

Still Life

1. Question & Research Task

Still life art is the composition and arrangement of objects that are not alive and cannot move. The practice of creating still life art develops and strengthens your natural level of drawing ability. It improves your observation and rendering of shape, tone, color, pattern and texture in a range of different media.

Examine the pictures on the right to discuss how the artist arranged the visual elements into a final still life composition. Why is the arrangement of the objects important?



Image Source: Public Domain, from Paintings by the Masters

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How do artists use compositional and media techniques to communicate intended effects in still life art?

2. Information Sources

You will use these resources to critique and compare two artists' still life compositions and media techniques:

View these sites and videos to learn more about the still life artists highlighted in the text, *A Global Pursuit*

- [Still-life- Amelia Pelaez \(Cuba\)](#)
- [Still-life of Fruit and Flowers - Paul Cézanne](#) (France), View the [Cézanne video](#)
- [Still-life with Parrots- Jan Davidsz de Heem](#) (Netherlands), View this [article](#) about his techniques
- [Parrots Live Forever- Audrey Flack](#) (United States), View this [biography](#) of Audrey Flack

View these sites to learn more about the still life artists highlighted in the text, *A Personal Journey*

- [James Rosenquist](#) (United States)
- [Clara Peeters](#) (Flanders)



Image Source: WikiPaintings, [Cape Cod still life](#)



Image Source: Rosenquist, James. *Dishes*, 1964. Oil on Canvas, VAGA, New York. *A Personal Journey: Explorations in Art*. By Marilyn G. Stewart. Massachusetts: Davis Publications, 2009. 55. Print.

3. Student Activity

Use the sites on Slide 2 to compare two different still life artworks. You may use the [attached inquiry organizer](#) or your journal to record ideas and information. Make sure to cite the artists, works, titles, and years as you reflect and compare. Use the following questions as a guide:

- How does the artist balance the painting?
- Is the composition symmetrical or asymmetrical? How do you know?
- Can you see examples of repetition, movement and contrast?
- What medium is used for the final still life artwork?
- What moods and ideas do you think the painting conveys? Explain your answer using specific examples from the artwork.

You will use what you have learned about still life composition and media techniques to create your own sketch and charcoal drawing.



Symmetrical Composition

Image Source: Raphaëlle Peale, *A Dessert (Still Life with Lemons and Oranges)*, 1814, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift (Partial and Promised) of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz Jr. in memory of Franklin D. Murphy 1999.44.1, Net Trekker Subscription

4. Assessment Activity

How do artists use compositional and media techniques to communicate intended effects in still life art?

Reflect on the artists and artwork you explored in the Student Activity. Think about what objects you would like to use for the subject of your own still life work. What are your interests? What objects do you use on a daily basis? What objects reflect an issue or topic that's important to you?

Working from observation, use the [attached guidelines](#) to take you through the process of completing a still life sketch and final charcoal drawing that utilizes accurate placement, proportion of items, and values to depict form. The finished charcoal drawing should appear realistic including the use of [shading, cast shadows, and highlights](#).

As you [plan](#) your charcoal drawing and prepare to sketch, think about:

- How to break down a still life drawing into shapes.
- How a sketch will have to achieve a level of proportion and composition in order to prepare you to create a charcoal drawing.
- Why artists generate several drawings or studies of the same or similar objects.



Image Source: Peeters, Clara. *Still Life of Fruit and Flowers*, after 1620. Oil on Copper, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. *A Personal Journey: Explorations in Art*. By Marilyn G. Stewart. Massachusetts: Davis Publications, 2009. 156. Print.

5. Enrichment Activities



Image Source: Flack, Audrey. *Parrots Live Forever*, 1978. Oil over acrylic on canvas, Louis K. Meisel Gallery, New York. *A Global Pursuit: Explorations in Art*. By Marilyn G. Stewart. Massachusetts: Davis Publications, 2009. 133. Print.

Explore Still Life

Review the classical still life compositions in art galleries:

- Take a [Still Life Tour](#) from the National Gallery of Art
- Visit the [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) still life site and explore the collection by artist and era

- Browse the still life artists featured at the [MoMA](#)

Now, consider how [contemporary artists are adapting still life](#) for today. Create your own contemporary adaptation of a classical still life image. Consider how you can update a classical composition to create a modern interpretation of one of the compositions you viewed. **Create an additional charcoal sketch or other teacher-approved art project to showcase your work.**

6. Teacher Resources

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Learning Standards Alignment

National Art Standards

Content Standard #1: Understanding media, techniques and processes.

Achievement Standard:

- Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes
- Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses
- Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner

MCCR ELA Standards for Grades 6-8

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

Grade 6-8: Still-life Unit

Objective:

- An artist's culture and surroundings can influence their work and process.
- Artists create images inspired by their surroundings to communicate ideas and information about time, places, and themselves.

Time Frame: 60 – 90-minute period

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS Digital Content in the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- You may utilize the provided organizers and rubrics or create your own. Please check all links before you view the videos with students. The You Tube videos will need to be shown by the teacher.
- Attached Guidelines Rubric found on slide 4 is a Microsoft Publisher document. It is not WCAG compliant. There is also a PDF version [found here](#).
- [NGA Kids Still Life](#) has an app for kids to download that allows them to create still life images on ipads.

Last updated: July 2022. [Report broken links](#) to BCPS Library Media Programs & Digital Resources.

BCPS Slam Dunk Research Model, Copyright 2018, [Baltimore County Public Schools](#), MD, all rights reserved. This lesson may be used for educational, non-profit school use only.

All other uses, transmissions, and duplications are prohibited unless permission is granted expressly. This lesson is based on [Dr. Jamie McKenzie's Slam Dunk Digital Lesson](#) model.