

Look, Think, Do

Flowers in a Glass Vase activities



Look

Look closely at this painting to find the tiny creatures in it.

How many insects can you spot?

Search for our story of *Vanessa the Lost Butterfly* on the vimeo website.



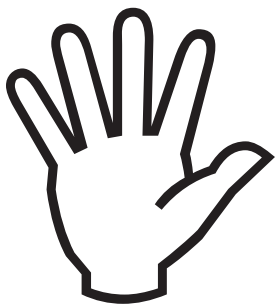
Think

Can you name all the insects?

Now try the same with the flowers!

(Answers are on the back of the picture)

Still lives are pictures of everyday objects such as flowers, fruit, kitchen equipment, ornaments. They have been very popular with artists over the ages.



Do

Use objects that you can find at home to make a still life arrangement of your own.

Can you sort your objects into groups?

Try arranging them by colour, size, or shape, for example.

You could take a photo of your still life or draw a picture of it in your sketchbook.



Answers

Henrietta Ward, our Assistant Keeper of Paintings Drawings and Prints, helped us to identify the wildlife hidden in this painting.

We counted 20 insects:

peacock butterfly, red admiral butterfly, garden tiger moth, brimstone butterfly, garden snail, burgundy snail, comma caterpillar, scarlet lily beetle, milkweed beetle, hornet (under white and purple tulip), ladybird, ant, dragonfly, spider, yellow bug (perhaps fruit fly or small horse fly?), crane fly, cricket (two: a big one at the bottom and one on the stem of a tulip as if looking out at us)

And 33 individual flowers:

carnation, tulip, columbine, pansies, double poppy, African marigold, marigold, peony, honeysuckle, snowball viburnum, iris, rose, viola, centaurea, thistle, convolvulus (morning glory), anemone, cow parsley and *Rutpela maculata* known as the spotted longhorn on the poppy at the top. There are also branches of blackberries, crab apples, sheaves of wheat and an acorn.

There may well be others, it is very hard to identify them all!

How would you paint a picture like this?

Where would you start and what would be hard?

Do all these flowers bloom at the same time of year?

Some of these plants are very rare and expensive and wouldn't last for long.

How would you stop the insects running away?

It's very hard to believe that this floral arrangement was in front of the artist when he painted it. De Heem would have built up the composition over some time, as and when the flowers became available. He would also have worked from earlier drawings and sketches.

Find out more

Flowers in a glass vase

Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606–1684)

Oil paint on wooden panel

93.2 x 69.6 cm

Jan Davidsz. de Heem was born in Utrecht, just south of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and became one of the most famous still-life painters of his time. He painted this in the 1660s when there was a growing interest in the natural world. His detailed flower paintings are crawling with insects, which must have delighted and surprised the collectors of the paintings. The more closely you look, the more creatures you see!

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Flowers in a Glass Vase colouring

