

# STEAM LESSON PLAN

*Created by Alison Ball, Josie Langbehn, Sue Oles, Trever Reeh & Laura Huntimer*  
Grade Level Middle school (adaptable for lower and higher grades)

**THEME** Still Life

**INSPIRED BY** Jacob Fopsen van Es, *Still Life*, 1630

## PROJECT TITLE: ON YOUR TABLE

### DRIVING QUESTION

What does a still-life painting tell us about the trade culture of a specific time period?

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Put these on the board or have students write them in a notebook/journal.

- *I will create a still-life artwork.*
- *I will respond to the deeper meaning of a still-life painting.*
- *I will present research on trade to my classmates.*
- *I will connect to the fine arts to deliver research discoveries.*



Jacob Fopsen van Es (Flemish, c. 1596–1666), *Still Life*, 1630, oil on wood panel, 29 3/4 x 42 in., Museum purchase with funds from the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund and Major Art Purchase Fund in memory of Edith Larsen Jonas, 1974.56

### CONTENT STANDARDS

[NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS](#)

[IOWA CORE STANDARDS](#)

### THE FOUR C'S FOR STEAM CAREER READINESS SKILLS

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will consider the deeper meanings of Dutch still-life paintings.
- **Creativity:** Students will be challenged to present their research using the fine arts.
- **Collaboration:** Students will work together to create a table setting to depict on paper.
- **Communication:** Students will teach each other about the idea of trade.

**VOCABULARY:** commerce, economy, fine arts, luxury, reformation, still life, symbolism, trade, value, vanitas

**RESOURCES:** [Es Teaching Poster](#); [Es Pinterest board](#); [Nelson Teacher Resource Center](#)

- Video – ["Dutch Still Life and Global Trade in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century," PCC Videos, YouTube](#)
- Video – ["'Old master' style still life painting time lapse demo," josvanr, YouTube](#)
- Video – ["Art from the Dutch Golden Age," Art Gallery of NSW, YouTube](#)
  - Preview all videos before sharing with students.
- Lesson Plan – [Trade in the 1600s, National Geographic Society](#)
- Website – [Jacob Fopsen van Es Artworks, The Athenaeum](#)
- App – [Brushes, App Store](#)

**SUGGESTED MATERIALS:** drawing or mixed media supplies, tablets, and velvet tablecloth

## **PROCEDURE**

**Overview:** Students are going to examine what is on “their own table” and compare it with what was on a Dutch person’s table in the seventeenth century then discover how the items got there due to the importance of trade.

**Engage:** What’s on your table? Have students share what they have on their table at home or at school. Have them be as specific as. Then show students Jacob Fopsen van Es’ *Still Life* (1630). Discuss the items on his table and note if any overlap with what students have on their tables.

**Ask students...**

- What does it seem like just happened with the scene?
- Could this painting have a special meaning? Why or why not?
- Why do you think van Es included each item?
- Which items stand out on the table? Why?
- Do any items seem out of place? Which one(s) and why?
- Would you like to be a guest at this table? Why or why not?
- Imagine your ideal table – what is on your “happy table?” How did it end up on your table?

**Deliverables: Tell students they will...**

- Create a still-life artwork.
- Discover the secrets of citrus fruits and give presentation using one or more of the fine arts.
- Explore the idea of trade and teach each other about it.

**Art Talk:** Introduce students to van Es and share his role in seventeenth-century still-life paintings in the Netherlands. Discuss the purpose of a still life—specifically “breakfast pieces” in which van Es excelled and the symbolism of the items in *Still Life* (1630). See the Es teaching poster for aid in this exploration.

**Description of Activity:**

- Start with a celebration. Have students think a holiday they celebrate and describe the food that was likely on the table. Think about possible ways the items could symbolize something in their family, culture, or the holiday.
- Have students start to list this items—perhaps they sketch them and write their meaning down.
- Take those items and compose a still-life set-up on a table in a drawing or mixed media project (using images from magazines or the Internet). It will be a challenge unless you have students bring in the items to set-up so images from which to draw will be helpful.
  - Note how van Es positioned his items—each having their own space with little overlap. You could have students practice contour drawings (or blind contour drawings).
  - Also share how his works were meant to appear as though someone just left the table, mid-meal, and encourage students to do that with their composition.
  - Take time to share the still lifes with each other and describe the celebration in which this tablescape represents.

- Optional: Have students bring one item from home. Put a table in the middle of the room and have students put their items on it. Then they can create their still-life artwork—each student will have a slightly different perspective of the table.
- Show students more of van Es' works and focus on the fruit he depicted. Explain that he and other still life artists rendered the fruit cut open or peeled as a way to demonstrate their technical skills.
  - Have students think about when these works were created. Why would citrus fruit be considered a luxury item?
  - Together, research how fruit was kept fresh and transported to the Netherlands. Find out what diseases came with poor food preparation or preservation during the travel.
  - What are the parts of citrus fruits? Have students diagram an orange or lemon. Bring some fruits to class and have students study them. Using the app Brushes, students can render the fruit from the *Still Life* (1630) or the real examples you brought.
  - Discuss idea of commerce—focusing on the economics and trade routes associated with this product.
  - Have students work in pairs or small groups to share the research they discover and encourage the to use one (or more) area of fine arts (fine, media, dance, theater, or music) to present their findings.
  - Optional: With older students, introduce the concept of *vanitas*, or the transience of earthly goods. Compare and contrast van Es' *Still Life* (1630) with [Kent Bellows' Self-Portrait with Wine Glass \(Gluttony\) \(2000\)](#). Both images are rich in detail that will evoke meaningful conversations.
- Take any of the other luxury items and trace their route to the table or their preparation for the feast in van Es' painting.
 

Ask students...

  - What do you value?
  - What do you consider to be a luxury item?
  - What food is a luxury to you? Why?
  - Would you consider any items on van Es' table a luxury? Why or why not? Share which item.
  - Optional: Consider investigating curing meats and what that amount of sodium does to a person's health. Was it too much?
- For older students: Delve more into the idea of trade. Compare what it was like 300 years ago and how it evolved into what it is today.
 

Ask students to investigate...

  - Why is trade necessary for a successful economy?
  - How did technology affect trade?
  - How have trade routes changed?
  - What was the best innovation in the trade industry?
  - What items are traded today?
  - How does trade with foreign countries affect American farmers who produce the same crops?
  - How is van Es' painting a vehicle for discussions of trade?

- Could this painting be considered media? Why or why not?
- Have students, working in pairs or small groups, tackle one of those questions (or others they may have about trade).
  - Take the opportunity to have students share their results with by having students rotate through stations in the classroom.
- For younger students: Have students work in pairs or small groups. Assign them a country and discover select one of the items that country exports. Create representations of those items (enough to trade with their classmates).
  - Turn the classroom's floor into a giant map with a path or "trade routes" to follow and have students go from country to country.
  - Discuss the modes of transportation needed to trade their items with another country.
  - Optional: Have students select in which century this activity will take place, from the seventeenth to twenty-first.

**Closing:** Have students go back to their table at home or school, and look at the things that may be on it. From where did they originate? Was trade involved?

**Assessment:** 3-2-1. Ask students to share three things they learned, two things they want to investigate further, and one question they have.

**STEAM LESSON PLAN** Joslyn Art Museum uses the Nebraska Department of Education's STEM Approach as a guide, but we took the liberty of adding the "**A**" to emphasize the **ARTS**.

NDE's STEM Approach reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary philosophy to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaborative school-based, work-based, family-based, and community-based experiences as a context for helping students to master key competencies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Teaching and learning resources, experiences, and example activities included within NDE's STEM Approach serve as a standards-based framework for supporting the engagement of students in hands-on, authentic, and contextual learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to learn STEM content while promoting essential career readiness skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

NDE's STEM Approach strives for compatibility with all content-areas, all grade levels, and all career clusters, not just those traditionally defined as STEM.

## 3-D→2-D: A SCULPTURAL STILL LIFE

Inspired by Jacob Fopsen van Es (Flemish c. 1596–1666), *Still Life*, 1630

Created by Josephine Langbehn, Art Educator, Omaha Public Schools

Grade Level Middle School

### OVERVIEW

Students will explore the idea that everyday objects can define our culture and ourselves. We explore works from Jacob Fopsen Van Es to Andy Warhol to Sandy Skoglund and determine how they connect. Students will create cardboard cuts out of their everyday objects that express their popular culture. Students will arrange them on a table with their classmates' objects to create a still-life composition to then photograph

### ANTICIPATORY SET

For bell work have students draw a soup can prompted by step-by-step instructions. Students can create a label for their soup of something they like. Show students a series of Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg's work. Have them brainstorm what each work has in common. Have students guess when they think the work was made.

### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to understand the Pop Art movement and still lifes.
- Students will be able to draw connections between pop art and still lifes.
- Students will be able to create their own still life photograph.
- Students will be able to construct their own pop art objects based on their popular culture.



Jacob Fopsen van Es (Flemish, c. 1596–1666), *Still Life*, 1630, oil on wood panel, 29 3/4 x 42 in., Museum purchase with funds from the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund and Major Art Purchase Fund in memory of Edith Larsen Jonas, 1974.56

### MATERIALS

- Pop Art & Still Life images
- Paper (for brainstorming & sketching)
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Cardboard
- Box cutters & X-Acto knives
- Tempera Paint
- Brushes (various sizes)
- Hot Glue Guns
- Hot Glue Sticks
- Scissors
- Paper Towels
- Water
- Device for Photographing

### RESOURCES:

- Jacob Fopsen van Es teaching poster\*
- Book: *Sandy Skoglund: Rality Under Siege: A Retrospective* by Sandy Skoglund\*
- Book: *Pop Art–Art and Ideas* by Bradford R. Collins\*
- Book: *The Great American Pop Art Store: Multiples of the Sixties* by Constance Glenn\*
- Video: [The Case for Andy Warhol, The Art Assignment, PBS Digital Studios, YouTube](#)

➤ Preview all videos before sharing with students.

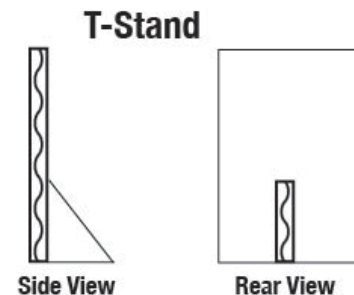
\*Available in Joslyn's [Nelson Teacher Resource Center](#)

## VOCABULARY:

- Pop Art
- Still Life
- Identity
- Popular Culture
- Culture

## LESSON OUTLINE

1. Student will learn about then Pop Art Movement with emphasis on artists Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg. Students will explore their works to gain an understanding of the art movement. This can be achieved through a teacher-made power point or guided-student research.
2. Define pop culture. Have student's brainstorm what is popular in their culture today.
3. Students will reflect on their own identity. What objects do they use daily that would define their identity and express who they are? Students will write down these ideas.
4. Students will choose the one object that they find the most interesting and that represents them. Students will sketch them.
5. Introduce Still Life. Artists to emphasize: Jacob Fopsen van Es, Vera Mercer, James Van Es, and Sandy Skoglund. Use the van Es teaching poster to explain the history of the still-life genre.
6. Compare and contrast the similarities of pop art and still life.
7. Students will then use the pop art objects they brainstormed and transform them into cardboard cut outs. Draw image on the cardboard and cut them out. (3-4 cutouts)
8. Paint cardboard cutouts and add t-stand with hot glue (so cutouts will stand up).
9. Have students choose their piece that most reflects their identity and place it in a group still still life with their classmates piece.
10. Arrange pop art objects and photograph. You can have students take turns arranging the items and taking photos.



## EXTENSIONS

- Have students create a meaningful background for their photograph.
- Build on foundations of photography.

## CONTENT STANDARDS

### NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS

FA 8.2.1.b Recognize personal voice and make stylistic choices to reflect personal identity.

FA 8.2.2.b Analyze, individually and collaboratively, the selection of art collections, displays, and presentations.

FA 8.2.3.a Identify and describe themes (glossary) and styles in works of art.

FA 8.2.4.d Explain how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

### IOWA CORE STANDARDS

# CUBISM STILL LIFE

Inspired by Jacob Fopsen van Es (Flemish c. 1596–1666), *Still Life*, 1630 and Maurice de Vlaminck (French, 1876–1958), *Still Life*, 1910

Created by Christina Kloeckner, Art Teacher, Bennington Public Schools  
Grade Level Upper Elementary to High School

## OVERVIEW

Discover the concept of cubism through the still life genre. When drawing a still life, we learn the difference between drawing what we *know* versus drawing what we see. Students will explore these differences, and then challenge them with the Cubist art movement.

## ANTICIPATORY SET

Upper Age Level Video: [In the Presence of Things–Four Centuries of Still-Life Painting, Blablabla Media, YouTube](#)

Lower Age Level Video: [Sesame Street: Super Grover Paints a Still Life, Sesame Street, YouTube](#)

➤ Preview all videos before sharing with students.

Upper Age Level Book: *What Life Was Like in Europe's Golden Age, Northern Europe AD 1500–1675*, Time-Life Books\*

Upper Age Level Video: *The Cubist Epoch* (Museum Without Walls series)\*

Lower Age Level Book: *When Picasso Met Mootisse* by Nina Laden\*

\*Available in Joslyn's [Nelson Teacher Resource Center](#)



Maurice de Vlaminck (French, 1876–1958), *Still Life*, 1910, oil on canvas, 25 x 31 in. (63.5 x 78.7 cm), Partial gift of the Gilbert C. Swanson Foundation and museum purchase, 1989.7

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the works of Jacob Fopsen van Es and Maurice de Vlaminck.
- Students will create a still-life painting/drawing using different values, geometric, and free-form shapes.
- Students will discover the difference in drawing what we know versus what we see.
- Students will identify the function of geometric and free-form shapes in art.



Project example

## MATERIALS

- sketchbook or scratch drawing paper
- colored pencils
- watercolors
- drawing paper (9x12 suggested)
- watercolor paper (9x12 suggested)
- pencils
- erasers
- rulers
- still-life props
- watercolor brushes
- water cups
- water
- paper towels
- table covers

## RESOURCES:

- Jacob Fopsen van Es teaching poster\*
- Maurice de Vlaminck, *Still Life*, 1910 print



- Various Cubist still-life images
- *When Pigasso Met Mootisse* by Nina Laden\*
- *Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists - Picasso* by Mike Venezia\*

\*Available in Joslyn's [Nelson Teacher Resource Center](#)

#### VOCABULARY:

- Cubism
- value
- value scale
- still-life
- shape
- geometric shape
- free-form shape
- blending

#### LESSON OUTLINE

1. Read *When Pigasso Met Mootise* by Nina Laden or share a book featuring still life or Cubism.
2. Display Jacob Fopsen van Es's *Still Life*, 1630 and Maurice de Vlaminck's *Still Life*, 1910.
  - a. Visualize: Have students visualize what they see in these works of art. Ask them to describe what they see.
  - b. Compare and Contrast: Have students compare the realistic still-life painting versus the cubist still-life interpretation.
3. Have students bring an object(s) or choose from provided still life props to draw. Using the van Es teaching poster, discuss the different items artists included in their still-life compositions.
4. Demonstrate and discuss drawing what we know versus what we see. What we know is the picture in our head that we can draw without looking at the object. What we see is the object that is sitting in front of us that we are trying to replicate. We should spend more time looking at the object that we are drawing rather than at the paper we are drawing on.
5. Draw just the object(s) in the middle of the paper, nice sized in relation to the paper size. For upper elementary/middle school level you may focus on just one object. For higher-level students you could easily have multiple items to make it more challenging.
6. Using a ruler divide the picture into various segments. For younger students you may need to focus on holding the ruler taut and pressing your pencil against it for a nice straight line.
7. After the space has been divided, choose 3-5 simple-to-draw sections to erase the object and redraw, but move the lines to create an effect similar to cubism (perhaps by drawing different sides of the object in the same picture plane).
8. Create a value scale using watercolor, pencil, or colored pencil. Create 6 different values going light to dark and then practice fading from one value to another below the value scale.

**Value Scale Example**





9. Demonstrate going from dark to light in each separate shape of your still life. Discuss how most of these are free-form shapes. Some may be geometric shapes depending on your drawing.
10. Answer Art Criticism Questions
  - a. Describe: Describe the object(s) you included in your still-life.
  - b. Analyze: In what areas could you improve the blended values?
  - c. Interpret: How does blending and color choice affect the mood of the piece?
  - d. Decide: How successful were you in creating blended values? What might you do to improve your drawing?

## **EXTENSIONS**

**Movement and Dance:** When colors are blended, they are softened at the edges. Use imagery to explore this idea in movement. Ask students to move like smooth fog, swirling, smudging, and sweeping through space. Call out each word and give students eight counts to explore, encourage level changes, and shifts of weight while maintaining a smooth quality.

**Poetry:** Have students choose one of the artworks and write a poem to go with it.

**Math:** Discuss how shading creates the illusion of depth, and review the formula used to find the area of a cube. Discuss the difference between shape (2-D) and form (3-D).

**Science:** Discuss the refraction of light in a rainbow. The blending of colors is a result of the change in energy. The light bends at slightly different degrees and causes us to see different colors.

**Media Arts:** Using a photo-editing program, gradually change the values in a picture by adjusting the balance.

## **CONTENT STANDARDS**

[NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS](#)

[IOWA CORE STANDARDS](#)