

# *Still-Life Themes in Art*

The aim of this presentation is to look at artwork in which still life is depicted *and* use this as inspiration for your photography

Definition:-

Inanimate objects arranged as a  
composition



- Flowers and fruit
- Food and meals
- Animals
- Symbolic
- Memento-mori
- Objects
- The alternative

Objects selected for a still life can be a  
celebration of materialistic pleasures  
or a  
memento mori

- The artist has control by including everyday objects as the main interest

Lighting can emphasise form or shape

The still life can be realistic or abstract

Arrangements can be symmetrical or A-symmetrical

## Early paintings from the Egyptians and Romans



# Symbolism





**Simone Martini  
(13-14 century)**

**The Annunciation.**



Jan Van Eyck (15<sup>th</sup> century)

The Arnolfini Marriage







**Hans Holbein  
(16<sup>th</sup> century)**

**The Ambassadors**



Food/meals

**Caravaggio (16/17<sup>th</sup> century) The Supper at Emmaus**





**Jan Vermeer  
(17<sup>th</sup> century)**

**The Kitchen Maid**





**Peter Claesz (17<sup>th</sup> century) Still life with a crab and a peeled lemon.**





Willem Kalf ( 17<sup>th</sup> century ) Still life with a Late Ming Ginger jar



**Willem Heda ( 17<sup>th</sup> century) Still life with Food and Drink.**





**Pierre August Renoir (19<sup>th</sup> century) The Luncheon of the Boating Party**





**Edouard Manet (19th century) A bar at the Folies-Begere**







Andy Warhol (20th century) Campbell's Soup Can



# Flowers and fruit

**Jan Davidsz de Heem (17<sup>th</sup> century) Vase of Flowers**





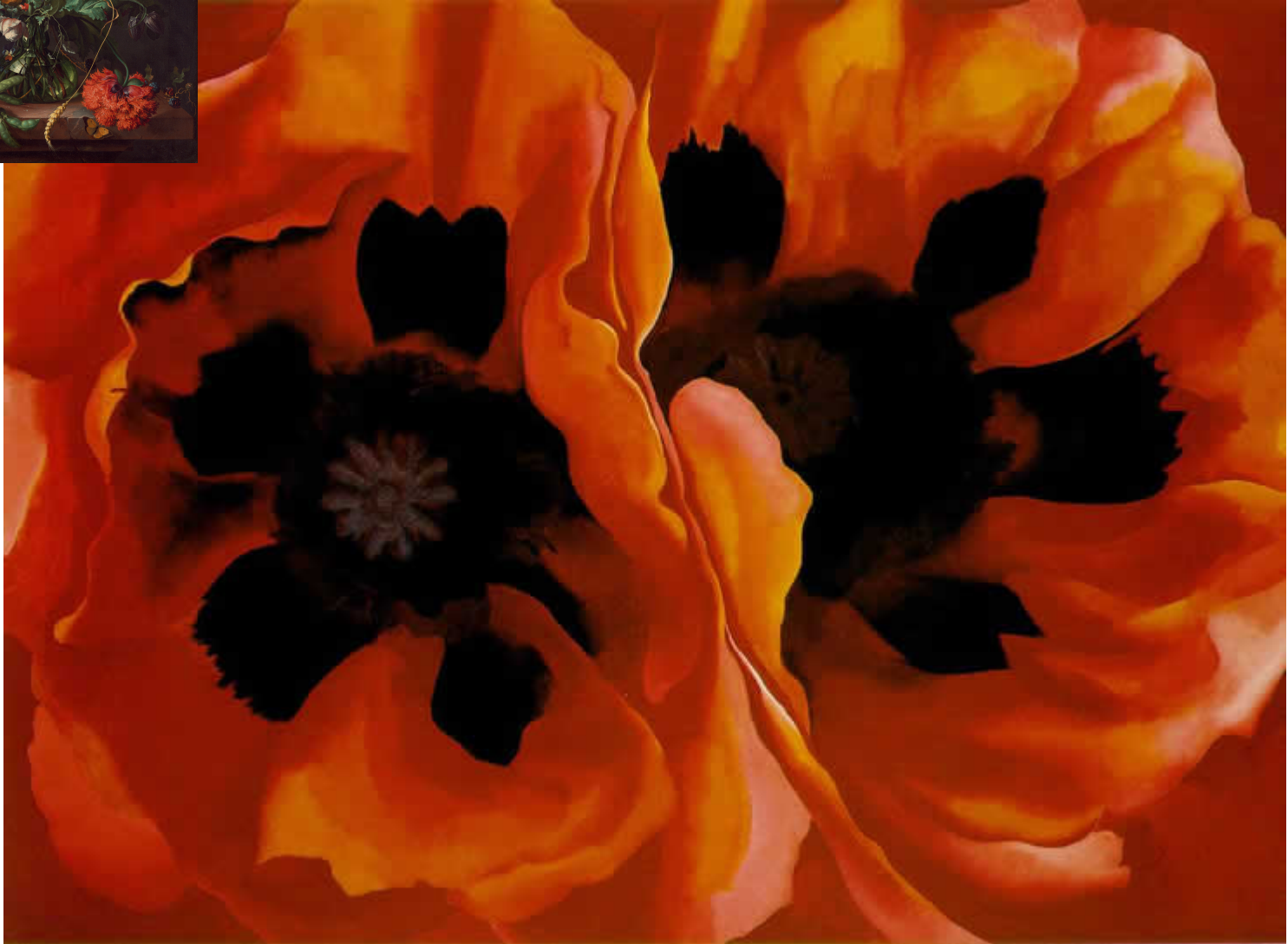
**Rachel Ruysch (17/18<sup>th</sup> century)**  
**Still life of Flowers on Woodland Ground**



## Vincent Van Gogh (19<sup>th</sup> century) Sunflowers





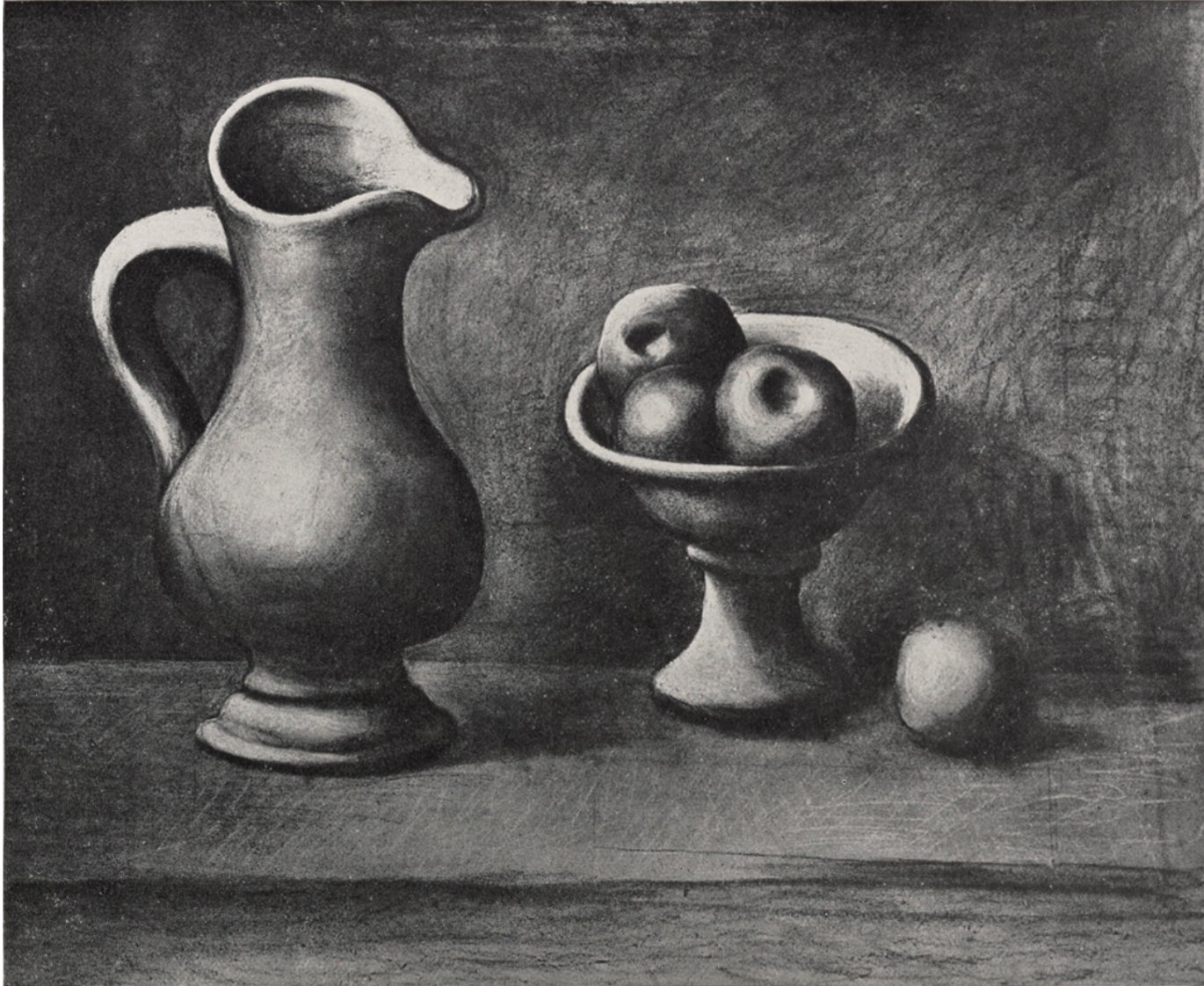


**Sir Nathaniel Bacon (16/17<sup>th</sup> century) Cook maid with Still life of vegetables**





**Pablo Picasso (20<sup>th</sup> century) Still Life with Pitcher and Apples.**





**Paul Cezanne (19<sup>th</sup> century) Still Life with Apples and Oranges**



Memento-mori or Vanitas  
(A reminder of death)

**Georgia O'Keeffe (20<sup>th</sup> century) From the Faraway Nearby**





**Adriaen Van Utrecht (17th century)  
Still life with bouquet and skull, a Vanitas**





**Hans Holbein  
(16<sup>th</sup> century)**

**The Ambassadors**



## Audrey Flack (20<sup>th</sup> century) Marilyn (Vanitas)



Objects (with connection)



**Grinling Gibbons (17/18<sup>th</sup> century)  
Detail of a carving in Petworth House.**



**Georges Braque (20<sup>th</sup> century) The Round Table**



**William Nathaniel Harnett (19<sup>th</sup> century)  
Old Models**





## Patrick Caulfield (20 century) Coloured Still Life



Alternative ideas

## Tracey Emin (21 century) Unmade Bed





## Dada 20<sup>th</sup> century



**Salvador Dalí**  
**Lobster Telephone**

**Meret Oppenheim**  
**Luncheon in Fur**



# Claes Oldenburg (20<sup>th</sup> century) Lipsticks in Piccadilly Circus

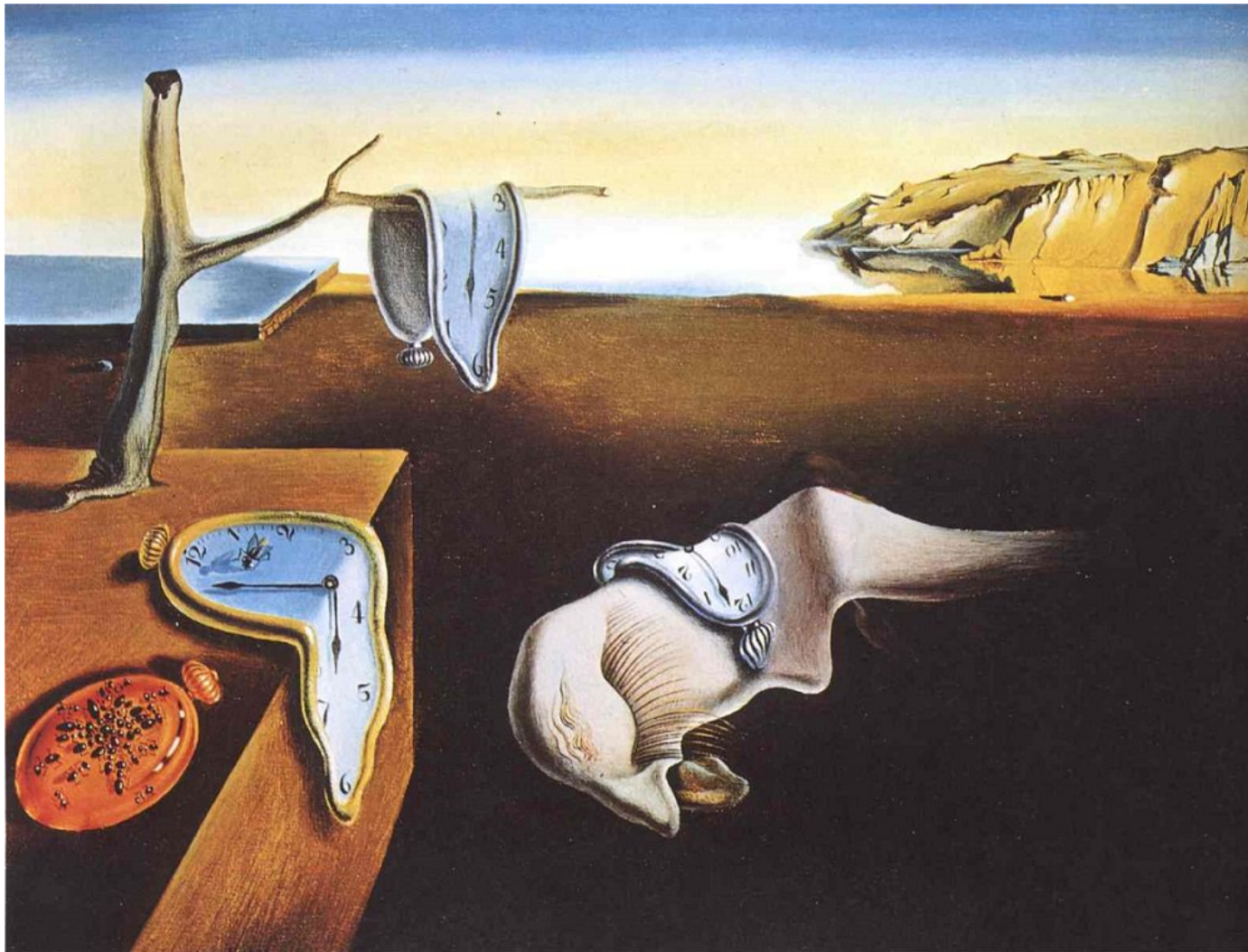


Lipstick man.

Oldenburg 1966.



## Salvador Dali (20<sup>th</sup> century) Persistence of Memory





## Christo and Jeanne-Claude (20/21 century) Wrapped Cans



**Cesar Baldaccini (20th century) Compression**



## Sylvie Fleury (21 century) Dissociation





Suggested themes

# Themes in Still Life



**Symbolism.**

**Use objects to depict subjects such as youth, old age, memories, fear etc.**





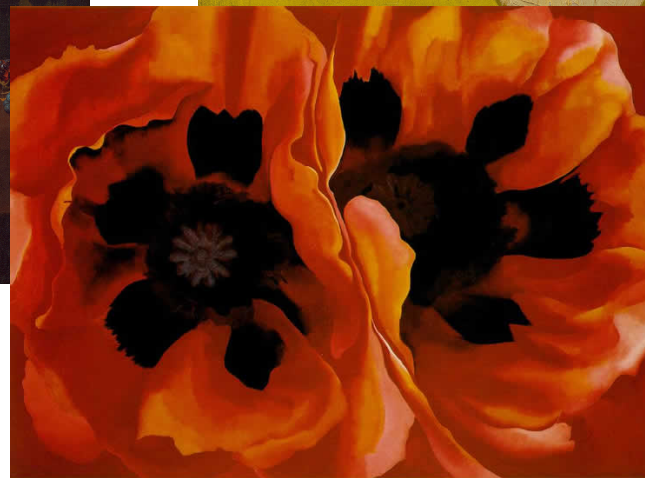


## Fruit and Vegetables.

Combination of different fruits or vegetables, peel, cut, let them go bad. Add a background cloth.







**Flowers.**

**A bouquet, a single bloom, colour, texture, a close up view, an interesting background.**



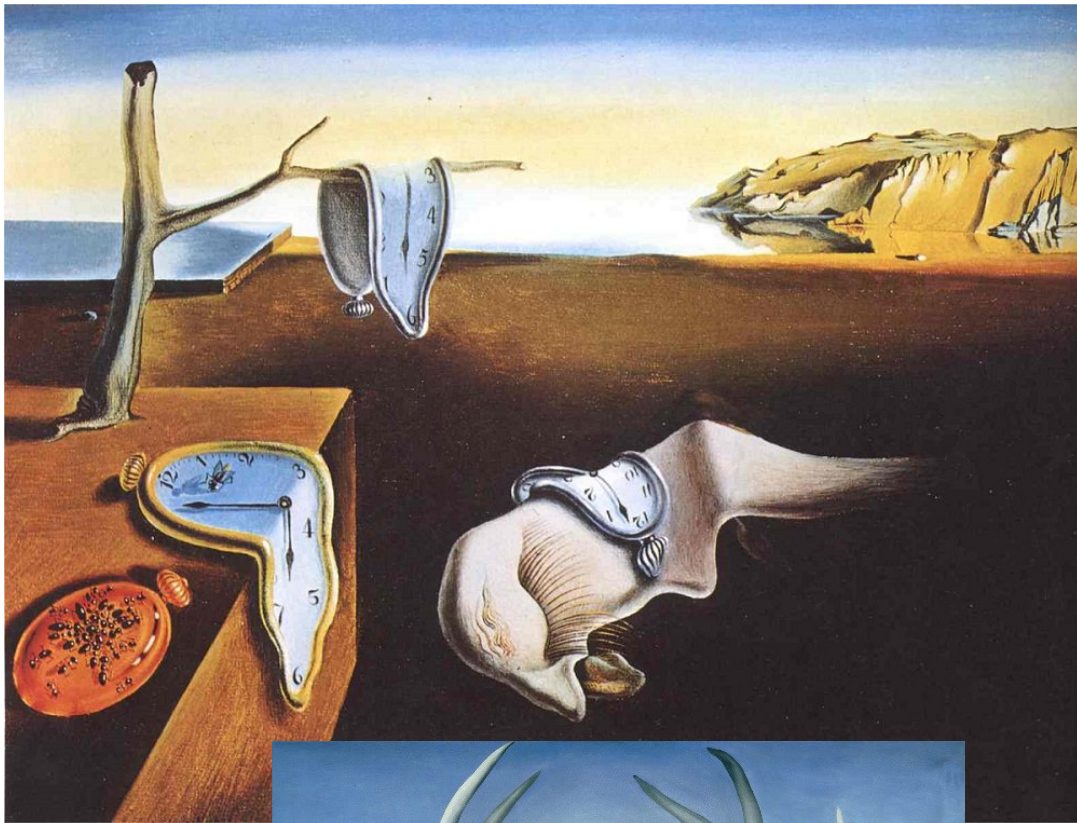


**Still life as part of a scene.**

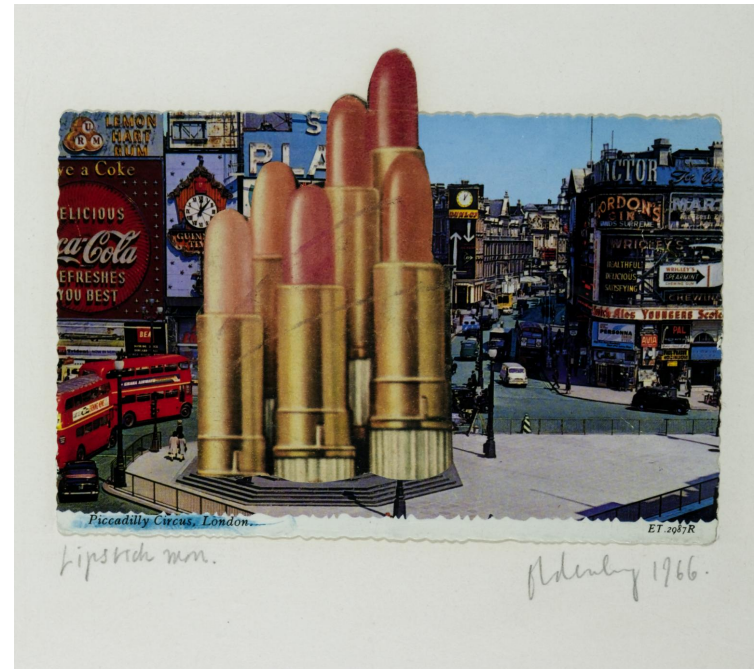
**Preparation of a meal, the remnants of that meal.**







A still life incorporated into a landscape to make a comment.







**Specific themes  
incorporating pattern,  
colour, shape, texture.**





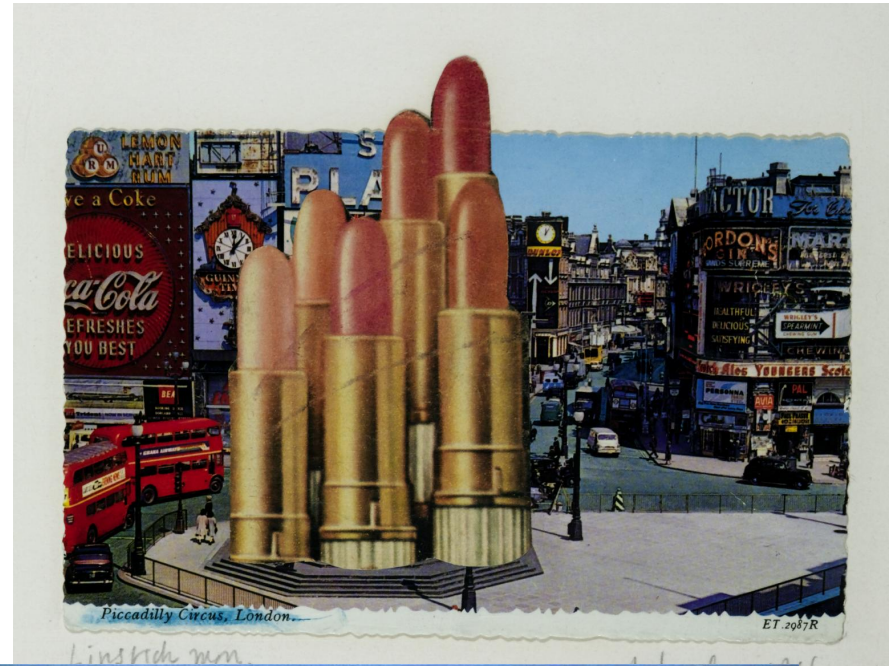




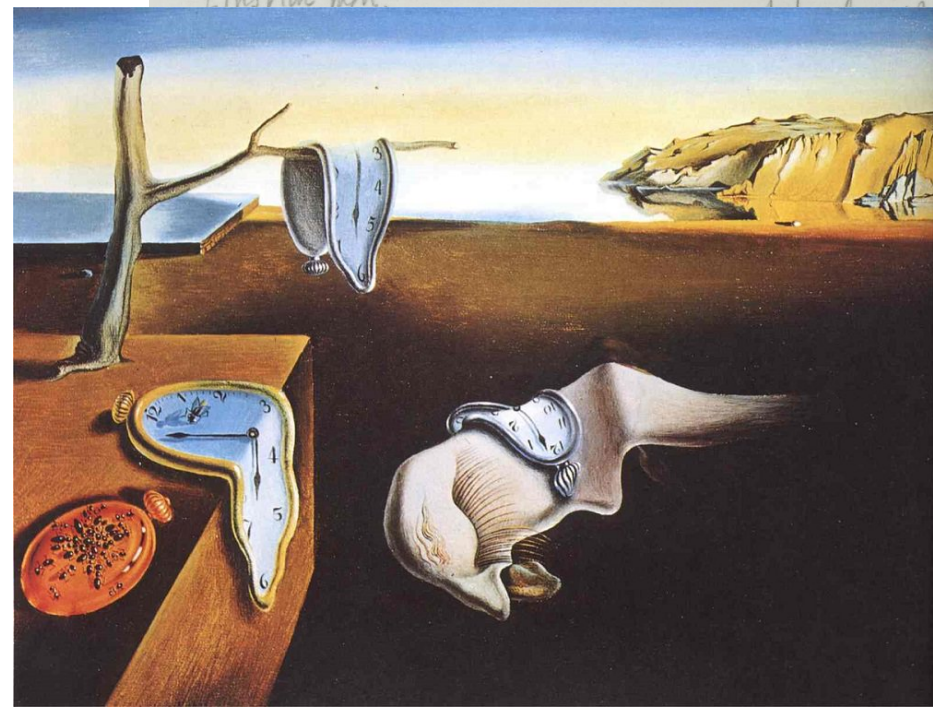
**Covered objects or objects placed  
into a transparent container.  
Wrapped, folded, screwed up, torn  
open.**







**Manipulation  
in Photoshop**

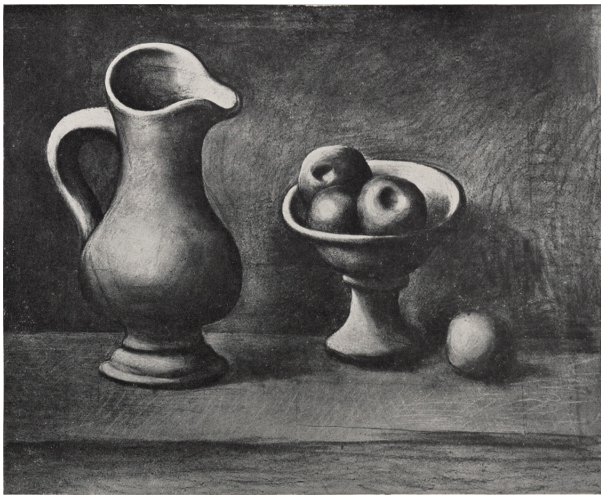




**Make a comment through an odd combination of objects!**







**Add a still life to a portrait study.**



**Ordinary objects from around the home to make a comment on lifestyle.**



**View your home as a series of still life groups; the corner of the bedroom, the bathroom shelf, the shoe cupboard, the bookshelf, the kitchen worktop, window sill.**





# Time for a break!

Marcel Duchamp 1917 \* Fountain

