

Perfecting Compositions

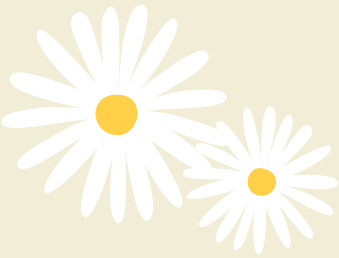
WITH LUCY ROLEFF

NGV

Throughout history the still-life genre has remained popular as a method for artists to control their subject matter, experiment with different techniques and express ideas. When different objects are placed together in a still-life arrangement, they have the power to communicate ideas of culture, class and identity. For instance, the presence of a half-peeled lemon, which was a luxury at the time, could indicate overindulgence or vanity in seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting. Later, the Impressionists used the genre to rebel against conventional methods of painting in their use of unnatural colour palettes, perspectives and modern subjects. Today, the genre continues to be referenced in contemporary art, fashion and advertising and on social media.

Lucy Roleff is a Melbourne-based artist whose still-life paintings reflect the beauty she sees in day-to-day domestic life. Through careful arrangement of inanimate objects and everyday items, her work examines the value often placed on material possessions. For more inspiration, search for 'still-life' at [ngv.melbourne/collection](https://www.ngv.melbourne/collection).

Learn Lucy's techniques for arranging still-life compositions in this art-making guide.



1

Collect three or four items from around the home. Try choosing imperfect or ordinary objects and look for items with interesting textures, different heights and shapes. Consider what message your objects might communicate to the viewer when grouped together.

2

Use the colour wheel to examine the colour palette of your objects. Try some of the colour schemes below:

> **Complementary**

Colours directly opposite each other on the colour wheel

> **Monochromatic**

Different variations of one colour, for example, light blue, cornflower blue and navy blue

> **Harmonious**

Colours that are immediately next to each other on the wheel



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3

Arrange your still-life collection and experiment by placing objects in different positions. Consider how your items relate when placed together. For example, a ceramic vase will look different when placed on some textured fabric or even more dramatic when placed against a black background.

Use your phone to record and compare different arrangements.



4

Once you're happy with your composition, you're ready to use it as a base for an artwork. Try creating a drawing, painting or photograph.

Where you take it from here is up to you!

Share your
creations by using
#NGVEveryDay and
tag @ngvmelbourne
to be featured.

For more information on programs and activities for teens, see ngv.melbourne/teens

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