

STILL / LIVE

Still Life *Studio* in the Learning Center

This **FAMILY GUIDE** will lead you through the KMA galleries with discussion questions, gallery games and sketching ideas. Start in the Beitzel Gallery (no pencils or drawing allowed) then proceed to the Righter Gallery where you can take out your pencil. We also encourage you to go into the Learning Center and use this guide with your Art Activity Pack to create your own artwork inspired by the exhibitions.



Katonah Museum of Art
March 16 – June 27, 2021

Beitzel Gallery: Still Life as Portrait



Still life is a genre, or category, of art which features natural or manufactured objects placed together. The artists in this section use objects as a way of exploring identity, like a kind of portrait. They tell both their own stories and the stories of others through carefully chosen objects.

Look closely at the photograph *Seven Days: Birthday Party* by Chuck Ramirez and discuss these questions with your family and friends.

- This series is like a self-portrait of the artist. What objects and foods do you see in this photograph? What do they tell you about the artist?
- Name a holiday or party that your family celebrates. What objects and food would be included? What objects would be left over? What do they tell about your family?



Chuck Ramirez, *Seven Days: Birthday Party*, 2003
Pigment inkjet prints
© Chuck Ramirez
Courtesy of Ruiz-Healy Art, San Antonio

Beitzel Gallery: Still Life as Portrait



The still life objects that Nakeya Brown photographed for her series *Some Assembly Required* are a portrait of her grandmother. In the photo *Folded Rag Rugs and Towel* the objects are a memory of the folded hand towels that her grandmother kept on her kitchen table. Look at the other photographs in the series and discuss what else you might learn about the artist's grandmother.

- Think about your own grandmother or an adult that you love. What objects would you put together that would remind you of that person?



Nakeya Brown, *Folded Rag Rugs and Towel*, from the series *Some Assembly Required*, 2016
Inkjet print
© Nakeya Brown
Courtesy of the artist

Beitzel Gallery: Still Life and Time



How can an artist show the passage of time in an artwork? In traditional still life paintings artists used wilting flowers, peeling oranges or candles as examples of objects that make the viewer think about time. In this section the artists have turned to video and photography to show both fleeting moments and long duration.

- Find these objects. In your opinion how do these objects/artworks show the passage of time?



Have you watched a fruit decay?
Is the artist showing real time?



What story can you tell from
these photographs?



How is a flower a symbol of time?



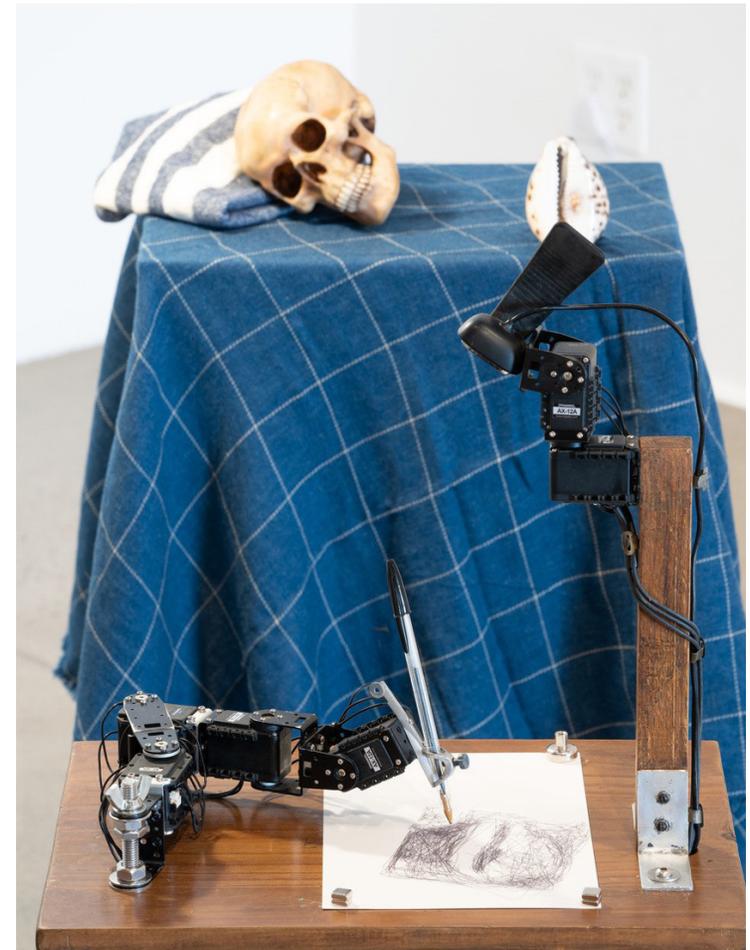
What did this object look like
before and after this photograph
was taken?

Beitzel Gallery: Still Life and Time



Vanitas are still lifes composed of symbolic objects that remind the viewer of the shortness and fragility of life and include symbols such as skulls, clocks and candles. In Patrick Tresset's installation *Human Study #2* a robot creates drawing after drawing of the objects on the table.

- How do you feel watching the robot draw? Do the drawings on the wall look like the objects? With your finger in the air do an air drawing of the objects on the table.



Patrick Tresset, *Human Study #2*, 2020
Robot, skull, shells, taxidermy, ballpoint pen, desk, table, camera, drawings on paper
Courtesy of the artist

Righter Gallery: Trompe L'oeil



Trompe l'oeil means to “fool the eye.” Traditionally an artist paints objects very realistically so the viewer has trouble telling whether they are real. The contemporary artists in this section use the concept to explore the real and the virtual, truth and fiction, and appearance and reality.

To create *Jade with Pears and Green Apples* Daniel Gordon sourced images online that he printed, cut and tore into shapes and assembled into paper sculptures. He then positioned these sculptures to create a still life and carefully photographed it. When you visit the Learning Center you will see examples of Gordon's paper sculptures.

- Which objects look “real” in this photograph? Is your eye fooled into thinking these are real objects? How do you think the artist made the shadows? What colors do you think he changed before he printed this photograph?



Daniel Gordon, *Jade with Pears and Green Apples*, 2019
Pigment print with UV lamination
© Daniel Gordon
Courtesy of Yossi Milo Gallery, New York / James Fuentes Gallery, New York

Righter Gallery: Trompe L'oeil



David Greber's video swaps out traditional arrangements of fruits and flowers for pizza slices, spaghetti, cats, mugs and other objects that bounce and break on a cloth covered table.

- What are some of the colors you see? Are they bright or muted? How quickly do they change? How do the colors make you feel?
- What sounds do you hear? Do you recognize some of them? Are they real or made up? How do the sounds make you feel?



Dave Greber, *Stilllives v1.1*, 2021
Single-channel video
2:03 min, looped
Courtesy of the artist

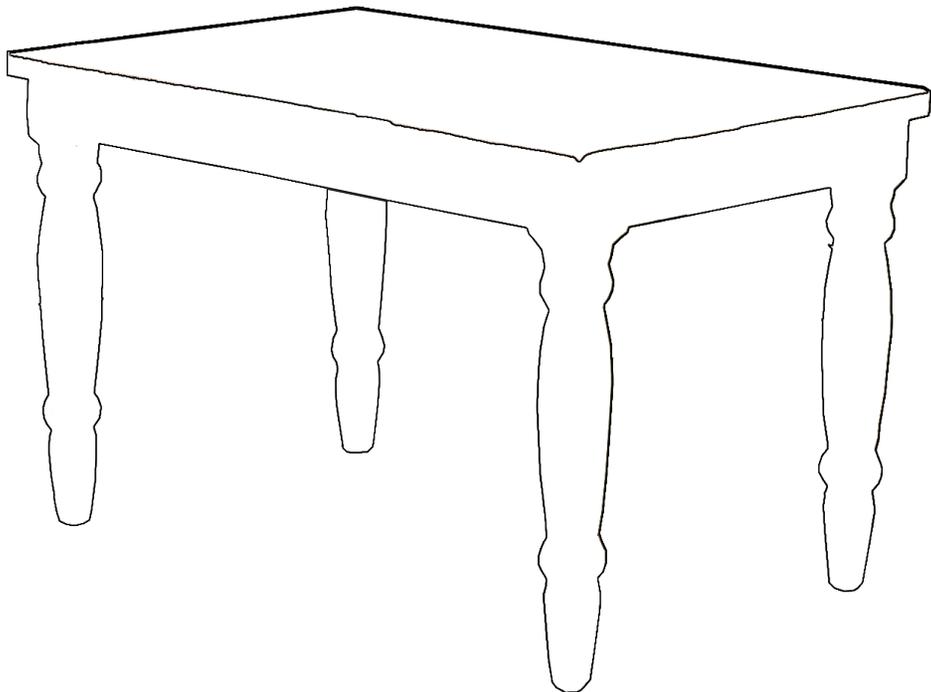
Now you can take out the pencil from your Art Activity Bag.
In the space below draw your favorite items from this video.

Righter Gallery: Trompe L'oeil



Find this table in Claudia Hart's *The Still Life With Flowers by Henri Fantin-Latour*. It is part of a sculpture that the artist created by first making a computer model of an 1881 still life painting. She then made her sculpture using a 3D printer. The artist uses trompe l'oeil in reverse by starting with a copy of a painting and reproducing it using 3D technology.

With your pencil draw the vase and flower on the table.



Righter Gallery: Trompe L'oeil



David Rokeby describes the installation *The Giver of Names* as a computer system that assigns words to objects. You get to be part of this installation by arranging objects on the pedestal. A camera will take a picture of your still life composition and then analyze the shapes and colors. The computer will identify associated words and concepts.

- With your group come up with a theme for your still life. First one person chooses an object, then the next person adds another object, etc., trying to build on the theme.

On the left side below draw with your pencil the shape of each object. On the lines next to it write your own related words.

Learning Center: Still Life Studio

Welcome to the Still Life Studio in the Learning Center. On the main wall you will see two different still life backdrops, one brightly painted and one with a red curtain. Decide which background you would like to use to set up your own still life arrangement, and sit at the table closer to that side of the wall.

- Choose a theme such as family, self-portrait or nature or come up with your own theme.
- Select objects from the shelves on the wall to the right of the entry, plus any items you have with you, to arrange a still life on the counter.
****Use hand sanitizer before and after you touch objects.****
- Use the ideas and art materials in this pack to create an artwork based on your still life arrangement.
- Return objects to shelves.
****Use hand sanitizer before and after you touch objects.****

Materials in your Art Activity Pack:



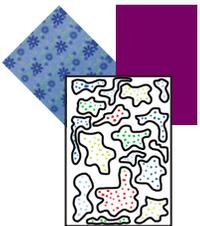
pencil with eraser



gluestick



set of colored pencils with sharpener



assorted patterned and colored paper



still life objects



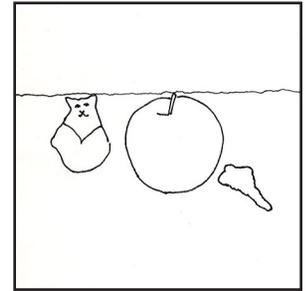
folded white cardstock and half pages of cardstock

Learning Center: Still Life Studio

Use the half sheets of cardstock and the art materials provided to create still life artworks based on your arrangement of objects on the counter. Try some of the artistic styles below. Use the hashtag **#KMAStillLiveChallenge** or email photos of your still lifes to **KMAStillLive@katonahmuseum.org**.

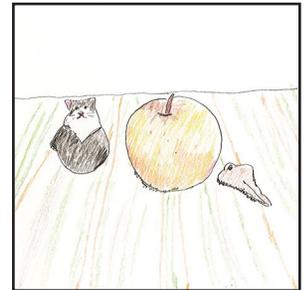
Contour Drawing

Look closely at the contour (outline) of each object. With your pencil draw a simple line drawing of your still life arrangement.



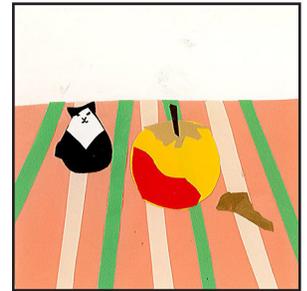
Colorful Realistic

Sketch the objects with the pencil. Use the colored pencils to color in the objects in a realistic way.



Collage

Use the colored and patterned paper to cut shapes to represent each object. Arrange them on the paper. Once you are happy with your composition, use the gluestick to attach the paper pieces.



Photographic Series

Your still life arrangement can show movement and time passing. Take a picture of your arrangement. Then move some of the items and take another picture. Continue to do this between shots.

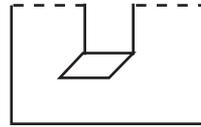
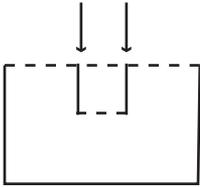


Learning Center: Pop Up Paper Sculpture Still Life

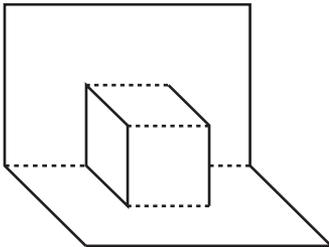
Daniel Gordon creates three-dimensional paper sculptures of objects that he thoughtfully arranges and then photographs. Look at Gordon's installation in the Learning Center as inspiration for this fun project.

Take folded cardstock from your pack.

1. Keep paper folded and cut two parallel lines through folded edge of page.
2. Fold down the flap to crease fold.



3. Open the paper and push out center flap so background stands up and the flap pops out. This is the base for your still life objects.



4. Cut out still life objects from the page in your pack and/or create your own still life objects using the assorted papers in your pack.



*** Note: You can experiment with the pop-up base. ***

If you make your parallel line cuts shallow the base will be shorter and closer to the back.

If the cuts are farther apart the base will be wider.

You can create more than one base. Or make the base to the side, rather than the center.

5. Arrange the still life objects standing on the pop-up base and/or against the background paper. Use the gluestick to attach them. You can decorate the background and bottom using the colored pencils or collage with the paper in your pack.



Tip: glue a folded tab of paper to the back of your objects to make them stand up.

