

## Title:

Painting Still Lifes

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437

## Summary:

So you want to be known as a painter of still life? Still life painting gives you, the artist an opportunity to render spirituality or poetry to seemingly mundane objects. Though the final creation seemed less intricate than portraits or landscapes, the process of composing a still life involves manifold preparations and specific requirements.

One of the specific requirements is the light source. It should be steady and the artist is allowed to use artificial lights and re...

## Keywords:

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## Article Body:

So you want to be known as a painter of still life? Still life painting gives you, the artist an opportunity to render spirituality or poetry to seemingly mundane objects. Though the final creation seemed less intricate than portraits or landscapes, the process of composing a still life involves manifold preparations and specific requirements.

One of the specific requirements is the light source. It should be steady and the artist is allowed to use artificial lights and reflectors. A window that faces north is good rather than one that faces east. The reason for this is quite obvious. The rapid change of the sun's position affects the lighting and after awhile, the you will lose the first image that you sought in the first place.

Another thing to prepare is the composition of the subject. You must be sure that it is how you want the objects to be arranged. You may draw several preliminary sketches using different compositions and carefully study each of them. Choose the one that would give the most balanced and harmonious pattern of light and dark.

The next step is to decide what approach you will use. Except when you're aiming for "photo-realism", you don't really want to paint the subject as exactly as

you see it. Therefore, decide what is your purpose, concept, or even message for making this still life. This step is most crucial because, based on your decision, you would determine how you would proceed.

The oil painting technique utilized by many old masters involves applying repeated layers of paint and glazes. Some examples of works done by this technique are "Still Life: Lemons, Oranges and a Rose" by Zurbarán and "The Silver Goblet" by Chardin.

Or you may wish to use the direct painting approach. Should you decide this, a good thing to remember is to decide one center of interest. This center interest ideally is the most lighted of all objects and others are partly concealed by shadows. Of course, the surface on which the center of interest lies should be lighted too. But the line of shadow beneath the objects should ideally be the darkest in the picture.

Another thing to keep in mind are the distinct shapes of your objects and the ground plane. Establish these early on and never lose them in the process.

And finally, after you have applied all the necessary strokes and colors, step back and scrutinize your work. Add finishing touches. For example, if the overall impression is rather dull, consider adding another color, perhaps a complement to one of the colors you've applied.