

Author: Robert Burton

## Exercise 1

### Assignment 1.

#### Workflow on Themed Assignment

##### *Planning the assignment*

For this first assignment under the Digital Photographic Practice Level 1 course, I have chosen to create still life images. Using the lessons learnt from Exercise 1 and 2 I have chosen to do some still life images.

This will not be an open ended shoot due to the control I intend to exercise over the amount of time I have and the subject matter. My intention is to combine two areas of other learning as well. Firstly from my new understanding of controlling reflection and light from the book *Light, Science and Magic* written by Fil Hunter, Steven Biver and Paul Fuqua. Also I want to explore more in the way of contrasts and colour which I learnt from the work I did under the first course *The Art of Photography*. Here, I was looking at the work of Johannes Itten and the use of simultaneous and complementary contrasts to produce the image of *Soft* in my first assignment. ([http://cliffordmilburn.co.uk/htdocs/assignment\\_1\\_accompanying\\_notes.pdf](http://cliffordmilburn.co.uk/htdocs/assignment_1_accompanying_notes.pdf))

The Camera kit will be a Nikon D200 with a general purpose zoom between focal lengths 28 and 200mm. I may also switch this to a 90mm macro lens made by Tamron that I sometimes use. Otherwise I also use two macro BW filters that give me close up capability, these I use on the general purpose zoom lens.

I will aim to gather different shots as I try to improve composition in a controlled environment, whilst shooting. I will also be varying the angles of the lighting and using more than one strobe either diffused and or non-diffused to increase the range of images captured for processing at the latter stages.

The subjects will be flowers of the current season – Spring. I am expecting to be able to use Daffodil, Snow Drop subjects and possibly Tulip, if I can find any. It has been a long winter.

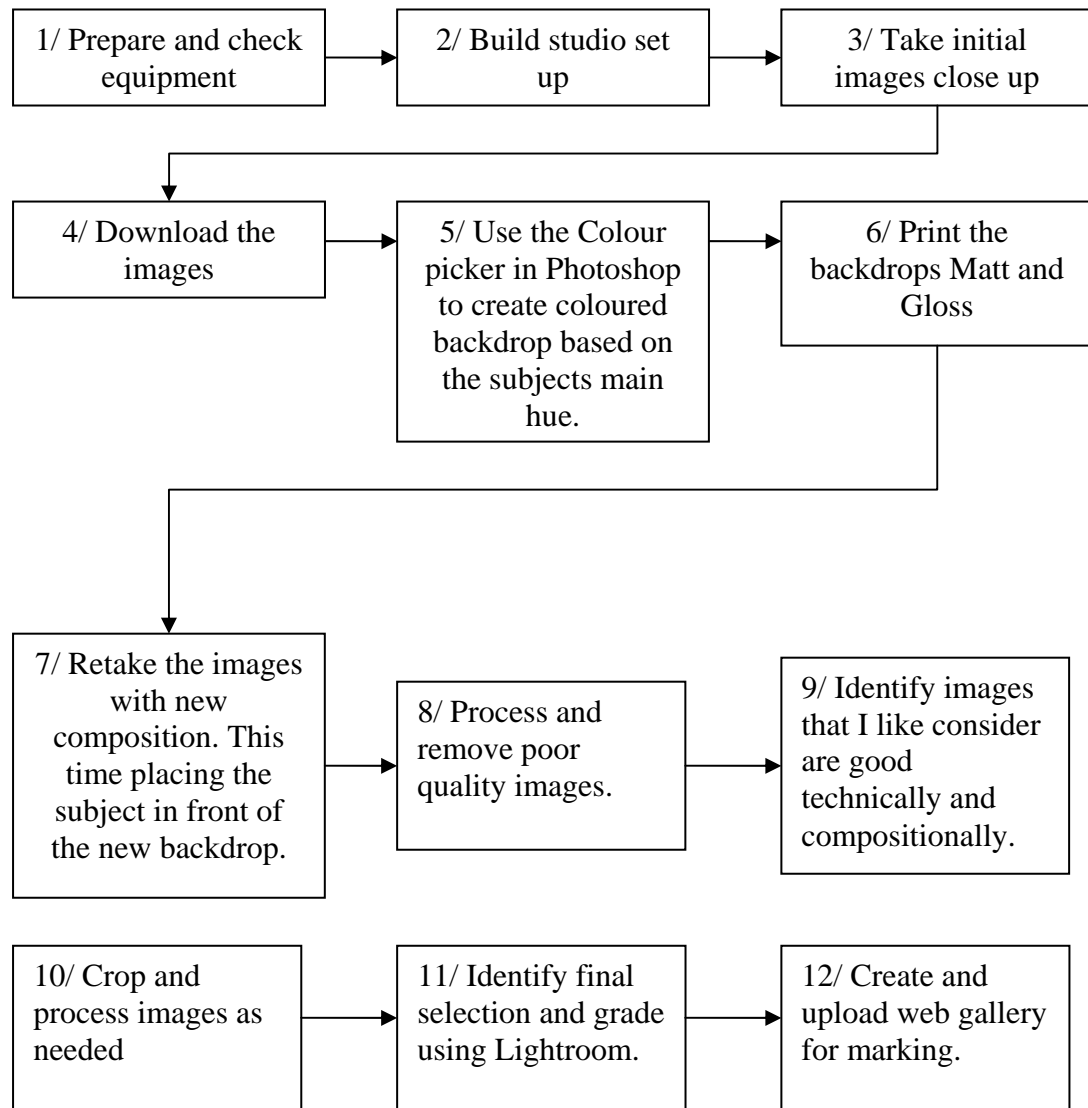
According to the book *Light Science and Magic* I now understand that every surface reflects both direct and diffuse light. To that end I will be closely studying the subjects and as I have a reasonable size room as a studio, I am hoping that I can work the strobes inside and outside of the family of angles to produce good well accomplished images.

The backgrounds I will make myself and I intend to use A3 photographic inkjet paper matt and gloss, due to their reflective qualities and colour retaining ability particularly in the latter case with Matt paper.

The initial pictures I take will be close up to establish the colour of the subject. From there in with Photoshop I will then use the colour picker to sample the subject and using its main colour I will then create the backdrop directly from this hue.

Author: Robert Burton

The work flow is as follows:



## ***Results***

As above with the workflow I worked through the stages depicted and there were alterations that were made due to one unforeseen event.

Step1 was straight forward enough and I had everything set to go with camera batteries charged and step 2 was ready with the equipment for the lighting in place. I had the A4 photographic paper ready in the printer ready and all I needed was my first flower.

This was all ok including step 3 where the Yellow Crocus was put in place and photographed as follows:

Author: Robert Burton

Photograph for colour sample taken



This photograph taken with the white backdrop had two strobes, one either side. Whilst there is direct reflection off the yellow surface amongst the diffused reflection, I still had enough brilliance and saturation in the yellows and green and brown to take a sample of colour with the Photoshop colour picker.

With these samples each colour was used with a wide brush tool on an A4 blank page. With the use of the Ripple Filter I was then able to create the following background:



So, we are now up to step 6 and these colours are all taken from the original Crocus in its own right. It is quite shocking in appearance and bold, however, the following pictures were all taken with varying aperture to blur the background and with the subject moved forwards or backwards in relation to the backdrop. Doing this would either accentuate or reduce its boldness and make use of the simultaneous complimentary colour.

Author: Robert Burton

Not only was the distance varied but I also experimented with different lighting. Using the small lights that I have (Nikon Flash Units) I was getting a lot of direct reflection which I wanted to experiment with.

When the lights were within the family of angles (depending on the focal length of the lens I was using) the direct reflection became more obvious. As the flash guns were moved outside the angles the direct reflection became less obvious and the surfaces were rendered with more diffuse reflection. Just as described in the book from the reading list 'Light Science and Magic'.

The diffused lighting even more improved when I used a white translucent material over each of the flash units. Whilst this reduced exposure slightly it did not concern me as I was using a tripod and cable release.

The Gallery in the website on the DPP Level 1 page, produces all the images, however, I have included three of the diverse samples taken here, the third one explains the workflow problem I discovered. These images are not the same Crocus as in the image above on page 3.



1/ Shows more direct reflection with no white translucent material over the flashgun to the right.



2/ Shows with the use of white cloth over the flashguns more diffuse reflection.

I liked both images but the second one was more over my favourite as I preferred the more saturated colours. My experiment had worked up to this point with the simultaneous colour and diffuse soft effect. My only self criticism is the right hand green leaf that touches the yellow petal, maybe this should have been moved upwards.

09/03/2011

D:\Degree Course\Project1\Assignment1\_Images\Assignment

Author: Robert Burton

As you can see by the next image this is where the workflow broke down! Note how the petals have changed shape, a lot!



3/ This image shows that the petals of a Crocus open rapidly when they are brought indoors from the cold to the warm! In fact the original flower above was wilting so rapidly with each frame taken I had to break the workflow, get another flower and carry on getting all the pictures I wanted. So even with a planned workflow I have had to manipulate this structured approach slightly for the unexpected.

Once under way though with the images taken steps 8 through 12 were straight forward enough; removing the images that were not technically right, identifying those that were good and then edit, crop and produce final selection. The Gallery was the last stage which includes the same process but this time with a purple Crocus that included a workflow that did plan for a flower that wilts rapidly under temperature change!

I have learnt a lot through this first set of exercises and assignment. It has given me a far more methodical approach to workflow in structured and unstructured situations where action can be more fluid and in turn more results can be captured.

If I were a commercial photographer this also makes me think about how I would quote for two quite different jobs, the amount of time I would need on the different scenarios and the storage capacity for images. Not only this but in conjunction with reading 'Light Science and Magic' and more about Photographic styles in another recommended read, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (new edition).

I am hoping that my combined efforts with the initial course (*The Art of Photography*) show a continued improvement in understanding in conjunction with an enhanced knowledge reading and learning more about other photographers, their ideas and approaches and a continued development of my own style.