



Gary Faigin

Online

Still Life Atelier

Overview

Still Life painting is about much more than making inanimate objects come to life in color, shape and form. In my class, **you learn the basics of oil painting**: how to mix colors, how to “turn” the form so it looks three-dimensional, how to get the light on your objects to glow, and how to compose paintings that really hold our attention. Your models never get tired or move, and you are the Director, the Writer, and the Photographer of your individual scene. You can apply the skills you learn in my class to portraiture, landscape, or even abstraction. And still life itself can be a place to use your imagination and creativity to do the unexpected, the comic, or even the cosmic.

Beginners are always welcome. In fact, still life is a great place to start your painting studies. I take students at any level, and as my class size is small (around 8 students), I tailor my instruction to my student’s particular needs and goals.

My class is online. You paint from your home studio and send me the results, along with a photo of your setup, for my critique. We meet twice a week for 3 hours. I go over everyone’s work using digital tools to show my comments and corrections, as you watch. The class is highly interactive with student participation welcomed. I often reference art historical examples to highlight particular concepts or painting techniques. If you must miss a class, you can watch a recording afterwards.

We also discuss art history, make master copies and have thought exercises as homework. My typical student stays in the Atelier for 2-3 years. By the end of that time, they feel confident in their rendering, color, and compositional skills. Students also meet online after class for further discussions and interactions, and we occasionally have a live critique for those who are in the area. And starting this year (2024-25), I will convene a hybrid class in our new Media Studio once a quarter, where local students can bring in their artworks for an in-person critique and my out-of-town students can participate virtually, as usual.

Outline

You are assigned all projects according to your technical expertise – beginner, intermediate or advanced. Over time, you will receive more challenging assignments. Students of all levels learn from one another in our classroom discussions.

- **Tuesday Class** – “Word of the Week” & Art History Presentations
- **Thursday Class** – “Theme Paintings” & “Master Copies

Weekly Homework

Intended to build your imagination and conceptual skills, every week I assign a “**Word of the Week**” as homework. Examples of typical word prompts are “twist,” “dissolve” or “fade to black.” The following week, you submit a drawing or painting for our Tuesday class discussion as your visual response to the assigned word .

Quarterly Assignments

During each quarter, you are assigned 3-4 specific “**Theme Paintings**” to complete over several weeks. Some painting assignments are based on a theme such as:

- Still Life with Tools
- Still Life w Landscape Background
- Still Life w/ self Portrait
- Palette Knife Painting

Other painting assignments are based on “**Master Copies**” of historic paintings. This assignment is intended to sharpen your skills in tonal analysis, color theory, painting technique and composition.

Student Report – Art History

Every student chooses an artist to make a one-hour PowerPoint presentation to the class about his or her life and art. This assignment can be completed at any time during the school year.

Student Goals

During your time in my Atelier, it is my intention that you will master the following skills:

- Accurate Drawing – proportion, relation; understanding basic principles of perspective
- Correct values – understanding of the use of contrast to control the viewer's gaze
- Ability to see the picture as a whole; suppression of details in favor of overall effects
- Ability to preview composition in thumbnail
- Study of earlier art – analysis by compositional elements, “Master Copy”
- Control of Edges
- Good brush handling – no random textures
- Thick and thin paint – use of impasto and glazes
- Learn to use broken color; learn to mix and use a string
- Understanding of warm and cool colors, use of neutrals and chromatic color
- Understanding of working from dark to light, and starting from the mass
- Ability to create striking compositions
- Ability to capture the effect of light; ability to create solid and convincing form
- Ability to render a variety of textures: metal, glass, wood, fruit/vegetable
- Mastery of fabrics/folds
- Exploring various supports: Canvas, panel, gessoed paper
- Good palette organization
- Ability to create images inspired by an idea – “Word of the Week”
- Ability to create mood, suggest emotions, narrate a story
- Work in a series – variety within a theme and format
- Familiarity with Western Art history

Your Still Life Setup

You will want to create a permanent working space somewhere in your home.

The below illustration shows an ideal painting set-up for a still life painter.



Faigin Teaching Videos

I have created a small library of teaching videos to show my students the basics of painting technique:

- How to Start Painting
- How to Mix Color
- How to Treat Edges

OIL PAINT MATERIALS LIST

S U P P O R T S

- 3 Stretched canvases 18" x 24" or 20" x 26".
- Please also have a few small canvas boards for quick sketches and "Word of the Week" projects

B R U S H E S

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR BRUSHES ARE IN NEW OR NEARLY NEW CONDITION. Do not use brushes that are not on this list, or are stiff or worn. Brushes are your most important tool! When cared for properly, they last years.

- Hog Bristle Filberts: Two each #2, #4, #6, #8
- Hog Bristle Filberts; One each #10, #12
- One or two Hog Bristle blending brushes are useful
- Two or three small round Sable substitutes (for details) – Any inexpensive synthetic is fine for this

M E D I U M S

We will use one medium: Alkyd gel. Recommended: Neo-Megilp by Gamblin. Dan Smith also makes a good alkyd medium.

Please do NOT use Liquid, as it is too volatile for a studio environment.

D R A W I N G M A T E R I A L S

- Soft Vine Charcoal
- Chamois Erasing Cloth
- Pencil Sharpener
- Drawing Pad

FAIGIN STILL LIFE ATELIER – STUDENT PACKET

OIL PAINT MATERIALS LIST (cont)

L P A I N T S

Only buy professional grade oil paints. - Daniel Smith, Gamblin, Sennelier, Winsor-Newton, Rembrandt, & Holbein are all suitable. Avoid student grade paints (no Winton, please).

- Mixed White (Titanium/Zinc blend) *Large Tube*
- Yellow Ochre
- Cadmium Yellow Medium
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- Cadmium Red Medium
- Quinacridone Magenta
- Indian Red
- Burnt Siena
- Ultramarine Blue
- Prussian Blue
- Cerulean Blue
- Sap Green
- Viridian
- Burnt Umber

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

- Gamsol Odorless Mineral Spirits
- Viva paper towels (worth the extra cost)
- Small plastic garbage bag
- Palette Cups
- Palette knives
- 16" x 12" palette (wood, glass, plastic, or paper)
- Masterson Palette Keeper (for keeping mixed paint wet between sessions)
– fits only a 16" x 12" palette