

Still Life with Lemons

Emma Cook

This painting, 'Still Life with Lemons', aimed to demonstrate my development in the representation of colour, form, and texture, with a focus on the relationship between light, shadow, and space.

I started with a colour scheme, with the major colours of the piece being yellow and blue. I selected these colours as yellow and blue are complementary colours and create a harmonious composition when arranged together. Yellow is eye catching, and darker toned blues complement it while balancing its warmth and brightness.

With this colour scheme in mind, I started arranging compositional elements, experimenting with height and depth. The resulting composition is balanced, with the lemons being focal points and drawing the eye across the painting. The blue elements have visual interest in the form of white patterns and provide a different texture to the organic subjects.

While this painting has no deliberate meaning and is intended to be a display of my developed skills, the subjects remind me of my parents. In the blues and whites of the various ceramics I find the comfort of my mother. I see our family kitchen overrun with blue bowls, plates, and dishes. I recall the *sobremesa*, sitting with my family and admiring the delicately patterned dinnerware over tender conversation. In the lemons, I see my father's dedication to his gardening. I smell the freshly picked citrus and rocket, I taste the homemade, homegrown, love-full meals that we share. This painting is a reminder of my parents and the life that they have built for my siblings and me. This is not necessarily the meaning I intended to display through my art, but it is the meaning that these subjects hold for *me*.

This painting was both challenging and rewarding. I am relatively new to painting patterned subjects, so the vases and bowl were difficult for me to accurately capture. My approach to this was to break them down into layers. I started by blocking in the main background colour, then added the more intricate designs on top once the paint was dry. This method seemed to work, but the application onto the dry paint resulted in rugged edges on the design. This still fit in the impressionist style I'm working within, and I don't think that this takes away from the overall quality of my piece.

As this piece was painted over multiple days, I could build up the shadows and highlights, putting emphasis on the darkest and lightest elements of the painting. I am very pleased with the composition and feel that it is balanced and visually interesting. The cool, dark background balanced the warmer foreground, and the colours tie everything together effectively. Nothing feels out of place as the shapes are all complementary to each other. Different textures can be seen between the organic and man-made subjects. This was achieved through directional brushstrokes, creating smoother or rougher surface.

Overall, I feel that this painting is a visual representation of my development in still life painting and demonstrates my ability to compose and create an impressionistic piece.