

CHALLENGE 1

STILL LIFE WITH EVERYDAY OBJECTS

Today we are going to be creating a still life inspired by the artist Hong Lei.

A still life is a collection of objects that are arranged in a meaningful way. Lei creates his still life photos by hanging objects from a thin string.

MATERIALS

A device to take pictures with (camera, smart phone, or tablet)

A collection of objects that you use every day

A tripod to hold your camera (optional)

A box or empty frame, string, and tape (optional)

EXAMPLES



HONG LEI, *MEMORY OF POMEGRANATE*, 2005, ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT. © HONG LEI, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



HONG LEI, *MEMORY OF BUTTERFLIES*, 2005, ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT. © HONG LEI, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

STEPS

Gather

- Think about the items you use every day. What are the items that are important in your daily life?
- Think both about actual items or symbols/representations of activities or feelings you have.

Arrange

- Once you have gathered your materials, find a space where you would like to set up your still life.
- If you would like some of your objects to be hanging like Hong Lei's work, make sure there is something above you can dangle your objects from.
- If you have a cardboard box that is the perfect space to build your still life!

- Test out different arrangements and think about putting heavier items at the bottom and lighter objects towards the top of your space.

Tips

- Lighting is key! Find a well-lit area with natural light or use flashlights and lamps for a more dramatic scene.
- Make your background simple so it does not distract from your objects.
- Play with different angles. Move your phone or camera up and down to see what the best angle is for your still life.
- Use objects of different sizes for variety. Or put objects on stands or boxes to elevate them.

SHARE

Upload your photos and tag MOPA on Instagram @MOPASD.

CHALLENGE 2

NATURE STILL LIFE

For this photo challenge we are going to create a still life inspired by photographer Irving Penn. Penn was a master at still lifes and often would hide a bug, something decaying or other surprises. We like to call that “a little bit of poison.” Check out the examples and see if you can spot the “poison.”

MATERIALS

A device to take pictures with (Camera, smart phone, or tablet)

A collection of objects that you find outside

Any objects from your house you would like to include

EXAMPLES



IRVING PENN, *RIPE CHEESE*, 1992, DYE TRANSFER PRINT, COURTESY OF CONDE NAST



IRVING PENN, *NEW YORK STILL LIFE*, 1947, PLATINUM PALLADIUM PRINT, COURTESY OF CONDE NAST

STEPS

Gather

- Walk around your neighborhood or take a walk at a park or a beach. Look for interesting organic materials. This could be plants, leaves, flowers, empty cans. Be careful if you want to use trash, make sure it is clean and safe!
- Think about what you can use to “add a little bit of poison” just like Penn did. We had some realistic toy bugs to add to our still lifes that were really fun!

Arrange

- Find a good space to arrange your objects. The background will play a big role in how your image turns out. You could use the blacktop, a sidewalk, the grass, or blanket or towel to arrange your objects.
- Test out lots of different arrangements. Try stacking your materials on top of each other to create a dynamic look.
- If you need inspiration check out more of Irving Penn’s still life, or look at some student examples that we did at MOPA

Tips

- Lighting is key! If you take your still life picture outside, look for a good shaded place. This will create even lightening and there will be no shadow from your phone or camera.
- Test out different vantage points. A bird’s eye view will give an overview of your materials, and a worm’s eye view could give a unique perspective of your materials that you don’t normally see.
- Mix and match organic materials with objects from your house to add more visual interest.

SHARE

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