

Glassware Update 2008

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In the photography of glassware, the objects must be lighted indirectly by bouncing the light off large colored boards. The objects are placed on a glass shelf in front of or behind an upright piece of pattern glass. The glassware must be scrupulously cleaned using a quality glass cleaner. Handle the glassware with fabric gloves. Do not handle the glassware with the hands. Monochrome and color are equally effective. Do not try to convert a simple color image in Photoshop to monochrome as contrast will suffer. A noteworthy monochrome work needs management entirely in black and white. Monochrome prints on glossy paper are beautiful, but so are color works.

Although large format cameras are best for glassware, 35 mm is effective if quality optics are used. Lenses of focal length 90 to 110mm of the macro type are best. Use an ISO of 50 or 100, if possible, otherwise 200. Focus is critical. Focus on far and near objects recording the distances then set the focus to manual at a distance 1/3 from the near to far distance. Use depth of field tables for the critical value for the f-stop. Usually the f-stop will be f 22 or so. If in doubt bracket the f stop. For optimal digital capture some bracketing of exposure is recommended. In UV photography of glassware this becomes of extreme import. A sturdy tripod and head are necessary for the long exposures. Film or digital may be used. Film capture may require the use of special color-temperature films or appropriate filtration. A cable release or remote switch are best.

Clear glassware is the best for a start. Opaque objects, translucent objects, flowers and retro pattern glass set-ups are effective for the advanced worker but tricky. Flowers need masked spot lighting. It is vital that the set up be done correctly rather than re-worked in Photoshop. A properly done work need only be spotted and parallax corrected in Photoshop.

Examples in the program demonstrate techniques for the optimization of glassware image capture. In all still life work the photographer has abundant time to obtain that perfect image, but what is that perfect image? Is there is visual statement? What is that statement? Do all the elements aid in adding to the message? Examples in monochrome, color and UV are presented as are examples of opaque, retro, translucent and floral elements.

Good luck.