

Keep Still!: Learning the Elements of Art Through Still-Life Paintings

Grades: Grades 1-3
Subjects: Visual Arts
Time Required: 30-45 minutes
Author: Biggs Museum Curator of Education
Featured Biggs Artwork: *Peale Family Still Life Paintings*, Artists: James Peale (1749-1831); Mary Jane Peale (1827-1902) after Rubens Peale (1748-1865) after Margareta Angelia Peale (1795-1882); Mary Jane Peale or Rubens Peale after Raphaelle Peale (1784-1825); Rubens Peale (1784-1865)
Still Life with Grapes and Wineglass, 1876, Andrew John Henry Way (1826-1888)
Untitled (Still Life), no date, Marian D. Harris (1904-1988)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ANCHOR STANDARD:</u></p>	<p>VA: Cr1.2.1a</p> <p>VA: Cr2.2.1a</p> <p>VA: Cr3.1.1a</p> <p>VA: Re7.1.2a, 3a</p> <p>VA: Re7.2.1a</p> <p>VA: Re8.1.1a</p> <p>VA: Cn10.1.3a</p> <p>VA: Cn11.1.1a, 3a</p> <p>Math: Content.1, 2.G.A.1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ESSENTIAL QUESTION and ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:</u></p>	<p>VA: How does knowing the context, histories, and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design? Why do artists follow or break from established traditions?</p> <p>VA: How do artists work? How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective? How do artists and designers learn from trial and error?</p> <p>VA: What role does persistence play in revising, refining, and developing work? How do artists grow and become accomplished in art forms? How does collaboratively reflecting on a work help us experience it more completely?</p>

	<p>VA: How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?</p> <p>VA: What is an image? Where and how do we encounter images in our world? How do images influence our view of the world?</p> <p>VA: How does knowing and using visual art vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?</p> <p>VA: How does making art attune people to their surroundings?</p> <p>VA: How does art help us understand the lives of people from different places and cultures? How is art used to impact the views of a society? How does art preserve aspects of life?</p> <p>Math: Distinguish between defining attributes (e.g., triangles are closed and three-sided) versus non-defining attributes (e.g., color, orientation, overall size); build and draw shapes to possess defining attributes/ Recognize and draw shapes having specified attributes, such as a given number of angles or a given number of equal faces. Identify triangles, quadrilaterals, pentagons, hexagons, and cubes</p>
<p><u>PERFORMANCE STANDARD:</u></p>	<p>Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art</p> <p>Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art/ Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, equipment, and studio spaces/ Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic purposes</p> <p>Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art</p> <p>Perceive and describe aesthetic characteristics of one's natural world and constructed environment/ Speculate about processes an artist uses to create a work of art</p> <p>Compare images that represent the same subject</p> <p>Interpret art by categorizing subject matter and identifying the characteristics of form</p> <p>Develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings</p>

	<p>Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons/Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made</p>
<u>I CAN STATEMENT</u>	<p>I CAN use observation to plan my work</p> <p>I CAN safely use my materials and tools/I CAN safely use and clean my materials and tools/I CAN safely and correctly use my materials and tools to create art. I CAN keep my tools and materials clean and organized</p> <p>I CAN use my art words to explain how I made my art</p> <p>I CAN describe images from nature and things that are constructed/I CAN infer how an artist created their work of art</p> <p>I CAN compare images that have the same subject</p> <p>I CAN describe what the artwork is about</p> <p>I CAN develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings</p> <p>I CAN understand that people from different places have made art for many reasons/I CAN see that reactions to art change depending on time and place</p>
<u>ACTIVATING STRATEGIES:</u>	<p>Students will learn to look closely at still life paintings by observing the elements of art including shape, line, composition, light source, and perspective. They will also observe change in art styles over time and observe ways artists often collaborate.</p>
<u>ACCELERATION STRATEGIES:</u>	<p>Vocabulary</p> <p>Circle – A 2-dimensional shape made by drawing a curve that is always the same distance from a center</p> <p>Composition – the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art</p> <p>Heart – shape that is pointed at one end and indented at the opposite side</p> <p>Line – an identifiable path created by a point moving in space. It is one-dimensional and can vary in width, direction, and length</p> <p>Oval – any curve that looks like an egg or an ellipse</p> <p>Perspective – technique used to represent three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface</p> <p>Rectangle – A 4-sided flat shape with straight sides where all interior angles are right angles and opposite sides are parallel and of equal length</p>

	<p>Star – a many sided shape (polygon) with 4 or more points made from adjacent triangles</p> <p>Square – 4-sided flat shape with straight sides where all sides have equal length, and every interior angle is a right angle</p>
<u>LEARNING STRATEGIES:</u>	Students will apply what they've learned to create a still life using cut outs of different pieces of fruit
<u>SUMMARIZING STRATEGIES:</u>	If time allows, students can offer a description of their work using the art vocabulary they've learned in the lesson

Featured Biggs Artwork

Peale Family Still Life Paintings, Artists: James Peale (1749-1831); Mary Jane Peale (1827-1902) after Rubens Peale (1748-1865) after Margareta Angelia Peale (1795-1882); Mary Jane Peale or Rubens Peale after Raphaelle Peale (1784-1825); Rubens Peale (1784-1865)

Still Life with Grapes and Wineglass, 1876, Andrew John Henry Way (1826-1888)

Untitled (Still Life), no date, Marian D. Harris (1904-1988)

Lesson Overview

Students will learn to look closely at still life paintings by observing the elements of art including shape, line, composition, light source, and perspective. They will also observe change in art styles over time and observe ways artists often collaborate. Students will apply what they've learned to create a still life using cut outs of different pieces of fruit.

Learning Objectives

Primarily, students should be able to:

- Recognize different shapes in paintings
- Identify and describe different lines in a painting
- Apprehend the definition of perspective
- Understand the basic definition of composition and apply this knowledge to creating a still life by looking at an arrangement

Secondarily, students should be able to:

- Identify where a light source is coming from
- Understand that often families and groups of artists often worked together and copied from one another and be able to connect this process to their life
- Understand that art from different time periods often look different from one another

Materials

- Worksheet
- Fake or real fruit to match some or all of the cut outs
- Colored pencils
- Fruit cut-outs
- Glue stick

Lesson Steps

1. View Peale Family Still Life Paintings, Artists: James Peale (1749-1831); Mary Jane Peale (1827-1902) after Rubens Peale (1748-1865) after Margaretta Angelia Peale (1795-1882); Mary Jane Peale or Rubens Peale after Raphaelle Peale (1784-1825); Rubens Peale (1784-1865)
 - a. Explain to students that a still life painting is a painting of objects arranged in a special way and that they feature many different shapes
 - i. Ask students to identify the different shapes they see in these paintings
 1. Clues: star, square, heart, circle, oval, rectangle
 2. When a shape is identified, ask students to describe that shape, i.e. how many lines does it have? Are the lines straight or curvy?
 - b. Explain to students that these paintings were painted by members of the Peale family
 - i. The Peale family were a family of artists who taught one another to paint
 - ii. Explain that they would help each other with paintings and would often copy one another's work
 - iii. Ask students to name some things that they've made together with friends or family members
 - c. Explain that artists pay very close attention to light and where it's coming from
 - i. Use your hand to create a shadow and explain that light must be behind an object to cast a shadow
 - ii. Guide students through the shadows in these paintings and ask them to identify where the light must be coming from in order to cast those shadows
2. *Still Life with Grapes and Wineglass*, 1876, Andrew John Henry Way (1826-1888)
 - a. Introduce the word "composition" and explain that the composition of a painting or drawing is the way that objects are arranged
 - b. Explain that every painting has a front, middle, and back
 - i. Ask students to tell you what they see in the front, middle, and back of this painting
 - ii. Ask students why they think the artist chose to place the objects in this part of the painting

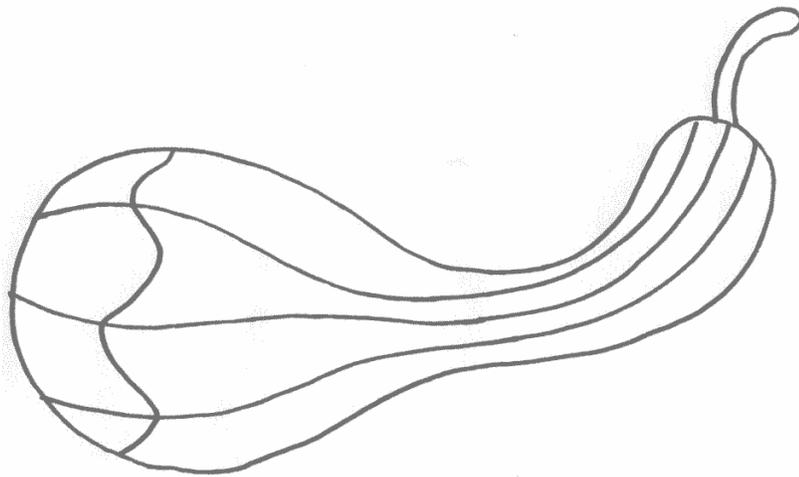
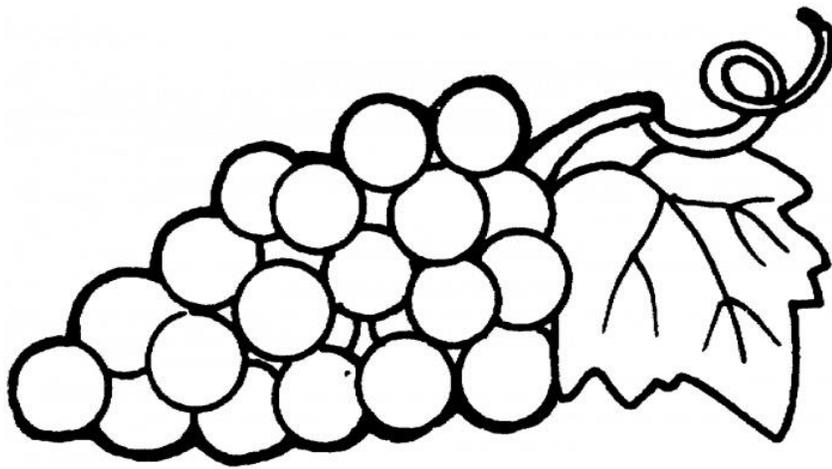
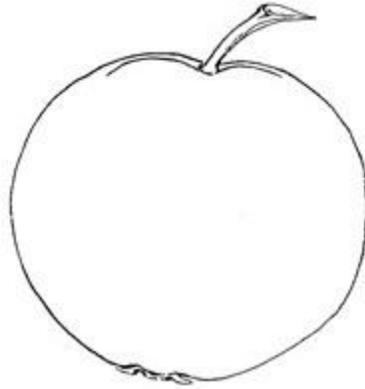
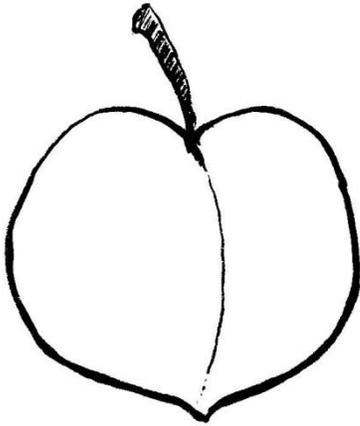
1. Encourage students think about what they might see if they stood on the other side of the table – would they be able to see all the walnuts? Or would the other fruit block them?
- iii. Prompt students to think about why the artist may have chosen to use a dark background

3. *Untitled (Still Life)*, no date, Marian D. Harris (1904-1988)

- a. Explain that this artist work in a time that was closer to today than the artists of the paintings they've already seen
 - i. Ask them if they see any differences
 - ii. Explain that artists during Harris' time painted so that we could see their brushstrokes, but artists of the older paintings made it so we couldn't see their brushstrokes
- b. Use this painting to explain perspective
 - i. Ask students to imagine that their holding a bucket in front of them and mime it with them
 1. Have them pretend to hold the bucket above their head, in front of their face, and below them and, at each position, ask them if they can see into the bucket or if they see the bottom of it
 2. Then have them look at the pitcher in the painting and ask them if they can see into the pitcher and ask them where the artist must have been standing if she could see into the pitcher – was she above it, right in front of it, or below it?
- c. Ask students to describe different kinds of lines – curvy, straight, diagonal, zigzag, etc.
 - i. Explain that this artist used lines to draw the viewers' eyes through the painting and trace your finger along the lines of the drapery, pitcher, plate

4. Activity

- a. If time and ability permit, students can cut the fruit themselves
- b. Students will glue each fruit into the composition according to where it is in the still life arrangement and then color each of them to match the fruit in the arrangement
- c. Instruct students to glue their fruits starting with the fruit that is in the back of the arrangement and work forward through their composition
- d. Ask students to compare the shapes and lines they see here with those they saw in the Biggs paintings



My Still Life

