

Still Life

A Brief Overview

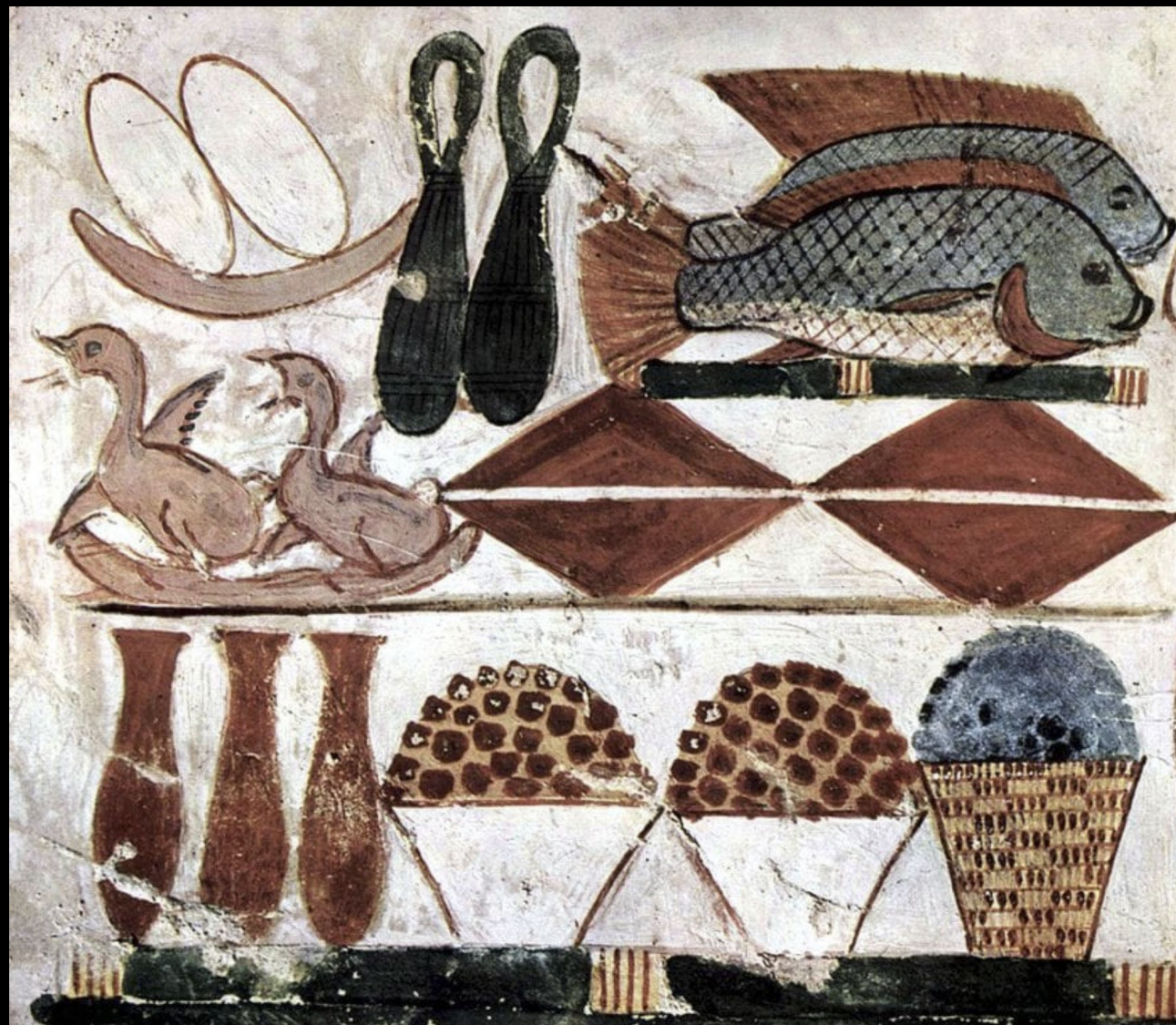
Orleans Photo Club – March 11, 2023

Presentation Overview

- The history of still life – 1411 BC to Present Day
 - **The Dutch Golden Age and beyond**
- Contemporary Canadian Still Life Photography
- The Still Life Photography of Manfred Mueller
- Start doing your own still life photography

What is Still Life Photography?

- It is a photographic genre that generally depicts inanimate subject matter, typically a small group of objects.
 - It has strong links to Still Life Painting.



Tomb of Menna

- Thebes (Luxor, Egypt)
 - 1411 BC



Set Table

- Nicephore Niepce
 - 1827

2.

BEEF WELLINGTON P. 230

Why tamper with perfection? Once you've mastered Beef Wellington, your family and friends will demand it for any important celebration, whatever the time of year. Adjustments, then, should be subtle. Our recipe calls for thyme, but other herbs are equally mushroom-friendly. Tarragon would add its own, slightly fennelly note in summer. Rosemary—or a combination of rosemary, thyme and sage—might seem more autumnal. The pâté involved can also be an instrument of change. Instead of pork, goose and cranberry, use a pâté with more parsley and peppercorns, or add an extra dimension with one that includes dried figs or dried apricots.



RARE ELEGANCE

A dish that lets superb beef tenderloin and supple mushrooms go on a date without the inconvenient chaperons of some overpowering sauce demands a wine of equal sophistication. Red Burgundy is the classic match, but why not choose an Ontario Pinot Noir of equal elegance and quality? Hidden Bench Estate Organic Pinot Noir VQA (VINTAGES ESSENTIALS 274753, \$37.95) is a polished gem, balancing earthy, woody, mushroomy aromas with subtle red fruit, and perfectly integrated acidity with just enough tannin to reach out to the beef's meaty juices. Unfiltered, it is a true reflection of its Beamsville Bench vineyard (you could teach a course on terroir with this wine) with all sorts of resonances to explore and enough "sustain" on the palate to allow you to do so at leisure.



LCBO Food & Drink

- Holiday 2022

In the beginning...

Golden Age of Dutch Still Life to current

Renaissance 14th – 17th Centuries

- Florence Italy
 - Started under the patronage of the de' Medici family of bankers



Northern Renaissance

- Areas north of the Alps
- Late 15th – 17th Century
 - Started with Italian Artists with local homegrown artists coming later
 - Golden Age of Dutch Art

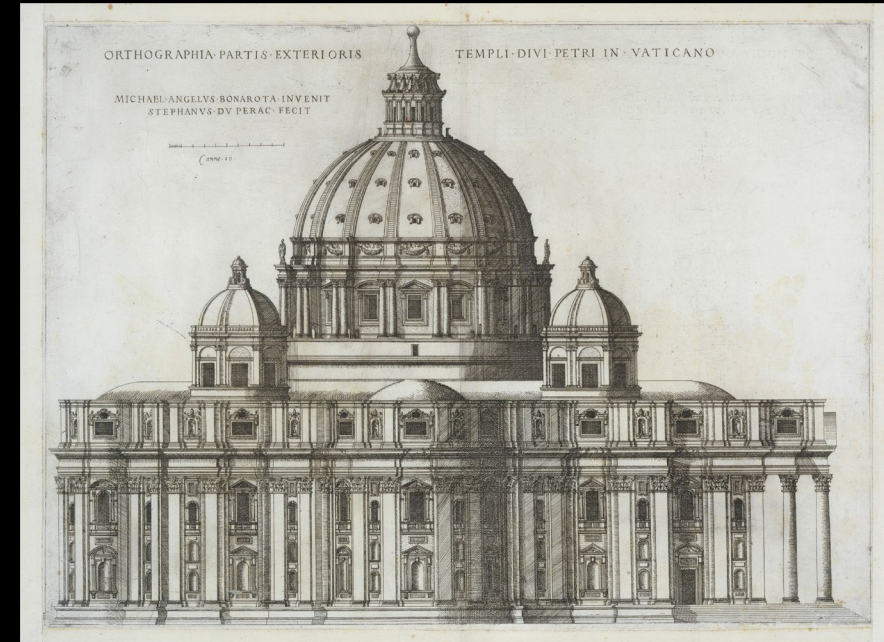


Garden of Earthly Delights

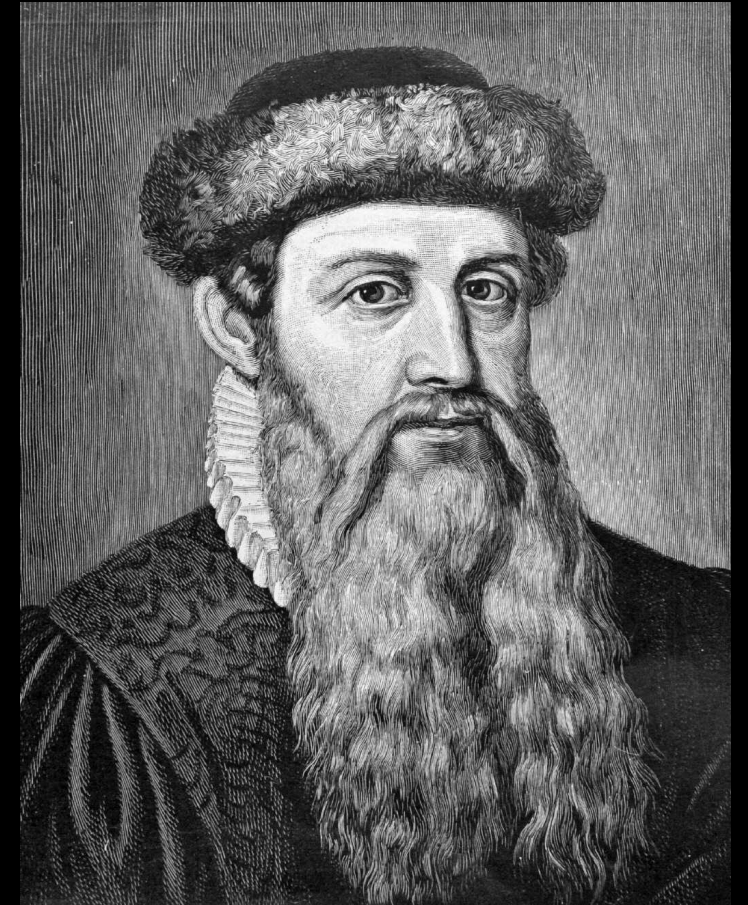
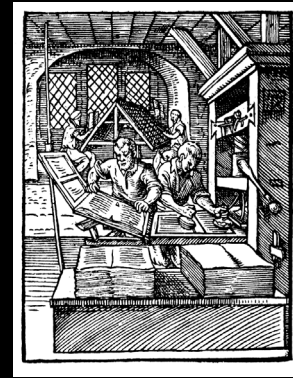
- Centre Panel of Altar Piece Triptych
- Hieronymus Bosch
 - 1495 -1505

Roman Catholic Church

- Paintings features Saints and Biblical stories
- Construction of new St Peter's in Rome
 - Replaced a 1200 year old St Peter's
 - Needed lots of money for this project
 - Michelangelo did not come cheap!
 - Pope Leo X
 - Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici (1475 – 1521)
 - Used «theologically suspect» means to raise money



The Printing Press



- **Johannes Gutenberg – Mainz, Germany**
 - Invented the modern printing press in ~ 1450
 - Based on wine press design
 - Mainz is in “wine country”
 - Used moveable type
 - Gutenberg was a goldsmith and knew metalworking
 - Enabled mass communications
 - Bible translated from the Latin to local languages
 - Religious pamphlets
 - The “internet” of the 15th Century
 - A key trigger of the Protestant Reformation

Protestant Reformation

- Northern states leadership did not like paying for expensive project in far away Rome
 - States broke away from the Roman Catholic Church
 - By 1560 Dutch Reformed Church is de-facto state religion in the Netherlands

Dutch Golden Age of Painting

- Golden Age of Dutch Still Life Painting
 - Rejected the religious art favoured by the Roman Catholic Church
 - Saints and Bible stories were banned
 - Highly symbolic still life painting replace these
 - Very specific “rules” on painting a still life
 - Lasted ~ 200 years
 - This is the origin of all modern still life painting
 - And photography

Elements found in every Dutch Golden Age Still life painting

1. Horizon (single or double) against vertical background
2. Creation of a single pivot point
3. Elements fall away from a central pivot-point (cascading) – forming a triangle
4. Horizon edges are broken by elements falling over the edges – (tension)
5. Presence of diagonals
6. Presence of “S”-curves
7. Single light source
 - (“Divine” background light sometimes used)



Still Life with Gilt Goblet

- William Claesz Heda
 - 1635

Photography

- Invention of the camera
 - ~ 1826
 - Quickly replaced the painted portrait as the preferred tool for portraiture
 - Painters had to find a new form to remain relevant
 - Impressionism was born
 - Over the following years other genres were developed from impressionism
 - Still life painting and still life photography have been intimately linked for the past 200 years



Still Life

- Claude Monet
- 1872



Still life, pitcher and fruit

- Paul Cezanne
 - 1894



Still Life, 1946

- Giorgio Morandi
 - Bologna, Italy
 - Almost exclusively worked in still life
 - Treats his subjects with reverence



New Dutch

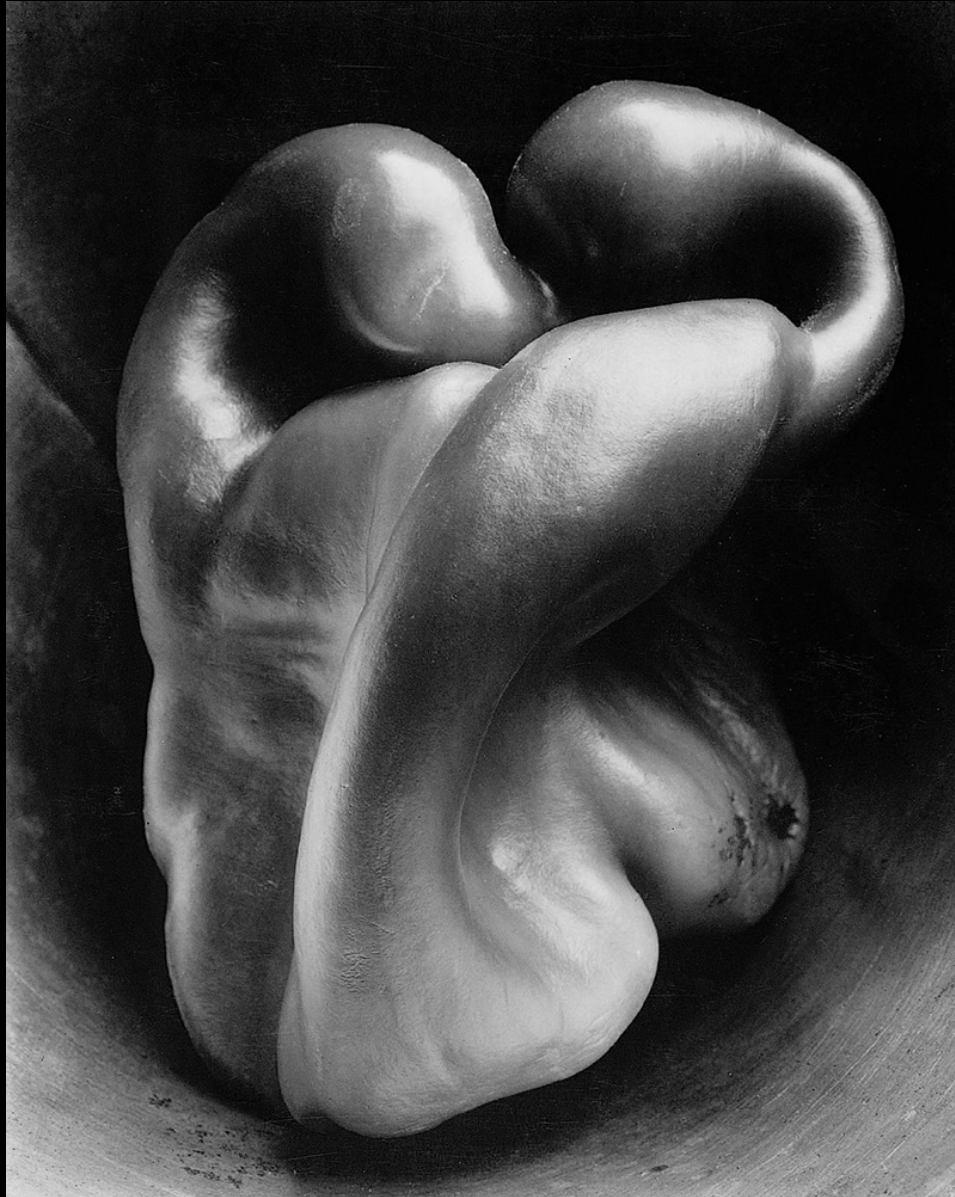
- Tineke Stoffels
 - “Tapanade”
- Used some but not all of the Golden Age Dutch Still Life rules

<https://tinekestoffels.eu/>



New Morandi

- **Tineke Stoffels**
 - “Otto”
- Expanded on Morandi’s style



Pepper No. 30

- Edward Weston
 - 1930
- <https://edward-weston.com/edward-weston/>



After Dinner Games

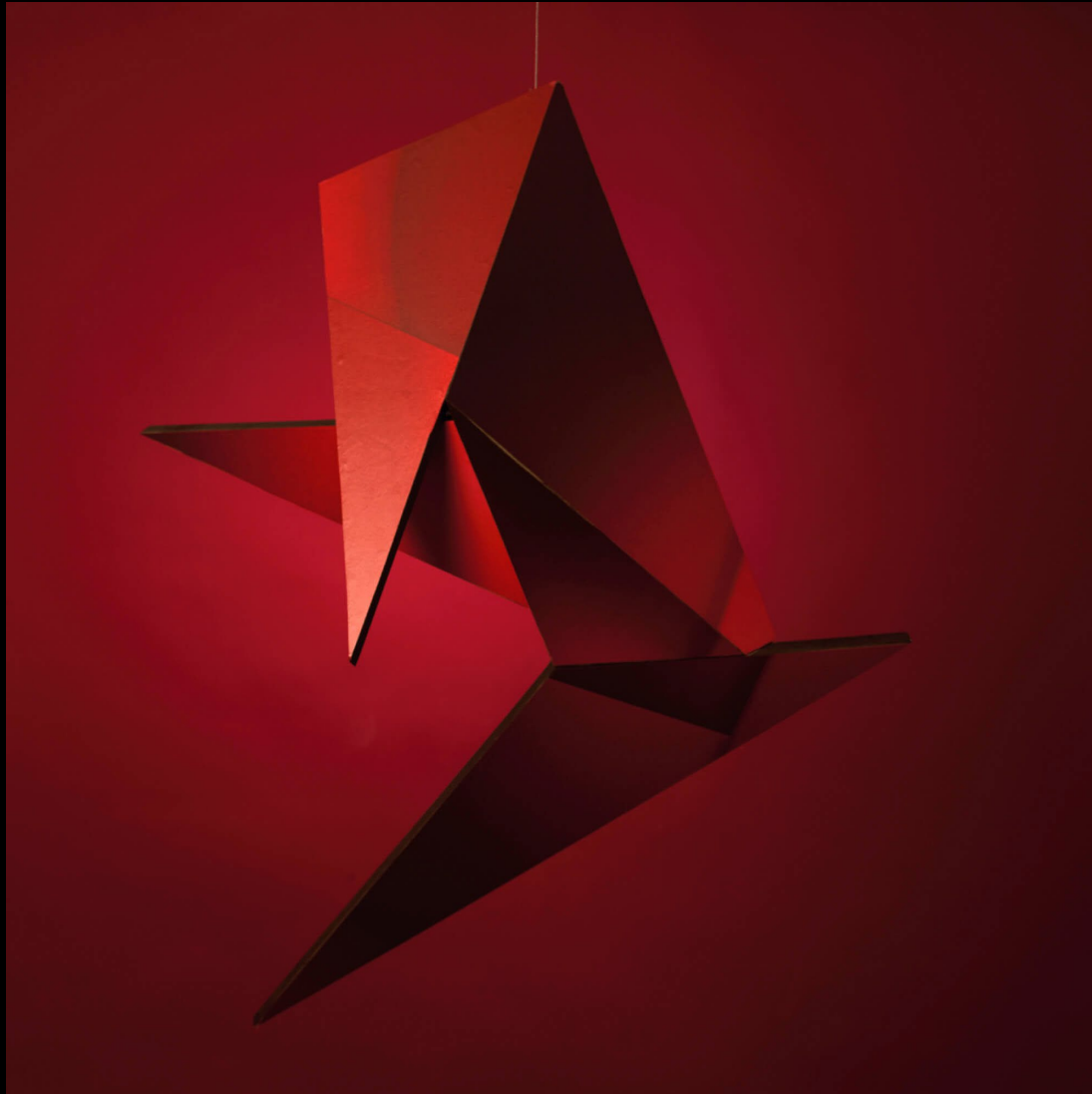
- Irving Penn
 - 1947
- <https://irvingpenn.org/>



Bars of Soap

- Koo Bohnchang
- <http://www.bckoo.com/>

Contemporary Canadian Still Life Photography



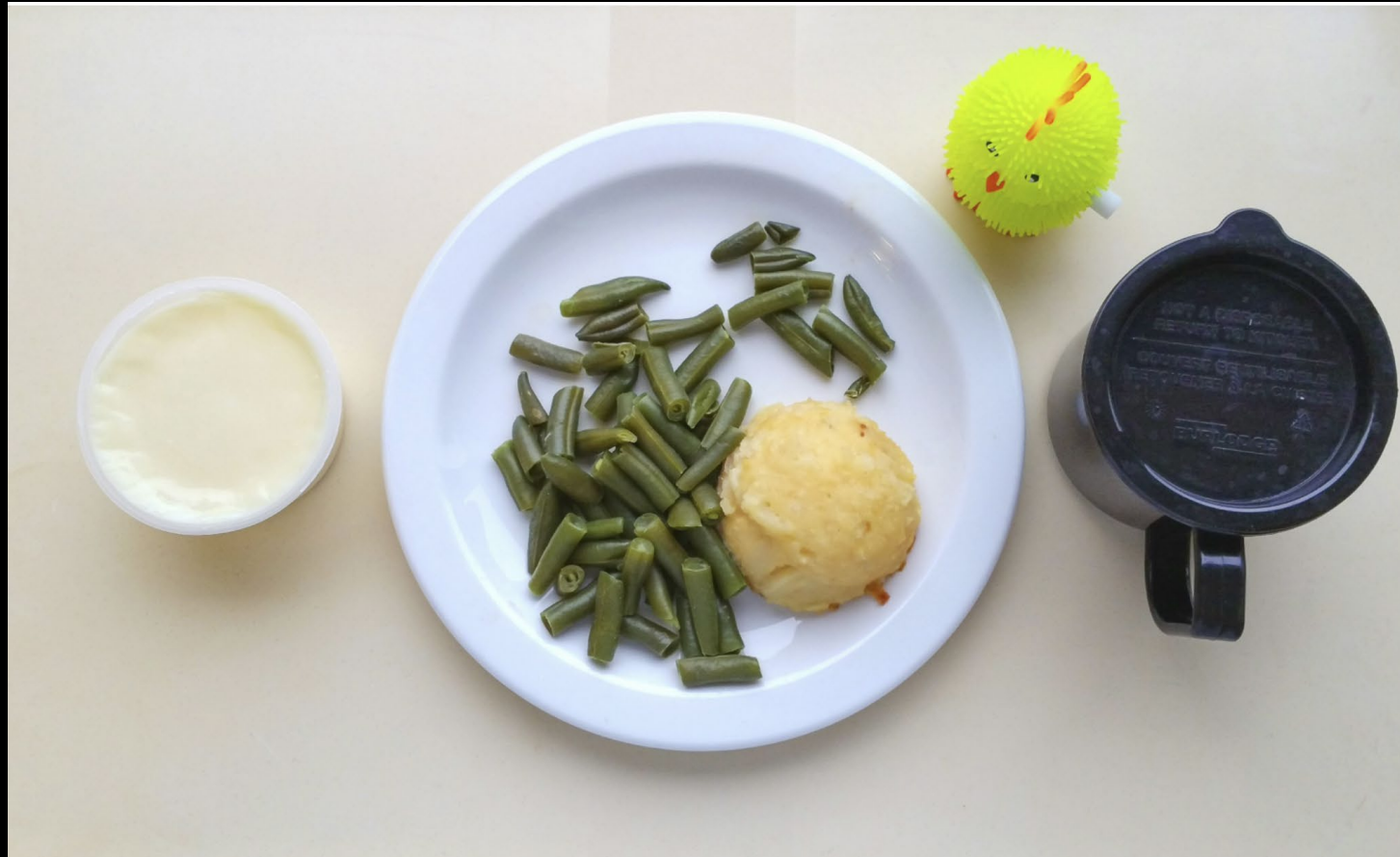
Photographie Pure #1

- Gilles Tarabiscuité
 - 2019
- <http://tarabiscuite.com/>



Joyce Craigo

- Flotsam: illness & Death
- <http://joycecraigo.com/>



Hospital Food

- Justin Wonnacott
- <http://www.justinwonnacott.photography/>



Biophila

- Whitney Lewis-Smith
- <http://www.whitneylewissmith.com/>



Group of Seven Awkward Moments (The West Wind)

- Diana Thorneycroft
- <https://dianathorneycroft.com/>

Manfred Mueller – Still Life Photography

- Was first introduced to Still Life Photography in 2011
 - Lighting course at Algonquin College had a still-life component
- Started to explore still life again in late December 2018
 - RAPC Still Life Competition
 - 2019 - Personal circumstances / COVID-19
 - 2021 / 22– School of Photographic Art – Ottawa (SPA0) – Adrien Duey
 - Food Photography Workshop
 - Masterclass – Still Life Concepts
 - Still Life In Winter class
 - December 2022 - Juried into Kanata Civic Art Gallery

Awards – since 2020

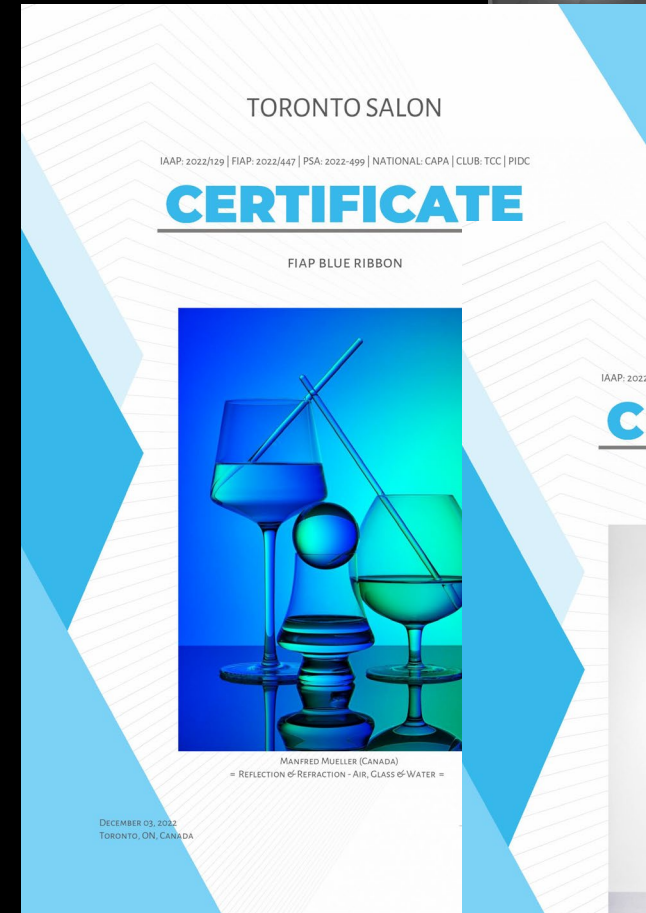
Still Life Photography – Juried Competitions
Shows / Galleries

- 23 Local (RA Photo Club) awards
- 5 National (CAPA) Awards
- 5 International (FIAP / IAAP) Awards
- Canadian Team submission to Four Nations Competition – 1 image
- One piece on display at the 2022 APEX exhibition at SPAO Gallery
- 7 pieces – Kanata Civic Art Gallery
 - Showing at the Ron Maslin Playhouse – Kanata in March 2023



Canadian Association for Photographic Art
L'Association canadienne d'art photographique

1st Place Merit Award
Theme: Still Life



Where do I shoot /what equipment do I use

- Primarily in the basement of my house
 - Have to tear things down when someone wants to watch TV
- Nikon D810 DSLR
- Use studio lights and light modifiers
 - I bought these to do portraits
- Small table (bought at Costco)
- Use a tripod in my work
- Have accumulated grip gear and other accessories over time



My first "serious" still life image - 2011

Bright Field Lighting

Optics of Glass, Water and Air













Dark Field Lighting







Still Life in Motion

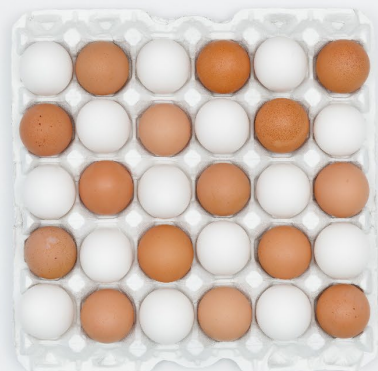
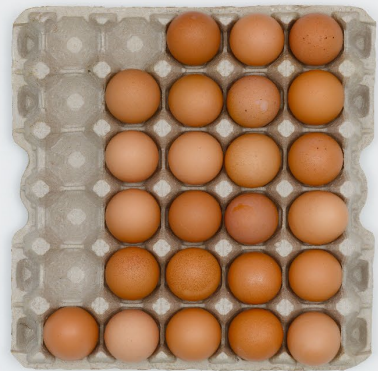
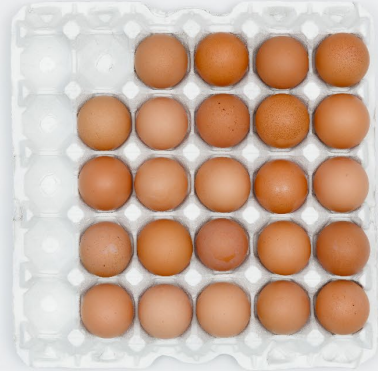
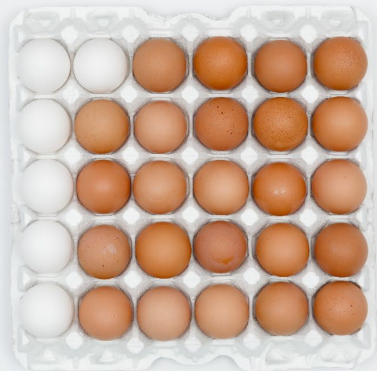
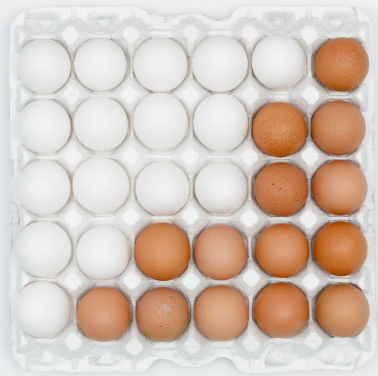
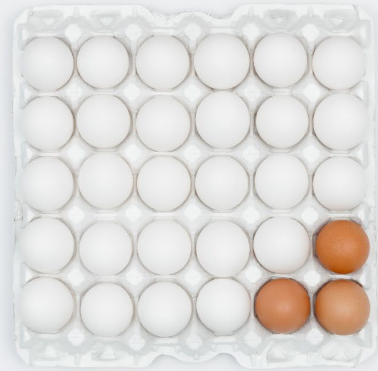
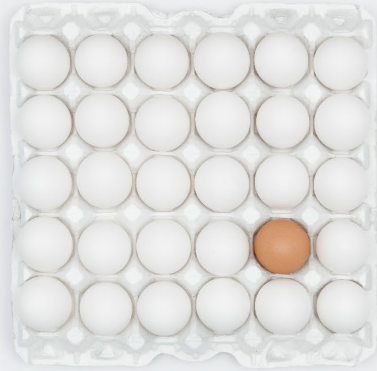




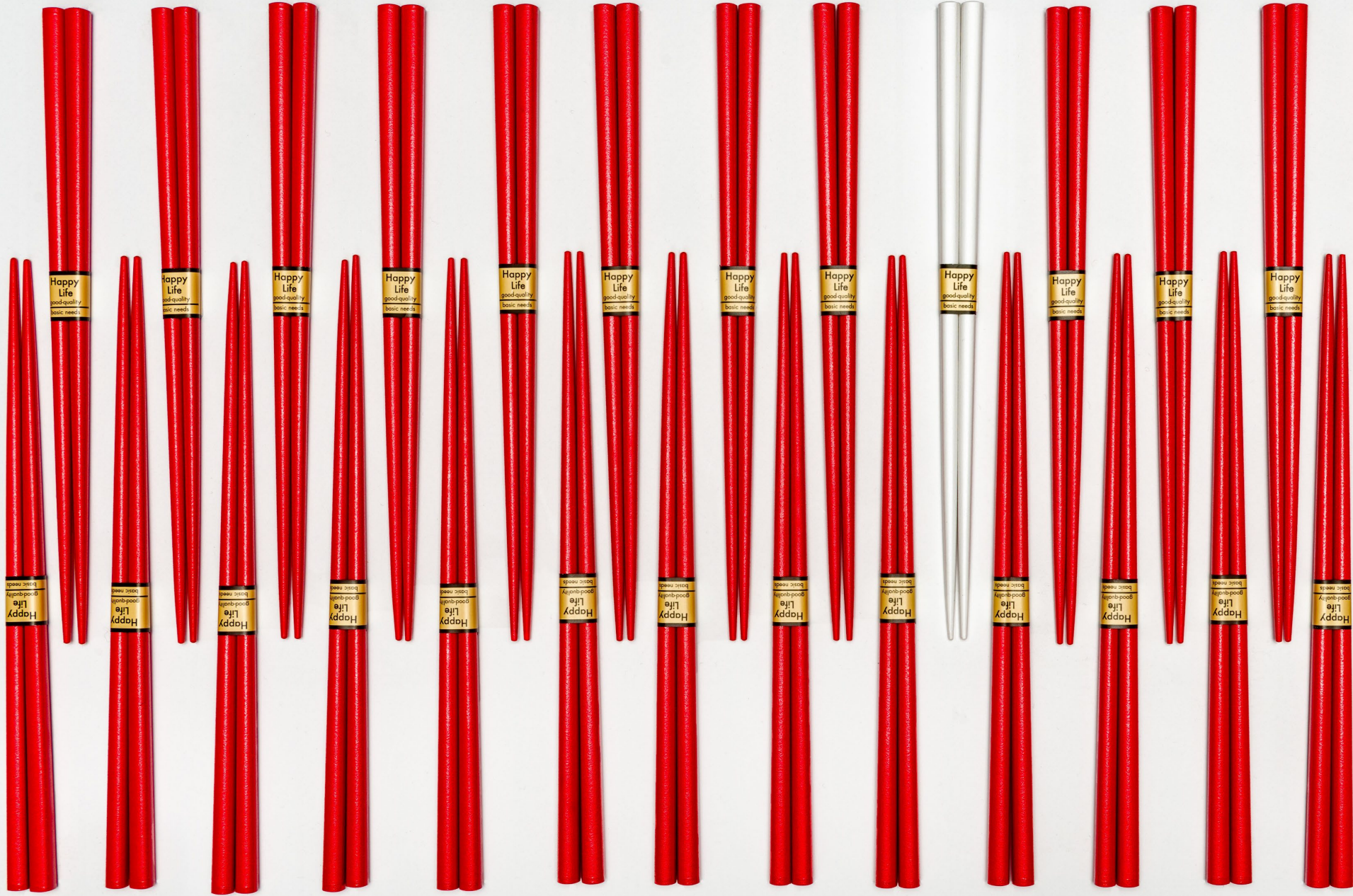


Food Photography





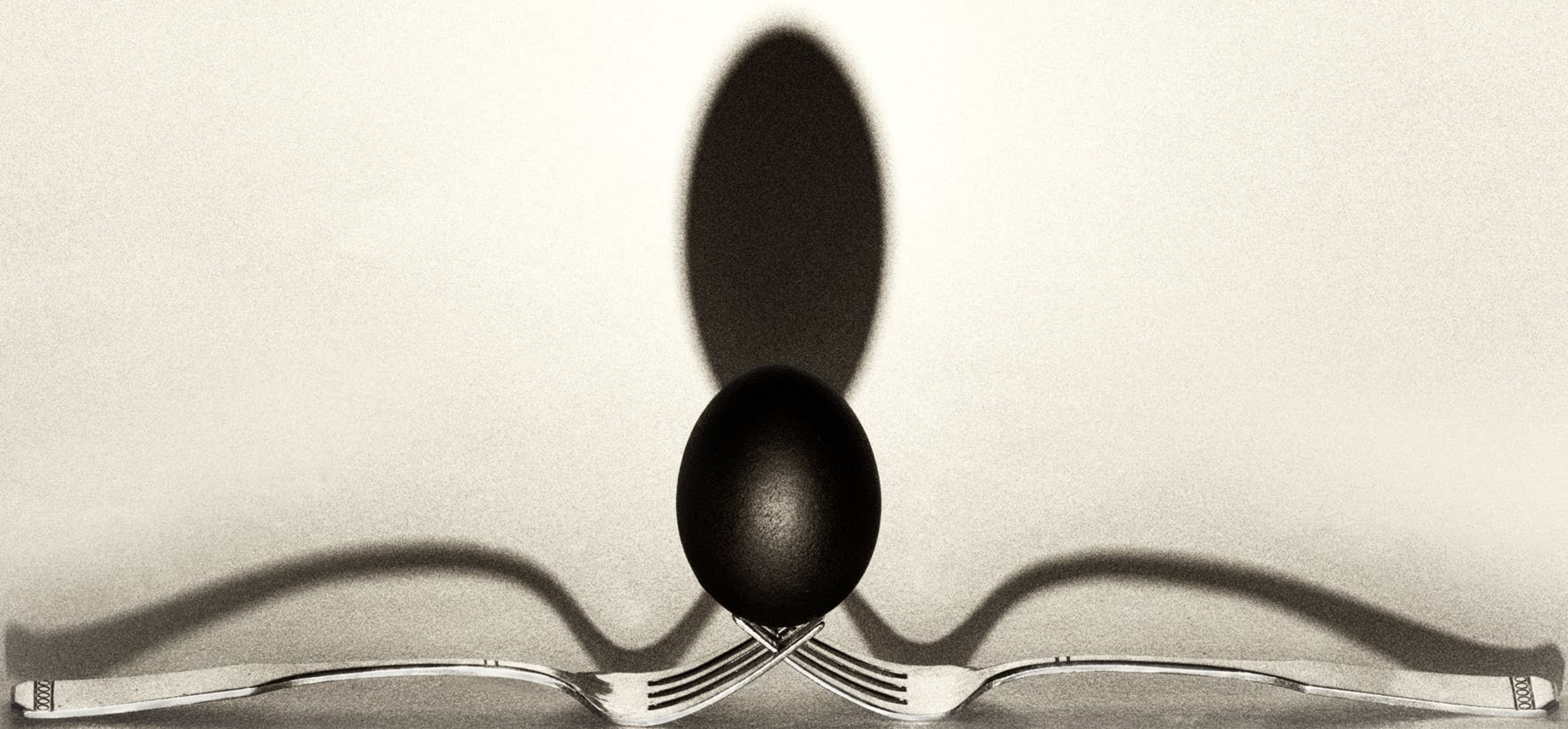
Chopsticks & Teapots



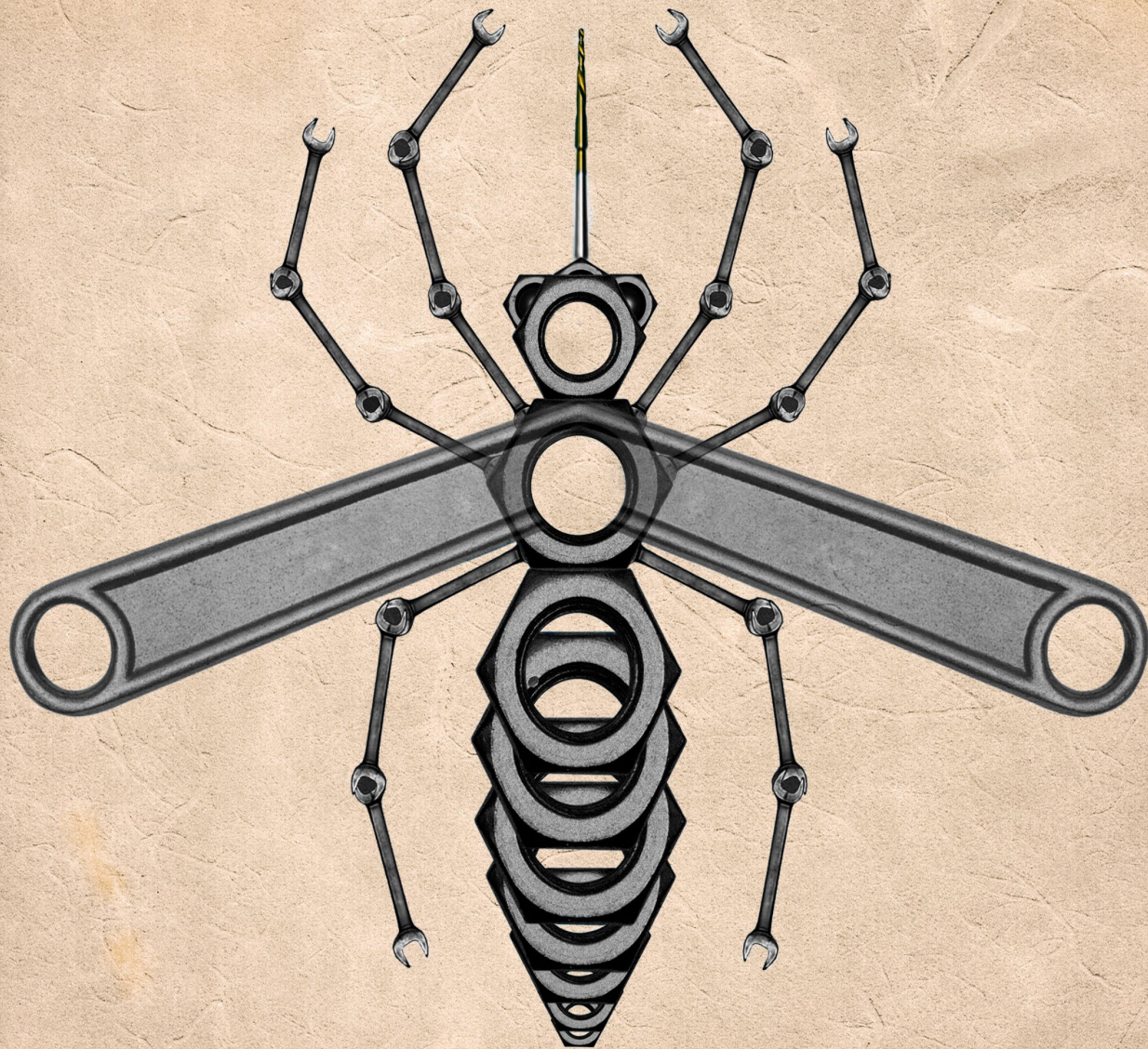


Whimsey



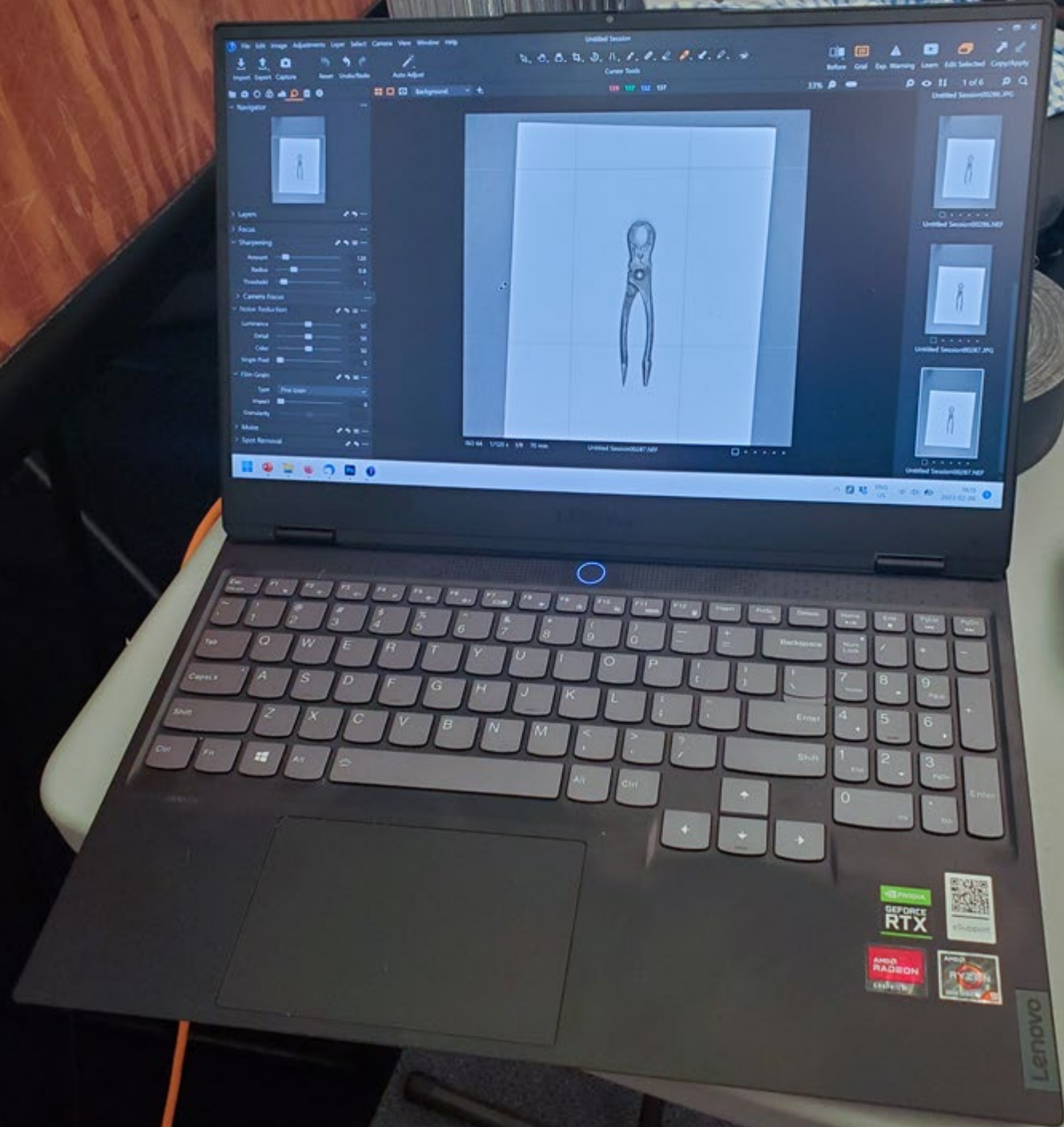


Bugs I found in my Toolbox

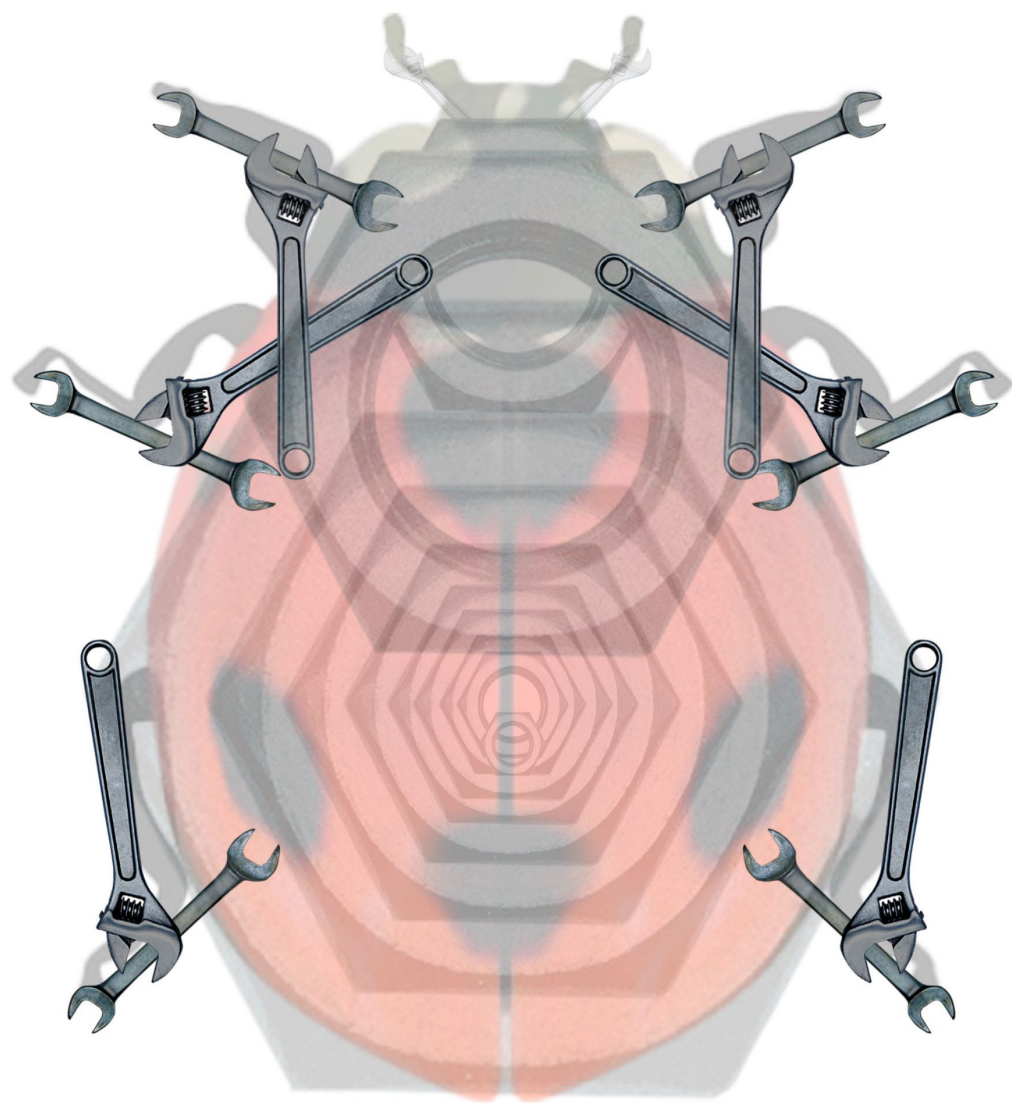






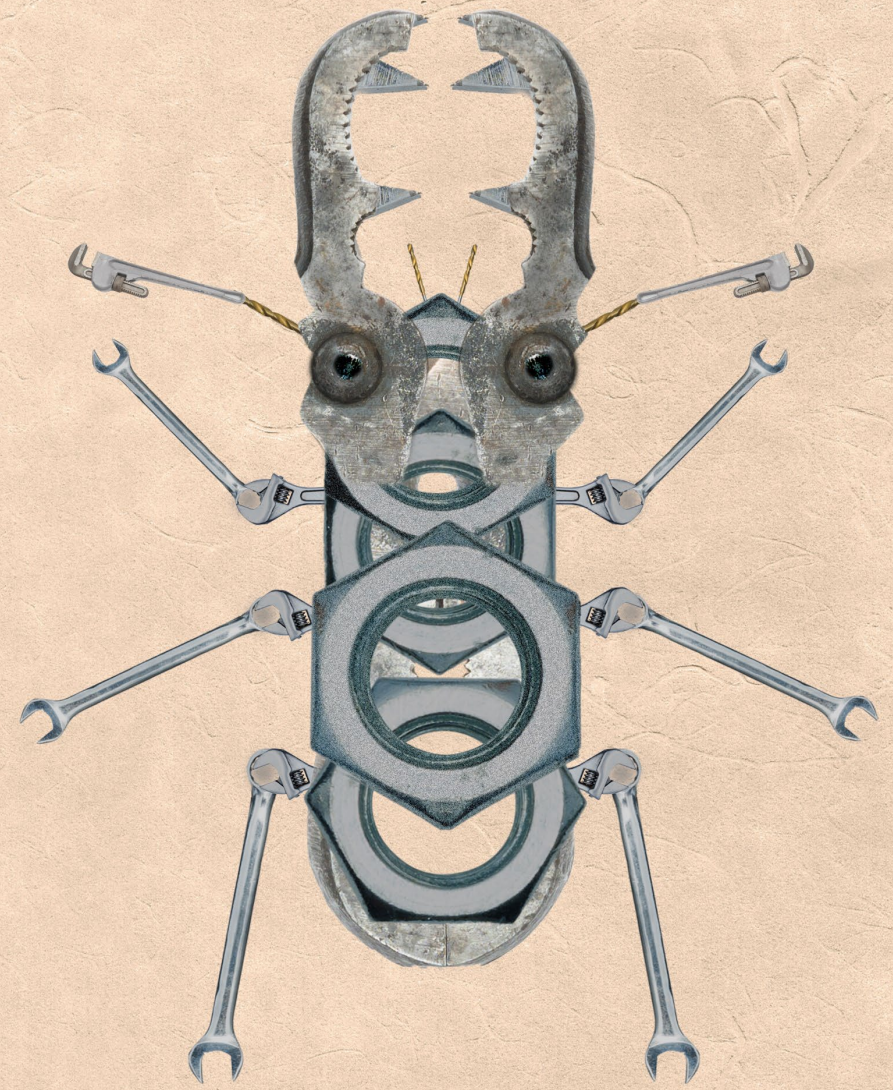








I like stag beetles because when they fight over tree sap, their food, they will grab other beetles or insects with their mandibles and throw them and that is cool!



Why still life?

- Can be done with very limited equipment
 - Additional gear is often quite inexpensive
- Can be done from the comfort of home
 - No need to carry heavy equipment for long distances
 - Don't need a lot of "studio space"
- The photographer is in control of everything
 - No need to wait for great light or good weather
 - **Scary part** – no one else to blame with the image does not work out.

Lighting



Natural Light

- North-facing windows are best



Optical Rangefinder

- Natural light image
- Cell phone image

Typical Light Sources used in Still Life Photography



Speedlight



Studio Flash with modeling light



Continuous Light

Equipment

In addition to your camera!



Tripod



Horizontal Adaptor for tripod



Tripod ball head



Tripod geared head

Getting Started in Still Life Photography

- Replicate existing work
- What's in my pockets or purse?

“Replicate” Existing Works

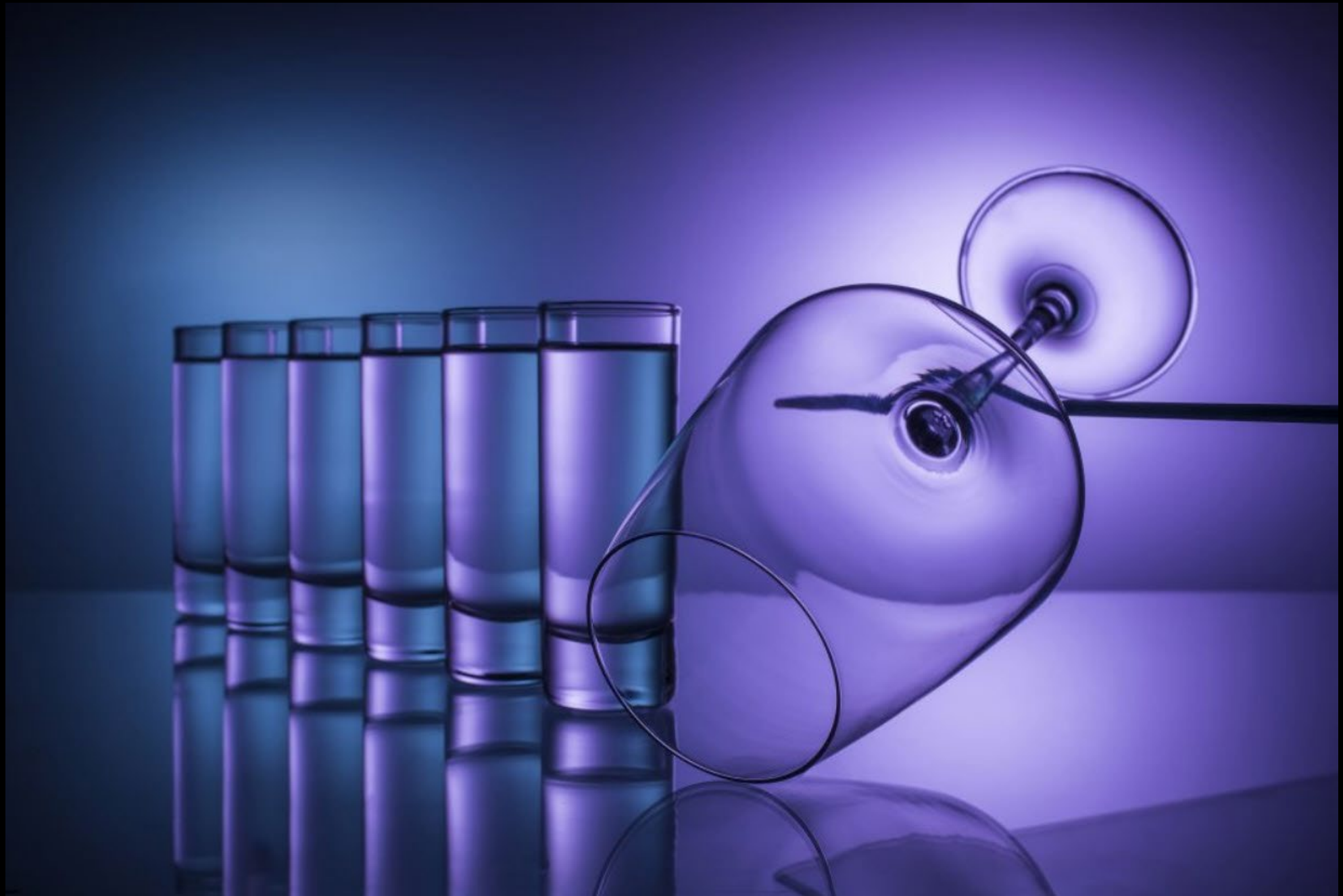


sugar & spice

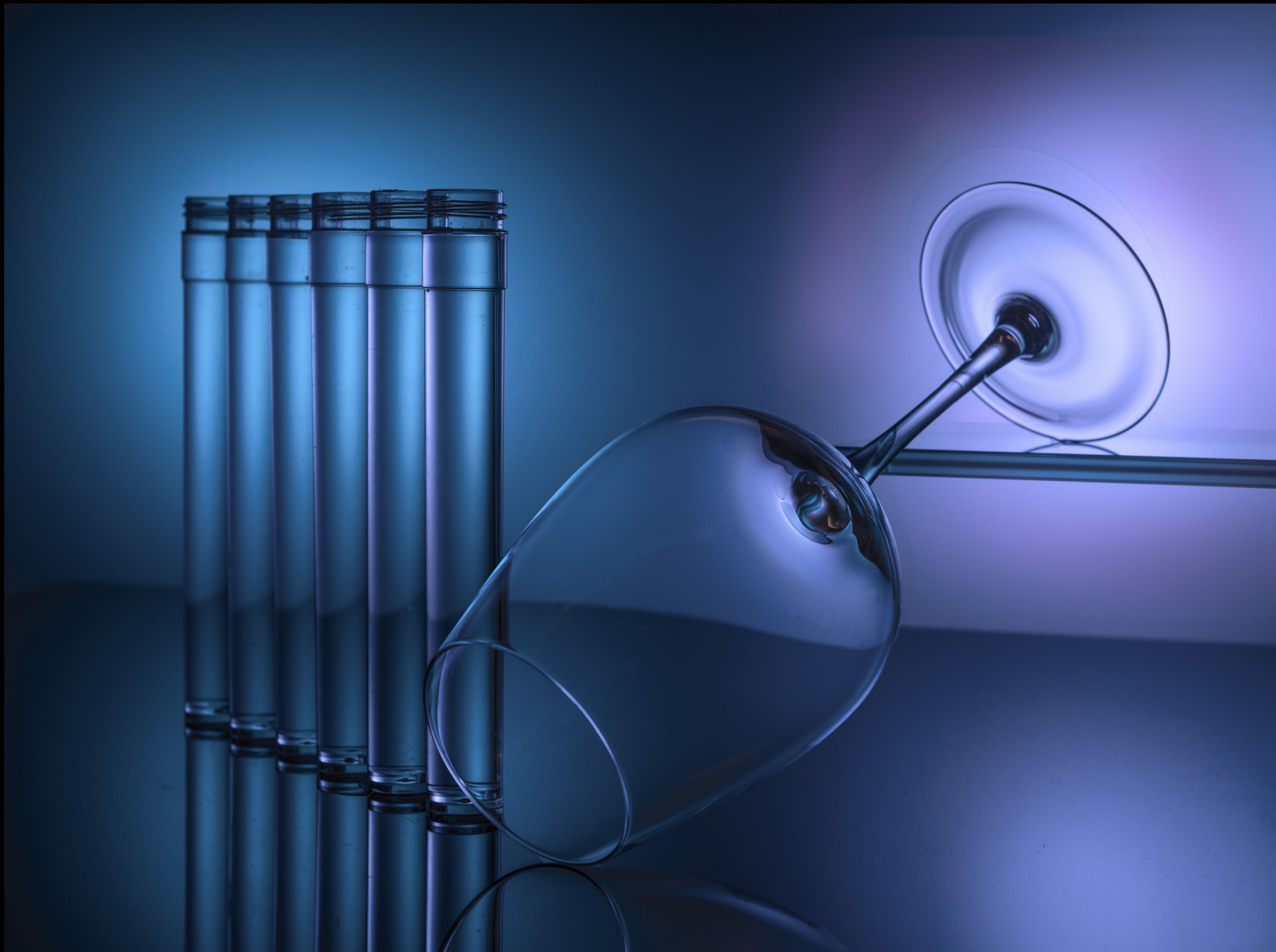
Breathe new life into this traditional Christmas combination and rediscover the aromatic appeal of delicately spiced desserts. You'll be amazed at how quickly your family and friends will find room "for just one more mouthful"!

Original





Original



Reproduction

What I found in my wife's purse



The End!

Questions?