

## Still Life Painting

Different art movements and styles go in and out of fashion. Art critics do not consider Still Life painting trendy at the present time but it is recognized as an influential form of art. It's still popular with the public and many amateur artists find this sort of art to be useful in teaching composition and perspective. Artists have always struggled to get models or to have enough light to paint landscapes. Setting up inanimate objects is convenient by comparison.

Common subjects to be painted are dishes of fruit, vases of flowers or a bottle of wine and a platter of cheese or meats. Still Life painting may have a hunting or fishing theme. It was popular in western art from the 17th century, especially in France, Italy and Holland. Dutch artists were especially proficient in this art form, being banned from painting religious iconography.

The 19th century was a golden age for artists who wanted to experiment with Still Life painting. Traditionalists may have been horrified at the time but the artists who pushed the boundaries with color and form were to inspire future generations. It seems tame to modern gallery visitors today, but the work of Impressionists and Post-Impressionists shocked both the public and critics when they were first exhibited.

Vincent Van Gogh used bold color and broad brushwork in paintings such as Sunflowers, probably the most famous Still Life painting in history. Sadly, he didn't see success in his lifetime but the painting set new records when it was sold at auction and is now considered to be a masterpiece. Paul Cézanne was another artist who had a very individual style and is often referred to as the godfather of modern art. His still life's were experiments in perspective and the artist distorted perspective to suit his artistic vision.

These earlier artists laid the foundations for what would be known as Cubism. Invented by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, this way of looking at the world through geometry often used Still Life painting as a means of expression. Juan Gris was another exponent of the form. Again, purists threw their arms up in disbelief as the style was given a make over.

The Pop Artists of the 1960s also took to the form, resulting in cultural landmarks such as Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans. Artists painted Coca Cola bottles and other everyday items, arguing that it was no different from an Old Master depicting a bottle of wine.