

# Fitchburg Art Museum

## *Still Life Lives!*

September 22, 2013 - January 12, 2014



**Definition:** Inanimate but could have been living (rabbits, flowers, fruit). Can be 2-D, in relief, or 3-D

### **Themes, concepts**

Domesticity

Temporary nature of life

Calmness

Cultural themes

Captures a moment – realistic or surreal

Expresses an emotion/mood and/or tells a story

Elevates the everyday / Symbolizes– memories, events, moral values

Perfection of image -- Artist controls everything about it – chooses the setting, the objects, the composition, the perspective, the colors, the lighting, etc.

Proving technical skill – composition, rendering, use of color and light.

Some artists show the imperfect (rotting fruit, fading flowers, leftovers from a meal), perfectly.

### **Artists' Strategies:**

Anthropomorphize objects

Appropriate imagery from other sources

Juxtaposition of things not commonly found together

Interiors and open window symbolism

Changes in color (to B&W, unnatural colors)

Changes in scale – monumental-- iconic

Neutral or absent background – floating in space-- iconic

Non-traditional subjects or materials

Refers to or imitates, historical subjects, styles, or technique, but combines with non-traditional subjects, styles, or techniques

Playing with the concept of time

Focus on a single object

Trompe l'oeil

Abstraction

Uses objects from everyday life

Uses objects with deep personal associations

Uses objects s/he created (unique)

Uses objects with cultural or historical symbolism, and either adopts the symbolism as commonly understood or plays against it

Repetitive imagery

## **Educational Goals for the exhibition:**

1. Visitors will understand several ways contemporary artists are pushing against the boundaries of traditional still life.
2. Visitors will explore creating still lifes.
3. Visitors will understand some of the artists' choices relating to still life genre, such as composition, symbolism, and mood.
4. Visitors will interpret still lifes through writing and conversations with companions.

## **How these goals are met in The Learning Lounge:**

### **1. Visitors will understand several ways contemporary artists are pushing against the boundaries of traditional still life.**

- The exhibition itself shows this.
- Illustrated Timeline, including Still Lives in Advertising
- Three artists are highlighted in The Learning Lounge, two with videos about their work.

### **2. Visitors will explore creating still lifes.**

- Create A Still Life table
- One Subject, Many Variations station
- The World's Longest Still Life

### **3. Visitors will understand some of the artists' choices relating to still life genre, such as composition, symbolism, and mood.**

- Change It and See Box
- Create A Still Life activity
- Symbols and Significance magnet board
- Videos of artists

### **4. Visitors will interpret still lifes through writing and conversations with companions.**

- Reflect and Respond writing station