

Photo Shoot Assignment: Still Life in the Style of the Dutch Masters

Due: _____.

Project requirements:

Minimum of 2 different still life genres.

Roughs: at least 10 pictures of each, showing light manipulation and some different arrangements of your still life (switch the still life around and remove/replace objects). Remember that your composition is made before you snap the picture. If you want to borrow a tripod, let me know! It might be helpful.

Final: 2 strong images

If you need inspiration, look up the following artists:

Pieter Claesz

Jan Davidsz de Heem

Abraham van Beijeren

Willem Kalf



Project guidelines:

Out of the five types discussed, you must try at least 2 of these genres:

- Breakfast
- Banquet
- Vanitas
- Floral
- Game

Each still life should be carefully constructed. Your composition will be created at this stage and in this style, it is the key to a successful image. Make sure to not just line up your items...make it visually interesting.

Lighting is important! Try shots using both day light and a spotlight. When using the spot light, do not use a high wattage bulb as it will wash out the areas of your composition in the light. Experiment and see what works best.

Textures and patterns were important also. The food, textiles, and objects chosen all had rich textures and patterns. Along with this, the focus of your image must be excellent so that these patterns and textures can be appreciated. Reflections are important! Look for shiny metals, glass, and other reflective items and make sure they are polished!

The images were often limited to simple color families and colors were muted. Use your lighting and object choices to accommodate this.

Use the compositional triangle. But ensure that your tall item is not dead center. These artists were masters of space – have a strong sense of space in your still life.

Backgrounds were often either dark or not detailed. Hang a dark sheet or curtain behind your still life.

Still-lives tell us a lot about history without the standard elements of a narrative painting. They provide a context for seeing the influence that specific historical events had on culture. The precision and hyper-realistic renderings found in Dutch still-life painting have their roots in a culture that was flourishing both economically and politically.