

First Grade Art Print

Still Life with Grapes and Clarinet - by Georges Braque



Other still lifes at Murray you can use for comparison:

Diego Rivera - Still Life 1913



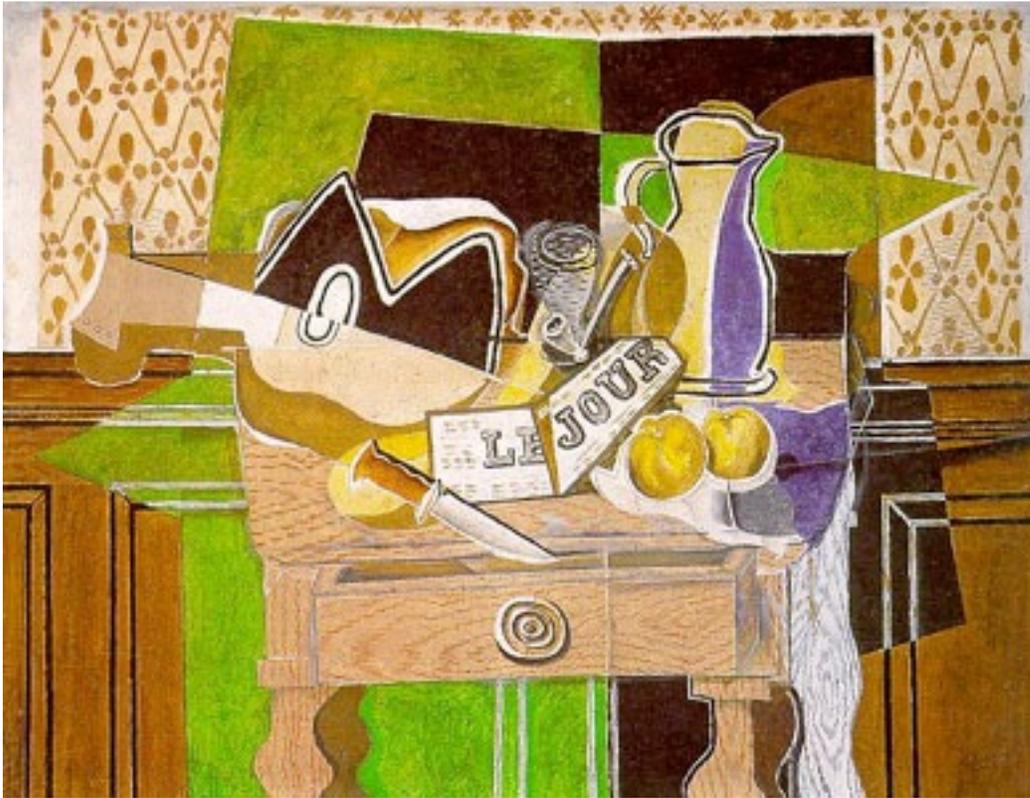
Cezanne - Still Life Fruit



Picasso - Enamel Saucepan



Braques - Still Life; Le Jour 1929



Background Info:

Artists have for thousands of years placed objects in an arrangement on a table or other surface to practice their skills at using paint to capture an image with its particular colors, shape, texture, and relationship to other objects. This genre is known as still-life.

George Braque was one of many French painters, along with Picasso and the earlier Impressionists, who wanted to challenge our ideas about reality. He did not believe the reality of an object was only what one person could see from one angle at a time. He reduced objects to more simple forms but also showed the objects from different angles at the same time. Braque, Picasso, Cezanne, Matisse, and many other French painters of this time were exploring new ways of understanding the world through painting and, as a result, are labeled “modern artists”.

Discussion Ideas/Questions:

You may tell them that this type of painting is a “still-life”. What do the words “still-life” mean to you? (You may help them understand by posing examples of a still-life around the room - you could create your own still-life right there in front of them by setting up some objects or have a kid volunteer collect some objects from around the room and arrange them on a table close by.)

Why would an artist go through the trouble to create a still-life and then paint it? (Possible answers could be to practice being a painter; maybe they didn't have enough money to travel to different places to paint other things, so they made up their own; maybe they just liked to do it - the children will come up with other interesting reasons)

What are some common subjects of still-life paintings? Can they be things that don't last for a long time (like picked flowers and fruit that will eventually go bad)? Yes! They could be fruit, flowers, household objects, anything that is part of real life that is accessible for them to place into an arrangement. They can be things that are transitory and changing, but that can be still and studied at least for a short time.

You may compare two or more of the still-life paintings. How are these the same? How are they different? (e.g., types of objects, use of colors, etc.) Which one looks more “realistic” to you? Why? Look at the Braque and ask the children to figure out what the objects are. What shapes are in the background?

Place an object that is a container (can, vase, or bottle) on a table. Tell the children that one artist might put this object in a still-life and paint it to look as much like the part he could see as possible. But, is that everything that is important to know about this object? If you can't see the bottom, isn't it still there and an important part of the can? (Turn it

over for them to see.) What about the inside? (Demonstrate again.) Put another object in front of the can so that it partially blocks the view of the can. If you can't see that part, is it still there? Is it still real? Is it still important information about the can? Mr. Braque thought his painting was just as real if he showed different parts of an object at the same time or overlapped them or made them very flat or simple. (Point out in his paintings how you can see multiple sides of some of the objects - e.g., the top and front of the vase at the same time.)

Project Ideas:

1. Option One: Put out three objects, maybe a piece of fruit, a container, and a book, for example. Or, you could bring a real violin (if you have one) and a couple of related objects. Put the objects where the children can see them, but not on the table yet. Each child should have paper and markers. First, ask them to draw the table. Next, place one object on the table and have them draw it. Then place another item on the table close to the first and have them add the second object to their drawings. Last, place the third object close to the other two and have the children draw the third object. Every time you add an object, let the lines overlap the other objects. Instruct the children to change marker colors each time they begin drawing a new object. Now add a window or chair, a piece of curtain, or something else in the room. Then go back and color in the shapes like a puzzle.
2. Option Two: When the children go back to their respective rooms, let them each pick one item from the room (pencil, stapler, potted plant, whatever is there). There will probably be 2 to 4 children at each table, so when they bring their items back to the table, they may arrange them in the center as their own "still-life". Then, they may proceed in drawing the items. Encourage them to not be limited by just a realistic view - they might try drawing two vantage points of the same object side by side in their drawings - even if they can't see both sides at the same time.