

4th Grade Still Lifes

In this lesson, I wanted to train students to use their eyes in art and to pay close attention to the small details in the physical world. I started this lesson using a blind contour drawing exercise. Students put their hands in a brown paper bag and had to keep their pencils moving at all times. I encouraged students not to peek and to commit to only looking at the still life that was in front of them versus what their hands are doing. This proved



difficult; I witnessed a lot of peekers, but the concentration on their faces when they were studying the still life in front of them was beyond sensational. The blind contour drawings were great practice for what I planned next.

Then, students drew the outline of the still life in front of them. Students' hands were not in bags, however they were encouraged to not look at what their hand was drawing and to let their eyes guide their marks. I did a demonstration on how to apply and blend pastels. Then, they were to color each element of the still life with one color only, preferably the dominant color of the shape or fruit.





The following class I taught students how to see shadows and highlights. I introduced the squinting technique and asked the class, “Where is the highlight? Where is the shadow? How does squinting allow us to see this better?” I showed students how to achieve shadows using pastels by layering the colors and students pointed out that the fruit looked more three dimensional than it did before. Students now had the eyes to look for shadows and highlights and demonstrated their understanding in their still life drawings.









