

# GREAT ART IDEAS FOR TEACHERS

## EVERYDAY MOMENTS: INSPIRED BY DAVID HOCKNEY'S DIGITAL STILL LIFE PAINTINGS

LEVELS 7–10

### OVERVIEW

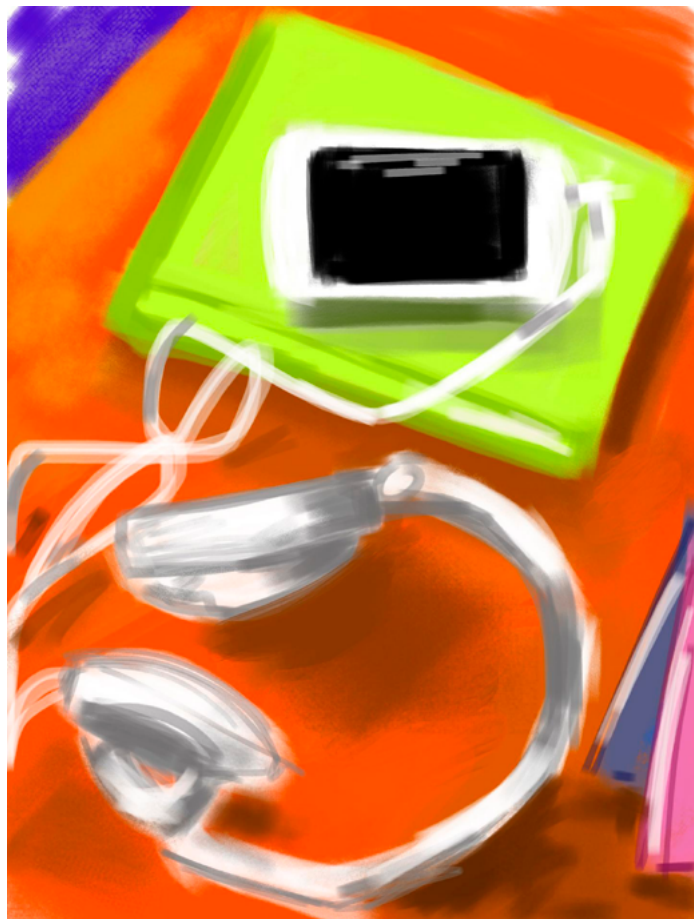
In this activity students will explore digital works by British artist David Hockney, and consider contemporary approaches to still life painting and the role of technology in art making. Informed by their observations and interpretations of the world around them, they will digitally sketch and produce their own still life artwork which uses colour to express mood and feeling.

This Great art idea involves digital painting on an iPad using the Brushes Redux application. It can be modified to use traditional materials or alternative apps if required.

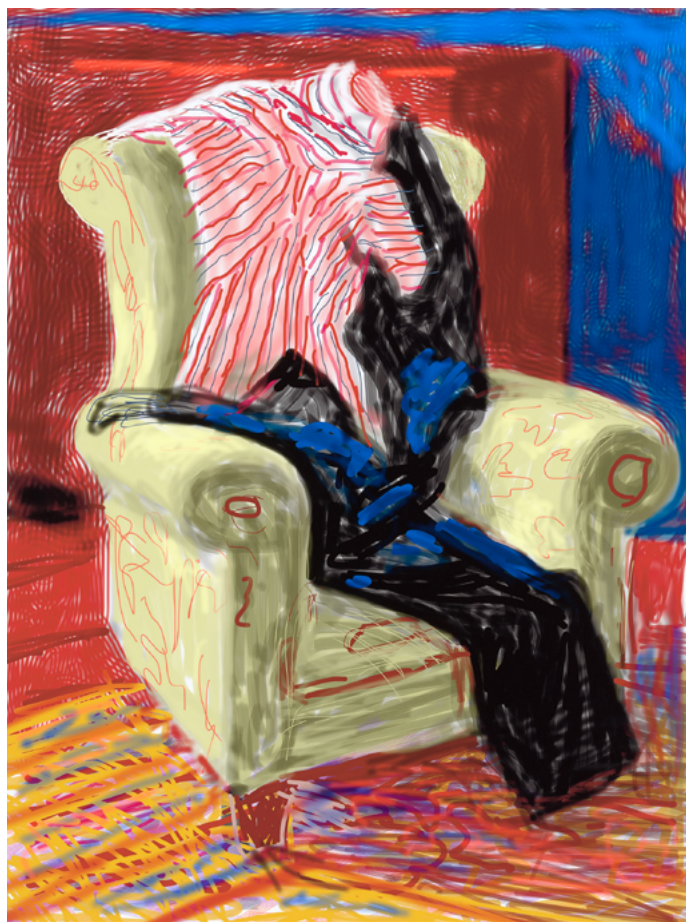
### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss subject matter commonly found in still life and develop informed ideas for still life compositions
- Describe and analyse the use of colour in David Hockney's digital still life artworks including how his use of colour communicates ideas and meaning
- Apply highly saturated and vivid colour schemes to a still life composition
- Develop observational drawing and digital artmaking skills
- Review their creative process, describe it to a partner/the class and evaluate how effectively their digital artworks express ideas and meaning.

## STUDENT EXAMPLES



## RELATED ARTWORKS



(clockwise from top left)  
**David HOCKNEY**  
*Will it ever work* 2011  
 ipad drawing printed on paper  
 94.0 x 71.0 cm  
 (image and sheet)  
 ed. 7/25  
 National Gallery of Victoria,  
 Melbourne  
 A gift from David Hockney, 2019  
 © David Hockney

**David HOCKNEY**  
*Striped mug* 2010  
 ipad drawing printed on paper  
 94.0 x 71.0 cm  
 (image and sheet)  
 ed. 7/25  
 National Gallery of Victoria,  
 Melbourne  
 A gift from David Hockney, 2019  
 2019.158  
 © David Hockney

**David HOCKNEY**  
*My shirt and trousers* 2010  
 ipad drawing printed on paper  
 94.0 x 71.0 cm  
 (image and sheet)  
 ed. 7/25  
 National Gallery of Victoria,  
 Melbourne  
 A gift from David Hockney, 2019  
 © David Hockney





# DISCUSS

## About David Hockney

David Hockney is widely considered one of the most important and influential painters of the 20th century. Born in 1937 in Bradford, England, Hockney was involved in the Pop art movement during the 1960s which celebrated subjects from everyday life and borrowed from the visual language of popular culture including advertising. Hockney became well known for his portraits of friends, and his paintings of swimming pools and lush, dense landscapes. From the late 1980s, Hockney began incorporating technology in his art. He started by using a photocopier to make homemade prints, then continued to innovate through the 1990s with fax machines and laser printers. As technology developed, Hockney began using an iPad and the Brushes app to produce still life artworks, many of which were displayed at NGV in the 2016–17 exhibition, *David Hockney: Current*.

## Still life

A still life is a piece of art where the subject is an arrangement of inanimate objects. Traditionally, they include organic objects like fruit and flowers and common household items like glassware, ceramics and textiles which have been set on a table. Still life can both celebrate material pleasures and warn of their impermanence, conveying the fleeting nature of human life. Sometimes the objects have personal significance for the artist.

To further explore the subject of still life, share this clip featuring Melbourne-based painter Lucy Roleff: <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/perfecting-compositions-with-lucy-roleff/>

Use the following discussion prompts to explore David Hockney's digital still life works with your class:

- What objects have been used in these compositions? Where are these objects found?
- Most everyday objects are considered mundane and not particularly interesting. Why do you think David Hockney has chosen to depict these objects?
- Which everyday objects can you find in your home, school or another important place which are significant to you in some way or bring meaning to your life?

Examine David Hockney's use of colour in each work.

- Create a list of words which describe the colours (such as bright, vivid, vibrant, saturated, exaggerated, eye-catching, energetic, and lively).
- Which are most realistic and which look more unnatural? Give reasons for your answer? Why do you think Hockney may have used these colours?
- What role does colour play in creating mood, feeling and meaning in an artwork? Describe the mood or feeling David Hockney's digital paintings evoke. How does the colour scheme contribute to this mood?
- Try to imagine these compositions painted in different colour schemes, such as natural, muted, or greyscale. How would the way we view the artwork and understand the messages embedded in the artwork change?

Look at the structure of each composition in the examples of David Hockney's work and identify:

- The background and foreground

- Negative space
- Mid-tones, shadows and highlights.

While David Hockney has painted with traditional media for most of his career, these works were created on an iPad using his finger.

- What do you think the main differences are between painting with a traditional medium (such as oil or acrylic paint) and painting digitally?
- What reasons might an artist have for painting digitally instead of using traditional mediums?
- What role does the medium of a work play in our interpretation of it?

## RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Paper for sketching thumbnails
- Graphite pencil
- Colour pencils or markers
- iPad with Brushes Redux application

## CREATE

Students design and create their own colour rich digital still life paintings using the following steps:

### Still life composition sketching

1. Look around your home or classroom for furniture and objects to arrange together to create unique still life compositions.  
*Consider how different combinations of objects might convey meaning. For example, an arrangement of toys might evoke thoughts of childhood or an arrangement of stationery on your desk might express ideas relating to school and study.*
2. Begin by sketching three or four compositions for your digital still life painting.  
*Your sketches don't need to be detailed, but take note of basic shapes and forms, the spatial relationship between each object, the negative space around the objects, your light source and any shadows the objects might cast.*
3. Choose a vibrant and exaggerated colour scheme for each sketch.  
*Consider how your choice of colours might express a mood, feeling or idea.*
4. Add colour to each of your sketches using colour pencils or markers.  
*Remain attentive to the highlights and shadows in your compositions and their impact on your colour choice. Choose lighter tones to effectively depict highlights on objects and choose darker tones to depict shadows and darker areas.*
5. Choose your preferred composition to paint digitally.

## Digital painting in Brushes Redux

6. Open a new canvas in the Brushes Redux App.
7. Before starting your digital painting, practice using drawing tools such as the various paint brushes, eraser, and colour palette and experiment with various brush sizes. Locate the buttons that let you undo and redo mark making too.
8. Once you've had a practice, return to your Gallery and create a new canvas for your digital still life painting.
9. Start by sketching the basic outlines of your composition with a pale coloured brush. You don't need to worry about details at this stage, your marks can be sketchy and light.
10. Choose a wide brush to paint the mid-tones in your composition, working from the background to the foreground.  
Don't worry if you go over some of the lines in your sketch during this stage as you'll be able to add details and fix parts later.
11. Referring to your hand drawn sketch, begin to add the darker tones of each colour to form the shadows depicted in your still life arrangement.  
*Remember, it's ok if you paint over any other objects or outlines. You can go back and fix these areas later.*
  - Handy colour matching tip: Press down on a mid-tone in your painting and wait for the coloured circle to appear. This activates your colour choice and places it in your colour palette. Now, all you need to do is choose an appropriate darker tone of your activated colour.
12. *Now that your mid-tones and shadows have been painted into your composition, begin to add in finer details and highlights. You can also fix and tidy up your painting as you go.*  
*Try work in your details from the background to the foreground of your composition so that you don't accidentally paint over an area you need.*
13. *When you have finished your painting, return to your Gallery where your painting will be saved.*
14. *If you re-open your finished painting you can playback your painting process from start to finish by pressing 'play', or swipe along the bottom of your painting to work on the digital canvas further.*

# PRESENT AND REFLECT

Ask students to show their individual work to a partner or work as a whole class:

- Looking at your finished painting, describe your chosen still life arrangement. Why did you include your chosen objects?
  - Describe the colour palette of your finished painting.
  - Why did you choose these colours?
  - How is it similar or different from the colour scheme in real life?
- What meanings and ideas were you hoping to communicate by using these colours?
- Playback your painting process in Brushes Redux to review the steps involved in producing your painting. Explain which steps were the most rewarding and which were most challenging. Why was that so?
- Overall, how well do you think you expressed your intended meanings and ideas in your digital still life painting? What might you do differently next time?

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