

Still Life

A Brief Overview

Kanata Seniors' Centre Camera Club – May 6, 2022

Presentation Overview

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

Two Types of Photographers

- Hunters
 - Hunters go out and “stalk” their prey and photograph what they find
- Farmers
 - Farmers cultivate and nurture their subjects over time and photograph the results of their work

What is Still Life Photography?

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



Tomb of Menna

- Thebes (Luxor, Egypt)
 - 1411 BC



Pompeii, Italy

- Food Stall
 - 79 AD



Set Table

- Nicephore Niepce
 - 1827

Product / Food Photography

Still Life Photography in Contemporary Advertising



X1D II 50C AND XCD 45P
THE ULTIMATE, PORTABLE MEDIUM FORMAT PACKAGE

X1D II 50C

XCD 4/45P



Raw Rapini Salad

Recipe on page 177

The Veggie Muffuletta

Recipe on page 177

Italian Cold Cut Sando

Recipe on page 177

LCBO Food & Drink

- Autumn 2021

In the beginning...

Golden Age of Dutch Still Life to current

A very brief history...

Origins of Dutch Golden Age Still Life Painting

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

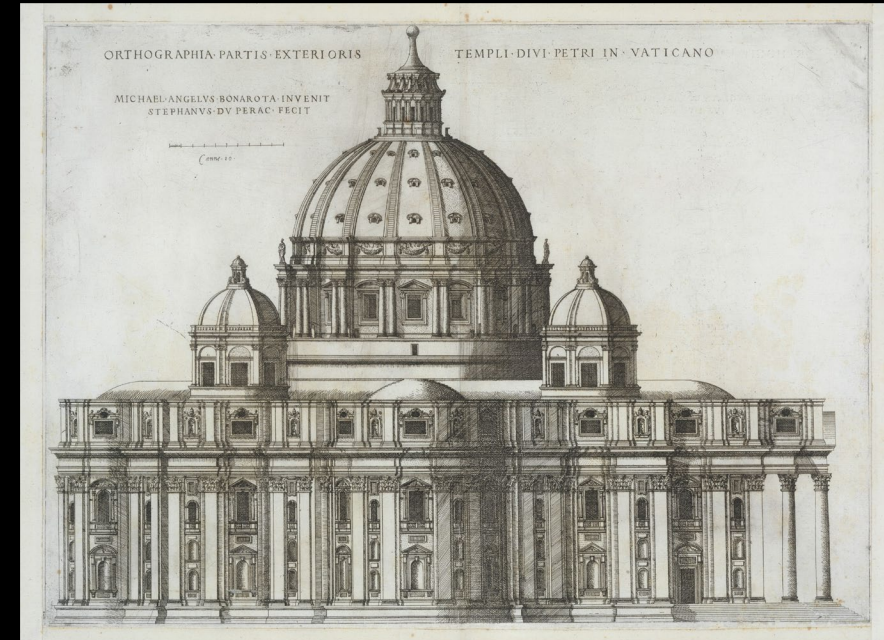


Garden of Earthly Delights

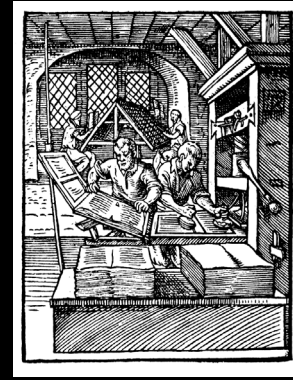
- Centre Panel of Altar Piece Triptych
- Hieronymus Bosch
 - 1495 -1505

Roman Catholic Church

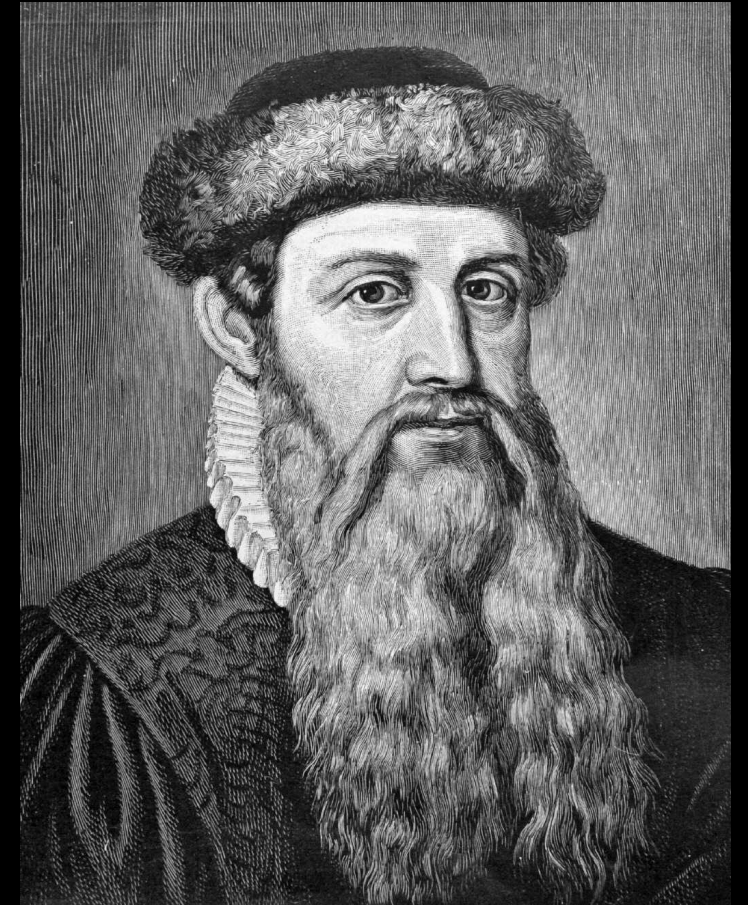
- Paintings features Saints and Biblical stories
- Construction of new St Peter's in Rome
 - Needed lots of money for this project
 - Michelangelo did not come cheap!
 - Pope Leo X
 - Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici (1475 – 1521)
 - Used theologically suspect means to raise money
 - Sale of indulgences



The Printing Press



- **Johannes Gutenberg**
 - Invented the modern printing press in ~ 1450
 - Moveable type
 - Enabled mass communications
 - Bible translated from the Latin to local languages
 - Religious pamphlets
 - A key trigger for the spread of the Protestant Reformation
 - Criticisms of Roman Catholic interpretations of Canon



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
 - Lasted ~ 200 years
 - This is the origin of all modern still life painting
 - And photography



Still Life with Gilt Goblet

- William Claesz Heda
 - 1635

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)



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Symbolism of Golden Age Still Life

- <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/small-guide-still-life-symbols-part-1/>
- <https://www.thecollector.com/still-life-paintings-what-they-mean/>
- https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/in_depth/a-symbolism-guide-to-the-spooky-world-of-dutch-still-lives-56298

Photography

- Invention of the camera
 - ~ 1820s
 - 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 came into existence
 - 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
 - Very respectful of his subjects



New Dutch

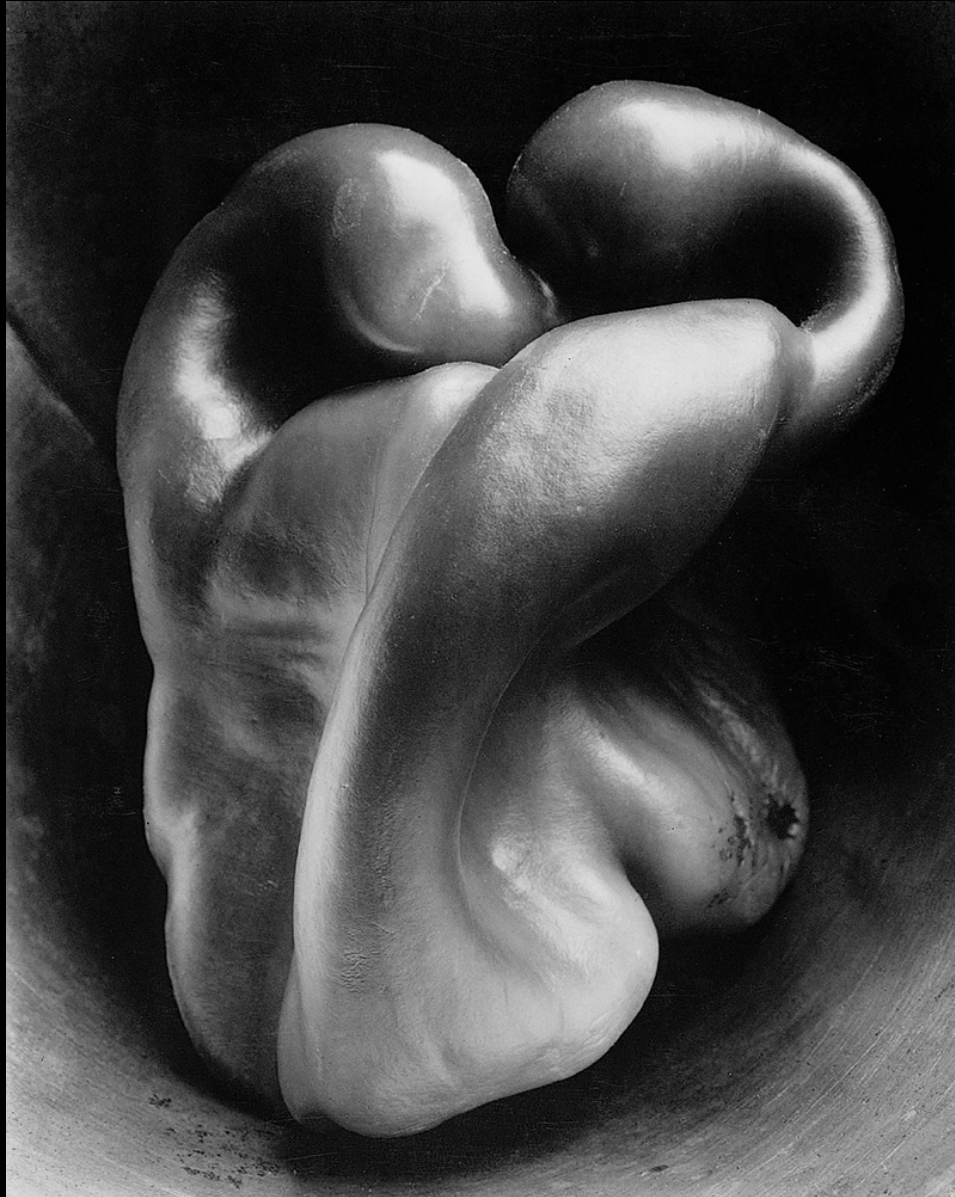
- Tineke Stoffels
 - “Tapanade”
- Used some but not all of the Golden Age Dutch Still Life rules

<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

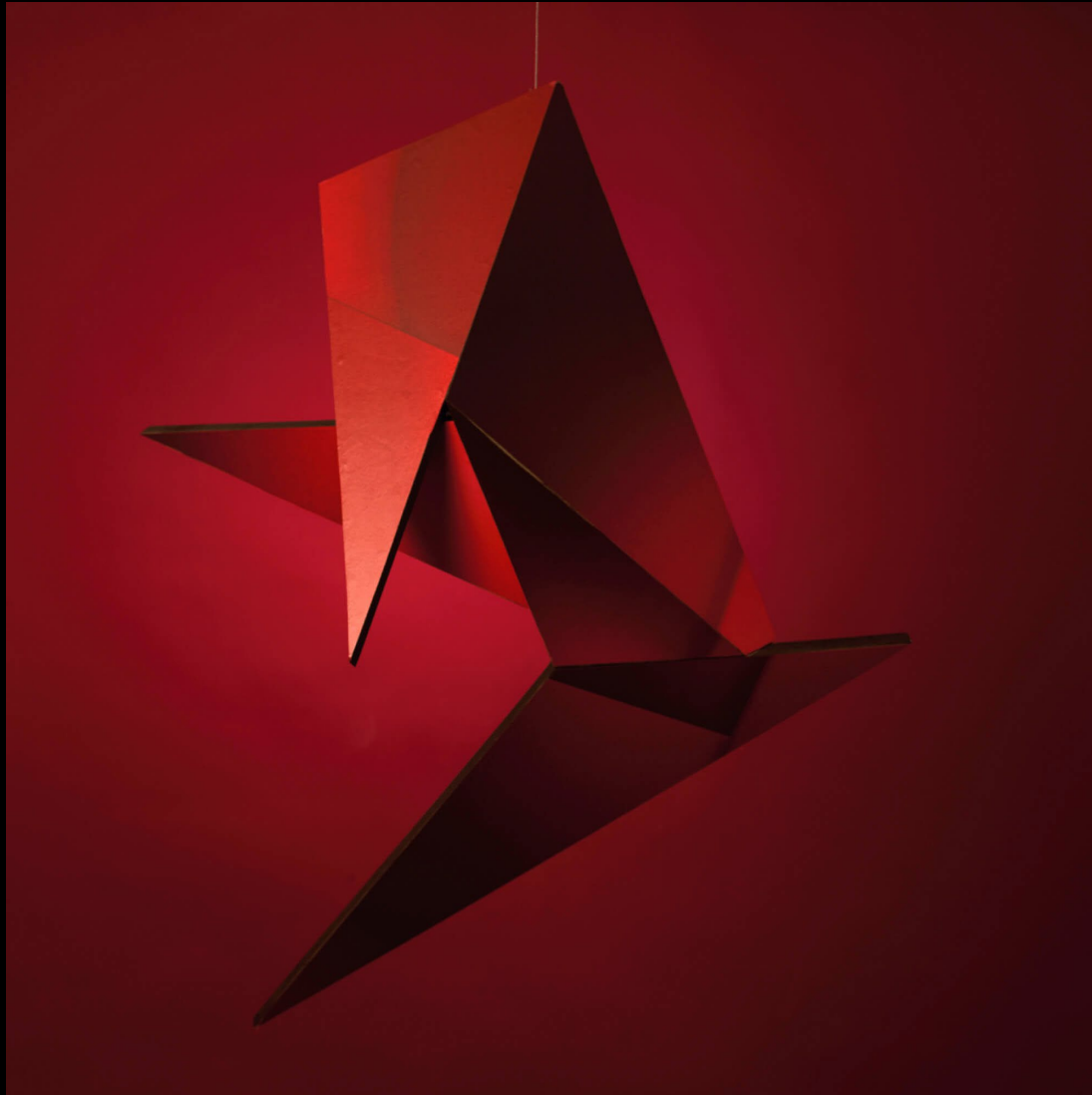
- Koo Bohnchang
- <http://www.bckoo.com/>



Still Life Styles

Dutch Masters / New Dutch – Pivot Table Top / Spanish Baroque -
Framing Devices / Dutch Masters Floral Studies / Cezanne, Monet
& Co. – Less Formality in Random Composition / Outerbridge,
Groover, Brodovitch – New Random / Light as a Compositional
Element / Study Shape & Light / Morandi Reverence /
Fragmentation / Pop Art / Rauschenbach – Layers / Mary Pratt
/ Typology – The Witnessed Document / Subject Isolation /
Deconstruction / Interconnections / Shapes – Strength of Forms /
Abstract / Specular Shape / New Morandi - New Dutch / Zen -
Miksang / Movement / Rhythmic Shapes / Graphic / Set
Construction / Surrealist

Contemporary Canadian Still Life Photography



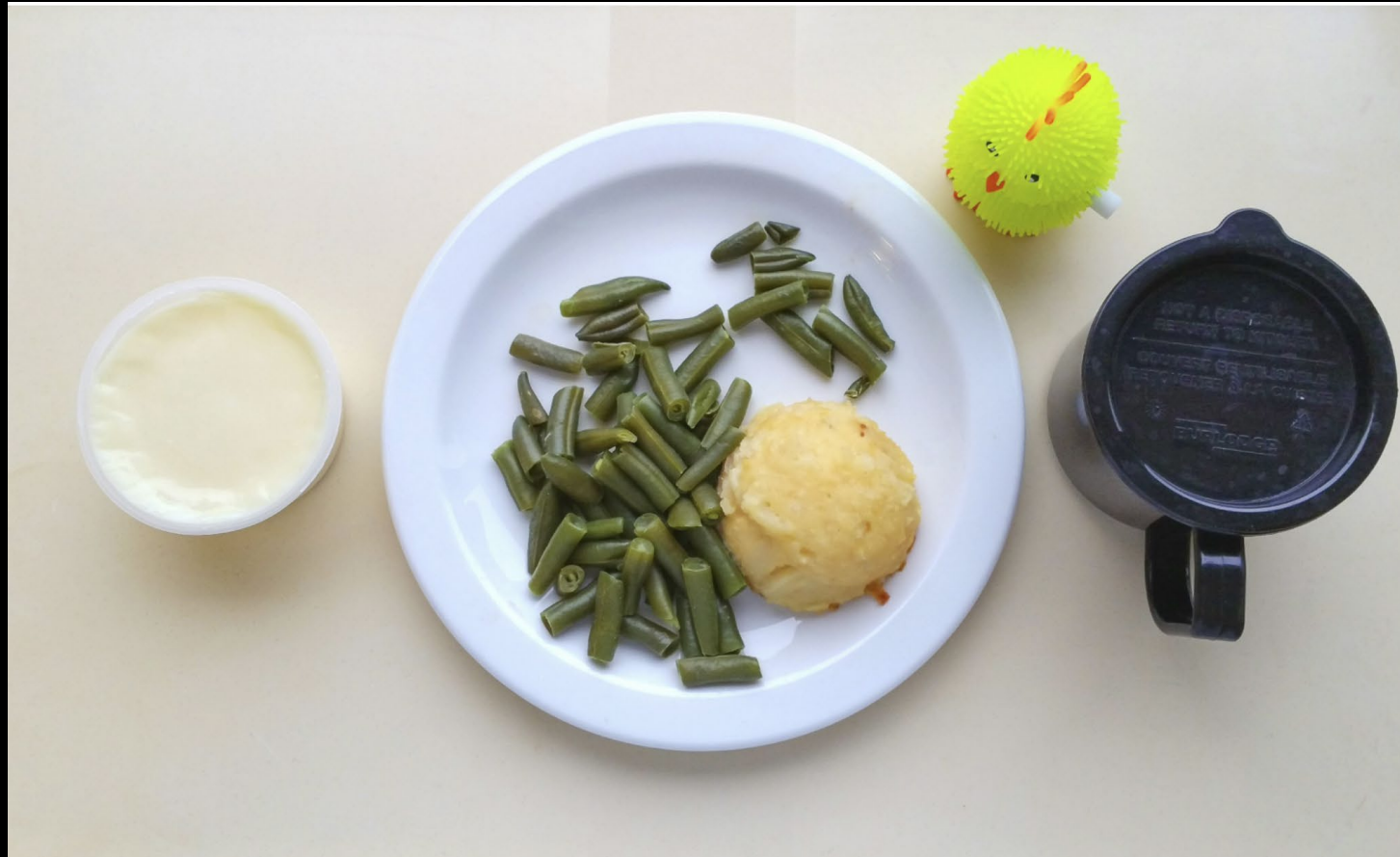
Photographie Pure #1

- 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/>

Foundry Folio

- Adrien Duey
 - Almonte ON
 - Top Food and Advertising Photographer
 - Teaches at SPAO

<http://www.adrienduey.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 & KSCCC Winter Challenge
 - 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

Awards – since 2020

Still Life Photography – Juried Competitions

- 12 Local (RA Photo Club) awards
- 5 National (CAPA) Awards
- 2 International (FIAP) Awards
- Canadian Team submission to Four Nations Competition – 1 image
- One piece on display at the 2022 APEX exhibition at SPAO Gallery



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)
- Generally 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





Textured Back Lighting







Still Life in Motion







Food Photography





BOAL

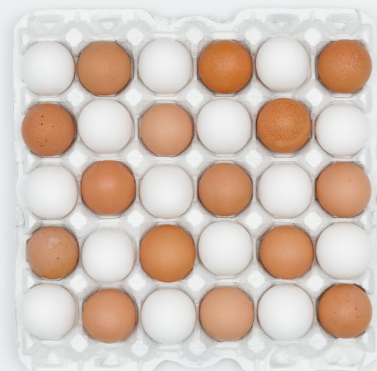
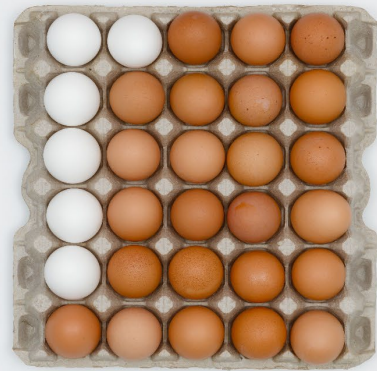
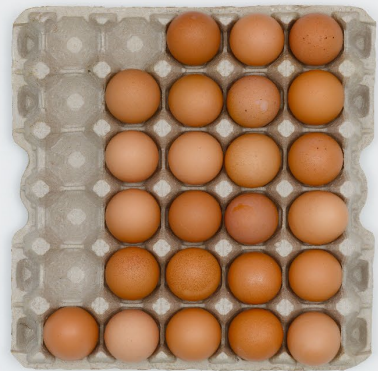
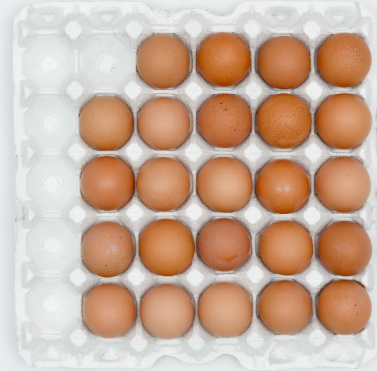
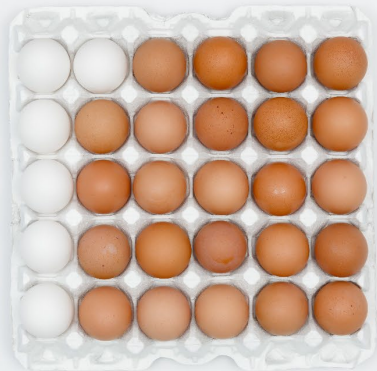
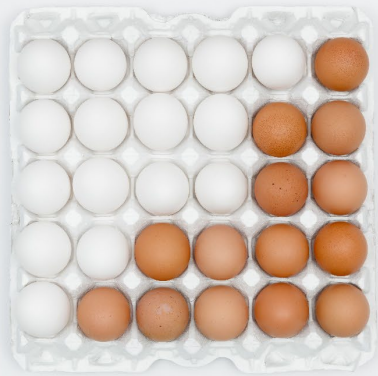
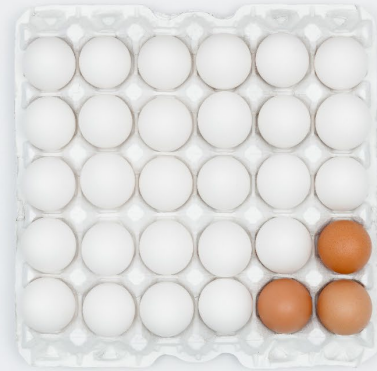
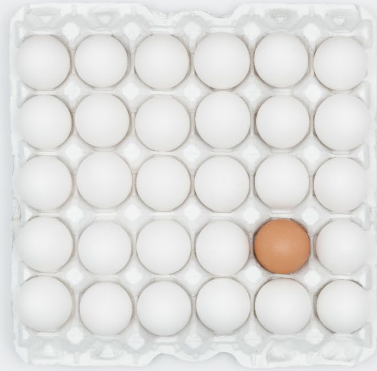
1954

COSSART
MADEIRA

BY DEIBY
COSSART

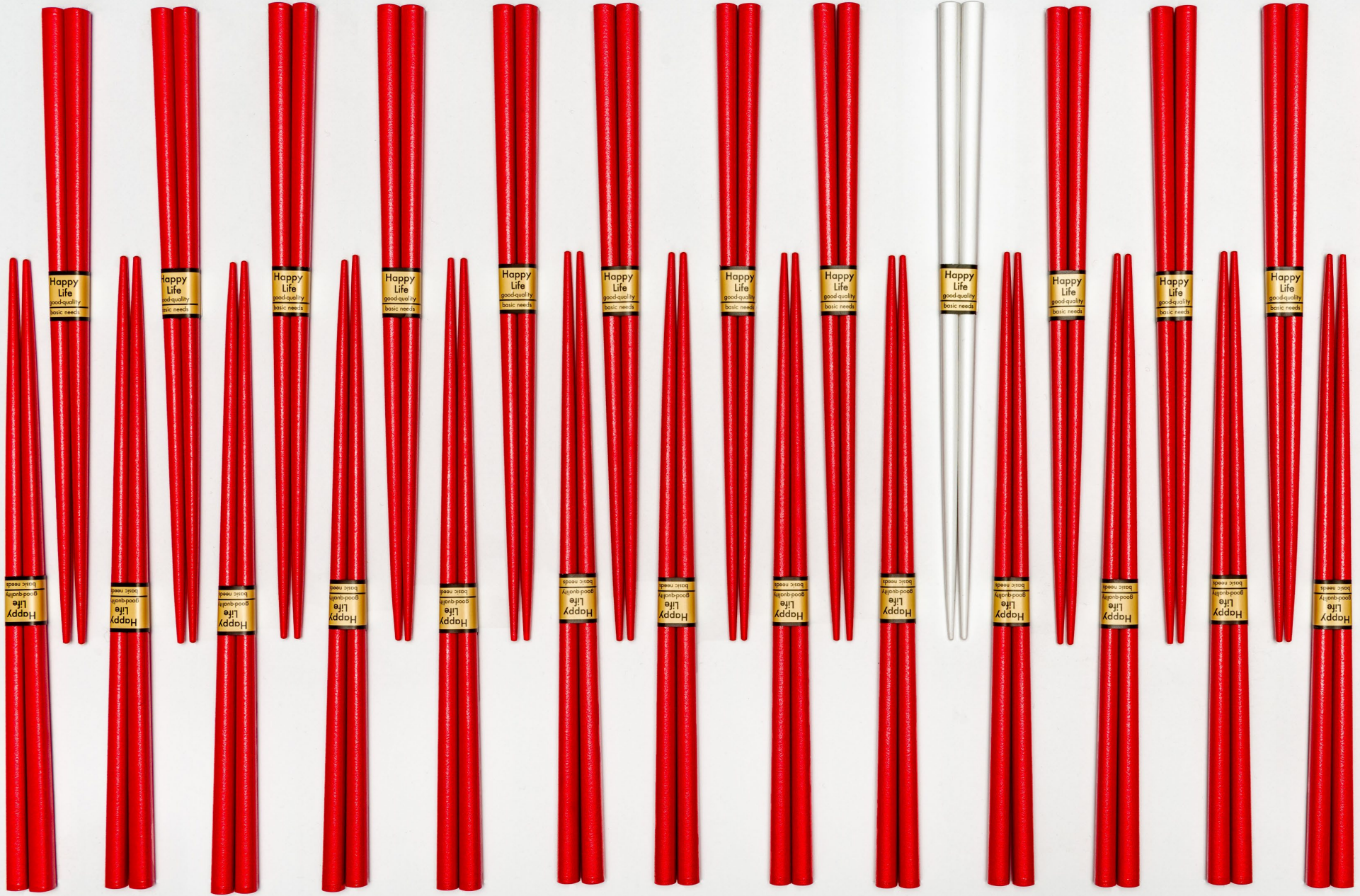






Chopsticks & Teapots



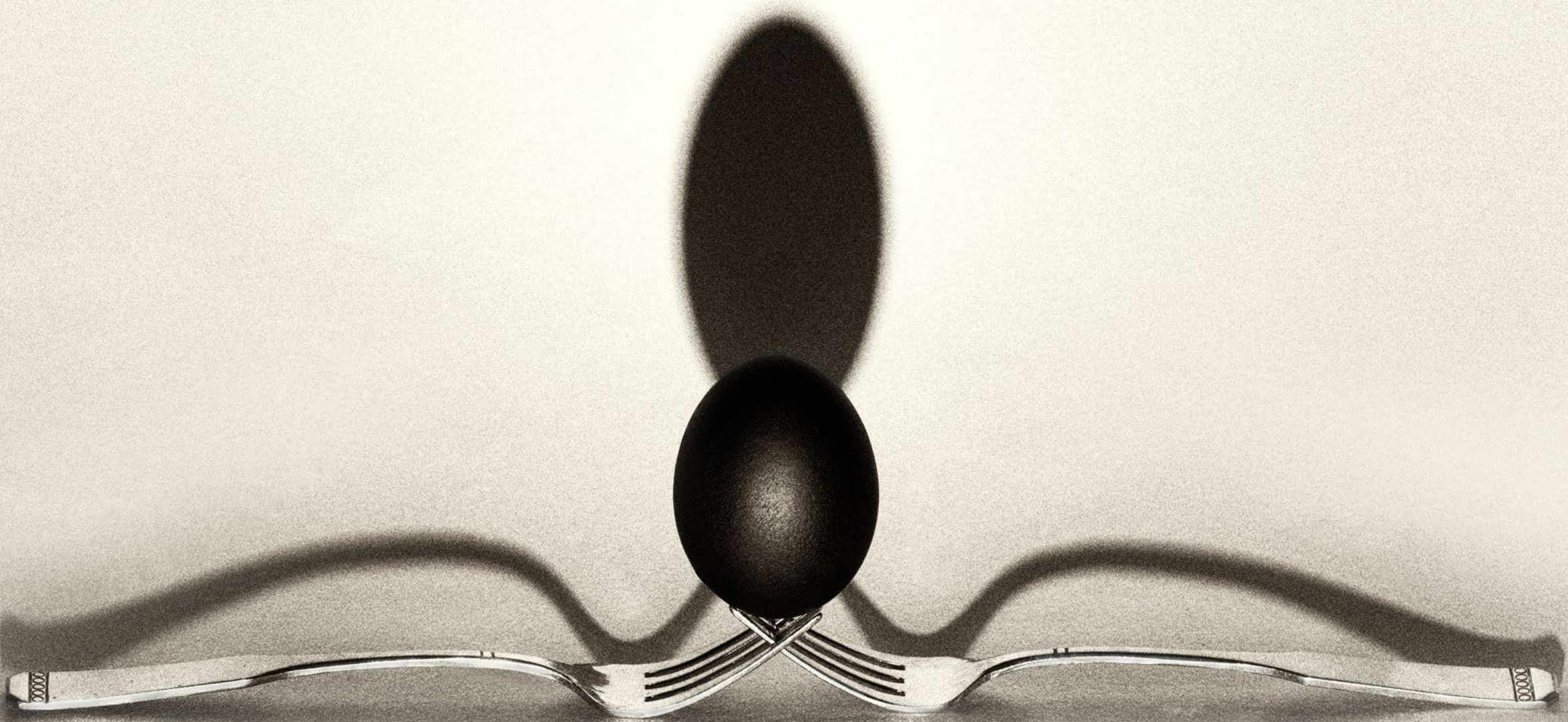






Whimsey

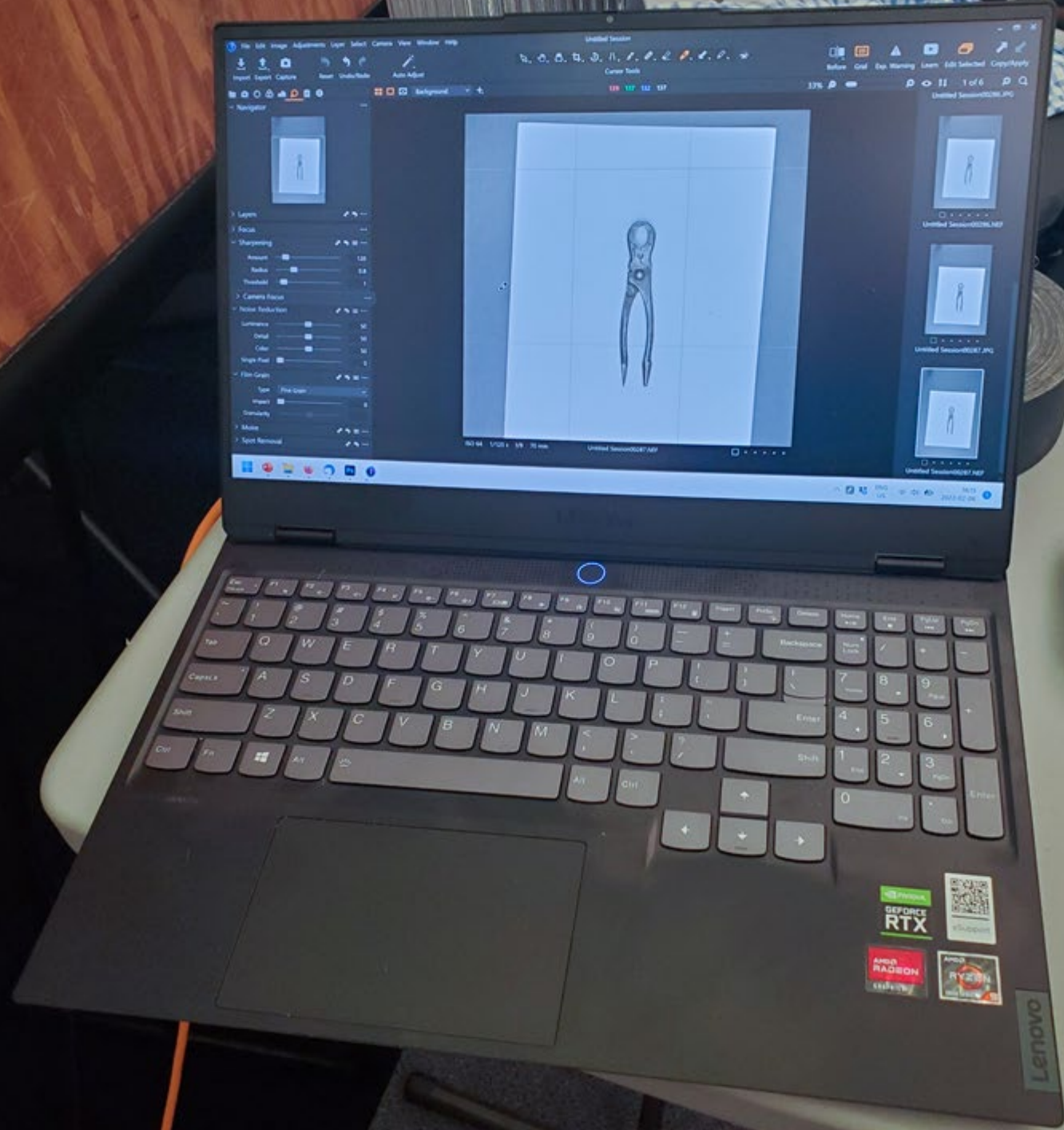




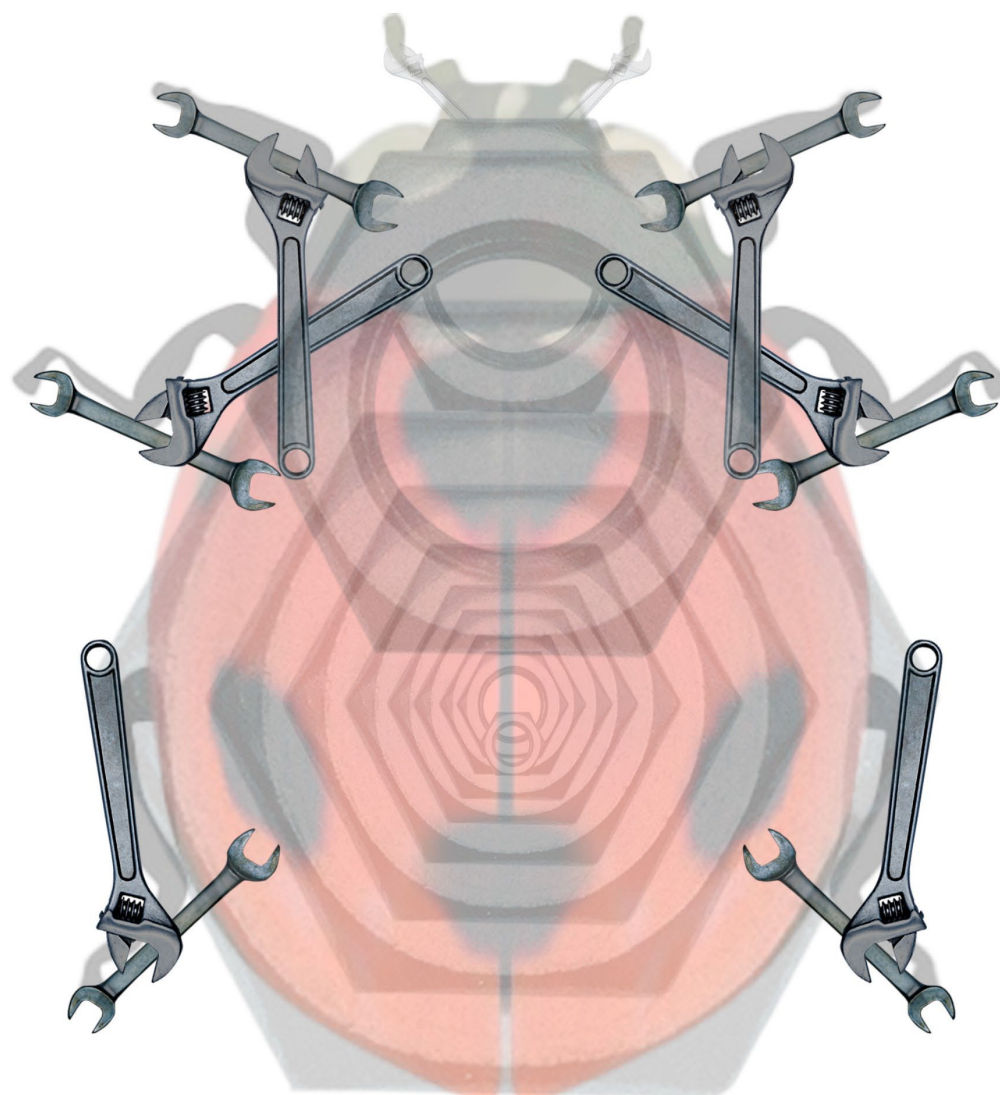
Bugs I found in my Toolbox



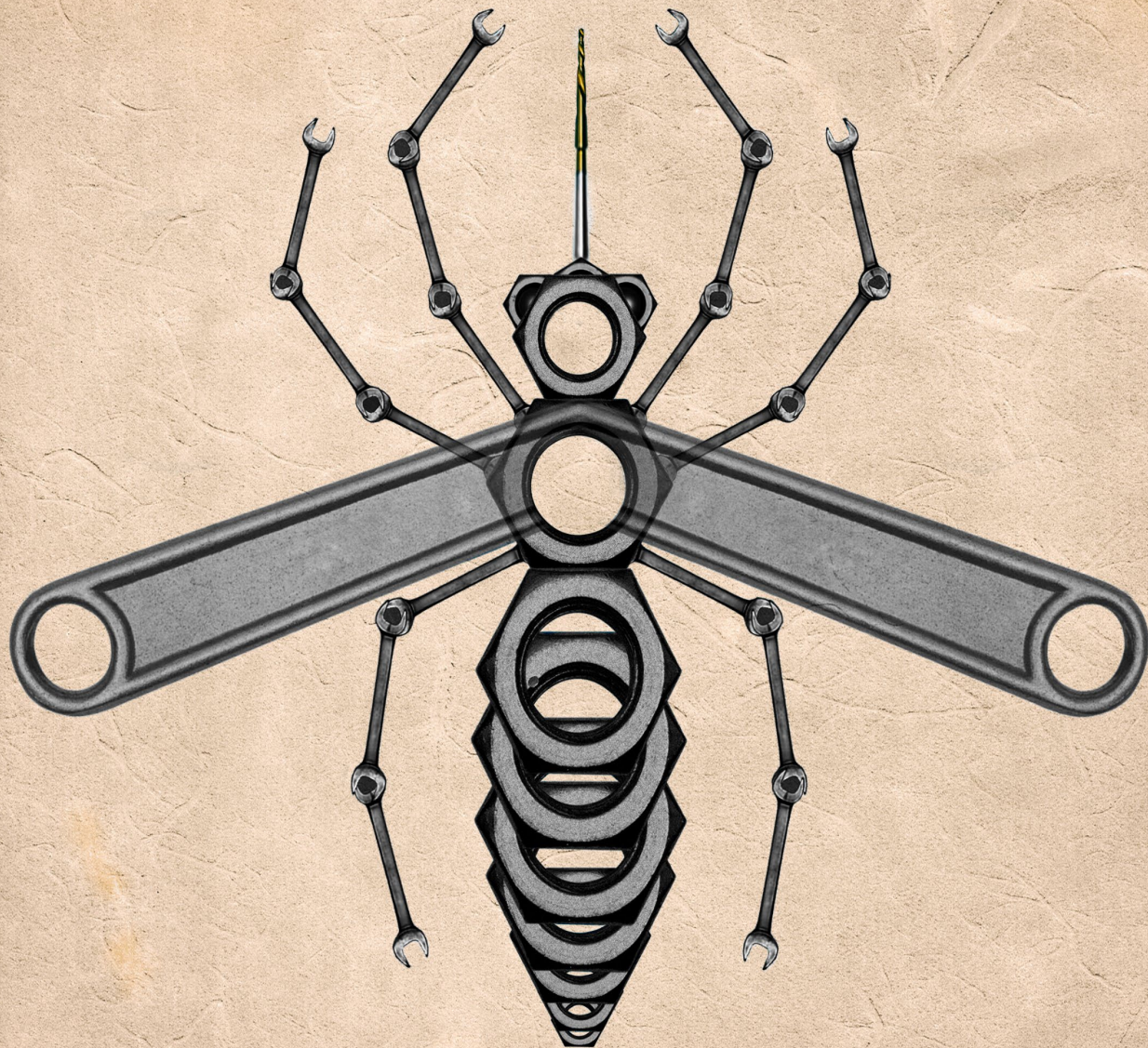




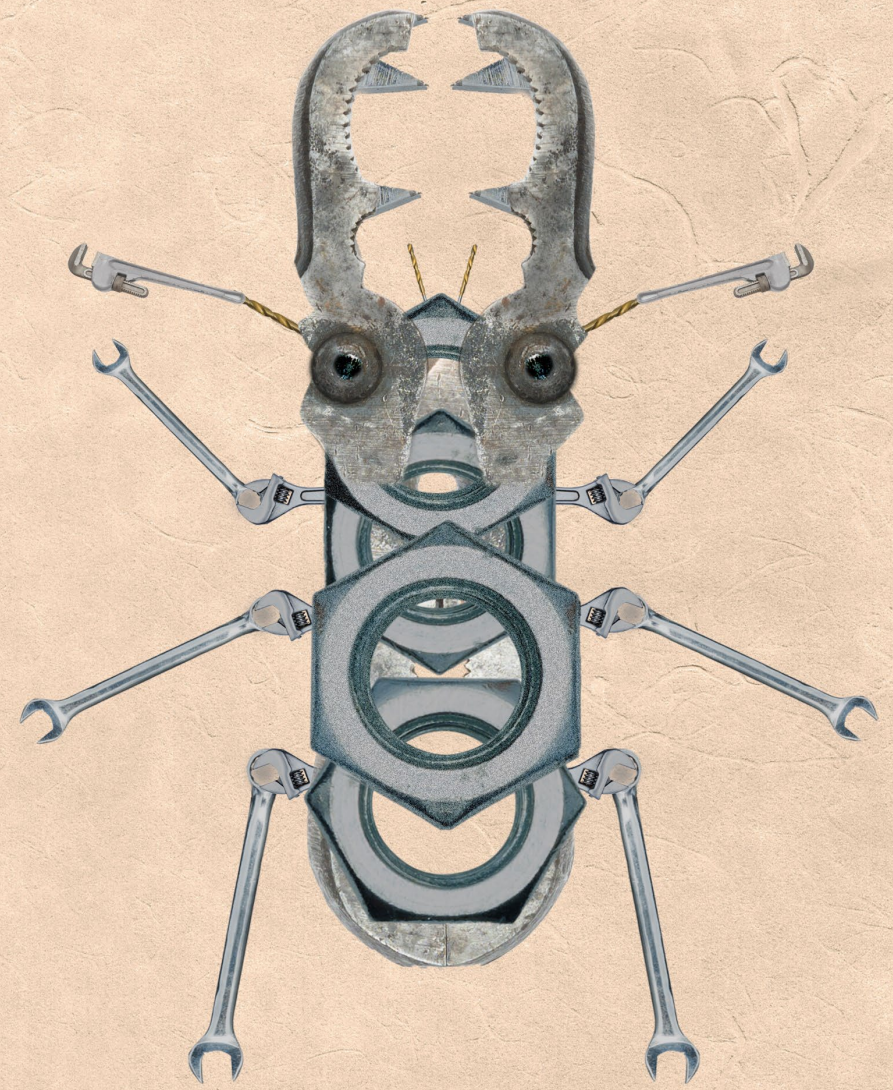








I like stag beetles because when they fight over tree sap, their food, they will grab other beetles or insects with their mandibles and throw them and that is cool!



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 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?
- Portrait (without a person in it)

“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



Maureen Murphy



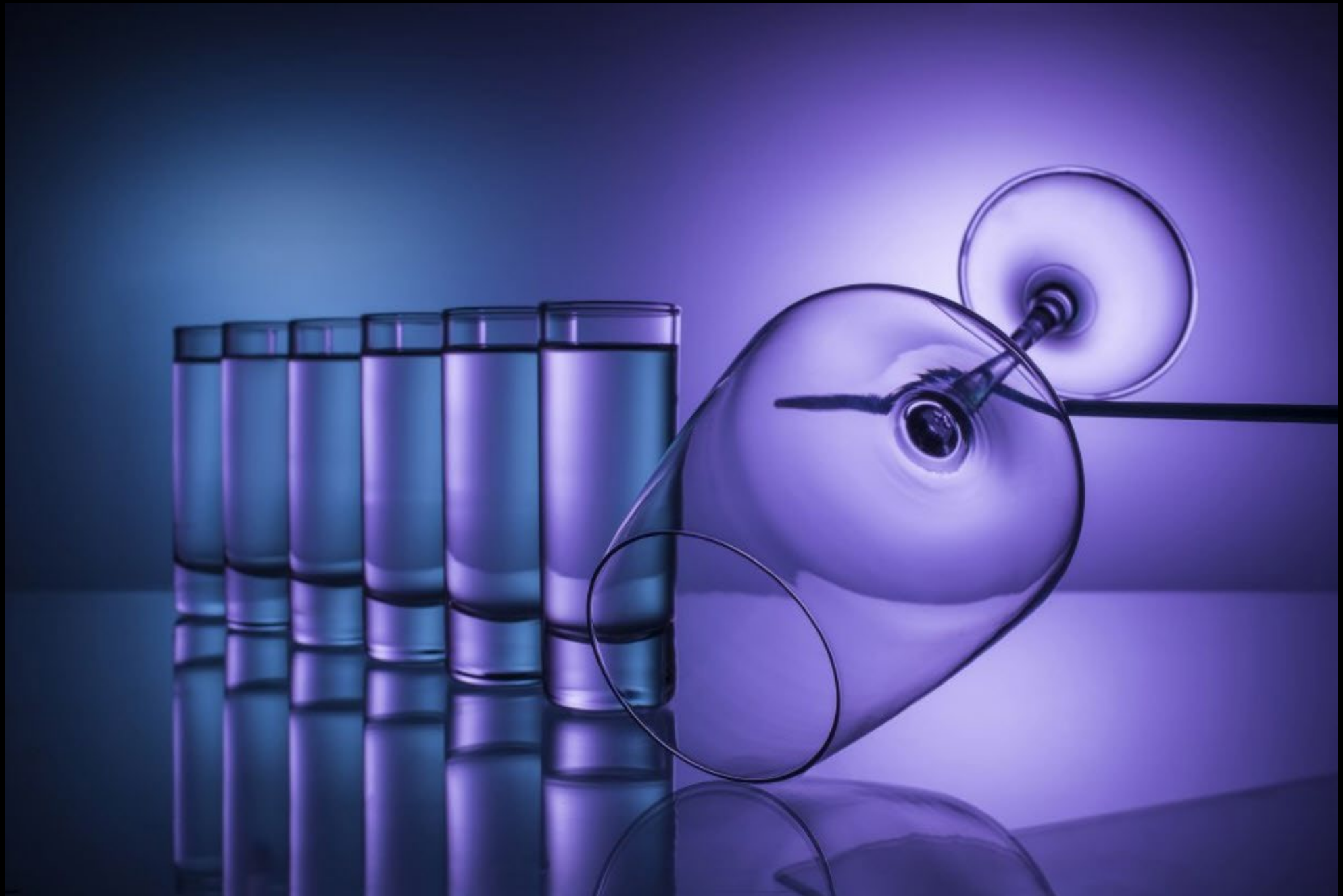
Manfred Mueller

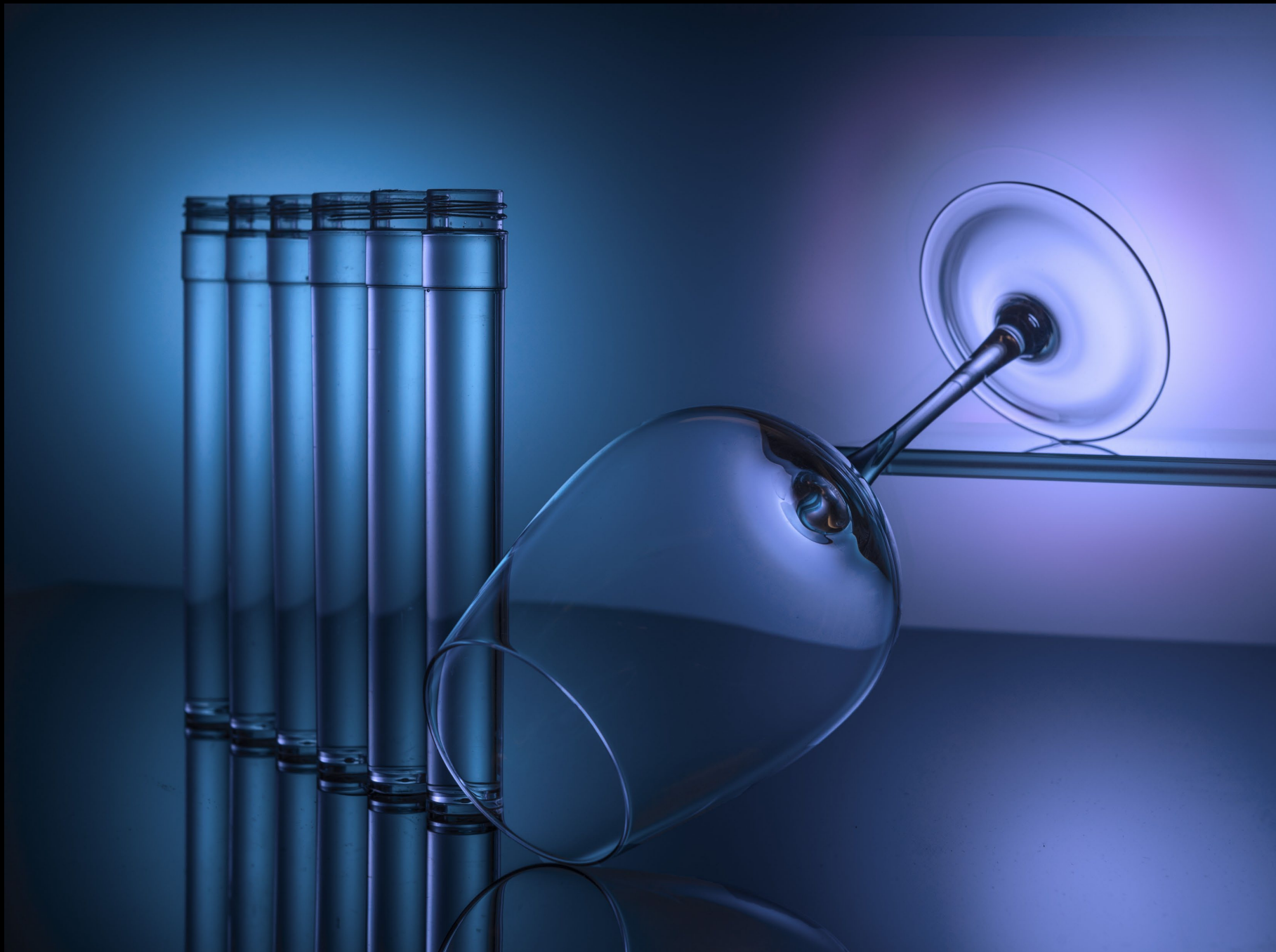


Jean Saint-Jacques



Glenn Bloodworth





What I found in my wife's purse



Self-Portrait

(no person in the shot)



The End!

Questions?