

Newsletter

InFocus at DVCC



Learn, Develop, Share, Support

4th May 2025

This week. Still Life Photography.

Still Life - not necessarily the most inspiring of topic tiles, but consider this: Still Life is very dependent upon your lighting, and considering where the shadows fall, your composition and your story telling skills - these are exactly the same skill sets required for portrait photography, street photography, landscape photography So we can see that still life envies us to practice these skills in the comfort of our home and with things we have (possibly) lying around the house, or in the local supermarket.

So here are some hints and tips to help you.

1) As the thing we are shooting is 'still' we can use a low ISO, and a long shutter speed - provided the camera is stable, so use a tripod or a pile of books to stand your camera on. Consider using the self timer or a remote shutter release.

2) A light source - of course this could be the kitchen window, maybe an angel poise lamp, maybe a torch

3) Something to soften the light: let the light pass through some form of filter, a net curtain (do people still have them?) some tracing paper / tracing film, a clear shower curtain ...

4) Something to create shadows, block some light with a sheet of card, cut some shapes into the card to cast shadows, Try making a window shape in your cardboard, move it back and forth the see where the shadows fall best.

5) Do you want a shallow depth of field (ie blurry at the back) if so use a wide aperture (smaller number) or use a small aperture (larger f number) to get more in focus from front to back. If you want to try Focus stacking where you take several images of the same thing but every so slightly move the focus position in several steps from the front of the subject to the back, take the photo at each focus change and then stack them in your software packages like Photoshop. Some cameras have a setting to do this automatically.

Some upcoming events:

Not necessarily DVCC attended event but here are some event you might like to pop into your diary

YPU awards and Exhibition
Doncaster Grammar School,
10th May then Doncaster
Museum

Society of Photographers
Roadshow, Wetherby
Racecourse 13th May 2025

Rugby Union 7 a side
competition in Hemsworth
10:00 to circa 5:00pm on
14th June

Steam Punk Festival at
Bolsover Castle, (English
Heritage Site) on 29th June

Equestrian Eventing, Show
jumping and dressage at
Frickley Park, 14th to 17th
August 2025

Downhill bike racing time
trials, Peaty's DownHill
Series, City of Steel in
Grenoside woods, Sheffield
13th September 2025

Smaller aperture will let less light in so you will need a longer exposure, put if camera on your tripod you can use a slow shutter speed. (or on a brick - see creativity later on !)

6) Be creative, take several images of your still life from different angles them stack them (look up Pep Ventosa) to create one image

7) Composition, composition is critical to still life, general accepted that an odd number of things is better than an even number so pay careful attention to both your composition and the angel at which you are taking the picture - pointing down, pointing up or straight on..



Ornamental miners lamp, black cloth, LED torch

8) as part of composition look for things that go together well - fruits of the similar tone; tools from the garden shed; spices; flowers; old curios and ornaments; hats and gloves; wine,, wine glass, rose; find suitable backdrops and surfaces for them to sit on - slate place mat, wooden chopping board, perspex sheet, old sheets, pieces of wood or stone...

9) Consider mounting a piece of 400mm x 500 mm x 15mm thick plywood onto your tripod to give you a great and compact work area. You can buy a bracket to screw to the plywood which has a tripod screw hole to take a tripod quick release plate. Look in the links below for the bracket.

A few words from our guest 'journalist'

Still life photography offers camera club members a rewarding way to hone their technical and creative skills. Unlike fast-paced genres, still life invites patience, control, and thoughtful composition. With everyday objects—fruit, flowers, books, or antiques—you can create scenes that tell a story or evoke emotion. It's a fantastic opportunity to experiment with lighting, angles, textures, and colour harmony—all within the comfort of your home or studio. So bring your camera, a tripod, some objects to photo, some backdrops, some lights and lots of creative ideas.

Practicing still life helps you master camera settings and post-processing techniques in a low-pressure environment. It also encourages attention to detail and builds a stronger sense of visual storytelling. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned photographer, still life sharpens your eye and enhances your photographic voice.

So gather a few objects, set up a simple backdrop, and start experimenting. You'll be surprised how this timeless genre can refresh your creativity and elevate your skills. Give it a try!



A still life, (pine nuts, garlic, lemon and a small jug on a chopping board, with a background added along with some AI waves. A very quick and dirty test of my learning from the talk by Mike Martin as I tried something a little more creative with my still life. I say quick and dirty this was all of 5 minute effort whilst getting the newsletter together.

Guest Speaker

Our guest speaker for 1st May was Mike Martin, he was kind enough to not only tell us about his photography, but importantly shared with us some tips and techniques that we might use. Tips like: look, look and look again at your images; use your post processing skills to create new images, either; by adjusting the crop, rotating the image, adding things, taking away things and generally exploring your creativity.

Now many of us say we are not creative so 'panic' at the thought of the word and the concept. So, to see how creative you are, think of 10 different things you could use the common brick for. When you've got 10 declare yourself to be an accredited creative thinker. I'll start you off - you can use a brick as a book end, you can use it as a step, as a makeshift tripod ...

Mike's thinking, which is something we can all consider: Simplify the picture, (the colours, the objects, the patterns), make the most of what you've got, and if all else fails add stuff. Last but not least consider "what's the reason to press the shutter". Let's use the inspiration from Mike's presentation to drive our still life workshop.

Look ups and Links.

None of these are endorsed by DVCC, they are things I've found on t'internet that might (or might not) be helpful and or interesting and offer you some places to go

[Link to last week's speaker - Mike Martin](#)

[A tripod mounting bracket for your plywood table](#)

[Intro to still life photography, a short 5 minute video](#)

Calendar of events - Look on the website for the new schedule.

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| 7/05/2025 | Wed | Wath | Practical: Still life and or product photography. Bring some items from how to enable you to build both a 'set' and some subject material |
| 14/05/2025 | Wed | ZOOM | Tutorial: Using software to create composite images |
| 21/05/2025 | Wed | Wath | Members Photography Journey: Gill Batson |
| 28/05/2025 | Wed | Wath | Planning |
| 04/06/2025 | Wed | Barnsley | Street photography walk around Barnsley |
| 11/06/2035 | Wed | Wentworth | A visit to capture the essence of Wentworth - be prepared to consider printing your best images so we can display them in Wentworth. |
| 18/06/2025 | Wed | Wath Walkabout | A walkabout the village of Wath, can you capture |

Look out for the minor changes to the events over next few week

Get your thinking caps on, last meeting of this season is about planning the next set of events. Probably do this in small groups to establish the sort of activities and events we want to explore, challenge ourselves, and enjoy. Its your chance to influence the calendar.

This newsletter will arrive on Star Wars day, however in a feeble attempt to stretch out the spirit of "bah humbug" we shall not be adding any Star Wars puns. Save to say, however, that the directors of photography for Star Wars were Gilbert Taylor (A New Hope), Peter Suschitzky (The Empire Strikes Back), and Alan Hume (Return of the Jedi). You may need to retain this valuable information for a pub quiz near you.