

Still Life with Natural Light Series

photographs and text by Emily Boucher

2024

PROJECT STATEMENT

The "Still Life with Natural Light Series" provided me with an invaluable opportunity to delve into photography intricacies, mastering my camera settings to harness natural light and skillfully manipulate it to achieve desired outcomes. In an era where still life food photography commands a significant and expanding presence, my primary objective was to curate a portfolio showcasing my proficiency in this niche.

With limited experience confined mostly to point-and-shoot methods and a photography class attended over a decade ago, the prospect of operating within the confines of a "mini studio" was both daunting and exciting. Thus, broadening my understanding and refining my ability to optimize images during shoots constituted a pivotal aspect of this endeavor.

My vision for this project revolved around crafting compositions with a pronounced emphasis on color. Extensive research led me to explore images featuring vibrant food items set against similarly colored backdrops, serving as a launching point for my creative process. Incorporating elements such as oranges against brass or copper accents, coffee amidst brown linens, and eggs juxtaposed with cast iron against blue pillowcases, I embarked on my initial setups.

As I went deeper into the project, my concept evolved to incorporate contrasting backdrops and splashes of vivid hues. With the majority of my work unfolding over four days, I discerned that the late morning yielded the warmest, softly filtered light through my shaded windows, ideal for capturing the desired ambience.

PROJECT STATEMENT continued...

Navigating through camera settings proved to be a challenge, necessitating precise adjustments to achieve the optimal white balance while maintaining focus across the entire composition. Shooting in Aperture Priority mode, I strived to strike a balance between shadows and highlights, all the while minimizing ISO for superior image quality.

Eager to enhance my understanding of light manipulation, I turned to DIY tutorials on YouTube for guidance. Experimenting with various techniques, I discovered how strategically shading certain areas within the composition, such as the lower section to draw focus towards the center and top, could add depth and imbue the images with a captivating moodiness. This approach proved particularly effective in my stacked citrus arrangement.

While color composition initially served as the cornerstone of my project, I found myself organically branching out to incorporate diverse elements such as flowers, fabrics, and textures sourced from my surroundings. Consequently, each shoot took on a distinctive narrative, reflecting my emotions and inspirations at the time. From spring and Easter-themed vignettes adorned with blue stripes and vibrant yellow flowers to evocative Valentine's Day setups exuding feelings of romance and desire, each composition became a reflection of my personal journey.

Ultimately, this assignment served as a testament to my growth and proficiency in manipulating natural light to craft compelling visual narratives, and I am surprised and pleased with the outcome. (I had no idea my camera was capable of taking such nice photos)

Still Life With Natural Light 01

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | 1/10 sec @ f 6.3 | ISO 100 | focal length: 35 mm



Still Life With Natural Light 02

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | .4 sec @ f 6.3 | ISO 100 | focal length: 64 mm



Still Life With Natural Light 03 (x2)

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | 1/4 sec @ f 5.6 | ISO 100 | focal length: 30 mm





Still Life With Natural Light 04/6

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | 1/4 sec @ f 8.0 | ISO 100 | focal length: 30 mm



Still Life With Natural Light 05/6

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | 1/50 sec @ f 5.6 | ISO 100 | focal length: 68 mm



Still Life With Natural Light 06 (x4)

EXIF METADATA

.CR2 RAW file | camera mode: Aperture Priority | 2 sec @ f 22 | ISO 200 | focal length: 20 mm









“We learn from other people’s cooking, then we start making our own.”

- Someone's Grandma