

Still Life Design Drawings and Paintings

Grades 5-8

Overview

Students will be introduced to the still life and will explore their drawing skills by drawing objects from direct observation. They will draw simple outlines of their choice of still life objects. Using a series of vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines, students will break their compositions up into small areas. The final step is filling each area using a choice of method such as black and white design, colour design, value scales and colour gradients.

What you will need:

- drawing paper
- pencil
- eraser
- still life objects
- ruler
- anything you can colour with - markers, oil pastels, pencil crayons, wax crayons, pens

What you can also use:

- watercolour/painting paper
- thick black marker
- paint brushes
- paint



What is a Still Life?

A still life is a type of painting or drawing where inanimate objects are arranged in a specific way. Objects that are typically found in still life drawings and paintings include fruit, flowers, tables, bowls and glassware. They are usually commonplace objects that we see every day. Objects for a still life can be chosen because they mean something special to the artist, or because the artist simply likes the way they look.



This still life painting is part of the Helson Gallery's exhibition, *The Collector's Eye*.

The exhibition features artwork by

Canadian artists. This artwork was painted by William Walton Armstrong, who was born in Toronto.

Would you use any of these objects in your still life? Why or why not?

What objects would you include in a still life and why?

Step 1: Set up your Still Life

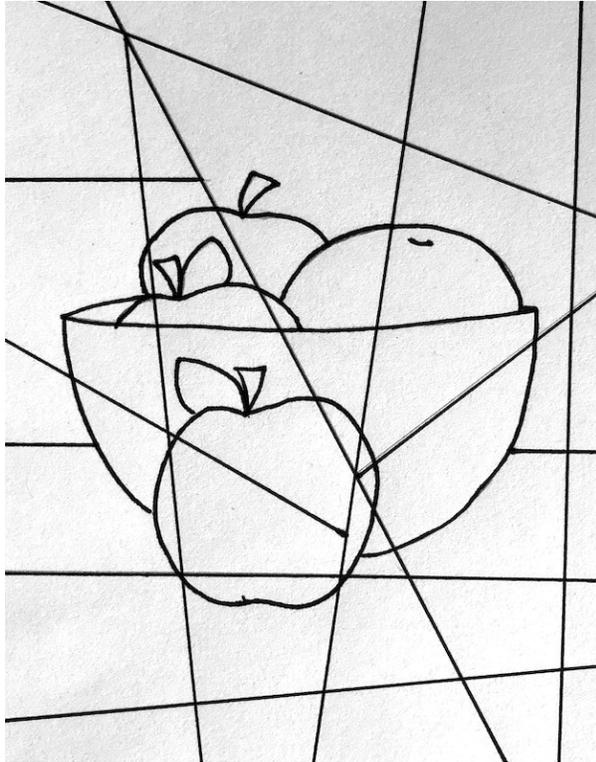
Set up your own still life arrangement. As the artist, it is up to you to choose which objects you want to have in your still life. Take some time to think about the objects you will include and why you chose them. You can choose objects that fit a particular theme, such as things that reflect your family or culture. They can be objects in a similar category like food or items that are special to you. You can consider things like colour and texture. Think of the composition of your artwork as a whole in addition to thinking of the individual objects. Place the objects somewhere where you will be able to look at them while drawing them.

Step 2: Draw your Still Life

To draw our objects we are going to use contour lines. Contour lines are just the outlines of the objects. Draw the contours, or outlines, of your objects. You can draw the objects the way that you have arranged them, or play with the composition and where you can place the objects on the page. If you like, draw a horizontal line across the page to create a table top on which the objects are standing.

Step 3: Incorporate Line

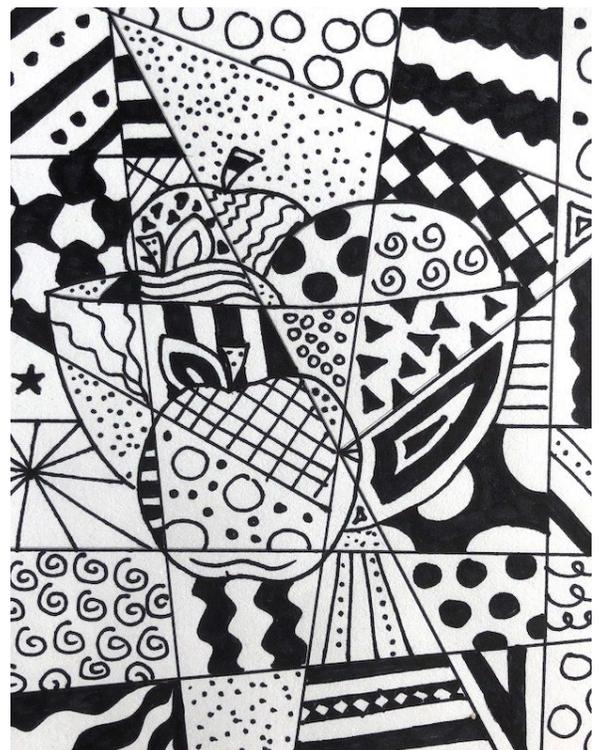
We are going to incorporate design elements into our compositions. To begin, we will use a series of lines. Using a ruler, draw several intersecting lines right over your drawing. The lines can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. They can go from one end of the page to the other, or they can be shorter. The length of the line doesn't matter, but every line should either end at the side of the page or at another line. If you like, go over your lines in black marker. It should look something like this:



Step 4: Colour in your artwork

When your drawing is finished, you can colour it in. The lines that you drew over your objects have broken your composition into smaller areas. Fill in each area using design elements, gradients, or a combination of techniques.

Design elements: draw a different design inside of each individual area. For example, one area can have dots, another can have a checker board pattern, and



another area can have vertical lines. You can choose to use just black marker to colour in some of the design elements to create a black and white design composition, or you can use colour. You can use a variety of materials to colour in your artwork, such as markers, pencil crayons, oil pastels and wax crayons. You can also use paint.

Gradients: leave the drawing as it is, without incorporating design elements into each area. You can colour the areas with value gradients using a pencil. Start at a different side or corner in each area and colour it in with a gradual change from dark to light. You can also do this with coloured pencils. You can even try this with paint. You can also create gradients by using two colours in each area. Fill in the area so that it changes from one colour to another. Use different colour combinations in each area.

