

TOGETHER, ALONE MASTERCLASS

CONNECTION



BY KATHRYN RATTRAY

ALL ABOUT KATHRYN

Kathryn Rattray is a freelance photographer and visual artist based in Dundee. Kathryn is self-taught in all aspects of her photography and artist's practice.

Over the past decade Kathryn has worked extensively across her hometown of Dundee where she has established herself as a photographer working in the arts. During this time Kathryn has created a diverse and extensive portfolio as well as being commissioned to undertake a large body of commercial and private client work.

Her photographs have been represented online, in art magazines, books and other media. The arts are her passion and she excels when engaged in this field. Her style is bold and contemporary with an exceptional use of colour and her admiration of the changing nature of light is central to how she creates her work.

Kathryn lives in Dundee with her two children - she spends her free time filling their lives with adventures.





CONNECTION

Connection comes in many forms; we are connected to the ones we love, connected to social and political movements and connected to the energies of others, for example. I love how photography has the ability to connect you to everything – not just other people, but also your environment.

This magical synergy allows you to connect with whatever is in front of your lens. For me, it's often a silent connection, allowing me to connect with my heart and mind. I truly believe that once you have warmed up and settled into the creative zone, photography is meditative in its very nature.

For the purpose of this masterclass I used the idea of connection to have an adventure to the Chinese Supermarket with my children to buy ingredients to make my favourite dish, Thai Green Curry. The masterclass has 3 parts which means 3 different opportunities to work on your confidence and skills and produce lovely photos!

Our adventure started around 9 am on a bright, sunny, warm morning when I gently tried to rouse the kids out of bed. Nobody was willing to move and they certainly did not fancy a trip in the car to the supermarket! I knew in my heart that they would love it once they got there, but it wasn't easy getting them there in the first place. As we finally pulled up outside, there were shrieks of "Ahh in here? We've never been here before!" They hauled on their face masks excitedly, eagerly going inside, one shouting to the other, 'I want to hold the basket!'"

For me, photography is about being brave, but it is also about being very aware of your surroundings. On entering the Supermarket, I approached the man on the counter and explained what I am doing here and that I'd like to take a few photographs inside. He was unsure and nervously got the manager.

I explained what we were doing and assured her that my intentions were good. She was happy that we asked permission first and set out the rules. The three of us then spent roughly 45 minutes excitedly taking pics and picking ingredients. The sights, smell and noise of the Chinese Supermarket are markedly different from the usual big 'soulless' ones. I love packaging designs and for me this place was an absolute gold mine for photos.

So far today I have connected with my children and with the people inside the supermarket - all before I've even taken one pic. I have also connected with myself, the camera and the environment around me. We paid and headed home to set up the home cooking studio and I couldn't wait....



PART 1: PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHER

Pick your favourite recipe (or try something new!) and for those feeling able to - head out on an adventure to get ingredients with your camera ready to shoot. If you don't fancy going out and about then don't worry - you can go on a product adventure in your own house! Rifle through your cupboards to find things you want to photograph, using the tips below.

Whatever you decide to make doesn't have to be something fancy - something simple like eggs on toast can be made to look beautiful in your capable hands.



- If you want to go out, try going somewhere completely new, like I went to the Chinese Supermarket
- Ask permission in the supermarket to take photographs - explain that you are involved in a creative project and would like to take photos. Explain that you are willing to show the photos when you are leaving
- Imagine you are a product photographer in search of vibrant and unusual packaging
- Look for colours
- Look for shape - we found the 'biggest onion' in the world
- Look for contrasts in colours and light
- Pick up different ingredients that you need and take pics of them in your hand
- Buy the ingredients to make your delicious recipe at home
- If you're "shopping" in your own cupboards, then take the time to explore the products you have there. Follow the same steps above - look for colours, contrast and shape
- Be brave
- Have fun







PART 2: DECONSTRUCTED THAI GREEN CURRY FLAY LAY

ONCE YOU GET HOME/HAVE DONE YOUR AT HOME CUPBOARD RUMMAGE, IT'S TIME TO CREATE ANOTHER GLORIOUS FLAT LAY!

HINTS 'N' TIPS

- Think back to Masterclass 3 Comfort and the hints 'n' tips for the flat lay. This idea is essentially the same
- Take a large piece of A3 coloured paper and place on a table and or surface
- Use natural daylight
- Lay your ingredients flat on the paper – this is your deconstructed recipe



- Some things will work better than others together. Think about grouping things, try sprinkling smaller ingredients and bunching herbs together
- Try to create an equal 'imaginary' border all around the ingredients. You can put the grid on your camera phone to help
- See my photograph for inspiration with placement and shape
- Get up high and over your ingredients and start photographing them
- Try to be really still when taking this pic. I sometimes even hold my breath for a few seconds as I photograph a flat lay so I remain really really still!
- Take lots of photographs till you start to see the best one appearing in your camera roll and or when you look back on the camera
- Remember you only need one image for this part
- Take your time
- Have fun

PART 3: THE FINISHED PRODUCT

Once I had made the curry, I invited two of my closest friends to try it out the next day. I felt like I was spoiling them, having a delicious lunch already made for them. Good connections! They both scoffed it all so quickly and with such enthusiasm that I didn't manage to take photos of them enjoying it. What I did do was take out a portion of curry and squeezed the rice into a ramekin dish so I had the right amount for the next days' shoot. Food Photography is one of my favourite things to do - mostly because you get to eat as you work!

It's PRESENTATION TIME This is the easy bit.

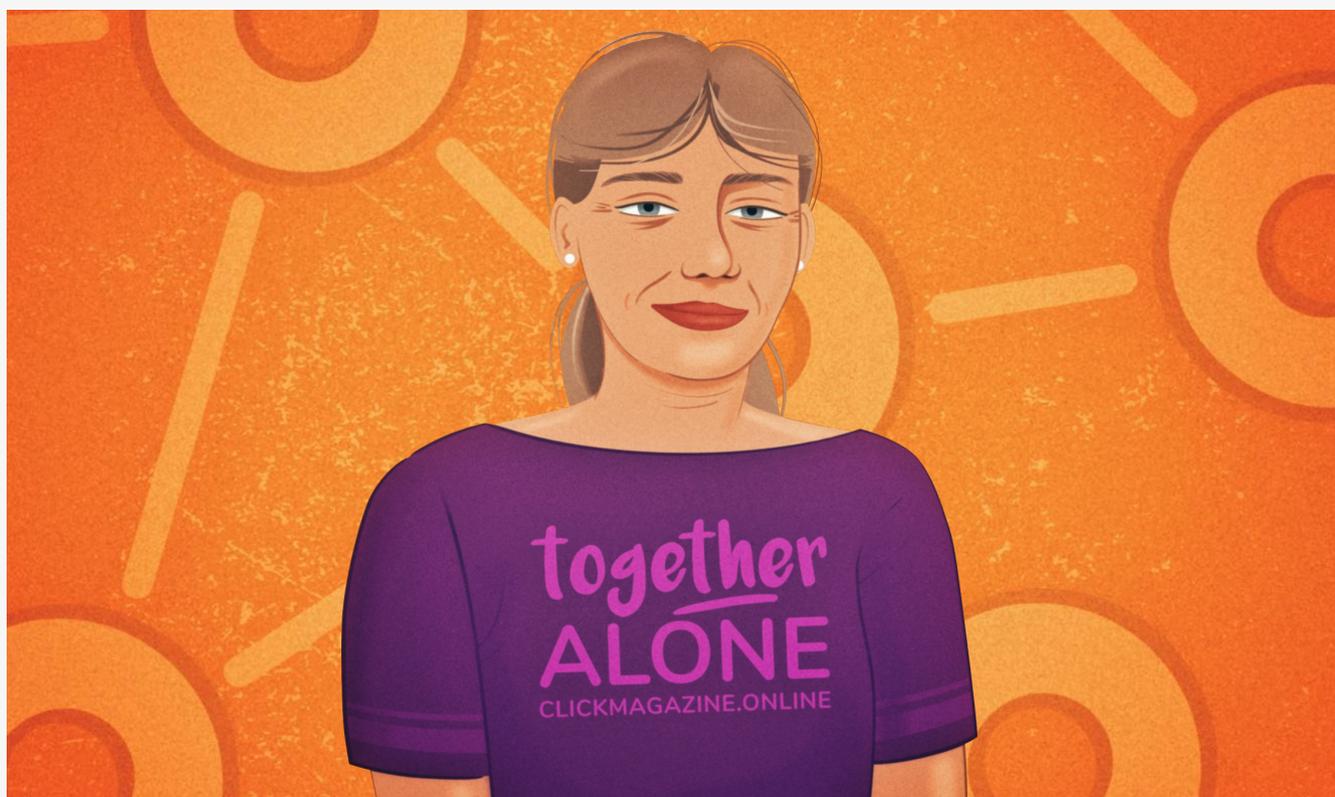


- Photograph in natural light as it's always the best and makes life as a photographer so much simpler. I set up the table right at the kitchen window as you can see by the photo, natural light flooding in. If you don't have a table, you can try using your kitchen worktop or a chair placed near a window
- Take your tasty food and place into crockery. I treated myself to the bowl and plate you see in the image, they were both a really good price and I knew they'd look good in the photographs



- Once again, take the coloured paper that you used in the deconstructed flat lay image and place the bowls on top of it. The paper I used was a bit marked but the bowls covered up the stains. Often what you see with your eye doesn't show up in the camera
- Use all the skills of Flat Lay #comfort and #connections part 1 – think about colour, contrast, shape, framing and light. Have confidence, I know you can do it!
- Really take your time with this one. Clear your mind and think like a photographer, imagine you have to get this image ready for the next big, famous cookbook
- Keep a steady hand and trial different placements of the bowls as you take the photographs
- I love cutting out parts of things when I'm shooting products. As you can see by the photo's most of the bowls have been 'cut in half', revealing half the bowl and half the paper. I think this adds to the styling of the image
- Use the images I've provided as templates to inspire your own photographs
- Take your time
- Have fun and enjoy eating the last of your delicious cooking!

ABOUT TOGETHER, ALONE



For many women in the sex industry, the coronavirus pandemic is exacerbating feelings of stigma, loneliness, and social isolation. Together, Alone is our wellbeing based arts project which aims to foster a sense of community and solidarity by building a “self-care toolkit”. We invite women to creatively share what self-care means to them. What works? What doesn’t work? And where self-care doesn’t go far enough, what needs to be done to better support the mental wellbeing of women?

This will be a place where we will share tips, as well as focus on the links between self-care and creativity with masterclasses from artists to build skills and ideas. You can find all the masterclasses at www.clickmagazine.online and we can also send you out a workshop pack with copies of the masterclasses, along with all the materials you might need to do them.

We would love to hear from you about what works / doesn’t work for you, any tips that you have and what you think about the masterclasses. We can’t wait to build Together, Alone with you!