

# Years 3 and 4

## Chardin – *Jar of Apricots*: Still life

Invite your class to arrange, plan and paint a still life in the style of Chardin, using items that reflect our time

### You will need:

A collection of typical foods and kitchen items of today (each class member can try to bring in two or three so that you have a good choice); dark cloth drapes; paper with a large chalked oval marked on; chalk; paints; brushes; mixing trays; water pots.

### Whole-class activity

- Ask the class to look at the balance of shapes, colours and tones (light and dark) in Chardin's painting. (See 'Objects and meanings' on photocopiable 1 for some pointers).
- Talk about the balance of textures in the picture – the smooth cup, rough loaf, matt cheese box and shiny glass.
- Chardin's paintings give us a clear knowledge of what people ate and used in the past. Make group paintings, which would tell people of the future what we ate and used today.

### Group work

- Divide the class into twos or threes to sit in front of the still life, or fours if sitting round a table. Each group should select three or four objects from the class collection and arrange the items in a balanced composition in front of a dark drape background, where everyone can easily see them.

- Make sure the children have a clear and comfortable view. Ask them to spend some time looking carefully at the composition, and remind them that they will each have a different view. They should start to plan where they will fit the oval on their paper.

- Using chalk, the children can *lightly* sketch the objects. If they go wrong, tell them to just carry on – the paint will cover all their mistakes. (This is why chalk is better than pencil.)

- Paint can be added when they are ready. Their paint should be mixed thickly, like Chardin's. Guide the children to start with the darker colours, then gradually add the palest tones. Finally, they can add the points of light with thick white paint or white pastel when their picture is completely dry.

- The oval painting can now be cut out and mounted on a contrasting colour.

### Differentiation

**Support:** A tray is better than a palette with holes for mixing, because colours can be dragged into another, as Chardin did.

**Extension:** Ask the children to try making an accurate painted copy of one of the objects in Chardin's *Jar of Apricots*. Copying an artist's work can help children learn more about it and discover new techniques.

