

STILL LIFE WITH SHADING

A still life is a work of art that depicts mostly inanimate subject matter highlighting its characteristics like shape, form, hardness, and softness. Like a photograph, a still life shows objects in their exact proportions with a balance of light, shade and harmony of colours.

A still life is characterized by some key elements: outline, ratio, shape/form, perspective, drawing, composition, balance, contrast, light and shade. To create a still life, the subject is arranged keeping these key elements in mind; start drawing sitting at a comfortable distance from it. Still, life study adds to a student's capacity for observation, and allows them to study a subject in depth. Still life allows an opportunity to study objects in detail with a perceptive awareness of their outline, shape, proportions, tone, colour, texture, form and composition.



OBJECTIVES

The learner will be able to:

- explain the core/basic elements of art and able to draw;
- state about the materials used for still life painting and use them;
- depict shading, dark and light effects;
- develop the capacity for deep study and observation of objects;
- depict through the different stages in this lesson, and paint a correct and complete still life.

2.1 BASIC/CORE ELEMENTS OF ART USED IN STILL LIFE

To depict an object, it is necessary to understand its external form called outline/shape. The outline/shape of an object could be round, square, triangular, or rectangular form. We sketch many different forms, like human, animal, vegetables. The painted or sketched forms, though copies of original forms, give a sense of being real.

Perspective is crucial in sketching. Shape and size, form-colour, left-right, high-low, and distance-closeness are the factors seen and shown in the placement of the picture. In nature, everything is seen through the atmosphere in the path of vision. The form and colour of an object depends on distance, and the amount of light falling on the atmospheric density through which it is seen. As the object moves further from sight, its size begins to look smaller and it finally begins to look like a point. The form of an object remains the same but different persons see it differently from different angles and distances and end up depicting it exactly the way they see it. For example, the lines of a rectangular surface seem to be inclining towards each other and meet at a point. This perspective plays a key role in a still life; while doing a still life, it is crucial to keep in mind the perspective.

Division of space is another important factor in still life. While doing a still life, the first thing to decide is the area to be worked. We fix a focal point which helps complete the picture. It is to be noted that the picture must be in the centre of the sheet and horizontal or vertical according to its shape.

Balance and proportion are necessary too. In a drawing, balance is determined by factors like line, size, colour, light and shade. Through balance, apart from the shape of an object, a person is able to show its shape, colour, weight and volume/area. Light and shade, dark and light effect the colours. Balance is the factor that brings stability and equivalence to a composition. A lack of equivalence makes the whole composition look shaky. A correct still life also requires correct measurement. Measurement not only divides lines, points and space, but it also represents balance in the picture. A lack of correct measure will not clarify the largeness or smallness of an object, and the drawing will not be considered proportionate.

The characteristics of the surface of an object, or its texture, are also very important in still life. Through the characteristics of a surface an artist can depict the real form of an object. Texture in a still life is created using the proper combination of line, colour and tone. It makes the drawing lifelike.

The last stage in the completion of still life is the composition of a light-shade. We are able to see an object due to the rays of light. The direction and position



Notes

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of the light falling on an object forms shade in the object; this composition of light and shade imbues a picture with life.

2.2 STILL LIFE PAINTING: MEASURING AN OBJECT

Place an object at a directed place, sit at a certain distance, hold the pencil in the right hand and close one eye, decide the correct measurements of the object and start drawing it. Pencil shading, crayon, pastel colour or water colour, whatever the medium, the first stage of a still life always begins with measuring with a pencil and drawing. This helps determine the size, composition, ratio, balance and placement of still life.

2.2.1 Materials Required

Drawing board, drawing pins, paper, pencils (HB, 4B, 6B), pastel colours, watercolours, brushes (Nos. 2, 4, 8, 10), eraser, pencil cutter etc.

EXERCISE 1

Still life: pencil drawing

First step

Set/compose the objects for the still life. Decide a focal point of the composition and begin drawing the objects with the lightest pencil. Once all the objects have been drawn, erase all superfluous lines to finish the drawing.



Fig. 2.1

Second step

Using a pencil, start shading the drawing to highlight the light and shade. To begin with, shade all parts apart from the areas of light. To create light and dark tones of shading, vary pressure on the pencil and use a 4B pencil for a light tone and a 6B pencil for a dark tone.



Notes



Fig. 2.1(a)

Third step

In this last step, a still life gets its final form. Observe every of the drawing section and create a three-dimensional effect through light and dark shading. Objects in the foreground are shown very clear and objects in the background dim to highlight the perspective. Add light and dark tones and balance each section of the work. Once the work is completed, erase all superfluous lines to finish the drawing.



Fig. 2.1(b)

EXERCISE 2

Still life in pastel colour

First step

Select and compose the objects to be depicted. They should be placed considering their sizes and shapes. Fix the paper on the drawing board, sitting at a comfortable distance, and measure the objects as directed earlier. Decide on a focal point and start drawing; once all objects have been drawn to your satisfaction, finish them with a clear, firm line. Erase all superfluous lines.



Notes



Fig. 2.2

Second step

In this step, the sketch is coloured with pastel colours. Colouring begins with lighter tones, and moves on to darker tones. Areas with more light are left as they are and the rest are shaded with a light hand depending on the desired shade.



Notes



Fig. 2.2(a)

Third step

In this last step, a still life gets its final form. Observe every section of the drawing and create a three dimensional effect through light and dark shading. Objects in the foreground are shown very clear and objects in the background dim to highlight the perspective. Add light and dark tones and balance each section of the work. Once the work is completed, erase all superfluous lines to finish the drawing.

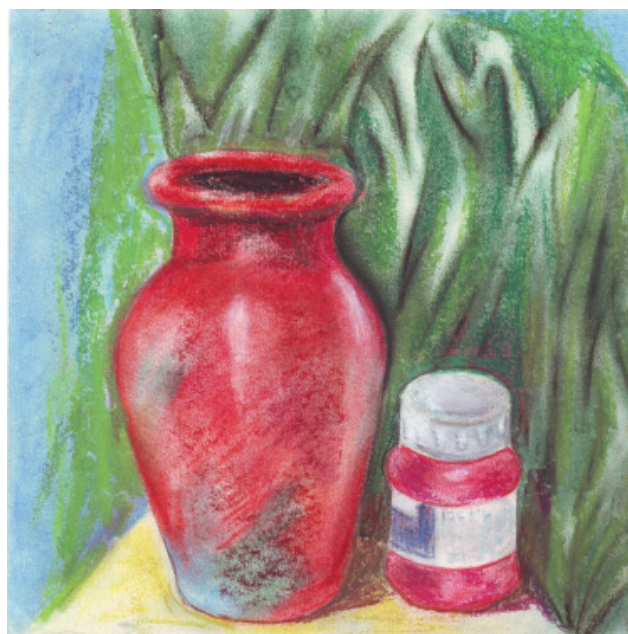


Fig. 2.2(b)

EXERCISE 3

Still life in water colour

First step

Select and compose the objects to be depicted. They should be placed considering their sizes and shapes. Fix the paper on the drawing board, sitting at a comfortable distance, and measure the objects as directed earlier. Decide on a focal point and start drawing; once all objects have been drawn to your satisfaction, finish them with a clear, firm line. Erase all superfluous lines.



Notes



Fig. 2.3

Second step

In this step, the sketch is coloured with watercolours. The first surface should be in the lightest colour. This will help get the right tone in work. In this step, the work is coloured in a uniform light colour. A slightly darker colour is applied only in places. Areas with more light are left as they are.



Notes



Fig. 2.3(a)

Third step

In this final step, all parts are observed in detail, and different tones are developed by studying the light and shade effects. The tone is created using light and dark colours. Care is taken to not adversely affect the basic characteristics of water colouring transparency. The tone of colours must highlight the three-dimensional nature of the objects depicted. Finish the work by completing each part of it.

MODULE - 1

Nature and Object Study



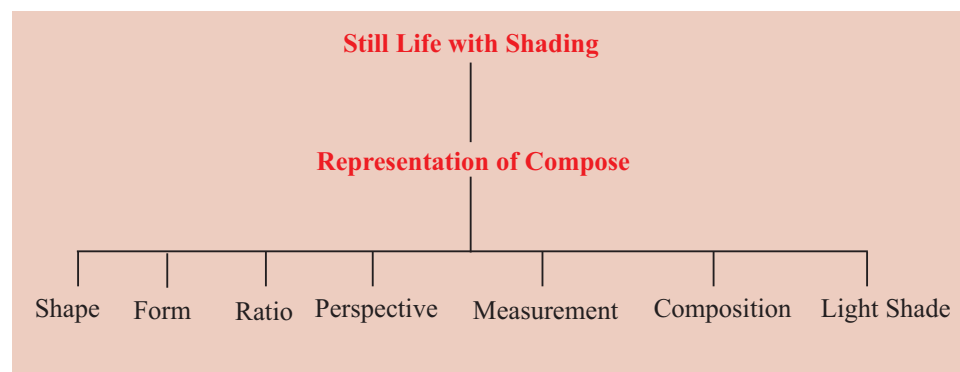
Notes



Fig. 2.3(b)



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Compose three stainless steel utensils and draw a pencil sketch.
2. Compose brass and plastic utensils together and colour them in pastel colours.

3. Compose a ceramic tea kettle, cup and saucer and colour them in water colours.
4. Compose an apple, papaya and bananas in a tray and colour them in water colours.
5. Name the materials required for a still life.
6. What are the important points to be remembered while creating a still life?

GLOSSARY

Perspective: View point

Three-dimensional depictions: Three elements illustrations

Composition: Waste of Art

Realistic representation/Exact copy: Reasonable image

MODULE - 1

Nature and Object Study



Notes