

Mastering Still Life: Zara's Art Studio

Learning objective: To understand the core principles, techniques, and historical context of still life composition.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of still life techniques. Zara the zebra is looking for artists who can justify their creative choices with precision and flair.

What is a 'Still Life' in art?

A still life is a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, typically commonplace objects which are either natural (like fruit or flowers) or man-made (like glassware or books).

Define 'Composition' in the context of a still life.

Composition refers to the deliberate arrangement or placement of objects within the frame to create a balanced and visually interesting image.

What is the role of the 'Focal Point'?

The focal point is the area of the composition that draws the viewer's eye first, often achieved through contrast, colour, or placement.

Explain the term 'Negative Space'.

Negative space is the area around and between the subjects of an image; it helps define the boundaries of the objects and prevents the composition from feeling cluttered.

What is 'Chiaroscuro' and why is it used?

Chiaroscuro is the treatment of light and shade in drawing and painting. It is used to create the illusion of three-dimensional volume and dramatic mood.

Define 'Texture' as an artistic element.

Texture refers to the perceived surface quality of an object, such as the roughness of a stone or the smoothness of a polished apple, created through brushwork or shading.

What is the difference between 'Foreground' and 'Background'?

The foreground is the part of the scene nearest to the viewer, while the background provides the setting or context behind the main subject matter.

What does it mean to use 'Asymmetry' in a still life?

Asymmetry is a compositional technique where objects are not mirrored on either side of the centre, creating a more dynamic and less formal arrangement.

Define a 'Highlight' on a curved object.

A highlight is the area on an object where light is reflected most intensely, indicating the object's form and the direction of the light source.

Why is 'Observation' critical for a still life artist?

Observation involves looking beyond the surface to understand the true shape, light, and colour of an object, rather than relying on what the artist 'thinks' the object looks like.