

Still life with drinking-
horn of st sebastians
archers' guild essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Just a bit about the artist Willem Kalf, he was a Dutch artist in mid-1700's who was known for painting called 'Pronkstilleven' in Dutch, meaning 'ostentatious still life'. He used lavish objects for his paintings that were mostly kitchen and farm related. Now about this painting. You can actually see this painting in better reproduction at the website I have included above. The painting style for the time period is somewhat of an experiment considering that the inhabitants didn't have any form of reproducing images other than hand drawings.

And the most amazing part is the usage of the color in this Rubenesque period of Dutch painters is outstanding. Several years ago I saw the Rubens exhibit at The Toledo Museum of Art and I was awestruck with the color of the paint. Centuries ago these painters called upon the use of some type of pigment and the mixture of a drying oil such as linseed or flax. While I realize that many of these works of this genre have been rehabilitated professionally with modern day techniques the color vibrancy is breathtaking.

When addressing the spatial/temporal relationship of this painting I think that a still life is the best way to present the best example of this process. The painter must be able to look at a dimensional setting and reproduce that visual into a portrait that will give the impression of dimension. Time and space must be give exquisite detail to complete the picture. In this picture, there is a light source on the left side of the painting (easier to see that from the link) which is broadcast throughout the painting.

This is a wonderful example of our sight stimulating our other senses; while you look at the painting you can almost smell the lobster and perhaps a musky blanket/table cover. We see the glass (the roundness of the glass) and the carafe (the fluting of the carafe) with liquid in both show the source of the light and the reflection of the liquid contents. Do you wonder what is in the glass, wine probably? Honestly, one really needs to be on their best game when trying to reproduce this type of reflection in a painting.

We also see the horn with great light reproducing the sensation of smoothness and shininess, almost like you can run your fingers along the polished horn and feel what a wonderful job an apprentice did polishing it. And again, the metal open end of the horn has the same light reflection as the glass pieces do. Another interesting item in this picture is the lemon with the peel draped off the table. It feels like you need to put your hand out and catch it because it will fall off!

The lobster color clearly indicates that it has been cooked, the vibrant pink-red and looks smooth until you look at the claws. Look at the jagged edges of the claws, will hurt if you get your finger caught in there while trying to dig out the delicate meat. And can you appreciate the metal platter? The color and reflections appear to make it look like it has been used many times, a bit pounded or beat up. The most remarkable part about this picture are two things, the integrate silver statuaries and the blanket/table cloth.

First the metal figures, look at the detail on the horn and the figures, the color, the dimension, the reflections. They look cold, they look sharp and they look real. The blanket or table cloth is really a fabulous impression of

folds and texture. The presentation clearly shows that the item is “crumpled” on the table but the texture in the painting is amazing. The artist went as far as including the warp in the weaving and a “carpet-like” texture that makes you want to touch it.

What is difficult to see in the photo at the top of this report but you can see on the link is the table that the arrangement of items sits on. A cherub has the weight of this marble table and the contents on its shoulder's, with the cleverly placed white napkin draped behind its profile, so it doesn't get lost in the background. Our assignment asks us to discuss a realistic painting from a scientific viewpoint and I think the fluid in the glass and carafe are the perfect example of disbursement as well as reflection.

I know this was discussed previously but while giving the piece another look over I did notice the light passing through the fluid in the containers. The reflection of the items on the glass itself draws you in and makes you look to see what was looking at that still life, maybe the artist? But the make of a really great artist is replicating how that light disperses in the fluid and reflects with a duplication of the bright light. The light is bent slightly to the bottom of the fluid in the glass, does the fluid do what our brain does for us, turn it upside down?

See, many questions arise while really giving this painting an analytical nod. Differences between this painting and a photograph would, in my opinion, be the very vibrant color and stark reflections. Not to say in our technologically advanced world now it could not be enhanced to give the same dramatic effects but I don't think a photo from years ago would have the same impact.

<https://assignbuster.com/still-life-with-drinking-horn-of-st-sebastians-archers-guild-essay-sample/>

And unless you could use a photographer's loop or enlarge a photo, the texture wouldn't be as appreciable as the artist's hand brushing, another indication of expertise employed by Willem Kalf.

What I love about this piece are the many components that make up the composition. Light, dark, hard, soft, liquid, metal, items found in nature, items man-made placed strategically to maximize the uniqueness of each component of the science that makes up our senses. You can almost smell that cooked lobster, you want to touch the horn, the marble looks cold and the metal looks sharp. This piece represents outstanding visual and it is scientifically a masterpiece, kudos to this era and technique.