

# Still Image Course

## A course for any person who loves photography

Written by

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### **Why Still Image?**

Nowadays training to become a photographer might look fairly easy.

Step 1: Buy a DSLR,

Step 2: Watch YouTube tutorials,

Step 3: Open a Facebook page and ask a couple of friends to comment that you are the best photographer in town,

Step 4: Start your own business and start calling yourself a professional photographer...

Well, our recommendation is Step 5... signing up for the Still Image Course!

This course is not just any other course being offered by your village photographer. This course is organised by the Malta Institute of Professional Photography and it is an accredited Level 3 course, recognised by the Malta Qualification Council, so you will obtain another important certificate to show in your CV.

At times, photographers tend to think that becoming professional is something which you can achieve overnight. As photographers we all feel the urge to learn more and we all crave to create better photos. However, few realise that this means hard work, commitment and effort. Taking up the Still Image Course means embarking on a journey which will lead you to improve your photographic skills and to delve deeper into this fascinating art form.

### **The Still Image Course challenges the photographer in you.**

When we started the course we both felt that we were kind of stuck in photography and hungry and eager to learn more. The main lecturer taking care of this course is the President of the MIPP, Mr. Kevin Casha. We knew that being tutored by Kevin we would gain the following: i) useful information ii)

constructive criticism on our photos, and iii) empowerment to continue our journey in photography.

### **The Still Image Course as a personal Journey in Photography**

As a student in the art of photography you will immediately realise that to become a good photographer you have to go through a learning progression. This does not mean learning only techniques, but also through practice, research, and personal development.

In fact, part of the course assessment was based on the reflective journal which we were told to compile throughout the duration of the course. The very act of keeping a journal helped us to brainstorm and be more creative, whilst serving as a means of keeping track record of our progress, mistakes and successes. By listing down our achievements, we boosted our self-esteem in photography. The journal also served as a point of reference during moments of lack of motivation.

It might seem hard to believe that during the weeks we followed this course, not only did we enhance our knowledge in photography, but it was also an opportunity to develop as individuals. This was achieved mainly through:

- a) Self-discipline: by meeting stipulated submission deadlines,
- b) Will Power: confronting ourselves and not giving up on our goals,
- c) Embracing new challenges: feeling empowered to take photos of subjects/objects out of our comfort zone,
- d) Enhancing our creativity: coming up with innovative ideas and by being guided to use the creative side of our brains.
- e) Being humble: recognising that to improve our photography we have to listen and accept the feedback and criticism given to us on our photos.

### **Lectures and Workshops**

One must point out that although the course is not extremely difficult, you will not earn your mark easily. You need to show commitment and self-determination. This will eventually lead you to see noticeable improvement in your work.

The course is based on both lectures and hands-on workshops. The workshops and tasks set out during the course motivated us to work harder and become better observers. We learnt new techniques, developed better understanding of what makes a good photo and we also became more meticulous when editing. Along the way, Kevin always provided us with mentoring and constructive feedback on the photos we produced during the workshops. The feedback that we gained during this course was also an opportunity for us to learn and obtain the wide range of skills needed in today's competitive world.

## **Networking**

The course also provided us with a platform to network with fellow photographers. This was a perfect setting to meet others and learn from each other. We also could seek the advice of others and get valuable feedback. By sharing our photos we learnt from each other's strengths and weaknesses. This made us appreciate the benefit of building relationships, since a good photographer is one who is always in contact with others and does not remain enclosed in his own world. This was particularly evident during one particular workshop, where we worked together to plan a photo shoot. The synergy of ideas provided us with some great results.

## **The assessment**

The course assessment was based on tasks set out for us during hands-on workshops in various locations, our reflective journal and a final panel of 20 images on a theme of our choice. Although these tasks seemed rather daunting, however we soon discovered that they served as a valuable teaching process. The workshops helped us boost our creativity and challenged us to undertake tasks often outside our comfort zone. On the other hand, the preparation of the final panel helped us to narrow down our focus and to discover our photographic niche. By working intensely on the chosen genre, we easily became engrossed with it and this also helped us to understand our weaknesses and strengths in the chosen field.

The intention of preparing a panel of 20 images was that of giving us a taste of what is required when sitting for the MIPP Qualifications. We are now aware of the work needed, what level is expected and what the judges are looking for. We can therefore say that the Still Image Course has paved our way and has also served as a starting point for an MIPP Qualification.

## Concluding

Taking this course was thus a wise decision since it gave us the courage to take the next step from being just hobbyists to becoming photographers with a truly professional outlook. This course has led us to confront and challenge ourselves and to always aim to improve our abilities. As journalist Joshua J. Marine says, *“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful”*.