

Standard Grade Expressive Critical Essay

Still Life Painting Unit

If I were going to do a still life painting I would use objects from my sitting room such as ornaments, Russian dolls or plants. I would like to paint a still life of a glass bowl containing the marbles that we bought at The House of Marbles in Devon. I would properly use watercolour to help show the glass effect. I would paint it so the marbles were bigger than their actual life size so I could concentrate on each marble individually. I would find these interesting to paint because they all have different patterns and textures. Some are opaque with designs painted on and shiny tints added while others are transparent in different colours and sizes. Some are even translucent, which means they are opaque with a swirl in or have glitter inside or around them. To get this effect I would sprinkle some glitter into the wet paint or use some glittery paint on top of the coloured marbles.

The first still life picture I drew in third year was of three jugs and a vase. It was based on the theme of black and white. I used chalk and charcoal to get the black and white effect. The characteristics of the chalk give the different tones of the dark and light. I also used red sugar paper as a background so that the black and white objects stand out more. The plain, quite detailed tones contrast very well with the bright red background to give a very good effect. I have used all the techniques and materials before so nothing is really new to me. However, I have not drawn jugs using chalk and charcoal before

I have chosen to study a picture painted by William McTaggart. McTaggart was born in 1835 and died in 1910. He liked to put a lot of detail into his paintings and drawings. His paintings are all quite warm and romantic; I think he may have been a bit of a daydreamer. The painting I am going to

write about is called "spring 1864" is painted on canvas with oil paint.

The painting I am about to describe is called "spring 1864". The picture shows two small children, a boy and a girl lying in a grassy meadow beside a small river. In the background are lambs and a landscape containing fields, trees and mountains. I think the colours are muted slightly but not enough to dull or depress the picture. The painting looks quite real, almost like a photograph. It is very detailed and there are a lot of things round about the children, but the children still stay as the focus of the painting. This is because they are right in the centre at the front. The contrast between the dark and light tones is not very strong. William McTaggart has used small, delicate, neat brush strokes to get the effect of the spring morning. The paint is very thick but smooth. I think the detail and neatness in this picture is very good. The children look almost real. McTaggart has captured the theme of spring very well in this painting.

The second artist I have chosen to study is Vincent Van Gogh who lived from 1853 to 1890. Van Gogh was an impressionist. The most important features of his work are his colour contrasts and his brushwork. He wasn't really influenced by other artists but more by places he stayed and objects he saw. The picture I have chosen to study is a painting of the room that he stayed in while he was in Arles.

The picture I am going to study is called "Van Gogh's room in Arles" and was painted by Vincent Van Gogh in 1889. This picture contains two buttercup yellow chairs, a brown table and a bed. There are also a few pictures hanging on the walls. The objects are quite three-dimensional. The colours are quite bright and contrast well with each other. The strong, bright colours and suppressed shadows suggest that the artist was happy but restless at the time

I think between these two pictures Vincent Van Gogh's room in Arles is more successful because he manages to get across an energetic yet restful feeling. The colours in these paintings are very different. In Vincent Van Gogh's room the colours are very strong, bright and lively where as in William McTaggart's spring painting the colours are more muted and less energetic. The quality of the paint and the artist's brushwork are also very different. In Van Gogh's painting the paint is used looks rough but in McTaggart's painting the paint used appears smooth. Van Gogh has used very long, thick, neat strokes where as McTaggart has used tiny, neat, thin strokes. I don't think that there is an area in either picture that needs to be improved. I personally prefer William McTaggart's painting because just by looking at it you get a warm feeling of a spring morning. I think both artists may influence my painting. I like the way that the type of brush strokes and colours used can put across different feelings.