

3 • 12

Georges Braque



Masterpiece:

Le Jour, 1929

Size: 45 in. x 58 in.

Media: oil on canvas

Artist:

Georges Braque, 1882-1963

Project:

Cubist Collage

KEY CONCEPTS

Style: Cubist
Still Life
Abstract/Realism
Design: Composition
Unity

Space: Viewpoint
Highlights
Shading
Texture: Collage
Actual

ABOUT THE ARTIST

- Painted in 1929 at a time when photographs were more easily available.
- Born and lived most of his life in France.
- Invented Cubist style with Picasso, showing objects from many viewpoints.
- Painted mostly still lifes so he could explore how to show distance.
- Photographs could capture realistic images, so they needed to find new ways to express their ideas.

CONCEPTS

Style:

- Cubist
- Still life
- Abstract/
Realism

Design:

Composition
Unity

Line:

Outline/Contour

Space:

- Viewpoint
- Highlights/Shading

Color:

Neutral

Shape:

2-D/3-D

Negative

Texture:

- Collage
- Actual/Visual

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR KEY CONCEPTS

Why is this lively composition called a still life?

This still life shows everyday inanimate objects, objects that cannot move on their own.

How did Braque combine everyday objects in a Cubist composition?

Cubism is a style that shows movement by combining multiple viewpoints of an object. We see the pitcher and guitar from the top and from the side at the same time.

How are the objects abstract?

The abstract shapes of the guitar, pitcher, pipe, and newspaper represent recognizable objects, but they are simplified and exaggerated.

Why is this painting called Le Jour?

Le Journal is the name of a daily newspaper in France. The paper is folded so we see only part of the title: Le Jour, which is the French word for today. This painting shows the way these objects appear today, at this moment. The background paneling and wallpaper create a realistic setting.

How do repeated lines and shapes unify the composition?

Repeated black outlines around the guitar, pitcher, knife, and paneling connect the objects and unify the composition. The outline emphasizes their flat shape.

Where are we, the observers?

We see these objects from different viewpoints. We see the table from a top view and a side view at the same time, as if we were standing up, leaning over, or moving to the side. Negative, or empty space, shown by the blocks of color behind the objects covers the busy wallpaper pattern and helps emphasize the objects.

Which shapes are 3-D?

Shading and highlights give the apples form and make them appear 3-D with height, width, and depth. The newspaper is two dimensional, or 2-D, in shape. It is flat, without depth. Highlights on the apples create the illusion of form. The blue area on the pitcher represents a shadow.

Is there real texture in this picture?

Many Cubist compositions were collages, made of patterned wallpaper, real newspaper, wood, and other actual objects with actual texture that the viewer could feel. Since this is a painting, the texture is only visual, not actual. Braque was known for his skill in painting visual texture.

MATERIALS

- Sketchbooks
- 12x18 assorted paper, background
- 9x12 assorted paper for objects
- Pieces of wallpaper
- Drawing pencils
- Sharpies: black
- Glue
- Wipes
- Classroom scrap box
- Scissors

SETUP

- Cut 9x12 assorted paper to 6x9.
- Set up a still life using objects with a theme, such as musical instruments, sports equipment, picnic supplies, or toys. Or set up a still life using many different objects, so students can choose several to include in their collages.
- Set out sketchbooks and drawing pencils.
- Have ready 12x18 background paper, 6x9 assorted paper, and wallpaper.
- Set out Sharpies, scissors, and glue.
- Have ready newspaper and classroom scrap box.

TIPS

- Use classroom scrap box for extra paper.
- Encourage students to use multiple layers and experiment with Cubist-style placement of objects.



PROJECT: CUBIST COLLAGE

Sketch:

1. Air draw a shoe.
2. Sketch side view and top view

Project:

1. Plan abstract Cubist collage. Set background paper on 12x18 colored paper. Select theme and 6x9 colored papers. Select patterned paper to contrast with colored papers.
2. Arrange and glue textured paper for back wall.
3. Draw, cut, arrange table top (as seen from above) and legs (side view) made from 6x9 paper. Place one or two blocks of contrasting colored paper behind the table to make back wall.
4. Design 5 objects that show theme.
5. Draw, cut, place 2 objects from patterned paper.
6. Draw, cut, place 3rd object, using both positive and negative (cut out) shapes.
7. Draw, cut, place object, 4th object. Cut with jagged lines, spread pieces apart slightly.
8. Draw, cut, place 5th object, using positive and negative space and showing 2 view-points.
9. Layer pieces on table and back wall. Turn pieces to create interesting lines and shapes.
10. Overlap table over back wall and add table legs.
11. Arrange objects on tablet to form balanced composition. Overlap smaller objects over larger ones.
12. Add details (guitar strings, shoelaces, logos etc) with Sharpie to create visual texture.
13. Glue objects on table.

