

SHOOTING FOOD THAT SAYS SOMETHING

EDITORIAL FOOD, SESSION ONE.



The Plated Formula



We all know the look. It sells brunch. This is not what this class is about.

The Two Jobs of Food Photography

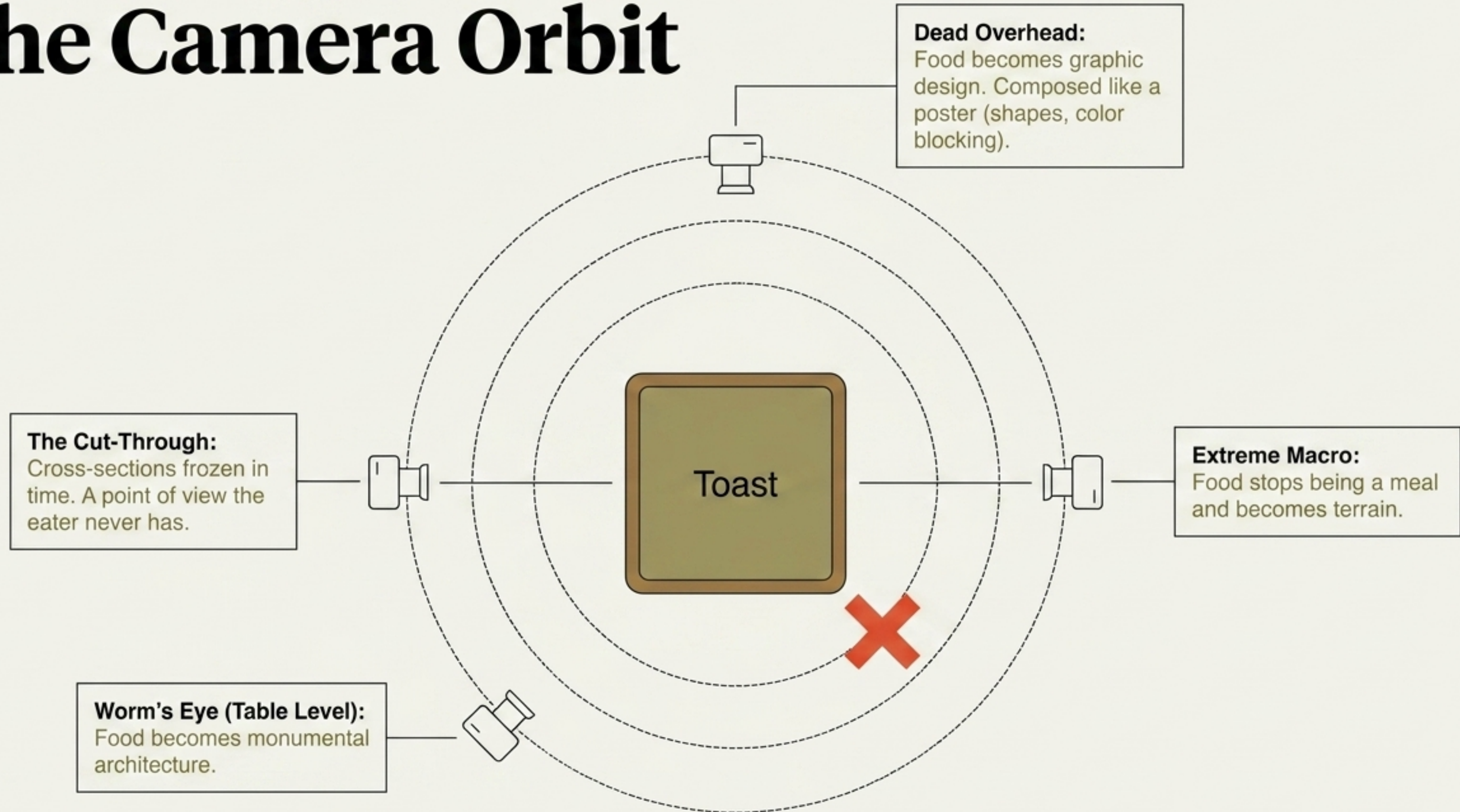
	MENU / PLATED	EDITORIAL / ARTISTIC
Primary Goal	Appetite & Accuracy	The Idea
The Food's Role	The Product	The Actor
Guiding Question	Does it look delicious?	Does it say what it needs to say?
Lighting Rule	Clean & Visible	Emotion-Driven & Rule-Breaking

Once the food stops being the product, every rule about making it appetizing becomes optional.

Shoot from
somewhere a
person eating
never stands.

The default 45-degree angle is the diner's view. Everyone shoots it. We are moving.

The Camera Orbit



The Shadow Spectrum

The Playbook:

~~Open, clean, visible~~
detail. Demanded by
appetite appeal.

Chiaroscuro:

Deep shadow. Hiding half
the product. Used by
Caravaggio in 1599.

Gels & Mixed Temp:

Color casts kill appetite. That
is exactly why red-gelled
steak or magenta milk reads
as editorial instantly.

Mixed Color Temperature.

Tungsten warmth on the food, daylight blue in the shadows.
Creates instant tension without a single prop.

Projected Light & Gobos.

Venetian blind shadows or a hard circle of light.
The shadow becomes a second subject.

Direct Hard Flash.

Bare, punchy light, saturated color. Deadpan and loud.
The evidence photo approach.

Complementary Pairs.

One colored gel on the subject, its direct
opposite on the background.

Clean plating
takes an
hour.

Controlled
chaos takes
a day.

This is rigging, monofilament, repetition, and
patience. Composites are legal here.

The Anatomy of the Unseen

The Split Second

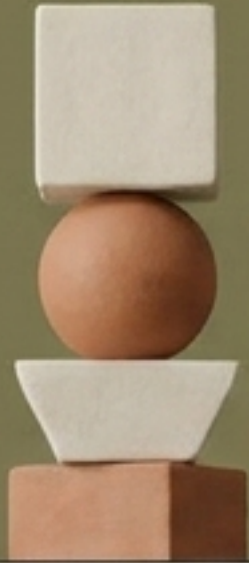
Food in Motion. Splashes, flour clouds, shattering items. Flash duration does the freezing.

The Wreckage

The Aftermath. Irving Penn's abandoned tables. Crumbs, stubbed-out cigarettes, spilled wine.

The eaten image tells a story the pristine plate cannot.
Somebody was here. Something happened.

Territory 4: Food as Sculpture, Graphic Object, Built Set



Pure Form.

Repetition, geometry, pattern.
Raw ingredients arranged as
flat graphic compositions.



The Built Set & Scale.

Food as a character in a
suspense scene. A gelatin mold
hovering above a mousetrap.
Tiny figures mining cookies.



The Dark Object.

Slick, controlled, and sinister
still lifes. Design objects with
something wrong underneath.



The banquet was never about the banquet.



Dutch painters in the 1600s painted tables where every object carried meaning. This language still reads in galleries today.

Mortality & Justice.

Henry Hargreaves' "No Seconds".
Plain recreations of death row
inmates' last meals. No
people, no captions needed.
The food carries the entire
weight of the justice system.

Waste & Luxury.

Klaus Pichler's "One Third".
Rotting food staged like luxury
still lifes, named for the fraction
of the world's food that is
wasted. Decay shot with
product-photography polish.

The point is the point. The food is never the point.

Casting the Idea

The Idea

Anxiety

Mortality

Graphic Order



The Actor

Gelatin Mold

Last Meal

36 Peas



The Territory

Built Set & Mousetrap

Stark Allegory

Pure Form Overhead

Pick the idea first, then cast the food. The lemon is an actor. Audition it.

The Folder.

Point of view, light, motion, construction, and historical reference are choices available to you the moment you stop trying to make someone hungry.

Collect editorial food that breaks the rules. Bring three images you love. Be ready to tell the group what each image is about.

*Not what it is of.
What it is about.*