



Things of desire

The brief

Collecting: we do it as small children, often compulsively. We accumulate sets of things, and fill boxes, shelves and mantelpieces with our very first collections, normally favourite toys or things we've found on the beach, on pavements or in the park. But as we get older, these sets of prized objects start to feature items as diverse as we are: from clocks, garden gnomes and antique buttons to bits of beachcombed plastic, 1950s cocktail glasses and theatre posters – and everything in between. With groups of things accumulated in this way, there's strength not only in numbers but in a label: a single object can only say a certain amount, but add six, 15 or 50 more and call it a 'collection' and there's no doubt that you're making a statement about what you value. Do you have a collection? Does someone you know collect things? Or can you find what looks like a collection, ready-made? Show us the evidence of how, again and again, a certain something has become the object of someone's desire.

Ways to approach this brief

A collection can be fairly small or comprise hundreds (even thousands) of items, so it's up to you to decide how much of one to illustrate in your images – maybe a shot of a stand-alone object: the most treasured, or the most typical – would best represent the essence of a collection, or you might relish the challenge of trying to capture the entire thing in a well-choreographed group shot. The other choice you need to make is whether to shoot objects in context or in 'studio' conditions on an empty table or against a blank wall, etc. Good composition will add graphic punch to what may otherwise be an overly 'busy' shot, so when you're setting things up, try to keep an eye on the overall shaping of the group as well as on which object looks good where. You could consider shooting from above, and in regulated rows to create a 'taxonomic' perspective, or let the natural jumble of a collection express itself in an along-the-shelf view of the objects as they are ordinarily presented.

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Expert judge

Liam Bailey is a co-founder of Photocrowd, and has been a photographer for over 25 years. His personal work documents everything from the Glastonbury Festival to the inhabitants of the UK's first model village.

Prizing

Winners of the Expert and Crowd votes: "Things come apart: A teardown manual for modern living" by Todd McClellan
An extraordinary book that makes visible the inner complexity of some of the world's most iconic products.

Dates and rules

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| Entry to assignment opens | Saturday 1st March 2014 |
| Entry to assignment closes | Monday 31st March 2014 (midnight, UK time) |
| Crowd voting closes | Thursday 3rd April 2014 (midnight, UK time) |
| Crowd and Expert winners announced | Friday 4th April 2014 |

Maximum number of image submissions per person for this assignment: **3**

There is no restriction on shoot date, although images shot in response to the brief will be acknowledged

Required image format: JPEG/JPG

Maximum file size: 25MB

Capture device: any, including phones, tablets, and larger cameras