive and negative space play an important role in determining the overall composition in a work of art. The term “still life” refers to a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, typically everyday objects, which may be either natural or man-made.

By understanding positive and negative space and applying your knowledge, you can become more successful in designing your compositions, i.e. learning where/how to place the objects in your frame, so it makes a good photograph.



What is positive and negative space?

Positive space: areas in a work of art that are the subjects, or areas of interest

Negative space: area around the subject, or areas of interest

Do you see faces or a vase?

This is a bit of a trick image, as the positive and negative spaces can be seen both ways:

Vase- white area becomes positive space with black faces as negative.

Faces- black areas become positive space, while the vase is negative.

Space: space is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth in a piece of artwork.



Things to consider when you are taking a still life photograph:

- What theme and subject are you trying to capture?
- Think about the context of the photograph you are trying to create for example, a perfume bottle photographed on a dressing table, lots of shoes in a hallway.
- What is the story you are trying to tell in the photo? Lots of shoes in a hallway can convey many different stories: If they are placed neatly in pairs, it may give a feeling of order and neatness. If they are scattered and covered in mud, you may imagine people who are a bit more messy, or people that have just been out on a walk and rushed in to get warm. What is the feeling or story that you want to tell?



Task:

1. Look around the room for everyday objects.
2. Thinking about positive and negative space create a still life photograph using the found object or objects. Don't forget to think about the context for your chosen everyday object. You might want to consider using bigger objects in the room, for example using a chair or table.
3. Using a camera, this could be a phone, DSLR or digital camera, capture the still life. Once you have taken a variety of images, choose one to share, this could be through social media or shown to members of your household.
4. Critique- It is always a good idea to review your work, you might want to do this with members of your family or with friends via social media.

Think about the following:

- What objects were used?
- How was positive and negative space created?
- Is your everyday object photographed in a context?
- How has your photograph changed the way the viewers perspective of the everyday object or objects?



Conclusion

By applying this photography technique to your compositions, you can change the way a viewer sees everyday objects, making your photography more fascinating. A technique which you may see in marketing campaigns, commercial photography, fashion, communication and promotion.

There are lots of Higher Education pathways in which you could develop and apply this skill to, for example:

- Photography
- Fine Art
- Graphic Design
- Textiles

Can you think of anymore?



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Useful Links

Creative Careers:

<https://discovercreative.careers/#/>



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