

# Still Life Photography

## U3AC Photo Forum

*Jitka Brynjolffssen 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024*

# Why 'Still Life'?



*Jitka Bryn 2017 - 3 Vases and a Rose*

- As from the earliest paintings – depicting group of stationary objects – hence **'Still'**
- Mainly flowers, fruit, and other kinds of food or dead animals –hence **'Life'**

# Still Life Photography v Painting

**As in Still-Life painting we photograph**

- inanimate subject matter, typically a small group of objects (food, flowers, dead animals, plants, rocks, or shells) or man-made (drinking glasses, books, vases, jewellery, coins, chairs and so on).

**And pay attention to**

- Composition
- Lighting
- Framing
- Colour

**You are in control!**



# A bit of History



## The Ancient Egyptians

Painted stacks of offerings for the gods, in temples or tombs



## Greek and Roman

Mosaics on the floor and painting on the walls, especially at Pompeii (the Roman town covered by ash in the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in AD79)

# Earliest Still Life in Painting



[Jan Brueghel the Elder](#) (1568–1625), *Bouquet*(1599).

Some of the earliest examples of still life were paintings of flowers by Netherlandish Renaissance painters.

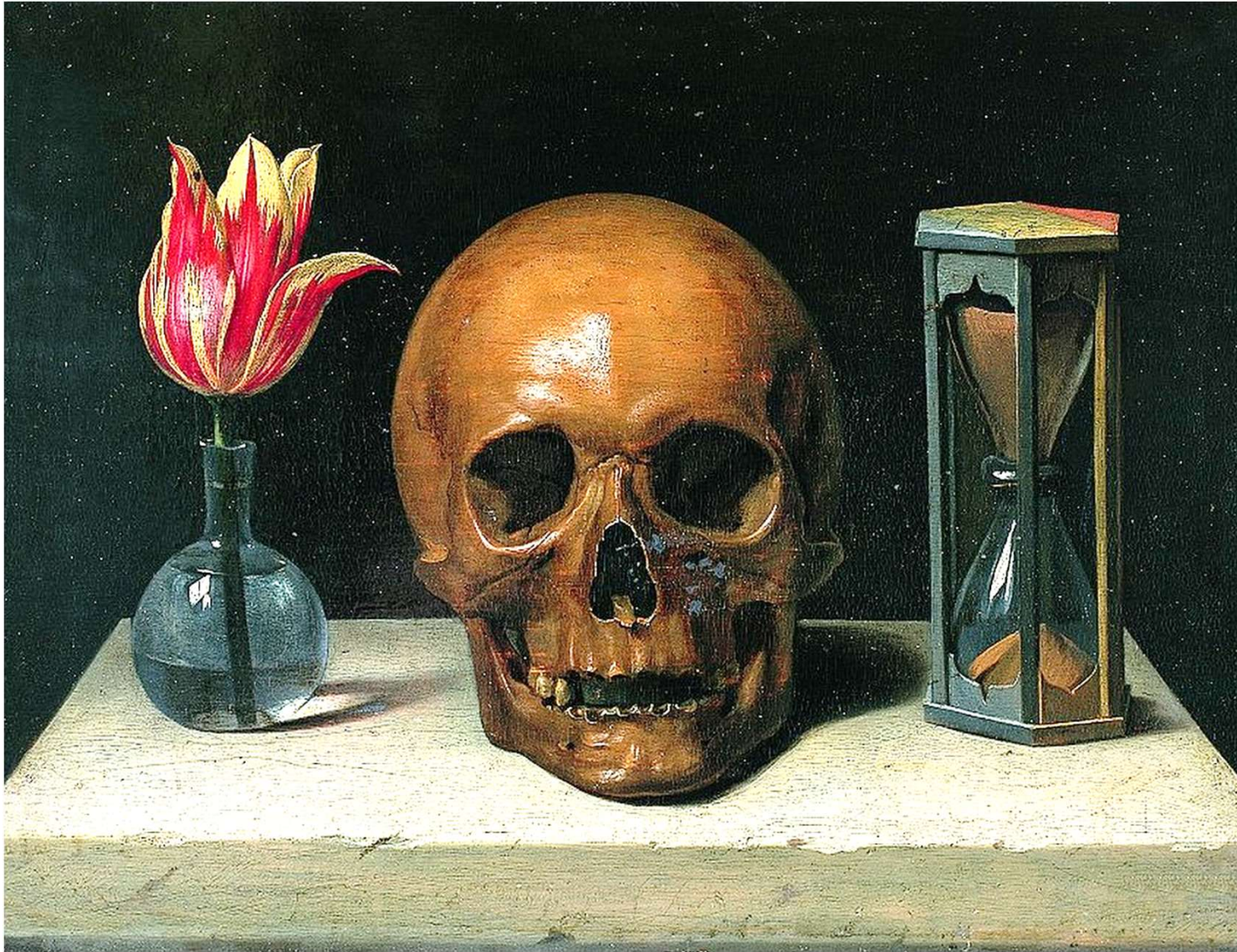
# Not Everything Need to be Perfect



***Basket of Fruit***

*Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, (~1599),*

# Vanitas



*Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674)*  
***Still Life with Tulip Skull and Hourglass***

# Light and Composition



The tradition for Still Life composition and lighting is set in these paintings

***Still Life with Game Fowl, Vegetables and Fruits*** (1602)  
Juan Sánchez Cotán Museo del Prado Madrid





***Still life with Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber,***  
*Juan Sánchez Cotán (1560–1627),*



[http://www.beikey.net/mrs-deane/images/stillevens/still\\_life\\_big1.jpg](http://www.beikey.net/mrs-deane/images/stillevens/still_life_big1.jpg)

# 19th Century Onwards



*Impressionists and post-..' Still Lives become respected and important genre of Art – as photography takes off and is used for realistic imagery of object*

# Still Life Photography

- Popular since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century –
- Practical choice as well as creative with the control over setting and light with objects such as fruits, glassware, vases and flowers
- 
- Often used for archiving and cataloguing and advertising.
- In early 20<sup>th</sup> Century photographers used soft focus lenses and played with light and shadows – to create art
- Contemporary Still Life recalls past styles but the range has expanded to include objects in motion

# Artists Known For Still Life Photography

- **Henry Fox Talbot** published a book of his photographic experiments in “The Pencil of Nature” (1844). His still life “The Open Door” (1844) plays with light and shadow.
- **Roger Fenton** – founder of Photographic Society
- **André Kertész** known for his groundbreaking contributions to photographic composition,
- **Paul Outerbridge** is famed for playing with dark shadows to create Surrealist still lifes like “Ide Collar” (1922). And the early use of colour
- More contemporary examples of still life photographs include Bill Owens’ documentation of the homes of post-war working class Americans and **Robert Mapplethorpe’s** monochrome photographs of flowers.
- **Irwing Penn** – commenting on modern society consumerism through his simple photographs of object found in the street
- Other masters of still life photography include **Josef Sudek**, Adolphe Braun, Edward Weston, Man Ray, **Ori Gersht** is known for freezing flowers and photographing their explosions in works like “Blow Up: Untitled 15” (2007). **Sharon Core**, Jonathan Lovekin, and Wolfgang Tillmans, **Martin Parr**

# William Henry Fox Talbot 1800–1877



*The Open Door before 1844 -@ The Metropolitan Museum of Art US*

# Roger Fenton 1819-1869



***Still life with Ivory Tankard and Fruit***, ~1860.. The Royal Photographic Society Collection at the National Media Museum

# André Kertész 1894-1985



***The Fork, or La Fourchette***, 1928  
and is one of Kertész's most famous works



***Bowl with Sugar Cubes***, André Kertész, 1928

*1927 Kertész was the first photographer to have a one-man exhibition with 30 photographs;*



# Paul Outerbridge - 1896-1958



## ***The Idle Collar***

*Taken in 1922 and published in Vanity Fair as an advert*

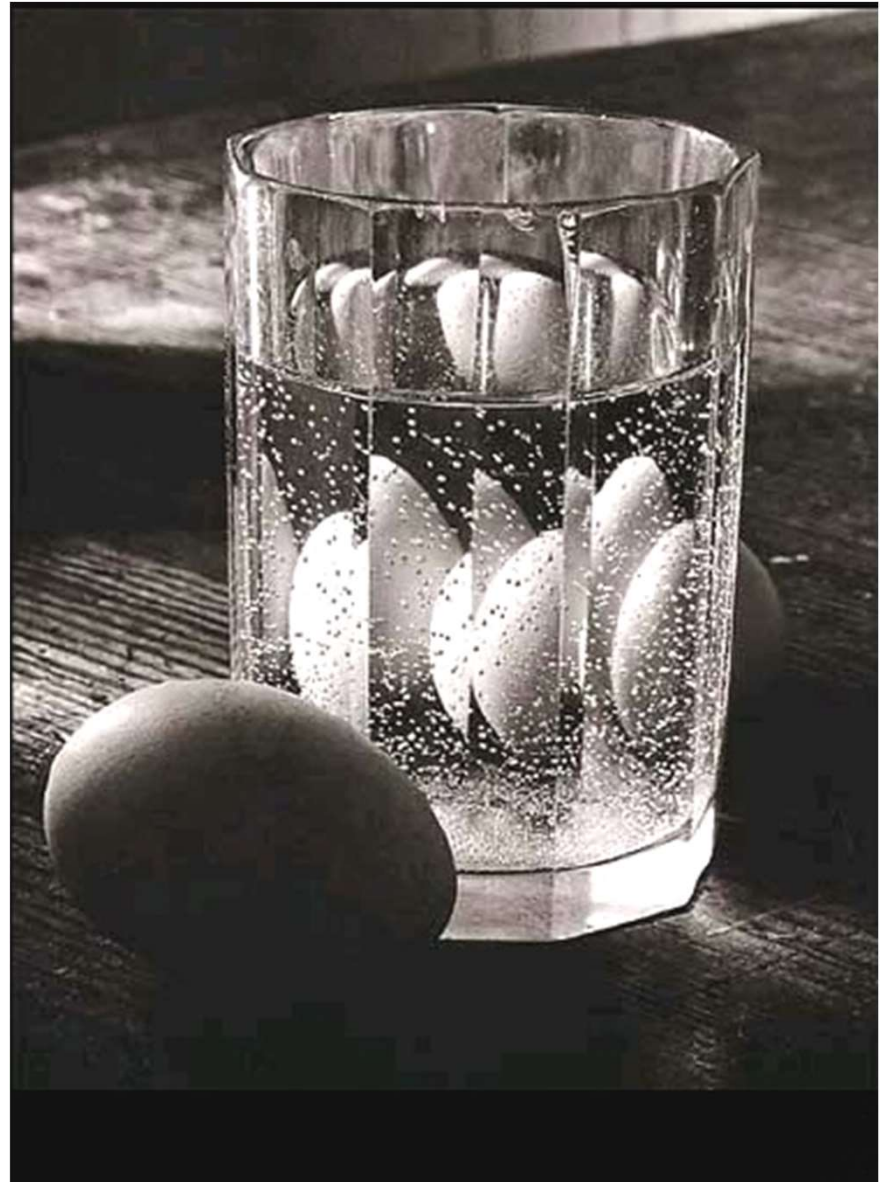


## ***Images de Deauville, c. 1936***

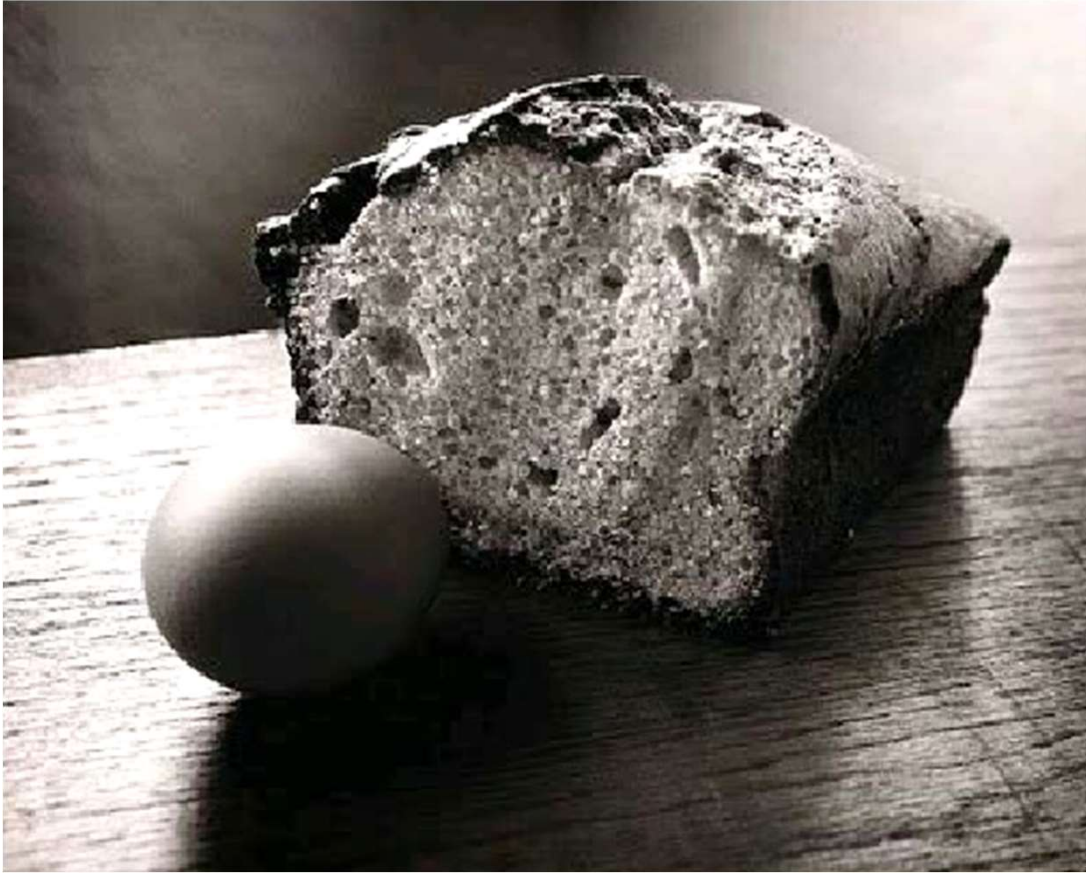
*Early use of colour*

# Josef Sudek (1896 – 1976) Czech,

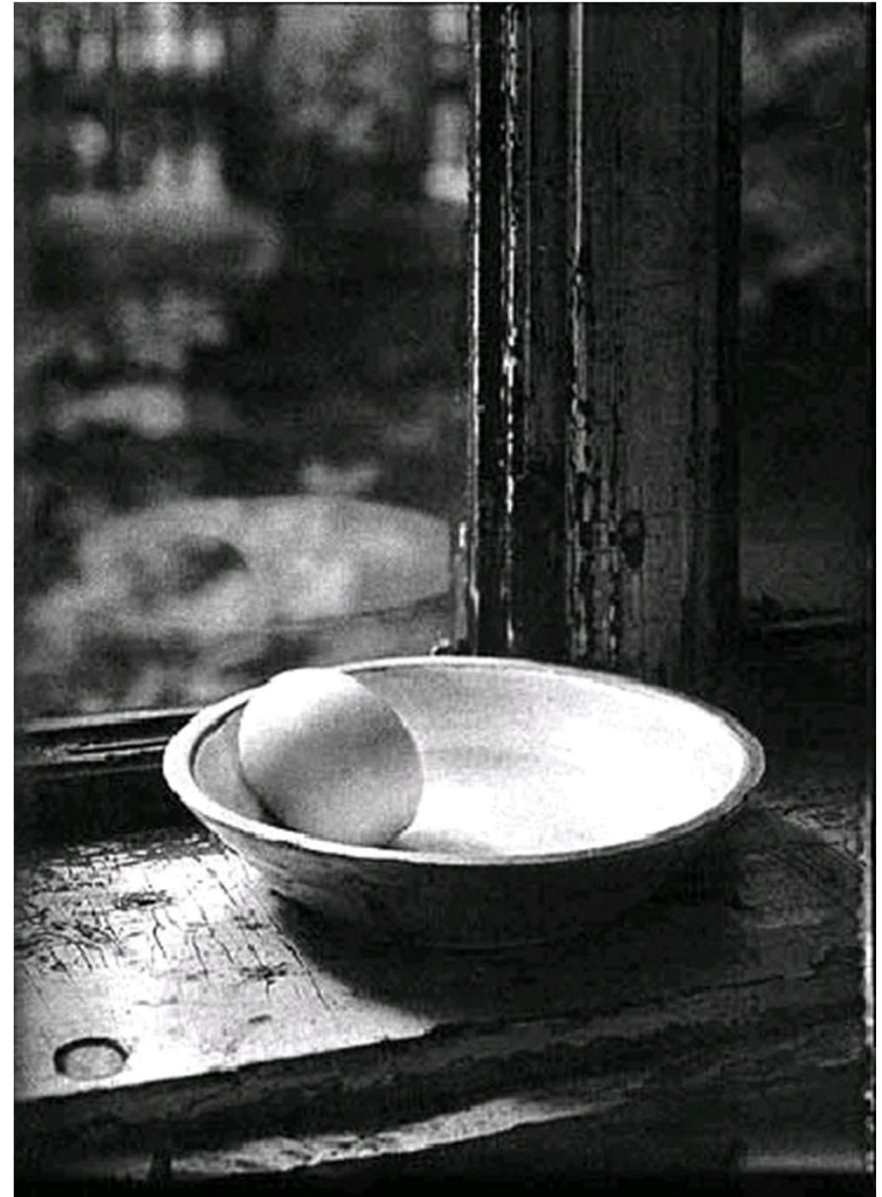
His 'Still Lifes' are the best known aspects of his work, indeed his graceful depiction of drinking glasses and eggs are familiar to those who don't necessarily even know his name



# Josef Sudek



*Bowl and an Egg in Window*



# Robert Mapplethorpe 1946-1989



"White Vase"



"Calla"

# Irving Penn 1917-2009

**Cigarettes** - literally found his subjects on the street. By bringing them into his studio and creating these minimalist compositions, he transformed one of the most widely consumed and discarded products of consumer society from that of pure detritus into a symbolic representation of contemporary culture.



# Irving Penn



Games



- Salad

# Sharon Core 1965-

← → ↻ 🏠 Secure | <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/sharon-core-early-american-still-life-with-steak-and-asparagus> ☆



🔍 Search by artist, gallery, style, tag, etc.

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## Sharon Core

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*Early American, Still Life with Steak and Asparagus, 2008*

Chromogenic Print

17 1/4 × 23 1/4 in

43.8 × 59.1 cm

Edition of 7 + 2AP

This is part of a limited edition set.

PRICE

**\$10,000 - 15,000**

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1627 - Sharon Core

[More on Sharon Core](#)



**Confections** – from her  
*Thiebauds series (2003–05)*



# Ori Gersht (1967-)



*The art of simple observation*

\*His *Blow Up: Untitled 5*, for instance, casts a keen eye on the colours and textures of flowers by freezing them with liquid nitrogen - so that even as he explodes the arrangement and photographs its destruction, shards of red, blue and white petals reveal their natural beauty (left). Simple observation leads to a rich and dark art of fragility and violence.

\*[The Guardian](#)

Jonathan Jones - Fri 16 Nov 2012

***Blow Up No. 5 -2007***

# More Ori Gersht



*Exploding the Genre of Still Life - Pomegranate*

[More Ori Gersht](#)

# Martin Parr (British, born 1952)



Atlanta, USA, 2010

# Pride Slices by me



*Stanley Market - Vancouver 2017 -Jitka Bryn*

# Still Life for Modern Advertising



<https://edwardfury.com/> Images Copyright © of Edward Fury, 2017



<https://jknowles.com/advertising/>

# Some of mine Images

- Black and White
- Outdoor Opportunities
- Traditional
- Food and Drink
- Eggs, Eggs Eggs .....
- Art Objects
- Techniques

# If Kertesz can –why shouldn't I?



**Legs** - *Andre Kertesz 1925*



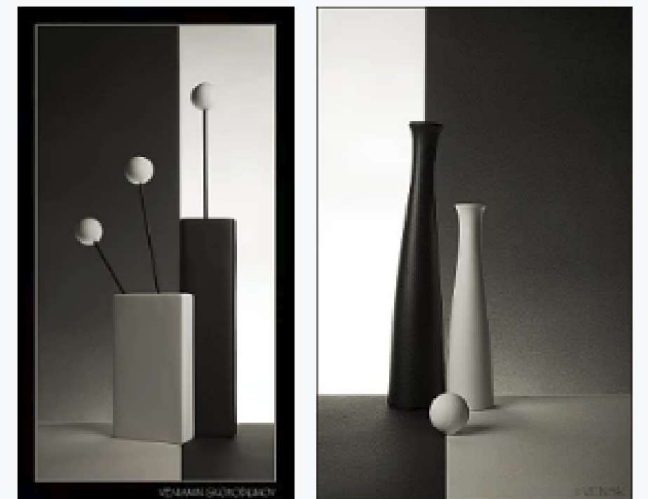
*Jitka Bryn 2018*



# Images which inspired me



- [Black and white geometry](https://www.500px.com/venisk) by Veniamin Skorodumov
- <https://500px.com/venisk>



## My Images after Skorodumov



<https://www.pinterest.nz/ginamurray1428/veniamin-skorodumov/>



# Outdoor - *Transience of Life*



***The Last Guard – Laxley – IOM 2021***



***Dandelion in Bluebells -  
ICM Double exposure***

# Outdoors



***Old Castle Window with red Vine***  
– *Jitka Bryn*

# Traditional



*Jitka Bryn - 2017*



Jitka Bryn -2017

# Food and Drink



*Winning: **Tequila Slammer**  
Andrew Colgan*



*Or: **My Birthday Cake at Basel Airport** - Jitka Bryn*



*Red Onion Witch – Jitka Bryn*



**Little Hot Peppers – Jitka Bryn**





# Eggs, Eggs Eggs...



*It's a Balance – Andry Fox*

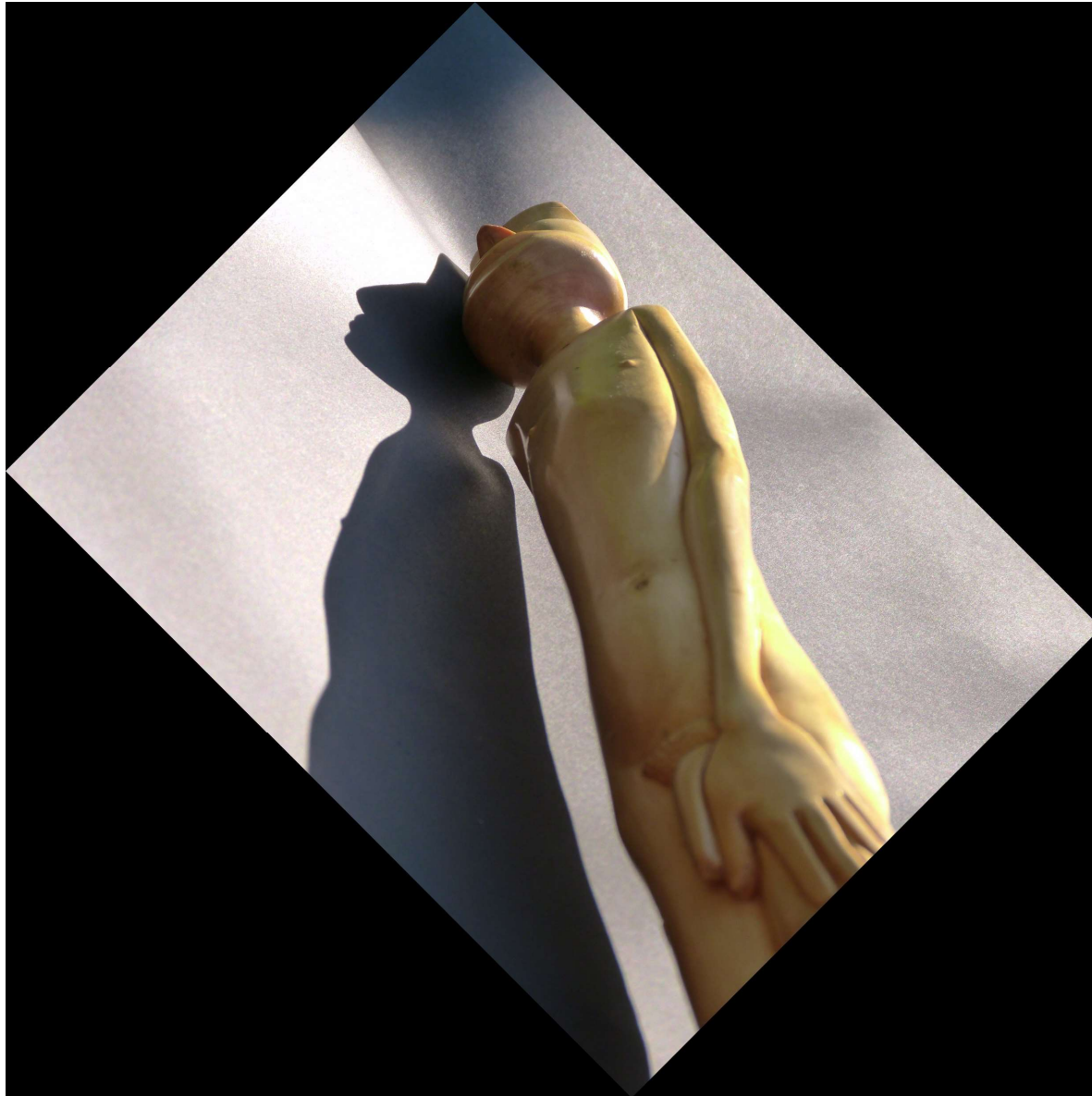


***Coming Out? - Jitka Bryn***

# Art Objects



*Is it a Sign?* – Jitka Bryn, wooden figures and hand by [Jan Zalud](#)



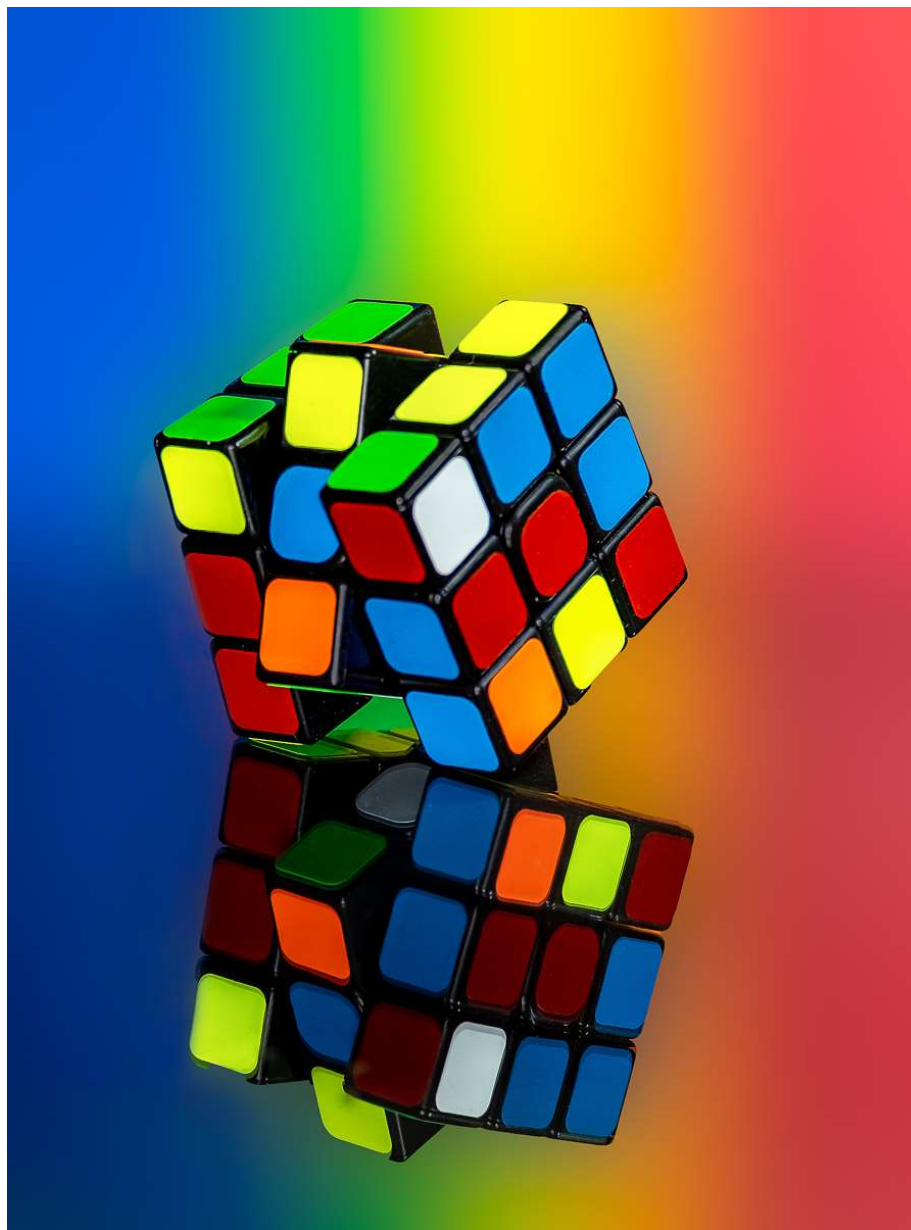
***Naked Man** - by Jitka Bryn 2014*



***Execution by an Iris –  
Jitka B***

*Wooden figure Jan Zalud*

# Reflections



*Magic Cube – Jitka Bryn*

# Magic Cube - Set up

**Props** – Rubic's  
Cube

*Coloured cards.*

*Box, black cards for  
surface,  
Glass for reflection*

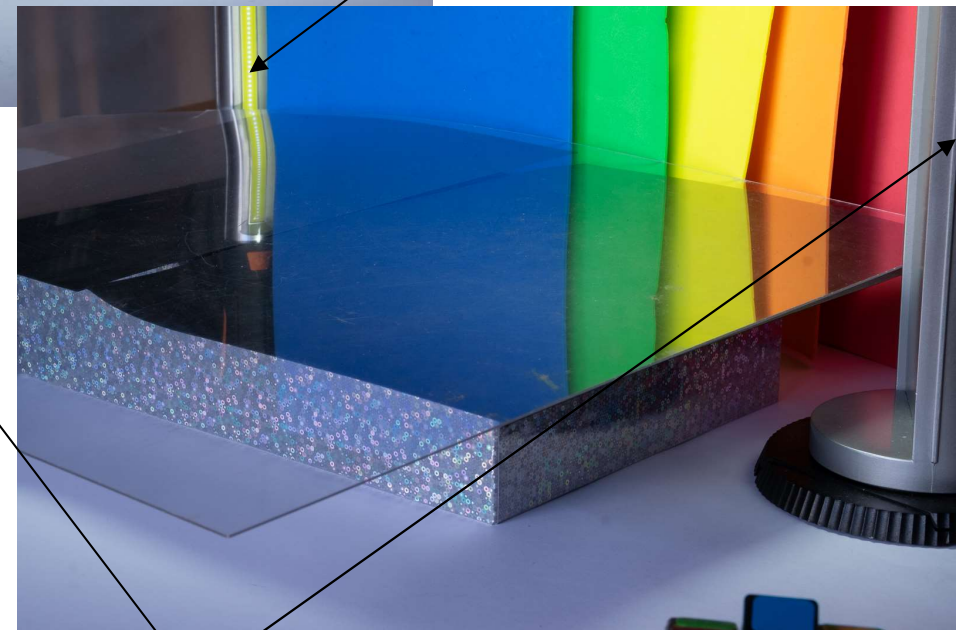
**Lighting** – *natural  
light from the front*

*Daylight lamp  
directly onto the  
cube*

*Bright light to lit the  
background cards*

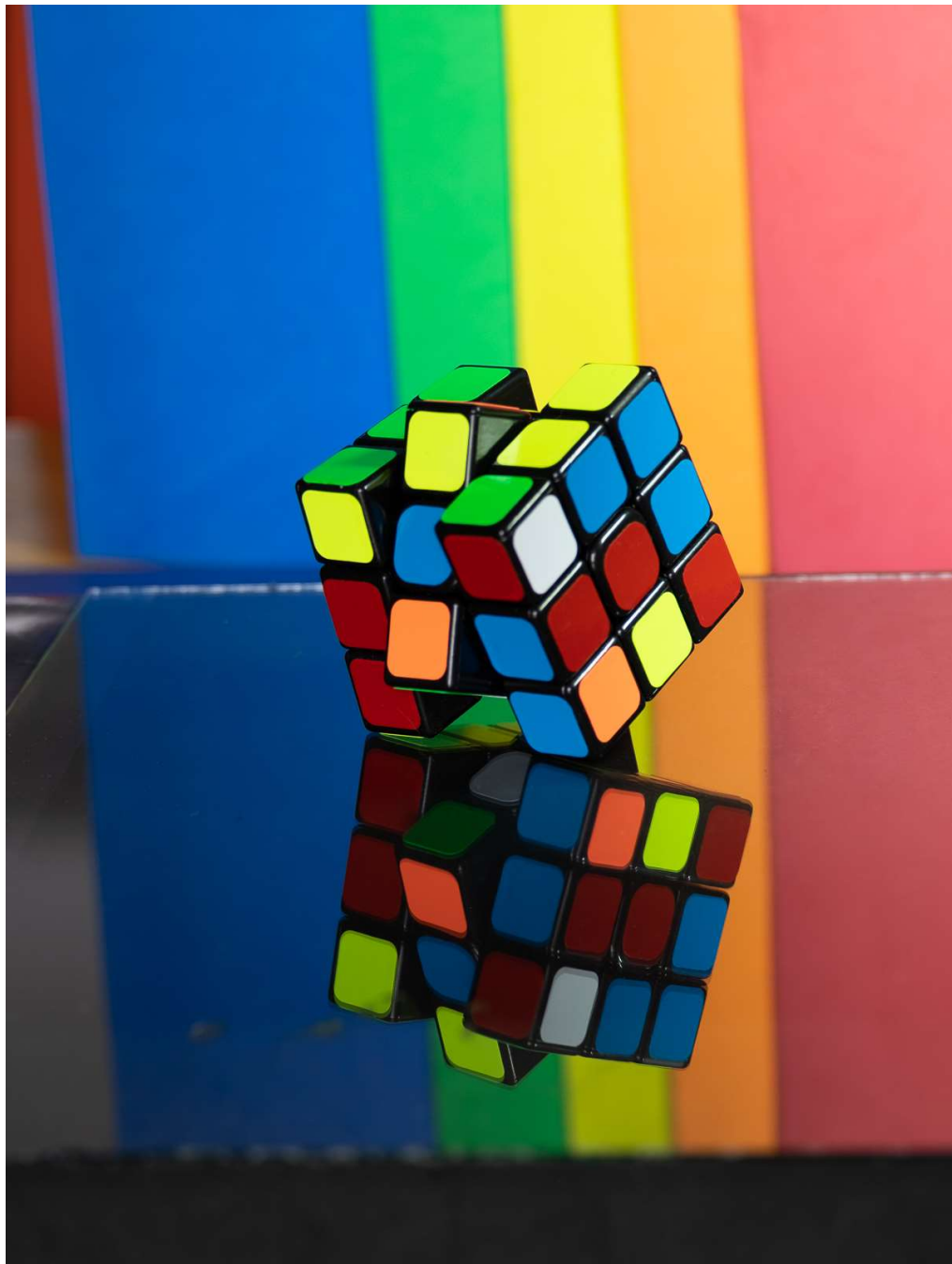


LED light



Daylight lamp from  
Permajet





# Refractions

If *Josef Sudek* can, so can I.

But the Judge did not like it, apparently not enough refraction. Like it is my fault that water's refractive index is what it is!!



# Polarised light



# Dark Field







*Lead Vases - Jitka Bryn 2019*



*Batzeba symbol of beauty and love- Jitka B. 2019*



[here](#)

# Post processing -Invert



# Post processing -Invert





# Links

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Still\\_life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Still_life)
- <https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/what-was-on/art-arrangement-photography-and-still-life-tradition>
- [Contemporary still life photographers](https://expertphotography.com/still-life-photographers/)  
<https://expertphotography.com/still-life-photographers/>
- [How to photograph glass](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIQwt7_ZXKg) -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIQwt7\\_ZXKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIQwt7_ZXKg)