



# Ikebana Photography Tips

Note:

While this presentation uses photographs of Ikenobo designs, the suggestions and tips for creating great photos apply to all schools of Ikebana.

# Why Good Photos?

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- Good photos have a greater impact in:
  - Virtual exhibits
  - Chapter websites
  - All Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest)
  - Publicity and other promotional materials
  - Chapter emails and newsletters

# Why Good Photos?

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- A good photo of an arrangement will be more eye-catching and demonstrates your attention to detail
  - Sets a standard for your chapter & groups
  - Is more likely to generate ‘likes’ and ‘follows’ on social media
  - Looks more professional to both the casual viewer and the “expert”

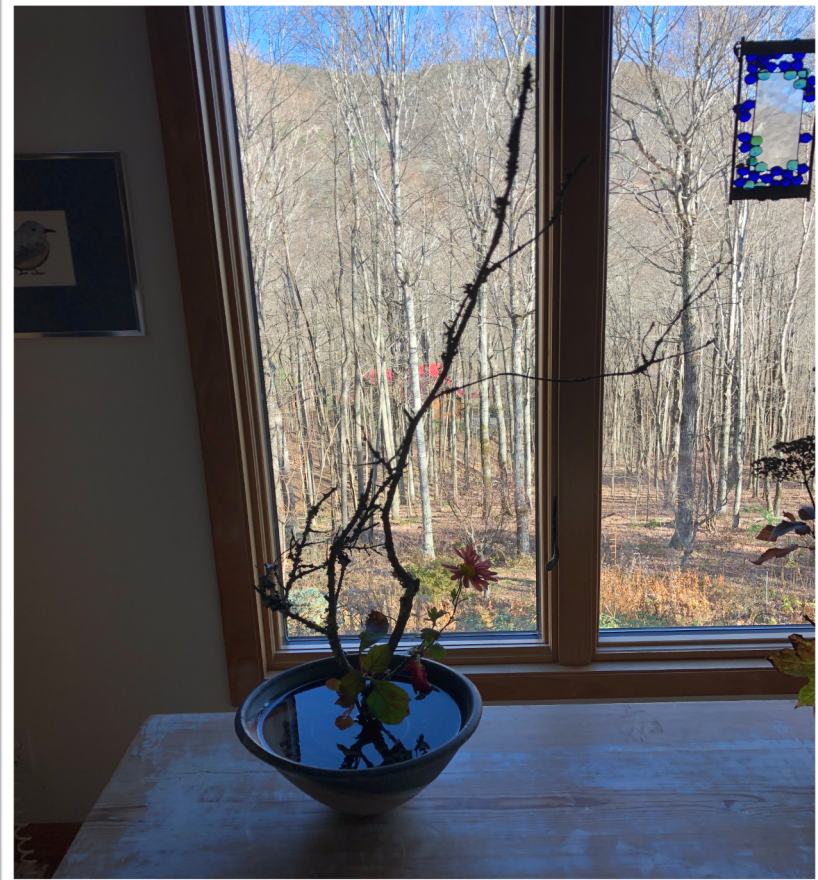
# Why Good Photos?

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- Using good photos in your emails and other communications enhances member engagement
  - Members will be inspired to continue their learning
  - They will choose to create more often
  - Meeting and workshop participation will increase
  - Gain satisfaction and self-confidence

## Example of a poor picture

- Cluttered background
- Crooked picture
- Bad lighting
- Poor surface under the arrangement
- Poor photo angle



# Really poor!

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- Photographed from above
- Arrangement cut in half
- Glare in background
- “Busy” surface under the arrangement
- Kenzan is showing





## Better...but still needs improvement

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- Good to see back of vase edge-shows depth
- Too many shadows
- Container is straight; edge of mat is crooked
- Mat is too busy
- Blue background doesn't work for most pictures



# Setting Up Your Photography “Studio”

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- Mat and Background
- Using a Tripod
- Lighting
- The “Rule of Thirds”
- Other Tips



Photo by Emiko Suzuki

## Setting up your photo area

- Use one display board (photo board) for the mat. Make sure this board is clean and smooth.
- Use another display board for the background. You may need two different size boards- one for larger/taller arrangements and one for smaller/shorter ones.
- *Note: Display boards are available at office supply stores in white and black; available on line in different colors and sizes*



Photo by Emiko Suzuki

## Giving yourself enough room

- You will need enough space between your table set up and a stool or chair where you will sit to take your picture.
- Be sure you can get low enough in the seat to have the proper angle to take your final photograph.
- Alternatively, build your set up on a taller table or cabinet, if available.

# Dealing with Photo Board Issues

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- They can create unwanted shadows
- Lines are difficult to erase with photo editing tools

## **Solution**

- Open up the photo board as much as possible



Arrangement and Photo by Beverly Barbour



Photo by Emiko Suzuki

## Eliminating Shadows

- You can see the two different shades of white in this photo (shadows).
- Keeping the back board flat eliminates unattractive shadows.



Photo by Patti Quinn Hill

## Setting up the ideal workspace

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- The back board is set wide open, so you don't have different tones of white on the sides.
- This set up uses professional lights that produce good photographs.
- You don't have to try to center the arrangement and you won't have to crop out the folds of the side panels.

# Setting up the photo back board

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- Use a box or bucket behind the back board.
- Support with something heavy to keep the box or bucket from moving.
- Open back board fully to eliminate folds.



Photo by Patti Quinn Hill

# Using a Tripod

- Tripods are inexpensive, portable and can be folded up for easy storage.
  - Many options available on line
- Using a tripod
  - Eliminates camera shake
  - Makes it easier to center the photo
- Remember – move yourself closer to the arrangement rather than using the closeup (zoom) feature on the phone.
  - Get better photo resolution and pixels





# Improve your Lighting

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- Most of us do not have ideal lighting for our ikebana photography.
- This is especially a problem when taking photographs at night.
- This photograph illustrates space with very poor light.



Arrangement and Photo by Dan Dell' Agnese

# Improve your Lighting

- A good option is the Bower 12" Ring Light Studio Kit.
- This kit includes a tripod.
- Many other options from other companies can be found online.
- Generally photos without flash are better



Photo by Dan Dell' Agnese

## “After”

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- Using the Bower 12” ring light
- There are other brands of lights on the market
- Find one that suits you



Arrangement and Photo by Dan Dell' Agnese

# Backgrounds & Shadows

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- A clear, smooth background is important.
- Go for as few shadows as possible.
- Eliminate crop lines (the small black line at the bottom left could be erased in your photo editing application).



Arrangement and Photo by Beverly Barbour

# Photographing Large Arrangements

- Large arrangements present special challenges.
- They are usually taller and wider than most of our photography background areas.
- A sheet can be used as a backdrop but as you see it is very difficult to remove all wrinkles.
- This is a “before” photo example.



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki

## “After Slide”

- After using photo app on iMac, the wrinkles from the backdrop have been removed.
- If back rim of vase were seen, it would add depth, thus improving the photo.
- Mizugiwa shows, which is good (in Ikenobo).



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki

# Photographing Tall Arrangements

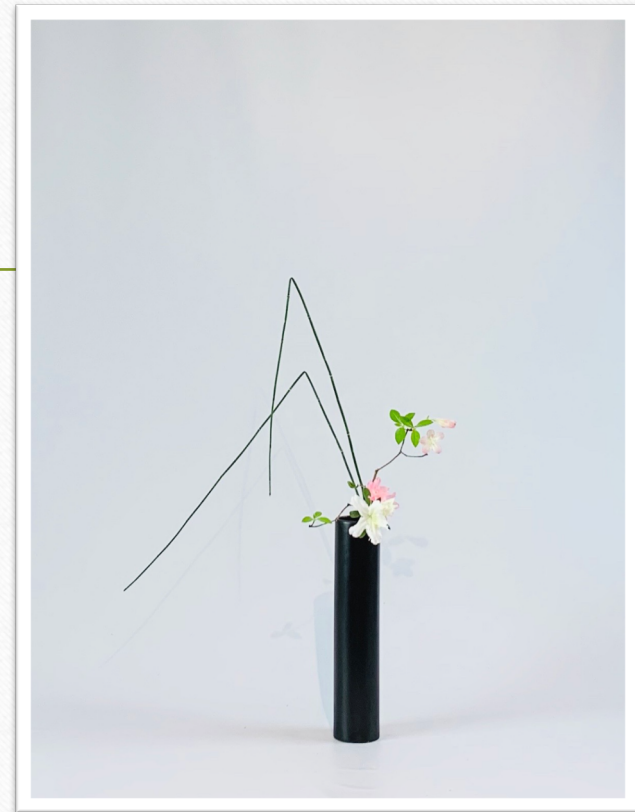
- Usually not as wide, so a little easier to photograph.
- Clear, clean background and area underneath the arrangement does not detract from the beautiful arrangement.
- Showing back rim of container would improve the photo.



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki

# Photographing Free Style

- This photograph might appear better with a deeper blue background. It is hard to see the delicate pink flower and the white flower.
- Think about your materials- sometimes a gray or darker background will work better.



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki



## Learn your computer\* software capabilities to create your best photos

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- Experiment with the photo program on your phone or computer.
- There are many free photo editing apps with tutorials for computers and devices.

\*or smart phone or tablet



Arrangement and Photo by Beverly Barbour

### **Before**

- Photo is not cropped
- Too dark
- Can see lines of photo board

## Learn your computer\* software capabilities to create your best photos

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- Practice making changes to achieve your best results.
- Always save your original photograph so you can “go back” if necessary.
- Enjoy! Have fun!

\*or smart phone or tablet



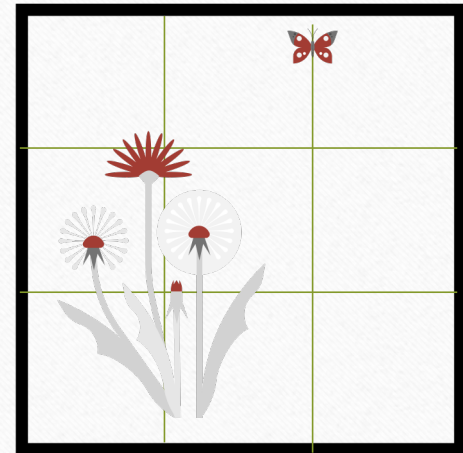
Arrangement and Photo by Beverly Barbour

### After

- Photo is cropped
- Light level raised
- Photo board lines erased

# Using the “Rule of Thirds” in Photography

- To take even better photographs, learn how to use the “rule of thirds.”
- The rule of thirds involves mentally dividing up your image into thirds by using 2 horizontal lines and 2 vertical lines.
- Position the important elements in your scene along the lines, or at the points where they meet. *See illustration at right.*
- Notice in the next slide, the “after” photograph of a large arrangement is in the center of the photo. If the arrangement is moved a little to the left this OK photo would become a GREAT photo.



# Using the “Rule of Thirds”

- By moving the arrangement a little to the left, the photograph better meets the “rule of thirds”



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki

# Positioning

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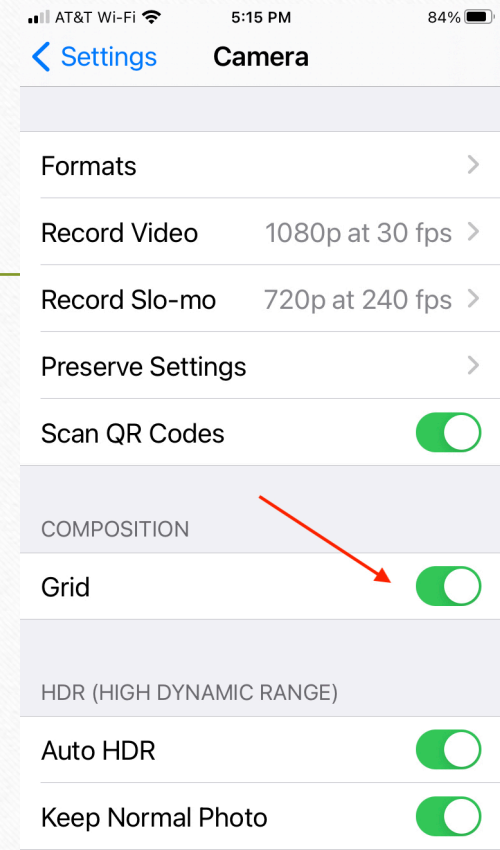
- An arrangement need not be centered to achieve good composition



Arrangement and Photo by Emiko Suzuki

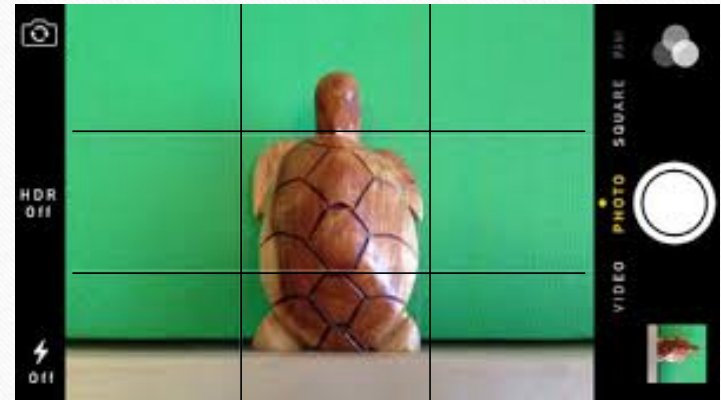
# Using the Grid on Smart Phones

- Applying the grid feature on a smart phone is very helpful.
- Go to Settings, Camera, and then check that the “Grid” button is green or on.



# Using the Grid on Smart Phones

- Use the “grid” to position your arrangement within the photo and to make sure it is level.
- The “rule of thirds” grid is also displayed so you can employ this feature when appropriate.



# Leveling using the smart phone grid feature



Photos and arrangement by Beverly Barbour



# Finalizing your arrangement photo

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- Photograph your arrangement and don't dismantle or move it yet
- Look at the photo on your computer, tablet or smart phone in detail (computer or tablet preferred)
  - Use Airdrop feature to send photo from phone to table or computer
- Make any adjustments to your arrangements (e.g. position of a stem).
- An arrangement may 'look' different in 2-D and the position of some stems, or the 'face' of the flower needs adjusting. You don't notice it until you take a photo
- Photograph the arrangement again and repeat this process until you are happy with the photo

# Finalizing your arrangement photo

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- Viewing an arrangement on a larger screen is preferred
  - Is there stray material or are there objects on the table?
  - How does the lighting appear?
  - Are there lines or wrinkles on the background that can be eliminated?
  - Did you apply the rule of thirds?
  - Is there room on all sides of the arrangement?
  - Can you see the kenzan? You shouldn't.

# Submitting your photo

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- Make any adjustments to the photo on your computer, tablet, or smart phone using whatever photo editing tools are available to you.
- Do not over crop the photo. Arrangements need room to breathe on all sides.
- Be sure your camera eye is on the central line of your arrangement even if your arrangement is not centered in the photo.

# Submitting your photo

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- Leave space around your arrangement if you are submitting your photo for critique so the sensei has room to move things around.
- Send the photo as actual size or in the largest format possible.
- Include your name and ikebana school on the email or file name

# Share your Photos

- On social media (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest)
- On your website
- In your chapter communications
- With your Regional Advocates
- To [narikebana@gmail.com](mailto:narikebana@gmail.com) so we can share them on NCAR I.I. Facebook account
  - Please include your chapter name, ikebana school and your name when submitting photos to the Advocates or [narikebana@gmail.com](mailto:narikebana@gmail.com)

## Photo Tips on [ikebanancar.org](http://ikebanancar.org)

- **Photography - Taking Ikebana Photographs**

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- There is a much shorter version of photo tips on our website on the [Directory of Resources](#) page. [Click here](#) to see that file.
- These tips and this presentation and many other helpful items are on the [Directory of Resources](#) page of the [ikebanancar.org](http://ikebanancar.org) website

With Special Appreciation to:

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Adapted for NCAR by Stephanie English, Communications Chair