

Tips on Mobile Phone Photography for Still Life Subjects

By Dan Currier

How to make above average images of your artwork with your mobile phone.

Items needed to make above average picture of your still life subject:

1. Mobile Phone, brand and make is not important as long as it has a photo app installed with editing software.
2. Subject to be photographed.
3. Light Source and diffusion material
4. Fill Light aka white foam core board or fold up reflector.
5. Background, (Flotone Graduated Vinyl Background Thunder Gray, 31 x 43", https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/17747-REG/Flotone_GFT409_Graduated_Background_31x43.html) or could be clean sheet of paper, gradient or a clean environment.

You are making a still-life image.

Remember, when you take a photo, you are recording a 3D object on a 2D surface and are trying to still make it look 3D.

There are three things in every nice image:

1. An interesting subject, your artwork.
2. Good quality lighting, lighting that highlights the character of your work
3. A clean background, free of distractions so the viewer can just focus on the artwork.

Mobile Phone Camera

The make and brand is not important to making a picture. What is important is the camera have a zoom function and does it have post processing software to enhance the digital image.

There are post processing apps that work better for enhanced results with your pictures.

Here are a few that are highly rated.

1. Snapseed, I love this app.
2. Photoshop for iPhone and iPad
3. Lightroom Photoshop

4. There are many more to choose from for your mobile phone

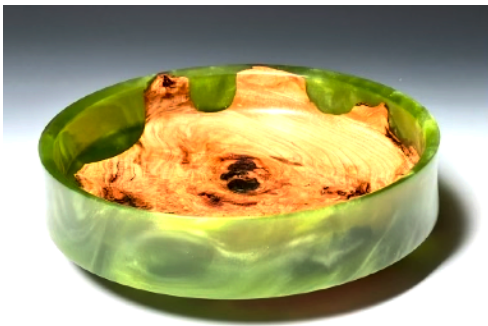
Subject

You have put some time and effort into your creative craft and you want to show it to people. In most cases, the first impression by anyone introduced to your craft will be a photograph.

It is important to show off the unique features of your still life so the viewer can experience the object in its full glory.

What to shoot?

1. Try to show off the unique characteristics of the finished piece. Maybe it's the shape or intricate details.
2. Decide what type of light works best for your object. Is it diffused light with a soft shadow or Direct light with a hard shadow that work best.
3. Clean up the background so you force the viewer to only see the still life you are shooting.
4. Less is More or KIS, Keep It Simple



Light Sources

Direct or harsh light source are defined by a hard edge shadow. Examples of Harsh light include: direct sunny day, a lamp without its lamp shade. A bare flash like what is used on your mobile phone camera, or any other non-diffused light source.

Diffused light source is defined by a soft edge shadow. Examples of Diffused or sometimes know as Soft light include: An overcast day, a lamp with a lamp shade, most indoor lighting is diffused like what we see in this room.



Be careful of Room Light spilling into the photos and changing the color of the image. Always turn off the exterior room lights not used in recording the images. Two different light sources could change the color of the subject matter.

Shadows

No one light source is good for everything. The use of shadows in a photo can have a purpose. Shadows can be your friend because a shadow can show depth in an image. The amount of shadow or how dark it will appear in the final image can be controlled by a fill light.

Fill Light

A fill light is used to illuminate the opposite side of the main light source. It can fill in the dark area of an image to help show more detail of the subject. In addition, it can also add to the 3d appearance of the image.



If you record an image with lighting that has no shadows, then the image can appear flat without a 3d appearance. Having a shadow in your image gives depth to the image and makes it look three dimensional.

Background

Backgrounds should be a clean background is that it does not distract or compete for attention with the main subject of the image.



Never, place your subject directly against the background. If you do, you will always have a shadow behind the subject. Place the subject near the front of the set. A clean background in a photo of your object can be the difference between your viewer(s) taking in the beauty of your hard work or asking themselves “what am I looking at here.”

Remember, everything in the final photo is something you control. You are 100% responsible for the appearance of the final image.