

# LEGENDS & LEGACIES

FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION  
*connections*

John Kelly Fitzpatrick



Still Life Painting

THE KELLY

Kelly Fitzpatrick Memorial Gallery





## John Kelly Fitzpatrick, 1888-1953

*Untitled, Blue Jug, Still Life, 1942, Oil on Canvas, 20" x 16"*  
*Gift of Kelly Fitzpatrick Jones and Watt and Pat Jones*

John Kelly Fitzpatrick was born in 1888 in Wetumpka, Alabama. His father, Phillips Fitzpatrick (1830-1901), was a physician, and his mother was Jane Lovedy Fitzpatrick (1850-1913). His paternal grandfather, Benjamin Fitzpatrick (1802-1869), served as the Governor of Alabama from 1841 to 1845.

Fitzpatrick attended the Stark University School in Montgomery and went to the University of Alabama to study journalism for two years. He then spent a semester at the Art Institute of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois. In 1918, he joined the United States Army and served in France during the First World War. In 1929, he spent a few months at the Académie Julian in Paris, France. His formal education was somewhat limited, never receiving a degree from an institution of higher education.

As a regionalist painter, he is best known for his paintings of rural Alabama, especially his home county of Elmore County, Alabama. He was inspired by French painters like Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), and Henri Matisse (1869-1954). In the French tradition, he often painted out in the open, near lakes or creeks in the Alabama countryside.

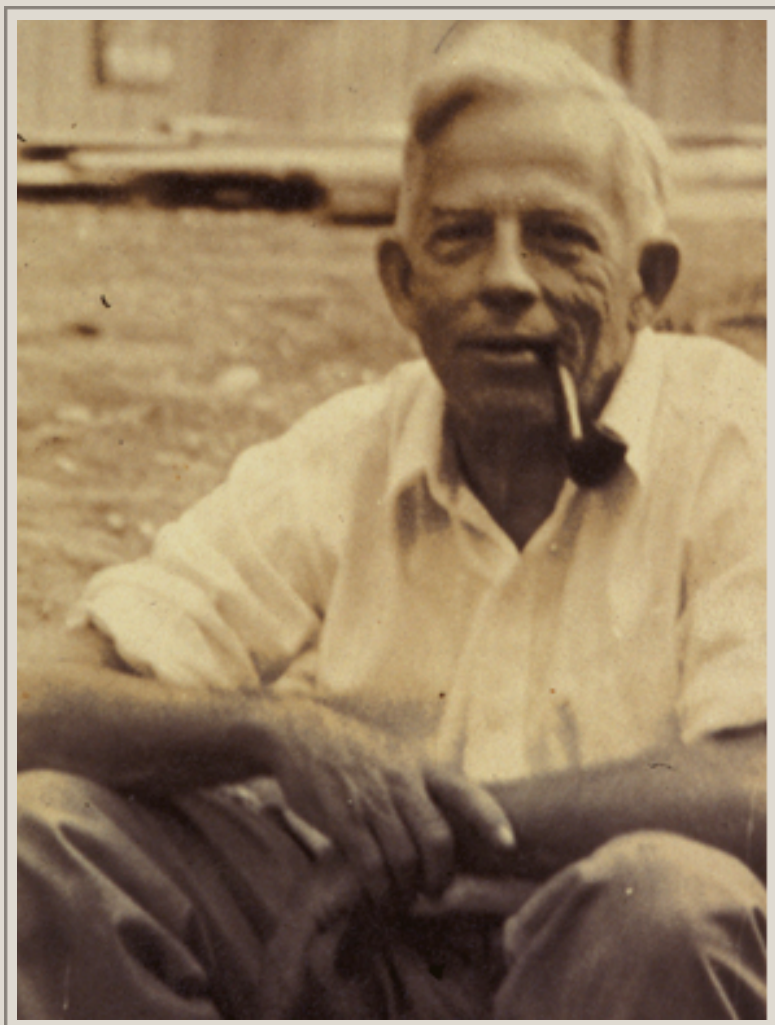


Together with a group of artists known as the Morningview Painters, he founded the Alabama Art League in the late 1920s. This led to the establishment of the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Montgomery, Alabama in 1930. He sat on its original Board of Trustees and helped develop its permanent collection. Some of his work is exhibited there. He also taught painting and served as director of the Montgomery Museum Art School. In 1938 and 1939, he was commissioned by the federal government as part of the Public Works of Art Project to produce paintings, including murals inside the newly constructed post offices in the towns of Ozark, Alabama titled "Early Industry of Dale County" and in Phenix City, Alabama titled "Cotton."

In 1933, Fitzpatrick co-founded the Dixie Art Colony with Sallie B. Carmichael and her daughter Warree Carmichael LeBron. The idea was to establish an artist colony to paint and train burgeoning artists in the South. From 1937, they met at Poka Hutchi ("gathering of picture writers" in Creek Indian parlance), a small cabin on Lake Jordan. Later, Frank W. Applebee, the Chair of the School of Art and Architecture at Auburn University and a painter, joined the colony, as did Genevieve Southerland, Anne Wilson Goldthwaite and Lamar Dodd (1909-1996). The colony last met in 1945.

In addition to John Kelly Fitzpatrick's paintings at "The Kelly" (Kelly Fitzpatrick Memorial Gallery) in Wetumpka, Alabama, his work can be found in the Wetumpka Historical Museum, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery as well as the Johnson Collection in Spartanburg, South Carolina and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Kelly Fitzpatrick died of a heart attack on April 18, 1953. He was buried in the Wetumpka City Cemetery.



Kelly Fitzpatrick

## Still-Life Painting: Arranging Nature—Lesson 1

Grades/Level: High School (9–12)

Subjects: Visual Arts

Time Required: 2–Part Lesson

Author: This lesson was adapted by J. Paul Getty Museum Education staff from a curriculum originally published on the Getty's first education website, ArtsEdNet.

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### Lesson Overview

This is the first lesson in a sequential unit. Students look at and discuss still-life paintings and develop a definition for the genre. They then further their understanding of this type of painting and practice watercolor techniques by painting their own still life from direct observation. Art production focuses on the tools used to create the illusion of three-dimensional space and convey texture in watercolors.

### Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify and discuss two key elements of European still-life painting: the use of symbols and direct observation from nature.
- use various watercolor techniques.
- create a painting of objects from direct observation.
- use painting techniques to successfully depict the illusion of three-dimensional form and space.
- use new vocabulary specific to watercolors and still-life painting.

### Materials

- Watercolor paints, paper, brushes, and other selected tools for watercolors (paper towels, sponges, etc.)
- Journals for note taking and sketching
- A still-life arrangement, created from objects such as pottery, glassware, fruit and vegetables, shells, flowers, etc.
- Images of still-life paintings from The Kelly's collection. Below are suggested objects for this unit.

## Lesson Steps

### Preparation:

Create a still-life arrangement for students to paint in class. Make sure it is situated so that the class will be able to see you demonstrate techniques. Set up the classroom for watercolor instruction.

1. Discuss the history and characteristics of still-life painting and the idea of painting from direct observation of nature. Show still-life images from the Getty Museum and briefly discuss painting techniques used in these works.

2. Select three to five images for critical evaluation.

Use the following prompts during a class discussion of the images:

- Use three adjectives to describe one aspect of each image, then support your word choice with visual evidence. (For example, the Liotard still life looks "messy": teacups are tipped over, and orange peels and used spoons are on the table.)
- What is the subject matter?
- Why do you think the artist chose these particular objects?
- How did the artist arrange the objects?
- Describe how the artist used color.
- Point out the use of different mediums in the painting.

Which images use a transparent medium? Which use an opaque medium?

- Point out all the lines you see and describe what kind of lines they are. (straight, curvy, bent, squiggly, etc.)
- Did the artist create an illusion of three-dimensional space? How did he accomplish this?
- Imagine you are standing in the picture. Where are you standing in relation to the objects? (Are they above you? Below you? Close? Far away?)
- Does the painting look realistic to you? Do you think the artist found these objects lying in this manner, or did he or she arrange them like this?

3. Have the class come up with a definition of still-life painting. Based on the image(s) they just looked at, make a list of elements and qualities that still-life paintings can have. Chart student responses for later use.

4. Working from the still-life arrangement you created in the classroom, demonstrate watercolor techniques to your class (transparent medium, wet-on-wet, dry brush, spatter, layering of paint, overlapping of color). Assume that this demonstration is a review, and add some more sophisticated applications. Have students practice the techniques in their journals as you demonstrate.

5. Tell students that they should practice watercolor painting from direct observation by creating studies of the classroom still-life arrangement. Paintings should incorporate the following techniques:

- Create different effects with tools and paint.
- Convey different textures observed in the surface of natural forms.
- Create the illusion of three-dimensional form and space.

6. Circulate among students as they work and engage them in discussion about the challenges posed by this medium and their subject. Have students select their best studies to include in their portfolio.

## **Assessment**

Students should be able to do the following:

- Define still-life painting and discuss the criteria they used to arrive at that definition.
- Successfully use various techniques of watercolor painting.
- Convey the illusion of three-dimensional form and space using watercolors.
- Describe, compare, contrast, and analyze art images orally using new vocabulary about watercolor paint and still-life paintings.

## **Extensions**

Have students write an essay that compares and contrasts two of the still life paintings that are by artists who lived in different centuries. Students should speculate about the factors that explain differences and similarities in the works. Hypotheses should be supported using information gathered from research.

Standards Addressed

## **Common Core Standards for English Language Arts**

### **Grades 9–12**

#### **READING**

##### **Craft and Structure**

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

#### **SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

##### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

#### **LANGUAGE**

##### **Conventions of Standard English**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## **National Standards for Visual Arts Education**

### **Grades 9–12**

1. Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
  - a. Apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.
  - b. Conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use.
3. Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
  - a. Reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture.
4. Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
  - a. Differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art.
  - b. Describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.
  - c. Analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making.
5. Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
  - a. Identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works.
  - b. Describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts.
  - c. Reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art.