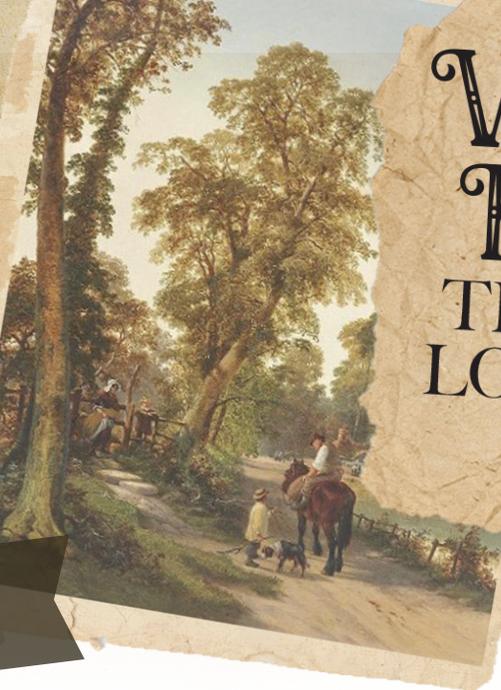




DISCOVERING NATURE:
Landscape and Still Life



VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We discovered that during the Victorian era landscape and still life paintings were very popular.
- We learned that one important reason for this popularity was because the Victorians (who were living through the first industrial age with all its factories, coal mines, and steam engines) liked being reminded of nature's quiet beauty.
- We explored the works of four painters whose love of nature inspired their art: Thomas Creswick, John Atkinson Grimshaw, William Holman Hunt, and Edward Ladell.

ART ACTIVITY: Still Life Drawings

The Victorians began a tradition of collecting and commissioning art. Today your little ones learned about several artists who painted landscapes and still life. We learned that a still life is a picture of objects that gives us a glimpse into people's daily lives. After the lesson, your artists were able to create their own still life drawings. We learned how to use shadows and line to draw bowls of fruit that look 3-dimensional. Then we used some coloring techniques with our watercolor pencils to further the 3D appearance of our fruit bowls. Don't you think they look good enough to eat?



A CLOSER LOOK: Landscape with A Purpose

In our lesson we discovered that **William Holman Hunt** believed “art has a purpose.” We also learned that he used symbols to help us understand his purpose. Remember his still life painting? This landscape gives us another example. The picture seems to be a simple country scene. But the title, ***The Hiring Shepherd***, reveals there is more to the story. Here Hunt creates a landscape to illustrate [John 10:11-13](#). In this passage, Christ teaches His disciples the difference between a true Shepherd who loves his sheep and a hired shepherd who neglects them.



Notice that the shepherd has his arm around a shepherdess showing her a [Death's-head Hawk Moth](#). (The moth gets its name from the skull-like mark on its thorax.) Ignoring his sheep, he fails to see that they are wandering through the trees into cornfields. Sheep can die from eating too much corn, and we see that two of the flock already lie sick. The shepherdess also ignores the lamb on her lap munching a green apple (a fruit harmful to lambs). According to Hunt the symbols he includes represent spiritual shepherds of his day who cared more about their wages than their sheep.

SYMBOLISM: Fruits, Flowers, Trees, and Vines

HYACINTH: symbol for peace of mind, desire for heaven

HYSSOP: symbol of penitence, humility

ILEX: symbol for Christ's crown of thorns

LILY OF THE VALLEY: symbol of new life

PLANTAIN: symbol for those seeking Christ

POMEGRANATE: symbol for unity of the Christian church

POPPY: symbol of sleep, death, eternal life

REED: symbol of Christ's passion

NARCISSUS: symbol of selfishness, self-love

OAK: symbol of strength, faith, virtue

OLIVE: symbol of God's providence toward His children

ORANGE: symbol of purity, generosity

IRIS: symbol of Mary's sorrow (the mother of Christ)

IVY: symbol of death, immortality

LAUREL: symbol of triumph, eternity

LILY: symbol of purity



Click on the picture to learn more.

FOR Parents

During the Victorian era landscape and still life painting emerged as distinct genres of English art. Painters like Thomas Creswick and Edward Ladell were known for diligently studying nature in order to recreate exactly what they saw. John Atkinson Grimshaw and William Holman Hunt also carefully studied and recreated the natural world but added a layer of mystery and symbolism to expand the imagination. Painters like these won both public acclaim and Royal Academy praise, laying the groundwork for a continued appreciation for landscape and still life paintings well into the 21st century.

DUTCH STILL LIFE: Breakfast Anyone?

Edward Ladell was inspired by 17th-century Dutch still life painters. The Dutch not only loved doing still life paintings, they had several types of them. This *Still Life with Cheese, Almonds, and Pretzels* by Clare Peeter is an example of a "breakfast piece" (also called an **Ontbijt** which is Dutch for "breakfast"). These "simple tables" filled with cheeses, breads, fruits, and veggies were designed to reflect "modesty, nourishment, and domestic order." In works like these, the cheese often takes center stage! To learn why click [HERE](#). To read about *Secret Meanings in Dutch Still Life Paintings* click [HERE](#).

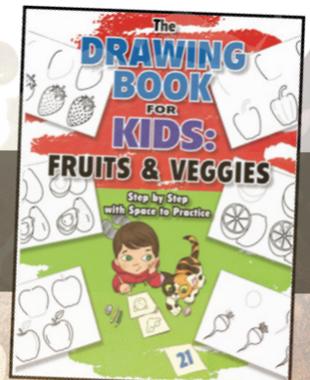


Your Turn!

Does this look anything like your breakfast table? Probably not! Using what you've learned, choose some of your favorite breakfast items to create a **breakfast piece**. As you make your choices, consider the colors, sizes, and shapes of your items. Also, think about which item you want to "take the stage." Place that on the table first; then arrange the rest of your still life "objects" around that centerpiece. Once you've finished take a picture of your still life. You can then sit down with the family to enjoy "eating" your creation.

BOOK Nook

A Drawing Book for Kids: Fruits and Veggies
by Lilia Garvin and Ainash Saini



ADDITIONAL Resources

- Learn about [Giuseppe Arcimboldo](#) who painted an emperor's portrait using fruits and veggies!
- Visit Ms. G's Studio to learn more about drawing a [Bowl of Fruit Still Life](#).
- Visit Drawings for Kids for more [Super Easy Still Life Drawings](#).
- Learn more about how to use [lighting and shading](#) in your drawing.
- Take a look at [The Drawing Book for Kids: Plants](#).

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

