

Giorgio Morandi Still Life

Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) is best known for his still life paintings and etchings which typically depict bottles, vases and containers. He would spend a long time setting up the objects and observing the shapes and how the form of the objects related to each other. He would adapt the objects by painting them in thin layers of muted colours and let dust settle on them which would subtly change the light. After much contemplation and making small adjustments he would paint the still life very quickly. This activity explores the process of contemplation involved in arranging objects and observing subtle differences in tone that Morandi is so well know for.



Giorgio Morandi, Still Life with Five Objects, 1956



Giorgio Morandi, Various Objects on a Table, 1931



Giorgio Morandi, Still Life, 1944



Giorgio Morandi, Still Life, 1948

- 1) Find some 3-5 bottles, vases or containers.
- 2) If possible paint them with thin white paint.
- 3) Place the objects on a table with a plain light coloured background.
You could use some cardboard or fabric for your backdrop.
- 4) Spend some time carefully arranging the objects in an area with natural light.
 - Look carefully at the shape of the spaces between the objects
 - What feels awkward, satisfying or balanced?



- 5) Keep observing your still life over a day and make any adjustments.
- 6) Look at the still life in different lights throughout the day. You could take photos to help you observe the subtle changes in the light.



Top Tip: Take time to contemplate your still life and make adjustments

Experiment: Leave your still life out and observe it over a long period of time. Let the dust settle on the objects and see how it changes their appearance.

Research: Draw the shapes of the shadows in your still life or create a drawing of light and dark without using lines.

Key Words



Contemplation: The act of looking thoughtfully at something for a long time.

Tone: Refers to the light and darkness values of something. This could be a shade or how dark or light a colour appears.