

# *...no end to our looking*

Interpretive Guide & Hands-on Activities



# The Interpretive Guide

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present your community with a selection from its Travelling Exhibition Program. This is one of several exhibitions distributed by the Art Gallery of Alberta as part of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. This Interpretive Guide has been specifically designed to complement the exhibition you are now hosting. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase your viewers' enjoyment and to assist you in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both elementary and advanced levels for younger and older visitors.

At the Elementary School Level the Alberta Art Curriculum includes four components to provide students with a variety of experiences.

- Reflection:** Responses to visual forms in nature, designed objects and artworks
- Depiction:** Development of imagery based on notions of realism
- Composition:** Organization of images and their qualities in the creation of visual art
- Expression:** Use of art materials as a vehicle for expressing statements

The Secondary Level focuses on three major components of visual learning.

- Drawings:** Examining the ways we record visual information and discoveries
- Encounters:** Meeting and responding to visual imagery
- Composition:** Analyzing the ways images are put together to create meaning

The activities in the Interpretive Guide address one or more of the above components and are generally suited for adaptation to a range of grade levels. As well, this guide contains coloured images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion at any time. Please be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

The Travelling Exhibition Program, funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, is designed to bring you closer to Alberta's artists and collections. We welcome your comments and suggestions and invite you to contact:

**Steven Teeuwsen**, Curator/Program Manager  
Travelling Exhibition Program  
780.428.3830 | [steven.teeuwsen@youraga.ca](mailto:steven.teeuwsen@youraga.ca)

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Travelling Exhibition Program (Trex) acknowledge that the artistic activity we support takes place on the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived on and cared for these lands for generations and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers, Elders and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities and growing our shared knowledge and understanding.

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## FRONT COVER IMAGES:

- Left:** Nathalie Shewchuk-Pare, *Coffee Cup #1*, 1998, Acrylic on masonite, Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts
- Top Right:** John Hall, *Dishes*, 1998, Acrylic on canvas, Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts
- Bottom Right:** Edward Bader, *Oranges*, 1984, Graphite on paper, Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts





# Curatorial Statement

## ...no end to our looking

*But in a still life, there is no end to our looking, which has become allied with the gaze of the painter; we look in and in to the world of things...in and in, as long as we can stand to look, as long as we take pleasure in looking.*

Mark Doty, American Poet

In the annals of art history the importance of artistic subjects vis á vis art institutions, art historians, artists and the art viewing public ebb and flow like the tide. A genre of artistic expression may be favored in one era and then totally disdained in the next, only to re-emerge in importance decades or even centuries later. One theme of artistic representation where this fluctuation is clearly evidenced is in the still life.

Still life describes works of art that show inanimate objects that are natural or man-made such as fruit, flowers, dead animals and/or vessels like baskets or bowls. Still life paintings had their origins in ancient times. They can be found adorning the interiors of Egyptian tombs, on ancient Greek vases and on the surviving walls of Roman homes and shops. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire the still life virtually disappeared from European artistic practice only to re-emerge, due to social and political changes, as a viable subject in art in the sixteenth century. Though the importance and artistic intents behind its treatment as a subject have changed over the centuries since, the still life has remained a consistent theme of artistic exploration.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition *...no end to our looking*, featuring works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, explores

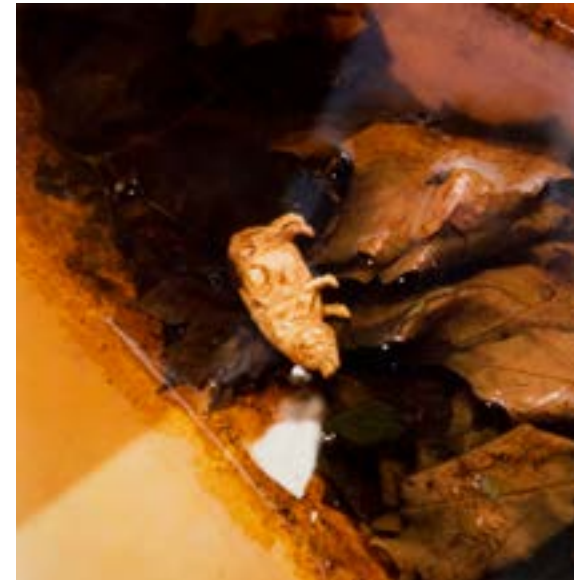
the enduring legacy of the still life as this subject has been expressed by artists in Alberta over the past forty years. Presenting an eclectic mix of styles and media, the works in this exhibition not only invite reflection concerning the objects represented but also ask viewers to look long and hard at the objects actually around them: to truly experience the shapes, textures, colours and meanings of the material articles which surround them and help define their lives.



John Snow  
*Bowl of Orange Flowers*, 1979  
Lithograph on paper  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

The exhibition *...no end to our looking* was curated by Shane Golby and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is financially supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

# Visual Inventory: 20 Artworks



Mark Arneson  
*Toy Pig*, 1987  
Ektacolor on paper  
18 1/4 inches x 18 1/8 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Edward Bader  
*Oranges*, 1984  
Graphite on paper  
22 1/4 inches x 29 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Sharon Simonds Chia  
*Chinese Vase with Dried Stock, Plate and Paper*, 1984  
Oil on masonite  
11 7/8 inches x 11 7/8 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



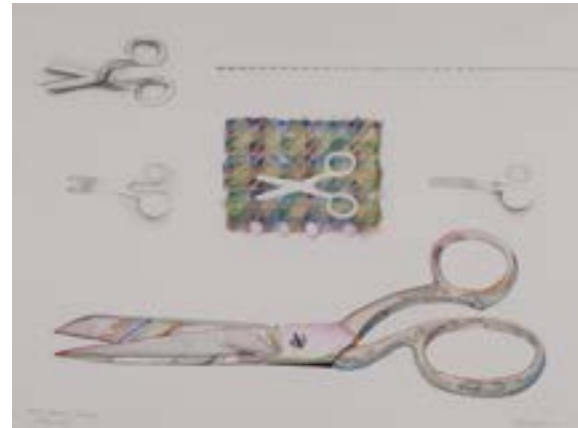
James Daubney  
*Leaves in Bowl*, 1981  
Silver gelatin, hand tinted on paper  
7 15/16 inches x 9 7/8 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



# Visual Inventory



E.J. Ferguson  
*Cocktail Shaker*, 1973  
Serigraph on paper  
17 11/16 inches x 22 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Ted Godwin  
*Rocks, Flowers, Scissors, Growing*, n.d.  
Watercolour on paper  
17 1/2 inches x 23 13/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Neil McClelland  
*12 O'Clock*, 2003  
Oil on board  
20 1/2 inches x 30 1/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



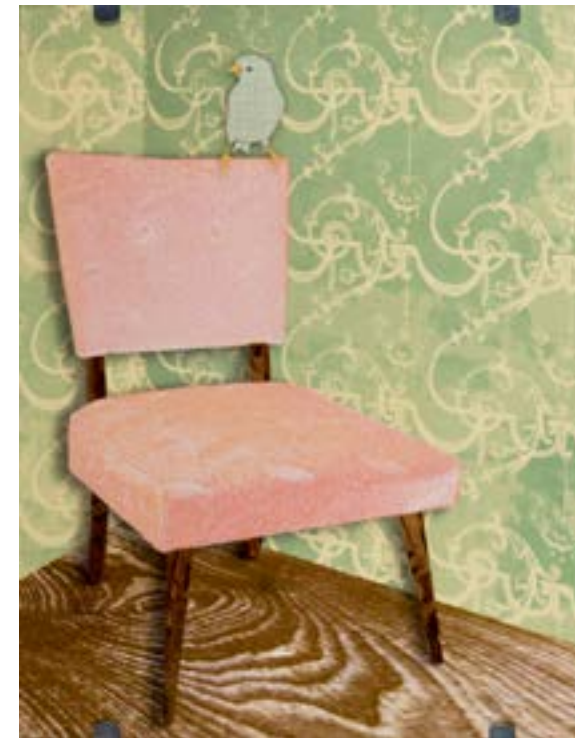
Alasdair Monro  
*Still Life in Four*, 1995  
Oil on masonite  
7 13/16 inches x 10 1/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Hall  
*Dishes*, 1998  
Acrylic on canvas  
18 inches x 26 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Douglas Jones  
*Still Life, Bottle and Bowl*, 1989  
Oil on canvas  
24 inches x 29 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Laura O'Connor  
*Patterned Disposition*, 2010  
Digital c-print on paper adhered to birch board  
14 inches x 10 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Marcia Perkins  
*Untitled*, 1988  
Oil on board  
18 7/8 inches x 15 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



# Visual Inventory



Stan Phelps  
*Still Life with Greeting Cards*, 1982  
Acrylic on canvas  
20 3/16 inches x 26 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Garth Rankin  
*Montezuma Suite #19*, 2000  
Silver gelatin print on paper  
5 11/16 inches x 8 9/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Glen Semple  
*Janet*, 1991  
Acrylic on masonite  
15 3/4 inches x 23 9/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Nathalie Shewchuk-Pare  
*Coffee Cup #1*, 1998  
Acrylic on masonite  
23 13/16 inches x 24 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Peter Rasmussen  
*Skull, Chair and Carpet*, 1986  
Oil on canvas  
9 15/16 inches x 11 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Jack Rigaux  
*Still Life with Flowers in a Vase*, 1983  
Watercolour on illustration board  
8 9/16 inches x 10 11/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



John Snow  
*Bowl of Orange Flowers*, 1979  
Lithograph on paper  
18 1/8 inches x 11 15/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Bev Tosh  
*Soul Catcher*, 1992  
Oil on canvas  
22 3/16 inches x 22 3/16 inches  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

# Talking Art

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Marcia Perkins  
*Untitled*, 1988  
Oil on board  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

## Art Curriculum Connections

The following curricular connections taken from the Alberta Learning Program of Studies provide a brief overview of the key topics that can be addressed through viewing and discussing the exhibition *...no end to our looking*. Through the art projects included in this exhibition guide students will be provided the opportunity for a variety of learning experiences.

### Grades K-6

#### REFLECTION

APPRECIATION: Students will interpret art-works literally and by examining their context and less visible characteristics.

#### Concepts

- Art takes different forms depending on the materials and techniques used
- An art form dictates the way it is experienced
- An artwork tells something about its subject matter and the artist who made it
- Artworks contain symbolic representations of a subject or theme
- Colour variation is built on three basic colours
- Tints and shades of colours or hues affect the contrast of a composition
- All aspects of an artwork contribute to the story it tells
- Contextual information (geographical, historical, biographical, cultural) may be needed to
- understand works of art
- Artistic style is largely the product of an age
- Technological change affects types of art

#### DEPICTION

#### Concepts

- All shapes can be reduced to basic shapes; i.e., circular, triangular, rectangular
- Forms can be overlapping to show depth or distance
- Images are stronger when contrasts of light and dark are used

- Shapes can be abstracted or reduced to their essence
- Shapes can be distorted for special reasons
- Size interchange affects the apparent position of something
- Surface reflections, shading and shadows affect the viewpoints

#### COMPOSITION

Students will create emphasis based on personal choices

#### Concepts

- An active, interesting part of a theme can become the main part of a composition
- A composition should develop the setting or supporting forms, as well as the subject matter
- Format can be adjusted and composition tightened by editing or cropping the unnecessary
- areas from the edges of a work
- Foreground to background movement keeps the interest within a composition
- Contrast subject matter with the ground for emphasis

**UNITY:** Students will create unity through density and rhythm.

#### Concepts

- Families of shapes, and shapes inside or beside shapes, create harmony
- Overlapping forms help to unify a composition
- Repetition of qualities such as colour, texture, and tone produce rhythm and balance



# Art Curriculum Connections

Component 9 CRAFTSMANSHIP: Students will add finishing touches

- Finishing touches (accents, contrasts, outlines) can be added to make a work more powerful

## Grades 7-9

### EXPRESSION

Component 10

PURPOSE: Students will express a feeling or a message

Concepts

- Feelings and moods can be interpreted visually
- Specific messages, beliefs and interests can be interpreted visually, or symbolized

SUBJECT MATTER: Students will develop themes, with an emphasis on personal concerns, based on

- Plants and animals
- Environment and places
- Manufactured or human-made things

MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES: Students will use media and techniques, with an emphasis on exploration and direct methods in drawing, painting, print making, photography and technographic arts

Concepts

Drawing

- Use drawing tools to make a variety of lines
- Use drawing tools to make a variety of shapes
- Make drawings from direct observation- Use drawing to add details and textures, or to create pattern
- Abstract or simplify a form
- Indicate perspective in drawings

Painting

Printmaking

Photography and Technographic Arts

Take advantage of the visual art implications of any available technological device, and explore the potential of emerging technologies. Included at this level:

- simple camera for documentation and sequencing of events
- computer software packages and device
- emerging technologies as available and applicable

## Grades 10-12

### COMPOSITIONS

- Compositions use positioning and grouping of subjects for different meanings and emphasis
- Movement, rhythm and direction are used in recording humans and their activities
- Various materials alter representational formats and processes used in achieving certain intended effects
- Works of art contain themes and images that reflect various personal and social conditions
- Technology has an affect on materials used in image making
- The exploration of existing technology may influence the development of two dimensional images
- The selection and presentation of perceptions, conceptions and experience as visual content for artworks is an important aim of the artist
- Artworks may be analyzed for personal, social, historic or artistic significance

### ENCOUNTERS

- Different periods of history yield different interpretations of the same subject or theme
- The adoption of a new medium will effect change in an artist's work
- Technology has an impact on the artist's role in modern society
- Personal situations and events in artists' lives affect their personal visions and work
- A specific artistic movement and its works of art influence later artistic movements

## Cross Curriculum Connections

This exhibition *...no end to our looking* is an excellent source for using art as a means of investigating topics addressed in other subject areas. The theme of the exhibition, and the works within it, are especially relevant as a spring-board for addressing aspects of the Science Program of Studies. The following is an overview of cross-curricular connections which may be addressed through viewing and discussing the exhibition.

### GRADE 1 Science

#### Topic A: Creating Colour

Students will:

- Identify colours in a variety of natural and manufactured objects
- compare and contrast colours, using terms such as lighter than, darker than, more blue, brighter than
- Order a group of coloured objects, based on a given colour criterion
- Predict and describe changes in colour that result from the mixing of primary colours and from mixing a primary colour with white or with black
- Create a colour that matches a given sample, by mixing the appropriate amounts of two primary colours

- Compare the effect of different thicknesses of paint. Students should recognize that a very thin layer of paint, or a paint that has been watered down, may be partly transparent

#### Topic D: Senses

Students will:

- Identify each of the senses, and explain how we use our senses in interpreting the world
- Apply particular senses to identify and describe objects or materials provided and to describe living things and environments. Students meeting this expectation will be able to describe characteristics such as colour, shape, size, texture, smell and sound

# Artist Biographies/Statements

## Mark Arneson

Mark Arneson was born in Kamsack, Saskatchewan and attended the University of Regina for one year, majoring in political science and psychology, before he began travelling for extended periods of time to England, Europe, Greece and Israel. Having participated in workshops in Saskatoon and Canmore, Arneson became interested in photography during his travels. In 1978 he pursued formal training in photography at the Banff Centre when he participated in the Photography Studio Program and the Photography Diploma Program. He received further training through the Apeiron Workshops in Millerton, New York, when the Photography Studio Program was transferred there following a fire that destroyed the Banff Centre photography building.

Arneson's work is known for its ability to capture the light quality of colour, and his photographs are influenced by the environments in which he lives. While living in the city, Arneson documents still life encounters in interior environments; while living in a rural or wilderness setting, his interest shifts to the natural environment. In these cases, he attempts to challenge concepts of time, confronting urban ideas of movement and change or capturing the life cycles of nature. His work is held in several museum and gallery collections including the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

## Edward Bader

Edward Bader was born in Lethbridge, Alberta. His artistic practice has changed and evolved over the years from the use of traditional drawing and painting techniques to employing digital and new media. His work deals with a diverse range of ideas but often comes back to common

themes surrounding the interrelationships between how one experiences technology, place, history, society, sexuality and culture. Edward Bader teaches drawing, contemporary art history and new media at Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC). He is active in the life of the college and of the art community in Grande Prairie where he lives, serving on numerous boards and committees. He has presented papers and talks on sexuality and gender, and graphic novels. His work has been exhibited extensively around Alberta and is held in public and private collections.

Bader holds a diploma from the Applied Multimedia Training Centre in Calgary (1997), a BFA from the University of Lethbridge (1979), an MFA in drawing / painting from the University of Calgary (1993) and an MA in popular culture from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario (2007). In addition to GPRC, he has taught at the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge and the Alberta College of Art and Design.

## James Daubney

James Daubney spent his early childhood in Banff, returning to live there in 1972. He attended the Banff Centre's Visual Communication program (1973-1974) and studied with the photographer Ansel Adams between 1974-1976, but considers himself mainly self-taught. Daubney's photographs ask viewers to consider the importance of silence for listening. They blend black and white, 19th century portraiture, and hand-colouring techniques to celebrate Canada's mountain landscapes—and occasionally people, including Stoney Nakoda First Nation Leader Hanson Bearspaw and composer John Cage, both of whom he met in Banff—as friends.

His work has shown at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies (formerly Peter Whyte Gallery, Banff), the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Vancouver Gallery of Photography, and can be found in the collections of the Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation and the National Gallery of Canada. Daubney is now semi-retired in Cochrane, AB.

## Ted Godwin

Ted Godwin was a flamboyant abstract impressionist best known for his Tartan series. He was the youngest member of the "Regina Five," a group of avant garde prairie artists who reinvented themselves in the early 1960s to become leaders of contemporary western Canadian abstraction. In later years, Godwin returned to representational work, doing landscapes of the Bow River focusing on the rich undergrowth of the shoreline. This series was celebrated with a touring exhibition, Lower Bow: A Celebration of Wilderness, Art and Fishing, accompanied by an exhibition catalogue (1992).

At age 14 Godwin enrolled at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology and Art (now Alberta University of the Arts). After graduating in 1955 he worked as an advertising artist at a television station in Lethbridge, AB before moving to Regina, SK to design neon signs. Between 1959 and 1965, he attended numerous Emma Lake Artists' Workshops. His collaboration in a satirical show at MacKenzie Gallery (Regina, SK) in 1960 brought him public attention. In 1961 his work and that of his four colleagues, Kenneth Lochhead, Arthur McKay, Douglas Morton and Ronald Bloore, were presented in a National Gallery of Canada circulating exhibition, Five Painters from Regina, which travelled across Canada. The bold, original paintings in this exhibition represented a new direction in abstract painting in Canada

and reflected aesthetic developments comparable to contemporary New York art. Dubbed 'The Regina Five,' they became a small but active artistic community in Regina (SK) throughout the sixties.

Godwin taught at the University of Regina (SK) from 1964 until 1985. He had numerous solo exhibitions across Canada including the travelling show, Ted Godwin: The Regina Five Years, 1957 – 1967 (2008), originating from the Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, AB, and Ted Godwin Remembered, Wallace Galleries, Calgary, AB (2014). Godwin was a nominated member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, a Member of the Order of Canada, and a recipient of both the Queen's Silver and Diamond Jubilee medals.

## John Hall

John Hall is one of Canada's most established contemporary painters with a virtuoso reputation in hyperrealism and a contemporary approach to still life in particular. His practice also involves photography to aid in the realization of his compositions. Hall has been compared to an urban archaeologist whose radiant and dramatic acrylics comment on contemporary life and the material stuff of consumerism. His subject matter for still life is broad in scope. It includes images of friends' personal possessions to create a novel idea of portraiture and the more mundane matters of existence. This latter subject was summed up in a large 2002-2008 series, (2015).

The artist graduated from the Alberta College of Art (now Alberta University of the Arts, Calgary, AB) in 1965, followed by post-graduate study in 1966 at the Instituto Allende (San Miguel de Allende, Mexico). He cites the mentorship of Calgary artists Ron Spickett and Marion Nicoll, as well as the Pop Art of the 1960s, as having a



# Artist Biographies/Statements

particular influence on his work. From 1971 to 1998 Hall taught painting and drawing at the University of Calgary; having a major impact on the development of contemporary realism in the province. Widely reviewed and acclaimed, John Hall has been featured in several exhibitions including a one-person show at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa, ON, 1979), a travelling exhibition arranged by the Museo de Arte Moderno (Mexico City, 1992-94), and a 45-year survey organized by the Kelowna Art Gallery, BC.

## Stan Phelps

Stan Phelps is a Calgary-based artist and teacher, known for his prints, paintings and murals. He earned a BFA from the University of Calgary in 1974. After graduation, he worked as a graphic artist and freelance writer and photographer, as well as teaching art, for the City of Calgary. He also taught for the Calgary and the Catholic School Boards. After five years with the City, he travelled widely in Europe, mostly to Spain. There he lived for a year, sketching, painting and visiting art galleries. He was a visiting artist at several international studios, including in Murcia, Spain and Urapan, Mexico. His artwork is often inspired by his travels.

In 1978, Phelps and his partner, artist Carole Bondaroff, founded The Heart Studio in Calgary's Kensington area. This multi-disciplinary art facility holds exhibitions, and offers classes and workshops for adults and children. Phelps' teaching work extends to positions such as Artist in Residence in various Alberta schools, where he introduces students to making art including murals, cartoons and inflatable sculptures. He has also served as Director and Artist in Residence at the Perrenoud Homestead Historic Site and Art Centre near Cochrane, Alberta.

Phelps' art works comprise oils, acrylics and watercolours, mostly of landscapes, historic buildings and figures in urban settings. He has also produced etchings, such as the Muses series (2010), lighthearted depictions of the Greek goddesses of culture. His murals can be seen throughout Western Canada, especially in Southern Alberta, and feature scenes from local history. They are also on display at the Calgary Stampede, the Calgary Public Library and at Calgary's International Airport.

His works have been purchased by the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa and are held in private and corporate collections nationally and internationally.

## Jack Rigaux

Jacques Rioux is a photographer who has been based in Calgary since completing a Diploma in Applied Photography at the CÉGEP du Vieux Montréal in 1979. In Calgary he participated in various photography and multi-media workshops. He has practised technical, commercial and fine art photography throughout his career. He is perhaps best known for creating extensive photographic series, such as The Calgary Picture Project (late 1980s-1990s) and Western Badlands (1990s).

The Calgary series, in black and white, describes different aspects of the city – whether of urban scenes, or of green spaces – which are both documentary and subjective in approach. Rioux also makes his own presence subtly evident in shadows and shop windows, a self-conscious reference to the genre of portraiture and to the perspective of the photographer.

He has also made photographs that seek to reveal the mystical qualities of Alberta's Badlands, and to share his own sense of discovery when he first saw this landscape.

His black and white, high-contrast photos evoke the eerie qualities of the ancient geological formations, located "at the frontier of the real world," in his words – spaces sacred to the Indigenous populations. Big skies with dramatic cloud formations and textures, and empty roads leading to vast horizons communicate Rioux' sense of connection to the past. He has also photographed similar landscapes in the Southwestern United States.

Rioux's work appears in permanent collections in Canada and Europe, including at Red Deer College, the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, the Glenbow Museum, Calgary; the National Gallery, and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa; the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; as well as in galleries in Luxembourg and Belgium.

## John Snow

John Harold Thomas Snow was raised between Vancouver, BC, England, UK, Olds, AB, and Innisfail, AB. At age 15 he told his father he wanted either to be a banker or a painter, and had successful careers as both. In 1928 he joined the Royal Bank of Canada, first in Bowden, AB, then in Calgary, from which he retired after 43 years at age 60. His time with RBC was interrupted only once, with his enlistment and overseas tour during World War II from 1940-1945.

Once back in Calgary, Snow began studying life drawing under Maxwell Bates and experimenting with woodblock printing techniques. In 1953, Snow and Bates rescued two decommissioned lithography printing presses and several old limestone blocks from the Western Printing and Lithography Company, and Snow quickly established himself both as a master lithographer and an instrumental mentor to colleagues and

new artists. He exhibited nationally and internationally during his lifetime in print and graphics biennials, as well as in solo and group gallery shows. His landscapes, still lifes, florals, and portraits in lithography, watercolour, oil, mixed media, concrete sculpture, textiles, and intaglio relief helped usher Alberta into the modernist period.

Snow worked diligently and prolifically until 1992 and died peacefully in 2004. The awards bestowed upon him are numerous; notable among them are the Salon des Beaux Arts, Paris (1965), an honorary Doctorate from the University of Calgary (1984), the Alberta Achievement Award (1984), and the Alberta Order of Excellence (1996). His work is held in the collections of the Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery, the Glenbow Museum, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Alberta Government House Foundation, and the National Gallery of Canada. In 2001, Snow's two-storey home in Lower Mount Royal (Calgary), where he lived and worked for nearly 50 years, was purchased by Calgary author Jackie Flanagan to accommodate writers who took part in the Markin Flanagan Distinguished Writers Programme. As of 2010, the John Snow House is administered by The New Gallery. It holds their resource centre (a combined library and archive), hosts an artist-in-residence program, and is available for community events.

## Bev Tosh

The daughter of a New Zealand WW II pilot stationed in Canada and his Canadian bride, Bev Tosh may be best known for her series on the theme of war brides, a vanishing and under-appreciated generation. She spent her early childhood in New Zealand but returned to Canada with her mother and sister at the age of nine, later earning a BA in Fine Art and Psychology from the University of Saskatchewan in 1968. She

## Artist Biographies/Statements

went on to gain a Diploma with Distinction from ACAD in 1985, and an MFA in Painting from the University of Calgary in 1987. She then established herself as a figurative painter and a lecturer at ACAD and the University of Calgary.

Bev has always been interested in the psychology of the figure just below the surface of the skin – or the paint. Her work focuses on women's lives generally, and on rites of passage. She created a series on women surfacing from underwater (part of her thesis exhibition, 1987), rich in symbolic associations. She also produced icon-like paintings of a Russian friend who died of cancer (Heavy Water, 1996). She has been praised for her brushwork, the placement of figures in space, and her sensuality of colour.

The Canadian War Bride series began in 2001 with a portrait (now displayed in the Canadian War Museum) of her mother for her 80th birthday. This blossomed into a major travelling exhibition, One-Way Passage (2005 onwards), still shown nationally and internationally. Bev formed a personal connection with many other former war brides, and produced 48 paintings, representing a fraction of the approximately 48,000 women who came from Europe on 'bride ships', arriving to meet barely-known husbands in an unknown land. The women are depicted in oil on long, narrow planks of plywood, standing shoulder to shoulder, based on photos taken on their wedding day. Small details suggest their individual personalities, reinforced by the irregularities of the wood grain. The exhibit also includes photos and projections, period artifacts, and vials of salt water, representing the tears shed – over homesickness and isolation. This marriage of personal narrative and social history was so popular that Tosh set up a website, [www.warbrides.com](http://www.warbrides.com).

Bev has had numerous solo exhibitions at various Alberta galleries and has participated in group shows nationally and in the US, Japan, India, Russia and the Czech Republic. She is a member of the Alberta Society of Artists and the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts. She is the recipient of the Alumni Legacy Award and the Distinguished Alumni Award of Excellence (both from ACAD), the Alberta Centennial Medal, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Woman of Vision Award (from Global TV and the YWCA).

**Douglas Jones - Biography unavailable**

**Neil McClelland - Biography unavailable**

**Alasdair Monro - Biography unavailable**

**Laura O'Connor - Biography unavailable**

**Marcia Perkins - Biography unavailable**

**Garth Rankin - Biography unavailable**

**Peter Rasmussen -  
Biography unavailable**

**Glen Semple - Biography unavailable**

**Nathalie Shewchuk-Pare - Biography  
unavailable**

**Sharon Simonds Chia -  
Biography unavailable**

## Art History: Still Life Painting: A Survey

The artistic genre explored in the exhibition *...no end to our looking* is the still life. A still life work of art is one depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, whether these are natural (food, flowers, dead animals, plants etc.) or man-made (drinking glasses, books, vases etc.). The English term 'still life' derives from the Dutch word 'stilleven'.



Caravaggio  
*Fruitbasket*, 1595-96  
Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan

Still life paintings had their origins in ancient times. They can be found adorning the interiors of Egyptian tombs and also on ancient Greek vases. Still life or 'low' subjects also survive in mosaic versions and wall paintings at Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Villa Boscoreale. With the fall of Rome still life painting virtually disappeared from European practice. Beginning around 1300 with Giotto and his pupils, still life paintings were revived in the form of painted niches depicting everyday objects on religious wall paintings. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, apart from notable exceptions seen in the works of Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer, however, the still life in Western art remained primarily an adjunct to Christian religious subjects and conveyed religious and allegorical meaning.

**The autonomous still life in painting evolved during the late 16th century.** This was partly due to the development of the tradition, mostly centered in Antwerp, Belgium, of the 'monumental still life'; large paintings that included a great spread of still

life material with figures and often animals. A second and very important reason for this was an explosion of interest in the natural world following explorations in the New World and Asia. These prompted the beginnings of scientific illustration and the classification of specimens and natural objects began to be appreciated as individual objects of study apart from any religious or mythological associations. In addition, wealthy patrons began to collect animal and mineral specimens, creating 'cabinets of curiosities'. These specimens served as models for painters who sought realism and novelty. Shells, insects, exotic fruits and flowers began to be collected and new plants such as the tulip were celebrated in still life painting.



Wall painting  
1st century AD, Pompeii, Italy  
National Archaeological Museum, Naples, Italy

**Still life developed as a separate category of art in the Low Countries (Belgium and the Netherlands) during the last quarter of the 16th century.** The popularity of oil painting on canvas in these regions was important to this development as oil painting permitted greater re-working of a picture and thus finer detail. The Protestant Reformation also had a significant impact on painting in these areas. In the Dutch Reformed Protestant Church



# Still Life Painting: A Survey



Jan Brueghel the Elder  
*Bouquet*, 1599  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

images of religious subjects and religious iconography were forbidden so artists turned to the still life where the tradition of detailed realism and hidden symbols appealed to the growing Dutch middle class, the principal patrons of art in the Netherlands. This direction was furthered by the Dutch mania for horticulture, particularly the tulip. The two views of flowers - as aesthetic objects and as religious symbols - were combined to create a flourishing market for this type of still life. Besides flower paintings, the Flemish and Dutch artists developed a number of specialties in still life paintings. Among these were the *pronkstilleven* (Dutch for 'ostentatious still life'), an ornate style focusing on abundance and diversity of objects. The Dutch also became well known for *vanitas* paintings which feature arrangements of fruit and flowers, books, jewelry, musical and scientific instruments and so on accompanied by symbolic reminders of life's impermanence, such as

skulls. There were also 'breakfast paintings', which represented literal presentations of delicacies that the upper class might enjoy and the *trompe-l'oeil* still life which depicted objects associated with a given profession.

The production of still life works in the low countries was enormous and such works were widely exported and had a tremendous influence on the art of other nations.



Pieter Claesz  
*Still life with Römer, Silver Tazza and Bread Roll*  
Prado Museum, Madrid

**During the 18th century there was a refinement in the still life formulae and the religious and allegorical connotations of still life paintings tended to disappear.**

Also during this time kitchen table paintings came to dominate the genre and artistic concerns focused on depictions of varied colour and form.

**While artistic interpretations of still life objects changed, however, so did the 'val-**

**ue' attached to such paintings. The 18th century witnessed the rise of European Academies which taught the doctrine of the 'hierarchy of genres'. This philosophy taught that a painting's artistic merit was based primarily on its subject. In the Academic system, the highest form of painting consisted of images of historical, Biblical or mythological significance. Still life painting, regarded as simply an art of imitation and viewed as calling for manual skill but no imagination or intellect, was relegated to the very lowest order of artistic recognition.**



Vincent van Gogh  
*Sunflowers*, 1888  
National Gallery of London

**In the 1830s Neoclassicism began to decline in favor and the Realist and Romantic painters which succeeded included still life in their body of works. It was not until the 19th century and the advent of Impressionism and post-impressionism, however, where technique and colour harmony triumphed over subject,**

**that the still life once again became of importance to artists.** With impressionist still life works both allegory and mythological content are completely absent. Instead impressionist artists, intent on exploring new ways of seeing and recording the observable world, focused on experimentation in broad, dabbing brush strokes, tonal values, and colour placement. Still life's focus on the real world thus made it very appealing to painters. Vincent van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' paintings are some of the best known 19th century still life paintings.



Paul Cézanne  
*Still Life with Cherub*, 1895  
Courtauld Institute Galleries, London

The 20th century proved to be an exceptional period of artistic ferment and revolution. Avant-garde movements quickly evolved and overlapped each other in a move towards complete abstraction. During this time the still life, as well as other forms of representational art, continued to adjust to the new trends until the complete abstraction of the mid-20th century removed all recognizable content.



## Still Life Painting: A Survey



Pablo Picasso  
*Compotier avec fruits, violon et verre*, 1912



Marcel Duchamp  
*Fountain*, 1917



Andy Warhol  
*Campbell's Soup Can*

The still life was the perfect genre for Paul Cézanne's explorations in geometric spatial organization. These experiments led directly to the development of cubist still life by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque which achieved goals nearly opposite to those of traditional still life. The flattening of space achieved by the cubists was, in turn, rejected by other artists such as Marcel Duchamp (founder of the Dada Movement) who created 3-dimensional 'Ready Made' still life sculptures.

**Beginning in the 1930s abstract expressionism reduced still life to depictions of form and colour until, by the 1950s, total abstraction dominated the art world. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, the advent of pop art, especially witnessed in the works of Andy Warhol, reversed this trend and created a new form of still life where what was portrayed was less important than what it represented.** The true subject of Warhol's soup cans, for example, was the commodified image of the commercial product represented rather than the physical still life object itself.



Patrick Caulfield  
*Sweet Bowl*, 1967

In the last decades of the 20th century and into the 21st still life imagery has expanded beyond the boundary of a frame. The rise of computer art and digital art has changed the definition and nature of still life to where artists can incorporate the viewer into their work or use 3D computer graphics to visualize and create actual objects.

## Art History: Watercolour Painting

**Watercolour painting is a painting method where the paints are made of pigments suspended in a water-based solution and bound by a colloid agent, such as gum arabic.** The traditional and most common support for watercolour paintings is paper. Other supports include papyrus, bark papers, vellum leather, fabric, wood and canvas. Watercolours are usually translucent and appear luminous because the pigments are laid down in a pure form with few fillers obscuring the pigment colours and the resulting marks are transparent, allowing light to reflect from the supporting surface.

**Watercolour painting has an extremely long history.** Watercolours have been used for manuscript paintings at least since ancient Egyptian times. Watercolours have also been the dominant medium used in Chinese, Korean and Japanese painting for centuries.

The continuous use of watercolours as an art medium in European and western art began in the Renaissance. The German



Albrecht Dürer  
*Hare*, 1502



Northern Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) is generally considered among the earliest practitioners of watercolours in western art. While watercolours came to be used for botanical and wildlife illustrations, however, it was not until the 18th century that watercolours became an acceptable medium for other genres in painting.

**The rise of watercolour painting as a serious artistic endeavour is a result of several factors which came together during the 18th century, particularly in England. One of these was the improvement and commercial development of the materials used.** At first, artists ground their own colours from natural pigments. In the last two decades of the 18th century, however, artists were able to purchase small, hard cakes of soluble watercolour which were invented by William Reeves in 1780. In the 1830s artists could buy moist watercolours in porcelain pans and in 1846 Winsor & Newton introduced moist watercolours in metal tubes.

Improvements were also seen in the type of paper used for watercolour paintings. The late 18th century saw the introduction of wove paper. Compared to earlier papers, wove papers exhibited virtually no impression of their fine, wire-mesh molds. This allowed painters to apply smooth, precise washes of watercolour without interruption.



# Art History: Watercolour Painting

Introduced as early as 1767, wove paper was eagerly sought out by artists and over the course of the 19th century a huge array of watercolour papers of various sizes, textures and surfaces were developed to meet the needs of the medium. By 1850 three distinct paper surfaces were introduced: hot pressed or least textured, suitable for detailed subjects; not pressed, suited to less precise work; and cold pressed or rough, suited to sketchy effects.



William Gilpin  
*Penrith Castle*, 18th Century

**Other factors which influenced the rise of watercolour painting were that, among the elite and aristocratic classes, watercolour painting was seen as one of the adornments of a good education.** During the 18th and 19th centuries the Grand Tour to Italy was undertaken by every fashionable young man of the time and topographical painters, who churned out memento paintings of famous sights in watercolour, came to be much in demand. The creation of such 'tourist' images by professionals also became a personal endeavor. In the late 18th century the English cleric and art critic William Gilpin wrote a series of popular books describing his journeys throughout rural England. Gilpin illustrated his journey's with self-made, picturesque monochrome watercolours of river valleys, ancient castles and abandoned churches and his example popularized watercolours as a form of personal tourist journal.

At the same time, mapmakers, military officers and engineers used watercolours for depicting properties, terrain, fortifications, field geology and for illustrating public works or commissioned projects. Watercolour artists were also part of the geological or archaeological expeditions of the time to document discoveries in the Mediterranean, Asia and the New World.

During the 18th century the combination of these cultural, engineering, scientific, tourist and amateur interests resulted in the celebration and promotion of watercolour as a distinctly English 'national art'.

**The rise of watercolour painting in Britain was closely tied to a growing acceptance in the 18th century of 'landscape' as an appropriate subject for painting.**

In the early years of watercolour landscape development, the art of the landscape grew out of the tradition of topography or 'the portrait of a place'. For early practitioners such as Paul Sandby, creating records of specific places was a major source of employment. From the 1750s drawing increasingly formed part of the education of both gentlemen and ladies and many watercolour painters, who were also drawing masters, encouraged students towards landscape painting.



J.M.W. Turner  
*Nant Peris, Looking towards Snowdon*, 1799

**As the landscape as a subject gained in importance in watercolour painting, artists such as Alexander Cozens divided the subject into three categories: 'composition', 'objects' and 'circumstance'.** 'Circumstance' included such 'themes' as the seasons, times of the day, and atmospheric elements such as fog, rain or clouds with the landscape. 'Circumstance' was further divided into objective studies of weather, as seen in the work of John Constable, or more emotive concerns with atmosphere and light, seen in the work of artists such as JMW Turner. Amateur activity, publishing markets, middle class art collection and 19th century techniques led to the formation of numerous English watercolour painting societies. These societies provided annual exhibitions, buyer markets, and watercolour tutorials which stimulated stylistic advances.

Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th the influence of watercolour painting spread throughout Europe and into North America. In Europe watercolour was important in the work of such artists as Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, Paul Klee and others. In North America important practitioners included John James Audubon, Charles Demuth, Edward Hopper and Georgia O'Keeffe in the United States and Alfred C. Leighton in what is now Alberta.



Paul Sandby (1730-1809)  
*Music by Moonlight*

# Art History: The Art of Photography

Some art works presented in the exhibition *...no end to our looking* are photographic in nature and this exhibition can be a vehicle for understanding photography as a means of artistic expression. Since the early 1970s photography has increasingly been accorded a place in fine art galleries and exhibitions, but what is this medium? How and why did photography develop, how is photography related to artistic pursuits such as painting, and what makes a fine-art photograph different than the 'snapshots' virtually everyone takes with their digital cameras or cell phones?

The following pages briefly examine the history of photography and photographic genres and styles in order to answer the above questions and provide an entry into the photographic works in the exhibition *...no end to our looking*.

*While there is perhaps a province in which the photograph can tell us nothing more than what we see with our own eyes, there is another in which it proves to us how little our eyes permit us to see.*

Dorothea Lange



Image credit: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera>

The word photography derives from the Greek words *phōs* meaning light, and *gráphein* meaning 'to write'. The word was coined by Sir John Herschel in 1839.

Artists and scientists have been interested in the properties of light, chemistry and optics for over 1000 years. In the tenth century the Arab mathematician and scientist Alhazen of Basra invented the first 'camera obscura', a device which demonstrated the behavior of light to create an inverted image

in a darkened room. Artists turned to mathematics and optics to solve problems in perspective.

The development of the *camera obscura* allowed artists to faithfully record the external world. The principle of this device involved light entering a minute hole in a darkened room which formed, on the opposite wall, an inverted image of whatever was outside the room.



Image credits: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera\\_obscura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera_obscura)

The camera obscura, at first actually a room big enough for a man to enter, gradually grew smaller and by the 17th and 18th centuries it was the size of a two foot box which had a lens fitted into one end. By the mid 18th century the camera obscura had become standard equipment for artists.

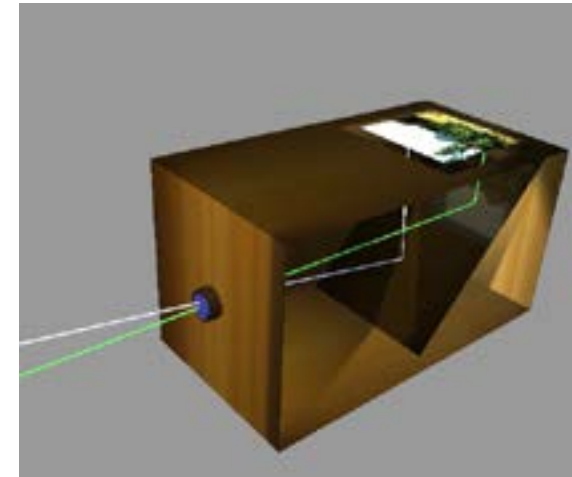


Image credits: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera\\_obscura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera_obscura)

In the early 1700s it was discovered that light not only formed images, but also changed the nature of many substances. The light sensitivity of silver salts, discovered in 1727, opened the way to discover a method to trap the 'elusive image of the camera'.

Developments in optics, and the incentive to find a practical means to capture images produced by the camera obscura, were stimulated by the growth of the middle class in the 18th century which created a demand for portraits at reasonable prices. By the 1800s a number of inventors were working towards a means to obtain an image using light and to fix the image making it permanent.

The first inventor to create a permanent photographic image was Nicéphore Niépce of France in 1826. In 1829 Niépce signed a contract with Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre who, while '...he did not invent photography, made it work, made it popular, and made it his own' (*The Picture History of Photography*, Peter Pollack, pg. 19) In partnership with Louis Daguerre, Niépce refined his silver process and, after his death in 1833, his experiments were furthered by

Daguerre. In 1839 Daguerre announced the invention of the *daguerreotype*, which was immediately patented by the French government and the era of the camera began.

The daguerreotype proved popular in responding to the demand for portraiture emerging from the middle classes during the Industrial Revolution. This demand, which could not be met by oil paintings, added to the push for the development of photography. This push was also the result of the limitations of the daguerreotype, which was a fragile and expensive process and could not be duplicated. Photographers and inventors, then, continued to look for other methods of creating photographs. Ultimately the modern photographic process came about from a series of refinements and improvements in the first 20 years. In 1884 George Eastman of Rochester, New York, developed dry gel on paper, or film, to replace the photographic plate. This was followed in 1888 by his Kodak camera, with the result that anyone could take a photograph. Photography became readily available for the mass-market in 1901 with the introduction of the Kodak Brownie.



Louis Daguerre  
*L'Atelier de l'artiste*, 1837  
Daguerreotype



# Photography History: the Documenty Eye

While early photographers often tried to emulate painting, photography's capacity for recording fact, giving evidence, and presenting a document was what practitioners and their public valued most. This aim of photographers to create a 'real' document, which derived from the genre of realism in painting, resulted in the genre of DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY and is expressed in the exhibition in thw work *Montezuma Suite #19* by Garth Rankin.



*Most art in the world does not have a capital 'A', but is a way of turning everyday objects into personal expressions.*  
Gloria Steinem, American feminist, journalist, 1934

Garth Rankin  
*Montezuma Suite #19*, 2000  
Silver gelatin print  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

**Documentary photography** has been defined as '...a depiction of the real world by a photographer whose intent is to communicate something of importance - to make a comment - that will be understood by the viewer.' (*Time Life Library of Photography*, pg. 12) In such photography the photographer attempts to produce truthful, objective, and usually candid photography of a particular subject, most often pictures of people.

**As a genre of photography, documentary photography developed in three general stages.** While the actual term 'documentary photography' was coined in the 1930s to describe a category of photography which comments on reality, photographs meant to accurately describe otherwise unknown, hidden, forbidden, or difficult-to-access places or circumstance date to the earliest daguerreotypes and calotype surveys of the ruins of the Near East, Egypt, the historic architecture of Europe, and the American wilderness.

**This desire to create a permanent record of familiar and exotic scenes and the appearance of friends and family marked the first stage of documentary photography.**

As expressed by photographer John Thomson in the 1860s...*the photograph affords the nearest approach that can be made toward placing (the reader) actually before the scene which is represented*  
*Documentary Photography, Time Life Library of Photography*, pg. 16

At this early stage in photography's development, photographs were seen as miraculous, enabling the human eye to see things it did not always notice or would never see. **Photography took over the concerns with realism that had been developing in painting** and the camera was used mainly as a copier of nature. This faith in the camera as a literal recorder gave rise to the belief that the camera does not lie.



Dorothea Lange  
*Migrant Mother*, 1936

The development of new reproduction methods for photography provided impetus for the next era of documentary photography in the late 1880s and reaching into the early decades of the 20th century. This period saw a decisive shift in documentation from antiquarian and landscape subjects to that of the city and its crises. Once the camera had proven itself as a tool for showing things as they were, it was inevitably thought of as a device for changing things to the way they ought to be. **In this second stage photographers discovered the camera's power to hold up a mirror to society and photographs could thus become social documents. This visual comment on the joys and pains of society has, to a great extent, occupied documentary photographers ever since.**

The photographer most directly associated with the birth of this new form of documentary was the journalist and urban social reformer Jacob Riis who documented the slums of New York in his historic book *How*

*the Other Half Lives* in 1890. Riis's documentary photography was passionately devoted to changing the inhumane conditions under which the poor lived in the rapidly-expanding urban-industrial centers.

In the 1930s the Great Depression brought a new wave of documentary, both of rural and urban conditions. During this period the Farm Security Administration in the United States enlisted a band of young photographers to document the state of the nation during the depression. Among these were Walker Evans, Ben Shahn, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, and Carl Mydans. This generation of documentary photographers is generally credited for codifying the documentary code of accuracy mixed with impassioned advocacy, with the goal of arousing public commitment to social change. The photographers in the FSA project were the first ever to be called documentary photographers and their work wrote the idea of documentary photography as a means of examining society large in peoples minds.

During the Second World War and postwar eras, documentary photography increasingly became subsumed under the rubric of photojournalism. This led to the development of a different attitude among documentary photographers in the 1950s, a new generation which did not feel bound by any mission except to see life clearly. As expressed by the photographer Gary Winogrand:

*The true business of photography is to capture a bit of reality (whatever that is) on film.*  
*Time Life Library of Photography*, pg. 164

**According to photographers in this group, their work made no effort to judge but instead to express, and they were committed not to social change but to formal and iconographical investigation of the social experience of modernity.**

# Photography: The Modern View

As a means of artistic expression, modernism or modernist abstraction is expressed in a number of ways. As concerns photography, modernist photography is that which is most concerned with FORMAL matters. This approach is most clearly demonstrated in the exhibition in the photograph *Leaves in a Bowl* by James Daubney. Like the other approaches to photography examined, modernism in photography has its roots in movements first expressed in the field of painting.

In the early days of photography, many photographic artists, concerned with 'picturesque imaginings' and trying to make photographs appear like paintings, focused their attention on views of nature where mood and soft atmosphere prevailed. **After World War 1, however, the modernism that was being expressed in painting began to influence photographic artists. By 1916 the view among photographers had shifted to exchange pictorialist charm for a more sharply focused view bringing elements of cubist abstraction, stark formality, geometry and metaphysical concerns to work.** Photographic artists, working towards a consciously aesthetic end, attempted from WW1 to the early 1970s to invest their works with **timelessness**: to transcend any 'sense of place' and to concentrate attention on formal issues of line, shape, tone and texture. **This was the establishment of photography based first on how things looked, their shape and their form, then on their meaning both real and metaphoric.** Modernist photographs came to be characterized by sharply defined 'straight' photographs rather than the soft-focus 'romantic' images of the nineteenth century.

The most important early practitioners of this approach were Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946), Paul Strand (1890-1976), Edward Weston (1886-1958) and Ansel Adams (1902-1984). Strand, who was a follower of Stieglitz, believed that the photographic artist was a 'researcher using materials and techniques to dig into the truth and meaning of the world.' (*History of Photography*, pg. 132) In his work Strand looked to the commonplace as his subject matter, seeking



Paul Strand  
New York



Paul Strand  
Wall Street, 1915

in everyday scenes and objects a purity of form. Edward Weston echoed this approach, viewing the world as a source of objects that might give of themselves profoundly when photographed, believing that his pictures 'should be the thing itself and yet more than the thing'. (*History of Photography*, pg. 134)

Many of these early modernist photographers believed in and practiced what has been termed 'straight' photography which refers to the creation of an unmanipulated image. As expressed by Edward Weston in 1923;

*(The camera) should be used for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the thing itself, whether it be polished steel or palpitating flesh...I feel definite in my belief that the approach to photography is through realism.*



Edward Weston  
Nautilus, 1927

Later photographers such as Ansel Adams, however, devoted a great deal of time and energy in both recording and developing their imagery to achieve the desired affect. As early as 1922 Weston developed a technique called 'previsualizing' where he worked with a view camera to conceive the final result and then controlled tones and



Ansel Adams  
Church, Taos Pueblo, 1942

textures through exposures and development. This technique was advanced to a finely tuned and scientific means of technical and aesthetic control by Ansel Adams. By 1942 Adams had developed previsualization into a means of formal control called the 'zone system'. This method of adjusting exposure and development allowed photographers to replace the intuition Weston had used with measurable and controllable values that were expressive and subjective rather than actual and allowed for a personal interpretation which realized the early pictorialists dream of having a painter's finesse combined with the perfectionalist desire to celebrate technology.



# Art Styles: Realism

**Realism in the visual arts is a term which has four main meanings.** In the most general sense, the term is applied to works which depict scenes from the life of the poorer classes or that could be described as 'ugly' rather than scenes of conventional beauty. In a more specific sense the term refers to works that are the opposite of 'abstract' or works where subjects are not distorted. 'Realism' is linked closely to the idea of 'naturalism' where the subjects in works aspire to be like natural objects. Finally, realistic is the opposite of idealized and almost the equivalent of 'individualized'. In the broadest sense, realism in a work of art exists wherever something has been well observed and accurately depicted, even if the work as a whole does not strictly conform to the conditions of realism.

The quest for 'realism' in the visual arts has been a current in the arts since very early times. While the art of ancient Egypt, for example, had very rigid and artificial conventions for the depiction of important personages, minor figures and animals were often very well-observed and lifelike. This same concern for 'realism' is also witnessed in sculptures and paintings from ancient Greece and Rome.



**In the Early Renaissance, the development of a system of linear perspective in Italy and the inclusion of naturalistic detail in Early Netherlandish painting both contributed to the advance of realism in Western painting. One of the earliest artists to take advantage of these innovations was the Northern European master, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528). Dürer's watercolours mark him as one of the first European landscape artists, while his ambitious woodcuts revolutionized the potential of that medium.**

**While Dürer is most famous for illustrating Biblical stories, he was also one of the first artists to view animals as a subject worthy of attention.** At the beginning of the 16th century the natural world of animals and plants was becoming a focus of interest as explorers and travelers were returning from distant lands with examples and illustrations of new species.

Dürer's famous woodcut of a rhinoceros is an excellent example of his interest in the natural world. Dürer based his image on a written description and brief sketch by an unknown artist of an Indian rhinoceros that had arrived in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1515. Dürer never actually saw the animal, the first living example of a rhinoceros in Europe since Roman times, which explains some of the anatomical errors in his work. Despite this, the image has such force that it remains one of Dürer's best known and was still used in some German school science textbooks as late as the 19th century. Dürer's watercolour *A Young Hare* of 1502 offers the viewer an even better example of this artist's skill in capturing the natural world. This work has been described as a virtuoso piece of watercolour illustration, particularly as it is believed that the image was based on a stuffed model, and has been frequently reproduced.



Rosa Bonheur  
*The Horse Fair*, 1852-1855  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

**Realism as a movement in European art continued to grow in importance and became a primary aim of artists throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. In the 19th century realism reached its height in the works of French artists such as Rosa Bonheur, Gustave Courbet and Honoré Daumier and also found expression in works by a number of British and American artists of the time.**

Courbet led the Realism movement in France and in 1855 wrote a Realist manifesto for the introduction to the catalogue of an independent, personal exhibition, echoing the tone of the period's political manifestos. As expressed by Courbet in this manifesto: *The title of Realist was thrust upon me just as the title of Romantic was imposed upon the men of 1830. Titles have never given a true idea of things: if it were otherwise, the works would be unnecessary. Without expanding on the greater or lesser accuracy of a name which nobody, I should hope, can really be expected to understand, I will limit myself to a few words of elucidation in order to cut short the misunderstandings. I have studied the art of the ancients and the art of the moderns, avoiding any preconceived system and without prejudice.*

*I no longer wanted to imitate the one than to copy the other; nor, furthermore, was it my intention to attain the trivial goal of "art for art's sake". No! I simply wanted to draw forth, from a complete acquaintance with tradition, the reasoned and independent consciousness of my own individuality. To know in order to do, that was my idea. To be in a position to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my time, according to my own estimation; to be not only a painter, but a man as well; in short, to create living art – this is my goal.*

**Despite the movements popularity on both sides of the Atlantic, however, in the later half of the 19th century developments in technology, changing artistic aims, and artistic influences from outside Europe had the affect of transforming western art and lessening the hold realism had on artists.** The development of photography, for example, had a profound affect on artists as it was believed that the camera could perfectly record the world and so the artist no longer needed to present reality. While new artistic styles developed, however, realism continued as a means of expression throughout both the 20th century and into the 21st.



## Art Styles: Contemporary Realism

Some of the artists featured in the Travelling Exhibition *...no end to our looking* utilize meticulous detail and a heightened sense of reality to draw viewers into their works. As such, the works created by these artists can be placed within the art style of Contemporary Realism.



Mary Pratt  
*Rolls Cooling, Glazed with Stars, 2012*  
Oil on canvas  
Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto, CAN

Contemporary Realism is a North American style of painting which came into existence during the 1960s and 1970s. The term Contemporary Realism encompasses all post-1970 sculptors and painters whose aim is to create representational art where the object is to portray the 'real' and not the 'ideal'. Artists classified as Contemporary Realists form a disparate group but share a desire to work in more traditional forms of representational art. Some focus on naturalistic imagery while others share approaches and methods of Photorealism. Others, meanwhile, continue to follow the legacy of 19th century American realist painting which attempted to portray the cultural exuberance of the figurative American landscape and the life of ordinary Americans at home. The American Realists introduced modernism and what it means to be in the present into American art, concepts which would have a conceptual influence on later art movements such as Pop Art.



Edward Hopper  
*New York Interior, 1921*  
Oil on canvas  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

## Art Styles: Photorealism and Hyperrealism

Some of the works in the exhibition *...no end to our looking* can be described as examples of Contemporary Realism. Artists within this style often share approaches and methods borrowed from the styles of photorealism and its off-shoot, hyperrealism.

**Photorealism** is a genre in art where an artist studies a photograph and then attempts to reproduce the image as realistically as possible in another medium (painting, drawing or other graphic media).



Jackson Pollack  
*No. 31*  
Genre: Abstract  
Expressionism

Photorealism evolved from Pop Art in New York during the late 1960s and, like Pop Art, was a reaction against Abstract Expressionism and other abstract movements. As a genre it was also a reaction to the overwhelming abundance of photographic media which threatened to lessen the value of imagery

in art. While photorealists create paintings that are as lifelike as possible and mimic photographs, they are also trying to reclaim and exalt the value of an image.

In photorealist works, technical precision and sharp result are at the center of the work. Photorealists, in contrast to abstract expressionist artists, reintroduced the importance of process, deliberate planning and draftsmanship into the making of art. For such artists, the traditional techniques of academic art are of great significance and meticulous craftsmanship is prized over spontaneity and improvisation.



Chuck Close  
*Phil, 1969*  
Whitney Museum of Art, New York



Dennis Peterson  
Genre: Photorealism



# Art Styles: Photorealism and Hyperrealism

Photorealist painting cannot exist without the photograph as change and movement must be frozen in time so that objects can be accurately represented by the artist. Photorealists gather their imagery with the camera and photograph and transfer the image onto canvas. The resulting images are often direct copies of the original, though usually larger, and the photorealist style is tight and precise, often with an emphasis on imagery that requires a great degree of technical prowess and virtuosity to simulate. For this reason reflections and the geometric rigor of man-made environments are very popular.



Mary Pratt  
Canadian artist

**Hyperrealism builds on the techniques and aesthetic principles of photorealism.**

It contrasts the literal approach of photorealist works, however, in that while hyperrealism often uses photographic images as a reference source, hyperrealist works are usually more narrative and emotive. Photorealist artists tend to imitate photographic images and often omit human emotions, political values and narrative elements. Hyperrealists, on the other hand, incorporate emotional, social, cultural and political thematic elements as an extension of the visual illusion.

In essence, the difference between the two genre is that hyperrealism is about something more than technique. While photorealists distance themselves from adding emotion and intent into their work, hyperrealist artists insert narration and feelings into their paintings and drawings. This allows for a less strict interpretation of images and hyperrealist artists will construct their works from a variety of images and details culled from multiple sources.



Charles Bell  
*Circus Act*, 1995  
Smithsonian American Art Museum

The focus on the photograph and the attention to detail result in an absence of individualism in photorealist works and gives such works a visual coolness and emotional detachment.

Though still a practiced genre in the visual arts, the height of photorealism was in the 1970s. **In the early 21st century a movement called Hyperrealism came to the fore and it is this genre that is most influential in the works in the exhibition ...no end to our looking.**

# Art Styles: Expressionism

**Expressionism** refers to an aesthetic style of expression in art history and criticism that developed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Artists affiliated with this movement deliberately turned away from the representation of nature as a primary purpose of art and broke with the traditional aims of European art in practice since the Renaissance. In the exhibition the influence of expressionism is witnessed in the work of Nathalie Shewchuk-Pare.



Nathalie Shewchuk-Pare  
*Coffee Cup #1*, 1998  
Acrylic on masonite  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

**Expressionist artists proclaimed the direct rendering of emotions and feelings as the only true goal of art.**

The formal elements of line, shape and colour were to be used entirely for their expressive possibilities. In European art, landmarks of this movement were violent colours and exaggerated lines that helped contain intense emotional expression. Balance of design was often ignored to convey sensations more forcibly and DISTORTION became an important means of emphasis. The most important forerunner of Expressionism was **Vincent van Gogh** (1853-1890). Van Gogh used colour and

line to consciously exaggerate nature 'to express...man's terrible passions.' **This was the beginning of the emotional and symbolic use of colour and line where the direction given to a line is that which will be most expressive of the feeling which the object arouses in the artist.**

The Norwegian artist **Edvard Munch** (1863-1944) was also extremely influential in the development of expressionist theory. In his career Munch explored the possibilities of violent colour and linear distortions with which to express the elemental emotions of anxiety, fear, love and hatred. In his works, such as *The Scream*, Munch came to realize the potentialities of graphic techniques with their simple directness.



Edvard Munch  
*The Scream*, 1893

By 1905, Expressionist groups appeared almost simultaneously in both Germany and France. Only English painters stood aside from the movement as Expressionism, with its lack of restraint, was not congenial to English taste. Between the world wars expressionist ideas were grafted on to other art movements such as Cubism and evolved into other forms such as Abstract Expressionism and Tachisme.



## Art Styles: Abstraction

*Of all the arts, abstract painting is the most difficult. It demands that you know how to draw well, that you have a heightened sensitivity for composition and for colours, and that you be a true poet. This last is essential.* Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)

**Abstract Art** is a term applied to 20th century art styles created in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. **Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.** Characteristics of abstraction are seen in the works of Alasdair Monro and John Snow in the exhibition.

**Like all painting, abstract painting is not a unified practice.** Rather, the term 'abstraction' covers two main, distinct tendencies. **The first involves the reduction of natural appearances to simplified forms.** Reduction may lead to the depiction of the essential or generic forms of things by eliminating particular and accidental variations. Reduction can also involve the creation of art which works away from the individual and particular with a view to creating an independent construct of shapes and colours having aesthetic appeal in their own right. **The second tendency in abstraction involves the construction of art objects from non-representational basic forms.** These objects are not created by abstracting from natural appearances but by **building up with non-representational shapes and patterns.** In other words, in this mode, abstract works are ones without a recognizable subject and do not relate to anything external or try to 'look like something'. Instead, the colour and form (and often the materials and support) are the subject of the abstract painting.

Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction



Alasdair Monro  
*Still Life in Four*, 1995  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer's perception. As described by Roald Nasgaard in his work Abstract Painting in Canada:

*The first message of an abstract work is the immediate reality of our perception of it as an actual object in and of themselves, like other things in the world, except that they are uniquely made for concentrated aesthetic experience.* (pg. 11)

## Art History: Abstraction

It is generally stated that abstraction in western art was developed in the early decades of the 20th century. The practice of abstracting from reality, however, is virtually as old as mankind itself. Early hunters and gatherers, as seen in the cave painting image above, created marvelous simplified or stylized images of the animals they depended on, both spiritually and in terms of sustenance, in caves throughout the world.

The artworks produced by non-European cultures, as seen in the two examples above and whether pre-historic or contemporary in nature, also provide examples of various degrees of abstraction in both two and three dimensional forms. The development of abstraction in European art in the early 20th century was, in fact, fostered by the study of such artworks by European artists such as Pablo Picasso.



Clay Jaguar  
200 BC - 600 AD  
Monte Alban, Mesoamerica



Bison Painting, 18,000 - 13,000 years B.P.  
Altamira Cave, Spain



# Art History: Abstraction

## Abstraction in European Art History

**Wassily Kandinsky** (1866-1944) is usually credited with making the first entirely non-representational painting in 1910. **The history of abstraction in European art, however, begins before Kandinsky in the later decades of the 19th century with the work of the French Impressionist artists** such as Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne and Georges Seurat. While the work of these artists was grounded in visible reality, their methods of working and artistic concerns began the process of breaking down the academic restrictions concerning what was acceptable subject matter in art, how artworks were produced and, most importantly, challenged the perception of what a painting actually was.



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Composition VII*, 1913  
The Tretyalov Gallery, Moscow



Paul Cézanne  
*Maison Arbie*, 1890-1894  
The Tretyalov Gallery, Moscow



Claude Monet  
*Haystacks (sunset)*, 1890-1891  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



George Seurat  
*A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884-1886

Radicals in their time, early Impressionists broke the rules of academic painting. They began by giving colours, freely brushed, primacy over line. They also took the act of painting out of the studio and into the modern world. Painting realistic scenes of modern life, they portrayed overall visual effects instead of details. They used short “broken” brush strokes of mixed and pure unmixed colour, not smoothly blended or shades as was customary, in order to achieve the effect of intense colour vibration.

**The vibrant colour used by the Impressionist artists was adopted by their successors, the Fauve artists.** The Fauves were modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by the Impressionists. This group, which basically operated from 1905 to 1907, was led by Henri Matisse and André Derain.



Henri Matisse  
*Harmony in Red*, 1908

The paintings of the Fauve artists were characterized by seemingly wild brush work and strident colours and, in their focus on colour over line and drawing, the subjects of their paintings came to be characterized by a high degree of simplification and abstraction.

**While the Impressionists and Fauve artists are the direct ancestors of the abstract movement in 20th century art, the real creator of abstraction was Pablo Picasso.** Picasso used primitive art from Africa and Oceania as a ‘battering ram’ against the classical conception of beauty. Picasso made his first cubist paintings, such as *Les Femmes d’Alger*, based on Cézanne’s idea that all depiction of nature can be reduced to three solids: cube, sphere and cone. Together with Georges Braque, Picasso continued his experiments and invented **facet** or **analytical cubism**. As expressed in the *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*, Picasso created works which can no longer be read as images of the external world but as worlds of their own.



Pablo Picasso  
*Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*, 1910



André Derain  
*Charing Cross Bridge, London* 1906  
National Gallery of Art, Washington



# Art History: Abstraction

Fragmented and redefined, the images preserved remnants of Renaissance principles of perspective as **space lies behind the picture plane** and has no visible limits. By 1911 Picasso and Georges Braque developed what is known as **Synthetic Cubism** which introduced collage into art making. Through this process these artists introduced a whole new concept of space into art making.

In synthetic cubism, **the picture plane lies in front of the picture plane and the picture is recognized as essentially a flat object**. This re-definition of space, so different from the Renaissance principle of three-dimensional illusion that had dominated academic teaching for centuries, would have a profound effect on the development of abstraction in art and was a true landmark in the history of painting.

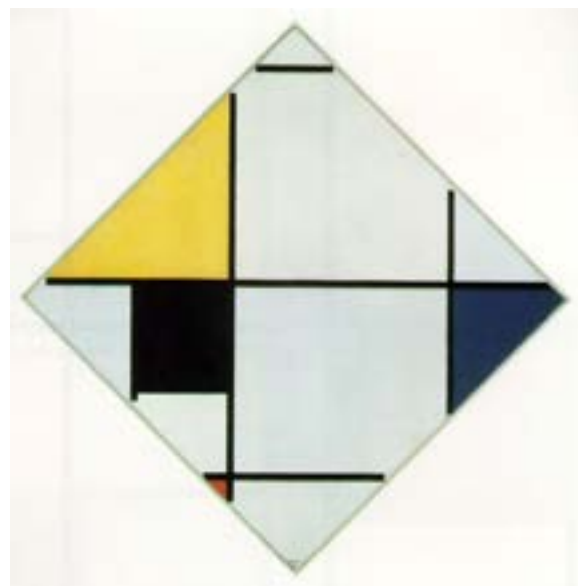
**Influenced by the practices of Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism, artists gradually developed the idea that colour, line, form and texture could be the actual subjects of a painting and formed the essential characteristics of art. Adhering to this, Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian developed the first pure abstract works in 20th century art.**

**For both Kandinsky and Mondrian, abstraction was a search for truths behind appearances, expressed in a pure visual vocabulary stripped of representational references.**

**Wassily Kandinsky** (1866-1944) was born in Moscow. Originally trained in law and economics, Kandinsky started painting at the age of 30 and, in 1896, moved to Germany to study art full-time. After a brief return to Russia (1914-1921) Kandinsky returned to Germany where he taught at the Bauhaus school of art and architecture until it was closed by the Nazis in 1933. He then moved to France where he remained for the rest of his life.



Pablo Picasso  
*Still Life with a Bottle of Rum*, 1911



Piet Mondrian  
*Lozenge Composition with Yellow, Black, Blue, Red and Gray*, 1921



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Composition X*, 1939

Kandinsky's creation of purely abstract work followed a long period of development and maturation of theoretical thought based on his personal artistic experience. At first influenced by both pointillism and the Fauve artists, by 1922 geometrical elements had taken on increasing importance in his paintings. Kandinsky was also extremely influenced by music as he considered music abstract by nature as it does not try to represent the exterior world but rather to express in an immediate way the inner feelings of the human soul. He was also influenced by the theories of Theosophy expressed by H.P. Blavatsky. These theories, which had a tremendous influence on many artists during the 1920s, postulated that creation was a geometrical progression beginning with a single point. Kandinsky's mature paintings focus on geometric forms and the use of colour as something autonomous and apart from a visual description of an object or other form and through relinquishing outer

appearances he hoped to more directly communicate feelings to the viewer.

**The most radical abstractionist of the early 20th century was Piet Mondrian** (1872-1944). Born in Amersfoort, the Netherlands, Mondrian began his career as a primary teacher. While teaching he also practiced painting and these early works, while definitely representational in nature, show the influence various artistic movements such as pointillism and fauvism had on him. Mondrian's art, like Kandinsky's, was also strongly influenced by the theosophical movement and his work from 1908 to the end of his life involved a search for the spiritual knowledge expressed by theosophist theory.

In 1911 Mondrian moved to Paris and came under the influence of Picasso's cubism. While cubist influences can be seen in his works from 1911 to 1914, however, unlike the Cubists Mondrian attempted to reconcile his painting with his spiritual pursuits. In this pursuit he began to simplify elements in his paintings further than the cubists had done until he had developed a completely non-representational, geometric style. In this work Mondrian did not strive for pure lyrical emotion as Kandinsky did. Rather, his goal was pure reality defined as equilibrium achieved through the balance of unequal but equivalent oppositions. By 1919 Mondrian began producing the grid-based paintings for which he became renowned and this subject motivated his art practice for the rest of his life.

## Conclusion:

**Abstraction in the visual arts has taken many forms over the 20th and into the 21st century. Among these modes are Colour Field Painting, Lyrical Abstraction, Abstract Expressionism/Action Painting, Op Art, and Post-painterly Abstraction. Whatever the tendency in abstraction, it is characteristic of most modes of abstraction that they abandon or subordinate the traditional function of art to portray perceptible reality and emphasize its function to create a new reality for the viewer's perception.**



# Art Processes: Watercolour Painting

The exhibition *...no end to our looking* features some works which make use of watercolour paints in their creation. What follows is a general list of watercolour terms and techniques for use with beginner watercolourists.

## Techniques:

### Washes

The most basic watercolour technique is the flat wash. It is produced by first wetting the area of paper to be covered by the wash, then mixing sufficient pigment to easily fill the entire area. Once complete the wash should be left to dry and even itself out. A variation on the basic wash is the graded wash. This technique requires the pigment to be diluted lightly with more water for each horizontal stroke. The result is a wash that fades out gradually and evenly.



graded wash

### Wet in Wet

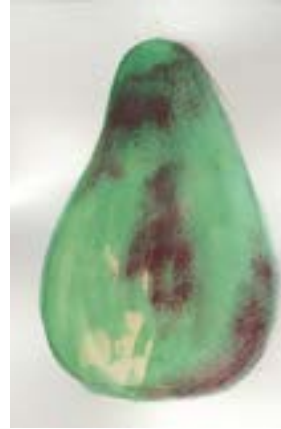
Wet in wet is simply the process of applying pigment to wet paper. The results vary from soft undefined shapes to slightly blurred marks, depending on how wet the paper is. The wet in wet technique can be applied over existing washes provided the area is thoroughly dry. Simply wet the paper with a large brush and paint into the dampness. The soft marks made by wet in wet painting are great for subtle background regions of the painting such as skies.



wet in wet

### Dry Brush

Dry brush is almost opposite to wet in wet techniques. Here a brush loaded with pigment (and not too much water) is dragged over completely dry paper. The marks produced by this technique are very crisp and hard edged. They will tend to come forward in your painting and so are best applied around the centre of interest.



Dry Brush

### Lifting off

Most watercolour pigment can be dissolved and lifted off after it has dried. The process involves wetting the area to be removed with a brush and clean water and then blotting the pigment away with a tissue. Using strips of paper to mask areas of pigment will produce interesting hard edged lines and shapes.



lifting off

### Dropping in Colour

This technique is simply the process of introducing a colour to a wet region of the painting and allowing it to blend, bleed and feather without interruption. The result is sometimes unpredictable but yields interesting and vibrant colour gradations that can't be achieved by mixing the pigment on the palette.



Dropping in colour

### Tips when painting:

- Always mix more paint than you need.
- Normally, the lighter tones are painted first and the dark tones last.
- When applying washes have all your colours ready mixed and keep the brush full and watery.
- Work with the largest brush that is practical for each part of the painting.
- When working wet in wet, don't have the brush wetter than the paper or ugly "runbacks" will result.
- Have tissue handy to lift off wrongly placed colour.
- Test for tone and colour on a scrap piece of paper before committing it to your painting. If things go wrong and colour can't be mopped straight with a tissue, it's usually better to let the work dry before attempting a rescue.
- When lifting off a colour, gently wet the area and immediately dab with a tissue. Do this four or five times then let the area dry again before lifting off any more.
- Do lots of doodles—simple watercolour sketches such as trees, skies and rocks. This will build up confidence and get you looking at subjects to study their form.
- Copy parts of a painting that appeal to you until you can get the effect.
- When practicing a passage for a painting, use the same paper that the finished work will be painted on.

\*credit: theresacerceo.wordpress.com/2009/03

# Printmaking Processes: Lithography

Prints of all kinds are usually produced on paper and can involve the production of many identical copies of a single work by means of partially mechanical methods. The main types of printmaking may be classified as: Relief; Intaglio; Surface or Planographic and other printing and mixed media techniques. In relief and planographic prints, the ink sits on top of the matrix, while in intaglio prints, the ink sits below the surface of the matrix. The main types of relief prints are woodcut; linocut; and wood-engraving. The intaglio techniques are all forms of engraving on metal, usually copper. The main intaglio processes are line or copper engraving; dry-point; etching; stipple and crayon-engraving; mezzotinting; and aquatint and related processes.

In the exhibition *...no end to our looking* one example of printmaking can be found in the work of John Snow. This is the technique known as Lithography.

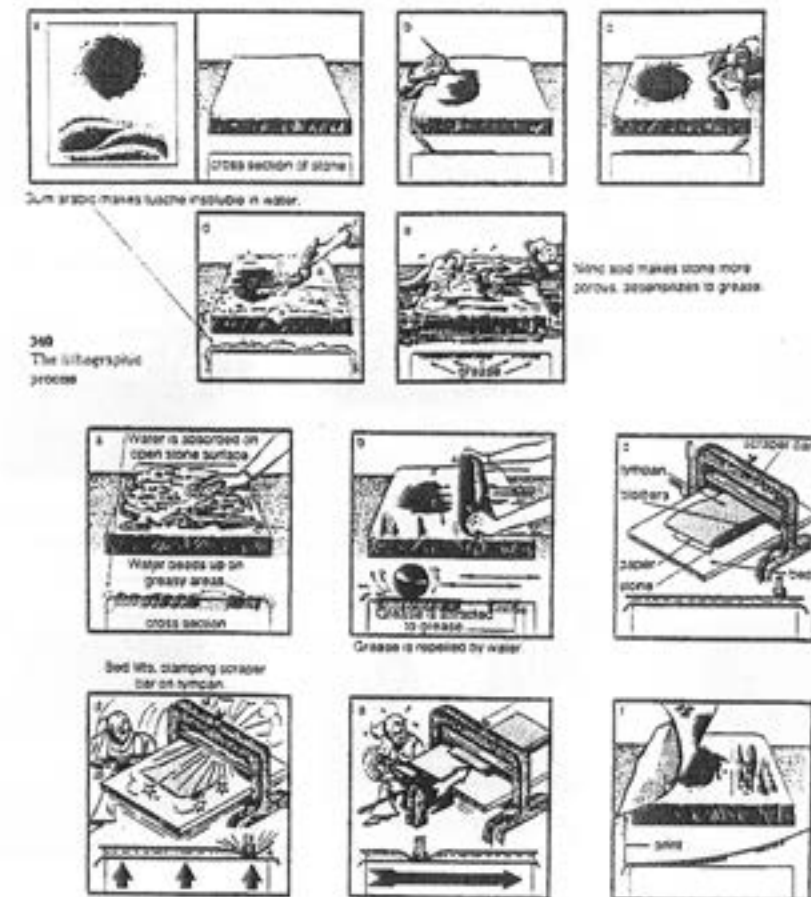


John Snow  
*Bowl of Orange Flowers*, 1979  
Lithograph on paper  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

# Printmaking Processes: Planographic

(3) **PLANOGRAPHIC:** The one major process which involves no cutting into block or plate, and therefore no "engraving" in the proper sense, is lithography, which is usually executed on a thick slab of stone, although zinc is also used since it is lighter and less fragile. (Sometimes lithography done with zinc and aluminum plates are referred to respectively as zincography and algraphy.) The whole technique, invented in 1798 by Alois Senefelder, is based on the fact that water runs off a greasy surface. The design is drawn or painted on the stone with a greasy chalk and then the stone is wetted. When the greasy ink is rolled on the stone it will not take on the wet parts but it sticks on the parts which are already greasy where the water has run off. The new process was taken up by several 19th century artists, including Delacroix, Gericault, Daumier, Manet and others.

This basic process is very widely used for posters and other forms of commercial art, and there is almost no limit to the number of prints which can be taken. Commercial lithography is a photo-mechanical process which involves developing a photographic image on a special light-sensitive surface. The image produced will form the greasy surface necessary to the technique. The plate, which may be wrapped around a cylinder, is passed over water and then inked, but instead of printing directly on paper, the plate is used to make an impression on a rubber "blanket", from which the design is transferred to paper. (Thus the process is known as offset lithography.)





# VISUAL LEARNING & HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

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Neil McClelland  
*12 O'Clock*, 2003  
Oil on board  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

## What is Visual Learning?

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time. How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to understanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a considered response to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

### STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE

The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation. What do you see and what do you think of it?

### STEP 2: DESCRIPTION

Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What colours do you see?
- What shapes are most noticeable?
- What objects are most apparent?
- Describe the lines in the work.

### STEP 3: ANALYSIS

Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground? Land? Sky?
- Why are there these differences? What effect do these differences create?
- What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

### STEP 4: INTERPRETATION

Exploring what the work might mean or be about.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- How does this work make you feel? Why?
- What word would best describe the mood of this work?
- What is this painting/ photograph/ sculpture about?
- Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

### STEP 5: INFORMATION

Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.

#### Questions to Guide Inquiry:

- What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?
- What art style and medium does the artist use?
- What artist's work is this artist interested in?
- What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?
- What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?
- What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

### STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION

What do I think about this work?  
(Reaching a considered response)

© Virginia Stephen

# Elements of Composition Tour

**LINE:** An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume.

See: *Leaves in a Bowl* by James Daubney



**What types of line are there? How can you describe line? What are some of the characteristics of a line?**

**Width:** thick, thin, tapering, uneven

**Length:** long, short, continuous, broken

**Feeling:** sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth

**Focus:** sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy

**Direction:** horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, perpendicular, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

**Now describe the lines you see in this image. Follow the lines in the air with your finger. What quality do the lines have? How do the lines operate in the image?**

This image is composed of thin to medium thick lines. Some of these are diagonal while others are curved. Diagonal and curved lines

give form/shape to the vase while curved lines lead the eye from the stems to the leaves and form the shapes of the leaves.

**Line can also be a word used in the composition, meaning the direction the viewer's eye travels when looking at a picture. How do lines in this image help your eye travel within the composition? Where does the eye start? Where does it finish?**

Curved lines form the large shapes of the leaves. These shapes are repeated and this repetition moves the eye around the composition. The diagonal structure of the stems of the leaves direct the eye to the center of the vase while the diagonal and curved decorative lines of the vase create the vase's shape and move the eye around this shape.

**SPACE:** Space is the relative position of one three-dimensional object to another. It is the area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional work.

See: *Untitled* by Marcia Perkins



**What do you see in this work? What is closest to you? Farthest away? How do you know this?**

In this work we see a variety of objects placed on a table or desk. In a painting the bottom of the painting is closest to the viewer. As a result, the 'paper' is closest to the viewer. The lines in the paper direct the eye to the mid ground of the composition - to the duck and chick. These are shown in their entirety and block parts of the other objects, showing that the duck and chick are closer than the other objects. The red figure on the left, meanwhile, blocks part of the blue object with green 'wings' as does the glass container on the right, showing that these objects are closer than the blue one. Meanwhile, all of these objects block part of the stereo, showing that it is the object farthest away from the viewer. Finally, the stereo blocks most of the wall from view, indicating that the brown wall is farthest away.

**What is space? What dimensions does it have?**

Space includes the background, middle ground and foreground. It can refer to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. It may have two dimensions (length and width) or three dimensions including height and depth.

**In what way has the artist created a sense of space?**

Besides overlapping objects, the artist also uses colour to create space. All of the objects are 'brighter' than the dull brown colours of the stereo and wall, placing them in front of these objects. The brightest colour in the composition is red/orange which makes the red object on the left stand out against the green 'wings' of the blue object in the center. In this blue object, meanwhile, the red accents pop out and give a sense of dimensionality to this object.



# Elements of Composition Tour

**SHAPE:** When a line crosses itself or intersects with other lines to enclose a space it creates a shape. A two dimensional shape is one that is drawn on a flat surface such as paper. A three-dimensional shape is one that takes up real space.

See: *Still Life with Flowers in a Vase* by Jack Rigaux



**What kinds of shapes can you think of?**

**Geometric:** circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. We see them in architecture and manufactured items.

**Organic shapes:** a leaf, seashell, flower. We see them in nature with characteristics that are free flowing, informal and irregular.

**Static shapes:** shapes that appear stable and resting.

**Dynamic shapes:** Shapes that appear moving and active.

**What shapes do you see in this image?**  
**What shapes are positive and negative?**

This image contains geometric shapes. Circular shapes are dominant, seen in the fruit, the tops of the salt/pepper shakers and the bowl. Rectangular and square shapes are seen in the book and the sides of the salt/pepper shakers.

**How do the shapes operate in this image?**

The repetition of circular shapes move the viewer's eye across the picture plane starting from the left, with the bright orange and then across to the 'glass' bowl. The rectangular shape of the book pushes the eye to the back (top) of the picture plane.

**COLOUR:** Colour comes from light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is)

See: *Cocktail Shaker* by E.J. Ferguson



**What are primary colours? Do you see any? Point to them in the drawing. What secondary colours do you see?**

Colour is made of primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Secondary colours are created from primary colours and include green, orange and purple. This image is made up of both primary colours, or tints and tones of primary colours, and secondary colours. Primary colours seen are tints of red while the secondary colours of green, purple and orange dominate the work.

**Where is your eye directed to first? Are there any areas of the composition that stand out more than others? Why?**

In this image the eye is probably first drawn to the bright red, orange and yellow shapes on the white oblong (table? tray?) on the left side of the composition. This is because these are the brightest shapes in the composition and warm colours (red, yellow, orange) stand out in an image. The eye then goes to the green grape shapes on the white surface. Green is the complement of red so by being placed next to the red shape these shapes draw one's attention. From this area the viewer's eye then moves across to the duller/darker green and red areas of the abstracted vessel and glass on the right side of the image. In this area the different tones of green and brown help to define the shapes of objects.

# Elements of Composition Tour

**TEXTURE:** The surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and media handling.

**See:** *Skull, Chair and Carpet* by Peter Rasmussen



**What is texture? How do you describe how something feels? What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?**

Texture can be real, like the actual texture of an object. Texture can be rough, smooth, hard, soft, glossy etc. Texture can also be implied. This happens when a two-dimensional piece of art is made to look like a certain texture.

**Allow your eyes to 'feel' the different areas within the work and explain the textures. What kind of texture do you think the artist uses in this work? Real or implied? What about the work gives you this idea?**

The work has both real and implied texture.

**What about the work/its manner of creation gives you the idea about the surface texture?**

The artist has used a rough/loose and 'stippled' method of paint application which gives a real texture to the painting. He has layered his paint with lighter tints showing through darker top layers. This paint application mimics what most of the objects in the scene would actually feel like. The wooden chair and small table, for example, look like they would be rougher/have more of a grain than the taller dark table and the paint application shows this. The carpet would also have a coarser texture and the paint handling reflects this.

# Reading Pictures

## Grades 4-12/adults

### Objectives:

The purposes of this program are to:

1. introduce participants to art and what artists do – this includes examinations of art styles; art elements; the possible aims and meaning(s) in an artwork and how to deduce those meanings and aims
2. introduce visitors to the current exhibition
  - the aim of the exhibition and the kind of artwork found in the exhibition.
  - the artist(s) - his/her background(s)
  - his/her place in art history
3. engage participants in a deeper investigation of artworks

### Teacher/Facilitator Introduction to Program:

This program is called *Reading Pictures*. What do you think this might involve?

- *generate as many ideas as possible concerning what viewers might think 'Reading Pictures' might involve or what this phrase might mean.*

Before we can 'read' art, however, we should have some understanding of what we're talking about.

What is art? If you had to define this term, how would you define it?

Art can be defined as creative expression - and artistic practice is an aspect and expression of a peoples' culture or the artist's identity.

The discipline of art, or the creation of a piece of art, however, is much more than simple 'creative expression' by an 'artist' or an isolated component of culture.

How many of you would describe yourselves as artists?

You may not believe it, but every day you engage in some sort of artistic endeavor.

*How many of you got up this morning and thought about what you were going to wear today? Why did you choose the clothes you did? Why do you wear your hair that way? How many of you have tattoos or plan to get a tattoo some day? What kind of tattoo would you choose? Why....? How many of you own digital cameras or have cameras on cell phones? How many of you take pictures and e-mail them to other people?*

Art is all around us and we are all involved in artistic endeavors to some degree. The photographs we take, the colour and styles of the clothes we wear, the ways we build and decorate our homes, gardens and public buildings, the style of our cell phones or the vehicles we drive, the images we see and are attracted to in advertising or the text or symbols on our bumper stickers – all of these things (and 9 billion others) utilize artistic principles. They say something about our personal selves and reflect upon and influence the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographic concerns of our society.

Art, therefore, is not just something some people in a society do – it is something that affects and informs everyone within a society.

Today we're going to look at art - paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures – and see what art can tell us about the world we live in – both the past, the present and possibly the future – and what art can tell us about ourselves.

Art is a language like any other and it can be read.



# Reading Pictures

Art can be read in two ways. It can be looked at **intuitively** – what do you see? What do you like or not like? How does it make you feel and why? – or it can be read **formally** by looking at what are called the elements of design – the “tools” artists use or consider when creating a piece of work.

What do you think is meant by the elements of design? What does an artist use to create a work of art?

Today we’re going to examine how to read art – we’re going to see how art can affect us emotionally... and how an artist can inform us about our world, and ourselves, through what he or she creates.

## Tour Program

Proceed to one of the works in the exhibition and discuss the following:

- the nature of the work - what kind of work is it and what exhibition is it a part of?
- examine the work itself
  - What do visitors see?
  - How do you initially feel about what you see? Why do you feel this way? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?
  - What is the work made of?
  - How would you describe the style? What does this mean?
  - What is the compositional structure? How are the shapes and colours etc. arranged? Why are they arranged this way?
  - How does the work make them feel? What is the mood of the work? What gives them this idea? Discuss the element(s) of design which are emphasized in the work in question.
  - What might the artist be trying to do in the work? What might the artist be saying or what might the work 'mean'?
- Summarize the information

At each work chosen, go through the same or similar process, linking the work to the type of exhibition it is a part of. Also, with each stop, discuss a different element of design and develop participants’ visual learning skills.

At the 1st stop, determine with the participants the most important element of design used and focus the discussion on how this element works within the artwork. Do the same with each subsequent artwork and make sure to cover all the elements of design on the tour.

Stop #1: LINE

Stop #2: SHAPE

Stop #3: COLOUR

Stop #4: TEXTURE

Stop #5: SPACE

Stop #6: ALL TOGETHER

- How do the elements work together to create a certain mood or story? What would you say is the mood of this work? Why? What is the story or meaning of this work? Why?

## Work sheet activity – 30 minutes

Divide participants into groups of two or three to each do this activity. Give them 30 minutes to complete the questions then bring them all together and have each group present one of their pieces to the entire group.

## Presentations – 30 minutes

Each group to present on one of their chosen works.

Visual Learning Activity Worksheet \*  
Photocopy the following worksheet so each participant has their own copy.

# Reading Pictures Worksheet

## Visual Learning Worksheet

**Instructions:** Choose two very different pieces of artwork in the exhibition and answer the following questions in as much detail as you can.

1. What is the title of the work and who created it?

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2. What do you see and what do you think of it? (What is your **initial reaction** to the work?) Why do you feel this way?

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3. What colours do you see and how does the use of colour affect the way you ‘read’ the work? Why do you think the artist chose these colours – or lack of colour – for this presentation?

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4. What shapes and objects do you notice most? Why?

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# Reading Pictures Worksheet

5. How are the shapes/objects arranged or composed? How does this affect your feelings towards or about the work? What feeling does this composition give to the work?

6. How would you describe the mood of this work? (How does it make you feel?) What do you see that makes you describe the mood in this way?

7. What do you think the artist’s purpose was in creating this work? What ‘story’ might he or she be telling? What aspects of the artwork give you this idea?

8. What do you think about this work after answering the above questions? Has your opinion of the work changed in any way? Why do you feel this way?

9. How might this work relate to your own life experiences? Have you ever been in a similar situation/place and how did being there make you feel?

# Perusing Paintings: An Artful Scavenger Hunt

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning. *Blooms’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which follows, is as applicable to teaching art as any other discipline.

1. *knowledge*: recall of facts
2. *comprehension*: participation in a discussion
3. *application*: applying abstract information in practical situations
4. *analysis*: separating an entity into its parts
5. *synthesis*: creating a new whole from many parts, as in developing a complex work of art
6. *evaluation*: making judgements on criteria

A scavenger hunt based on artworks is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the artworks and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works. **The simple template provided, however, would be most suitable for grade 1-3 students.**

**Instruction:**  
Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, galther students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

## Sample List:

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
someone wearing a hat			
a specific animal			
landscape			
a bright red object			
a night scene			
a house			

\*This activity was adapted from *A Survival Kit for the Elementary/Middle School Art Teacher* by Helen D. Hume.



# Basic Shapes - Grades 3-5

**Almost all things are made up of four basic shapes: circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. All objects can be reduced to basic shapes and basic shapes can be combined to create 'realistic' forms. In this lesson students will practice reducing objects to their basic shapes and then filling in the areas with colours 'natural' to the central object and complementary to the background.**

### Materials:

- drawing paper
- pencil and eraser
- magazines
- paints and brushes
- mixing trays

**Instructions:**

1. Have students look through magazines for pictures of objects made up of several shapes.
2. Direct students to choose **one** object and determine the basic shapes which make up that object.
3. Have students draw their one object using the basic shapes which make up the object.
4. Students to simplify their drawing further removing any overlapping/extraneous lines so that the object is broken into simplified shapes/forms.
5. Students to decide on colour scheme for work. Review the colour wheel and the concept of complementary colours.
  - what is the dominant colour of your object? use tints/tones of that colour to paint the object, keeping shapes separate through the use of heavy black lines.
  - what is the complementary colour of your main object's colouring? - paint the background area the complement of the objects colour.

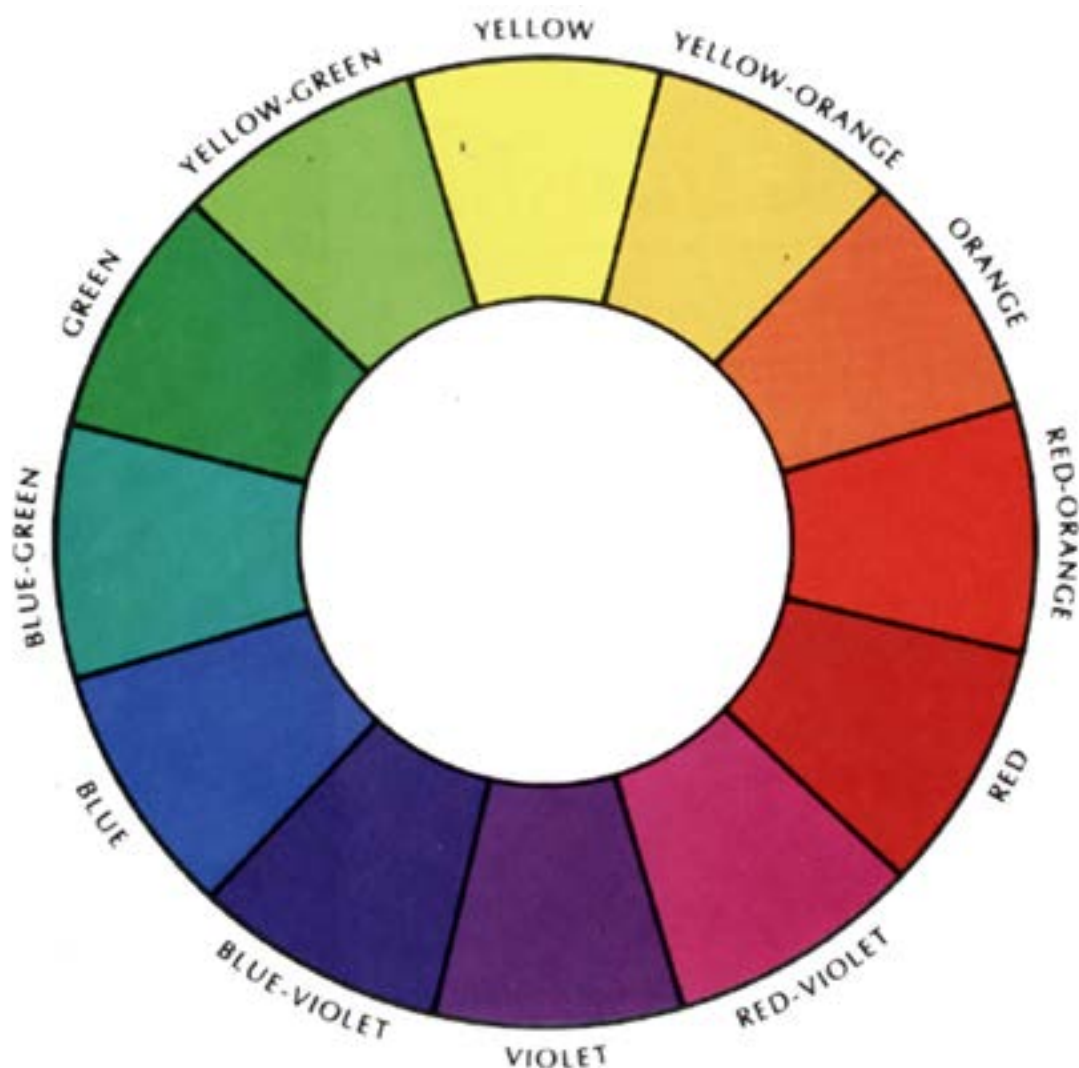
**Extension (for older students):**

- when students have completed their first painting have them re-draw the basic shapes of their object again, but this time have them soften the edges, change shapes and add connecting lines where necessary so their drawing resembles the original magazine image.
- have students paint this second work using 'natural' colours for both their object and for the background.
- display both of students' drawings and then discuss.

**Discussion/Evaluation:**

1. Which shapes did you use most often in your drawing(s)?
2. Explain how identifying the basic shapes in your object helped you make the second drawing.
3. Which of your paintings appeals to you most? Why?

# Experiments in Colour - Grades 3-9



When artists create a composition, they plan their colour combinations very carefully. Colour can serve many functions in a work of art. It can be used to create the illusion of space; it can be used to provide focus and emphasis; it can be used to create movement; and it can be used to create a certain mood. In the works in the exhibition the artists use colour to serve all of these functions. In the following project students will examine the use of colour relationships to create the illusion of space and mood within a painting.

**Materials:**

- Colour Wheel Chart
- Pencils/erasers
- Paints and brushes
- Water container
- Mixing trays
- Paper towels
- Paper
- Magazines/ photographic references
- Still life items or landscape drawings

**Methodology:**

Through an examination of the colour wheel provided, discuss with students the concepts of **complementary colours** and **split-complements**.

**Questions to guide discussion:**

- What is the lightest colour on the colour wheel? yellow
- What is the darkest colour on the colour wheel? violet
- What is the relationship of these two colours? the colours are **opposite** each other.

Colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel are called **complementary colours**.

What are the colours next to violet? red-violet and blue-violet

These colours are called **split complements** because they are split, or separated, by the true complement of yellow. Complements can be split one step further to become a **triad**, three colours **equally spaced** on the colour wheel.

**Complementary colours can be used to create focus, emphasis, and the illusion of space. Brighter (warm) colours in the colour wheel tend to appear in front of - or come forward on the picture plane - compared to darker (cool) colours.**



Glen Semple  
*Janet*, 1991  
Acrylic on masonite  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

**Instructions for Creating Art**

1. Distribute paper, pencils and erasers to students
2. Instruct students to make several sketches of ideas for their painting - they may base their work on a still-life arrangement or create a landscape based on magazine or photographic sources
3. Have students choose a sketch they like and then plan their colours by first examining the colour wheel. Students to first choose their **dominant or main colour** and then pick the **split complements or triad** to that colour.
5. Students to use their colour scheme to paint their painting.

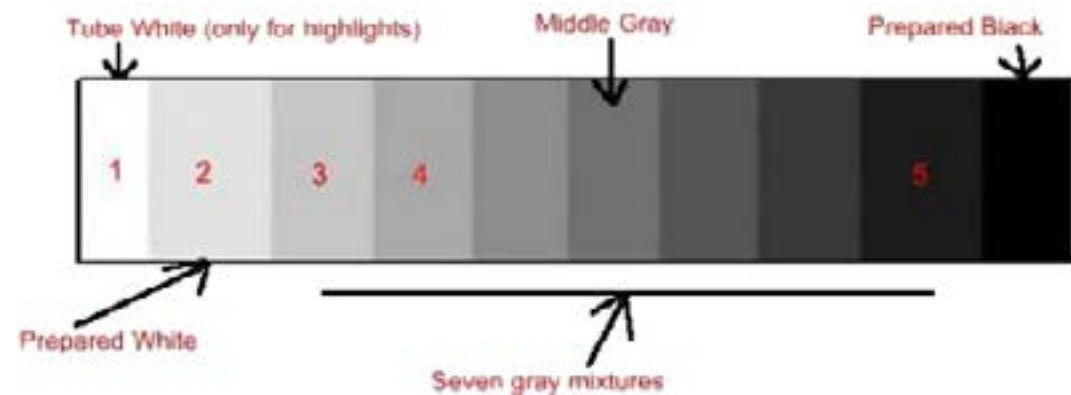
**Questions for discussion**

1. What are the split complements and triad colour schemes used in your work?
2. What is the colour relationship of the colours used in your painting?
3. Why have you used these particular colours?



## Making the Grade: *an introduction to working with light and dark*

Many of the works in the exhibition *...no end to our looking* make use of strong contrasts of light and dark to create form and space within the compositions. The following two activities introduce students to using black, white and gradations of these in their own art works.



Edward Bader  
*Oranges*, 1984  
Graphite on paper  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

## Working with Black and White

### Observing and Thinking Creatively

Light and dark is not a simple matter of black and white. There are countless shades or **values** in between. The gradual change from dark to light is called **gradation**. Artists use gradation to make objects appear **three-dimensional**—to have **height, width, and depth**. The part of an object closest to the light source has the lightest value, and the parts farther away have darker values.

Look at the artwork in this lesson. Observe how Allston used gradual changes in shade, or value, to show roundness and depth in the fingers of *Belshazzar's Left Hand*. If there were no variations in shade, the hand would

look very flat. Notice the technique Allston has used to give depth to the folds he has drawn.

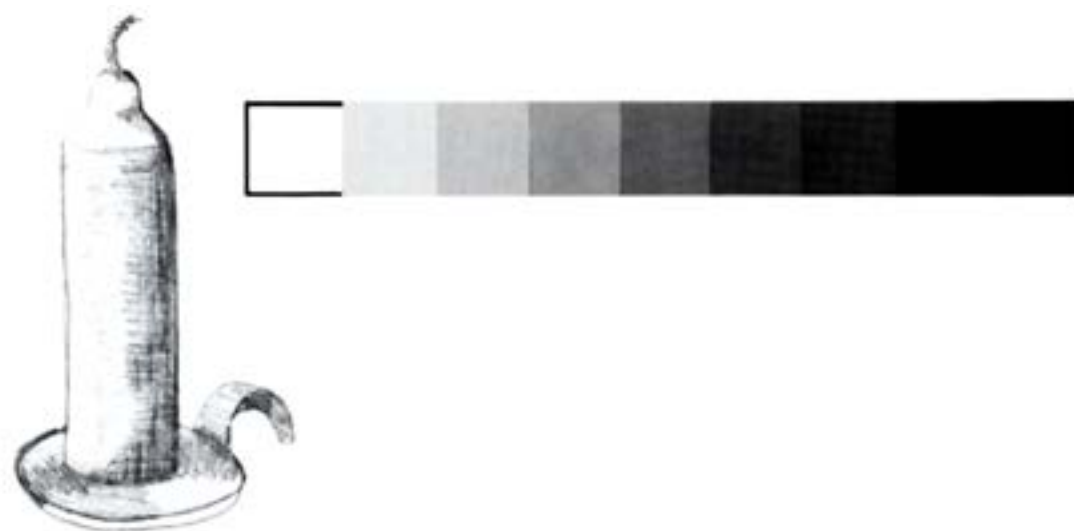
Allston drew this picture with black and white chalk. The bone structure of Belshazzar's hand is accentuated by the use of light values next to dark. What effect is created by the use of white?

In this lesson, you will create a value scale and a drawing that shows different values of an object. This exercise will help you become more aware of the variety of shades that can be used in drawing to show roundness, depth, and texture.



Washington Allston, *Belshazzar's Left Hand*, 19th century, drawing, black and white chalk on faded blue paper, 9 1/2" x 12 1/2". Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. On Loan from the Washington Allston Trust.

# Working with Black



## Instructions for Creating Art

1. Divide a piece of white paper with lines to make nine 1"×4" rectangles.
2. Label the rectangles off to the side from the top down in the following order: white, high light, light, low light, medium, high dark, dark, low dark, and black.
3. You may use a soft pencil or charcoal to make your value scale. Begin shading from the middle rectangle, rather than from the top down. This helps prevent duplication of values or arriving at black at the seventh or eighth rectangle.
4. Now use the side of your pencil to shade the bottom black rectangle a very dark, solid black. Then fill in medium, the light and dark, and finally the remaining four rectangles.
5. Remember that it is easier to make an area darker than lighter. However, if you must lighten an area, don't erase. Instead, use your eraser like a sponge and press down and lift off some of the value. If the area is left spotty, pencil it in evenly.
6. Except for white, each rectangle should be filled in evenly. For darker areas, use your pencil to go over and over the area until you reach the right value. Hold the paper up to the light to see if the values change at even rates.
7. Now choose an object with round contours and draw it. Carefully shade in the dark and light areas so that the roundness is shown.

### Art Materials

9" × 12" white paper  
Pencil or charcoal and eraser  
Cover sheet

## Learning Outcomes

1. What is *gradation*?
2. How do artists use values to create a sense of three-dimensions in drawings and paintings?
3. What part of your shaded object was most difficult to create? Why?

# Drawing Objects

## Observing and Thinking Creatively

What objects do you visualize, or picture, when you think of a baseball? Maybe you associate a baseball with a catcher's mitt, a bat, a uniform, a trophy, a scoreboard, or a broken window. We often associate certain things with particular objects.

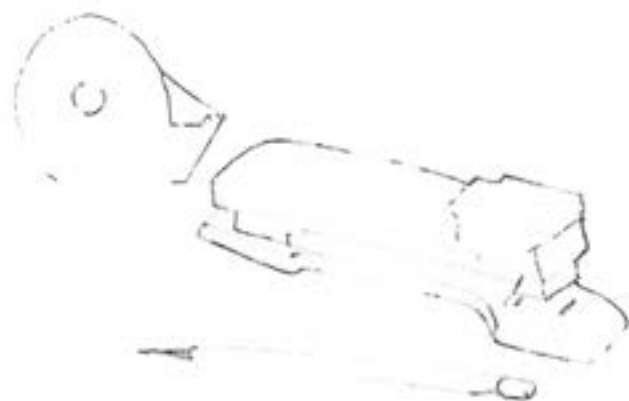
In this lesson, you will draw a picture of an object you see. Then, using your memory, you will add other things to your picture that

you associate with the first, observed object. Look at the student art on these pages and see if you can identify the object the students drew from observation. Now, test your own memory and imagination as you add to the object your teacher provides. Use your knowledge of **shading**, **texture**, **mass**, and **composition** in your drawing.





# Drawing Objects



## Instructions for Creating Art

1. Choose the object you wish to draw. Study it from all sides. What kind of object is it? What other kinds of objects could you draw to go with it? How big will you make the object in relation to the things you will add from your memory? Where will you place it on your paper?
2. When you have decided what you are going to add to your picture, and how large your objects will be, begin drawing your picture.
3. Notice which areas of the object are light, and **shade** the dark areas. Decide how you will show the **texture**, the rough or smooth surface of your object. Try to make your drawing look as real as the actual object.
4. Now complete your drawing by adding other items that relate to the original

object. In order to make something look real in a drawing, you must know exactly what it looks like. Looking at objects carefully, and then remembering, will help you improve your art.

### Art Materials

Miscellaneous materials, such as bucket, bone, clock, hat, etc.	Paper Pencil and eraser
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## Learning Outcomes

1. Explain why you chose the objects you added to your picture.
2. Describe how you showed textures in your drawing.
3. Tell which part of your picture looks most realistic, and explain why you think so.

# Still Life Project

**FOR THE TEACHER** The still-life communicates information about the culture in which it was done. Dutch still-lives, by such artists as Pieter Claesz Heda, had paintings filled with items that symbolized the fleetingness of life such as a broken glass, a half-eaten loaf of bread, or a clock. William Harnett and John Peto were American painters who specialized in *trompe l'oeil* (fool the eye) still-life paintings. Contemporary American painters Audrey Flack and Janet Fish continue the tradition of realistic still-lives, and photographer Sandy Skoglund creates sculptural still-lives that she then photographs. Impressionists such as Paul Cezanne and Henri Matisse specialized in interior paintings of flowers and the table set for a meal.

## Vocabulary

still-life  
trompe l'oeil  
intensity  
artistic license  
viewfinder  
depth  
overlapping

**Preparation** Have students collect objects for a huge still-life. This could include mechanical objects, a bicycle, toys, cloth, rope, a hat, skull, rubberized face masks, ladders, a window frame, buckets, stools, etc. The still-life should be arranged, then left untouched until the drawings are finished. If you prefer, you can make individual still-lives around the room for several students to use.

Make viewfinders in proportion to the paper that will be used. Individual slide mounts make ideal viewfinders. Tell students that looking through a viewfinder is similar to taking a photograph, isolating one subject with a single well-composed view. Demonstrate to students that the viewfinder should always be held the same distance from the eye when looking through it, and show them how to place objects on their paper in the same location as they find them in their viewfinder.



# Still Life Project

## STUDENT PAGE

### Materials

viewfinders (paper or slide mounts)  
drawing paper  
white chalk  
tissues  
oil pastels  
fluorescent markers  
pencils



### Directions

1. Use the viewfinder as if it were the viewfinder of a camera. You will isolate a particular section of what you see to make a pleasing composition. Remember to hold your arm at the same distance from your body whenever you look through the viewfinder.
2. Notice where an object is in relation to the top, sides, or bottom of the viewfinder. Then, using chalk, draw it in exactly the same place on your drawing paper (you can use the tissue to correct the chalk line if necessary). When you are satisfied that your chalk drawing has sufficiently filled the paper, you are ready to begin applying oil pastels.
3. Do not concern yourself with making true colors. In fact this composition might be more interesting if you were to use, for example, only five colors. Apply color firmly, but allow some paper to show through the crayon.
4. When you have applied sufficient oil pastels, go over them with contrasting colors of fluorescent marker. This is similar to crayon resist with ink, but the markers give an entirely different effect.



### Instructions for Creating Art

1. Fold a piece of paper or stiff cardboard in half and cut out a rectangle along the fold. Open the paper and use the window to look at different views of one scene.
2. Look at the two views of the photograph on this page. How are they different? How are they alike?
3. Now, look for an interesting group of objects around your classroom. Experiment with looking through your viewfinder until what you see makes an interesting composition. When you have discovered two views of the same scene that you like, you are ready to draw your pictures.
4. Using a pencil, pen, or colored marker, draw the large shapes of the scene you are looking at through the viewfinder. Which part of the scene do you want to make most important? Make that part larger or place it in the foreground, or front, of your picture. Fill the whole sheet with your drawing.
5. Next, draw in the important details of your scene. You may emphasize a center of

interest by making one part of your picture larger, more detailed, or more brightly colored than other parts.

6. When you have completed your first drawing, draw another view of the same scene on another sheet of paper. Does your second picture have the same center of interest as the first drawing? Which view do you prefer?

### Art Materials

Heavy paper or thin cardboard	Scissors
Pencil, pen, or colored marker	Eraser
	Drawing paper



### Learning Outcomes

1. What does *composition* mean in art?
2. How did you show the *center of interest* in each of your drawings?
3. Explain how you could tell you had found a good view in your *viewfinder*.



# Still Life Project: Fruit Salad

Through this activity students will create their own mixed media still-life composition.

**Materials:**

- coloured tissue paper
- scissors
- graters
- white glue (diluted with water)
- brushes
- coloured construction paper
- oil pastels/wax crayons



Orange



1. Cut a circle from orange tissue paper. Then, cut a curved strip of tissue paper and glue it along one side.



2. Lay the tissue paper orange on a grater. Then, rub the side of an orange oil pastel or wax crayon gently over the paper.



3. Continue rubbing until the orange is covered with texture. Then, use a fine black felt-tip pen to add a stalk to the top.

Apple



Cut an apple shape from green tissue paper. Rub it with a green pastel around one side and at the top. Glue on a stalk.



Lemon



Cut a lemon from yellow tissue paper. Glue a green strip along one edge. Rub it with a yellow oil pastel, then a light green one.

Lime



Cut the shape of a lime from green tissue paper. Add a green strip along one edge, then rub it all over with a green pastel.

This background was made by overlapping rectangles of tissue paper.

Strawberry



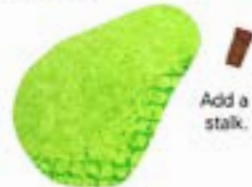
Cut a strawberry from red tissue paper. Add a red strip covering about half of the shape. Rub it with a yellow oil pastel.

Grapefruit

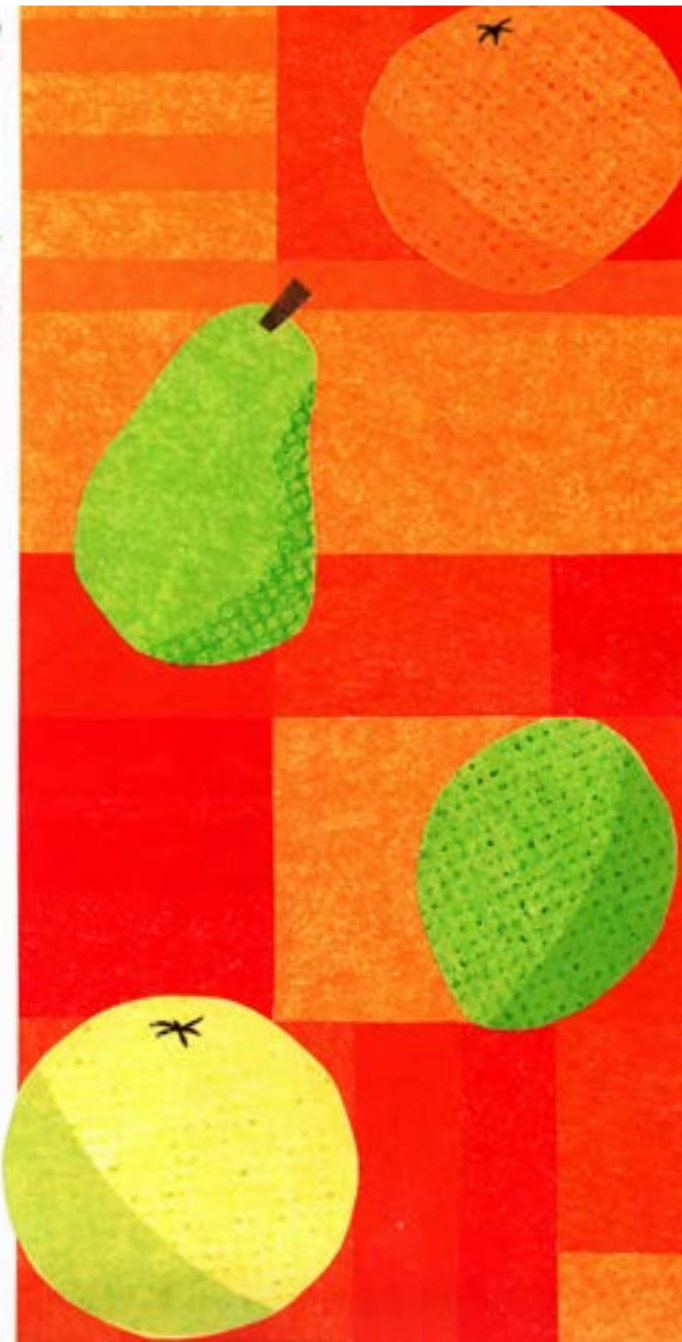


Cut a circle from yellow tissue paper and add a pale green strip. Rub it with a yellow, then a light green pastel. Add a stalk.

Pear



Cut a pear shape from green tissue paper. Rub down one side with a green pastel. Then, glue on a stalk.



Once students have completed the various fruit pieces, have them arrange them on a coloured piece of construction paper as if they were in a bowl and glue them into place.

Then have students create the shape of a bowl out of a different coloured piece of

construction paper and glue this shape over part of the fruit pieces so it appears that the fruit is sitting in the bowl.

Students can then use crayons/ markers to draw in a table and decorate the background.



# Painting a Realistic Still Life

## Observing and Thinking Creatively

Much like photographs, the three paintings here show nature, people, and objects that the artists actually saw. This style of art is called realism. The realist artists often painted lively outdoor scenes, landscapes, portraits, and still life arrangements with great accuracy.

Thomas Eakins, one of the greatest American realists, painted natural scenes. His painting of a man in a scull, an oar-powered racing shell, shows Eakins' precise sense of proportion and detail.

Winslow Homer was first a printmaker, but is known for painting landscapes and the sea. He emphasized light and shadow in his work. Notice how the bright, sunny light in *Snap the Whip* adds to the happy mood of the painting. What realistic details did he portray in this scene?

Look closely at *My Gems* by William Harnett, a silver engraver who painted in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Notice how precisely he rendered the objects in his still-life arrangement. And what an assortment of objects is on the table! Harnett thought of these objects as his gems. He chose them carefully because he wanted to show people what was important to him. Besides music, what else can you see that Harnett valued? Would any of these objects be your gems?

In this lesson, you will paint a still-life arrangement of your gems. You will discuss your painting with a classmate, increasing both your own and your classmate's awareness of the things you value. You will experiment with arrangement and details in painting your gems in a realistic way.



Stan Phelps  
*Still Life with Greeting Cards*, 1982  
Acrylic on canvas  
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Winslow Homer, *Snap the Whip*, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio



William M. Harnett, American, 1848–1892.  
*My Gems*, 1885. Wood, 18 x 14 inches.  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of the Avalon Foundation.

## Instructions for Creating Art

1. Think about the things that have special meaning or value for you, your "gems." Gather them together, and arrange them on a flat surface. Be conscious of each object's position and experiment with the grouping. Consider the size of each object. What do you want to emphasize? What might be almost hidden? How will you balance the objects?
2. Try using the rule of compensation from lesson 5. The bigger the mass, the more the mass is toward the center. The smaller the mass, the more it is toward the edge. Observe how Harnett arranged the objects in his painting. What do you see first when you look at his picture?
3. Next, sketch your still-life composition. Then mix paint to match the colors of the items you chose. Paint your still-life arrangement of gems to look exactly as you see it.
4. Now choose a classmate and discuss each other's paintings. What do the objects tell about the values and interests of the artists?

### Art Materials

Personal objects	Mixing tray
Drawing paper	Container of water
Paints and brushes	Paper towels

## Learning Outcomes

1. What is meant by realism in art?
2. Describe how you arranged your still life to reveal which objects are most important to you.
3. Tell which object in your painting appears the most real, and why.



# Abstracting from the Real

## Observing and Thinking Creatively

**Abstract** art usually uses bright colors, sharp edges, geometric shapes, and interesting contrasts to create a mood. Sometimes abstract art simply shows an artist's emotional response to an object or idea. Details may be minimized, proportions **distorted**, and unusual color schemes used. **Nonobjective** art occurs when abstraction departs completely from realism.

Henri Matisse was a French artist who enjoyed changing the usual form of an object. His versions emphasized the pure idea of the object, and are a type of abstract

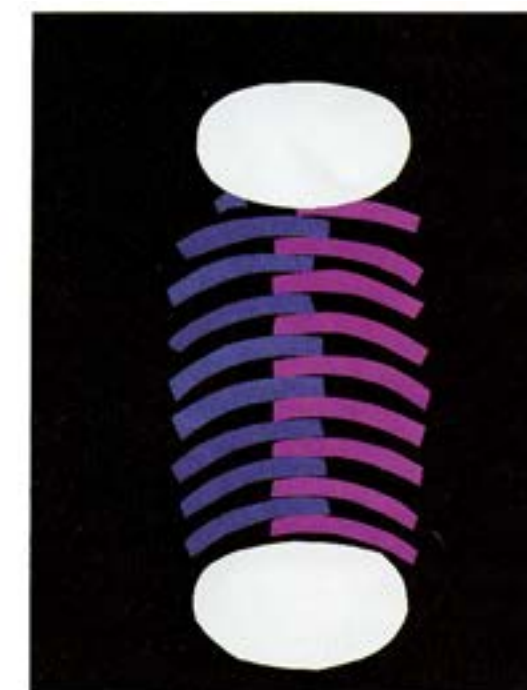
art. To create the cutouts for the snail shown here, he first picked up a real snail and examined it closely. Then he drew it from every angle possible, noting its texture, color, and construction.

Observe the cut out paper shapes Matisse used in his snail of many colors. Can you see how the simple blue rectangle represents the foot of the snail? Notice which parts of a snail Matisse omitted, and which parts he thought were essential.

In this lesson, you will create an abstract cutout design of an object.



Henri Matisse, *The Snail*, 1952, Tate Gallery, London.



## Instructions for Creating Art

1. Choose an object with an interesting shape and study it. Sketch it from several angles. Examine how it is built. Does it have a center? What basic shapes compose it? Observe the texture and colors of your object.
2. Now draw the general outer shape of your object. What idea does it give you? Next, draw only the inside parts of your object, without any outside lines. Think about what color reminds you of the feeling or idea of the object. Notice curved and straight lines, light and dark values, and small and large shapes.
3. When you find a shape that seems to capture the idea of your object, practice distorting or changing it to make a more pure, simple shape.
4. Choose one or more colors for your shape, and cut it out of colored paper. Mount the shapes on a sheet of a different

color, and display your abstract cutout design. Can your classmates guess what the real object was?

### Art Materials

A variety of objects such as a shell, spoon, corn cob, flower, leaf, model, toy, piece of fruit, etc.	Pencil and eraser
	Colored construction paper
	Scissors
	Glue or paste
Sketch paper	



## Learning Outcomes

1. Name two ways of making *abstract* art.
2. Describe how you distorted the shape you made of an object.
3. What parts of your object did you leave out of your cutout design? How did you decide which parts to keep and which parts to omit?

# Glossary

**Abstraction** – A term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.

**Background** - In a work of art, the background appears furthest away from the viewer. In a two-dimensional work, the foreground is usually found at the top of the page.

**Beauty** – Inherent in a form. Beauty in art is often defined as being well formed and close to its natural state.

**Chiaroscuro** - The arrangement or treatment of light and dark parts in a pictorial work of art

**Composition** – The arrangement of lines, colours and forms so as to achieve a unified whole; the resulting state or product is referred to as composition.

**Contemporary artists** – Those whose peak of activity can be situated somewhere between the 1970s (the advent of post-modernism) and the present day.

**Distortion** – The use of incorrect or unusual reproductions.

**Dynamic Shape** – Shapes that appear moving and active.

**Elements of Design** – The basic components which make up any visual image: line, shape, colour, texture and space.

**Exhibition** – A public display of art objects including painting, sculpture, prints, installation, etc.

**Foreground** – In a work of art, the foreground appears closest to the viewer. In a two-dimensional work, the foreground is usually found at the bottom of the page.

**Geometric Shape** – Any shape or form having more mathematical than organic design. Examples of geometric shapes include: spheres, cones, cubes, squares, triangles...

**Medium** – The material or technique used by an artist to produce a work of art.

**Modernism** – An artistic and cultural movement initiated by those who felt the 'traditional' form of the arts were becoming outdated in the new industrialized world.

**Organic Shape** – An irregular shape; refers to shapes or forms having irregular edges or objects resembling things existing in nature.

**Perspective** – creates the feeling of depth through the use of lines that make an image appear to be three dimensional.

**Pictorialism** – a movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that sought to have photography recognized as a fine art. Pictorialist photographers manipulated their prints to achieve a variety of effects. Romantic subjects in soft focus were common.

**Realism** – a movement in the late 19th Century representing objects, actions and social conditions as they actually were, without idealization or presentation in abstract form.

**Representational art** – Art with an immediately recognizable subject, depicted (or 'represented') in ways which seek to resemble a figure, landscape or object; also called Figurative art and contrasted with Abstraction.

**Rhythm** – A principle of art indicating movement by the repetition of elements. Rhythm can make an artwork seem active.

**Static Shape** – Shapes that appear stable or resting.

**Stylization** – The representation of something through using a set of recognizable characteristics.

**Texture** – How a surface feels to the touch. There are two types of texture in an artwork – the way the work feels and the texture implied by the artist through the use of colour, shape and line.

# Credits

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