

Vasilyeva E.I., candidate of pedagogical sciences, member of the Union of artists of Russia, professor of the department of drawing and painting at the Russian university of traditional art crafts, 191186, Saint-Petersburg, Griboyedov canal embankment, 2, lit. A, e-mail: usvshni@mail.ru

Kuznetsov N.G., candidate of art history, member of the Union of artists of Russia, head of the department of drawing and painting at the Russian university of traditional art crafts, 191186, Saint-Petersburg, Griboyedov canal embankment, 2, lit. A, e-mail: kafedra.risunka.vshni@mail.ru

Algorithm for the pictorial execution of a still life with a bouquet of flowers by future artists of traditional applied arts

Abstract. The article scientifically substantiates and develops an algorithm for completing the educational task “Still life with a bouquet of flowers”. The key components of the algorithm are defined: stages of task completion; gradual increase in complexity of educational tasks; control and evaluation of each stage of work. Each stage of completing the etude is considered in detail: from sketch to generalization of details of the pictorial image. The authors of the article conclude that following the algorithm for completing educational tasks leads to the sustainable development of skills in painting flowers, increases students' motivation to achieve specific goals, which allows minimizing compositional, plastic and coloristic errors.

Keywords: painting, still life, color study, sketch, traditional applied art.

Within the framework of designing an algorithm for conducting a still life painting study featuring a floral bouquet, it is essential to consider the entire process of studying the “Flora” section. Unlike the professional training of easel painters – where the initial emphasis is placed on the integrity of the painted study and subtle tonal and color relationships (valeurs) – when teaching future artists of traditional art crafts, attention is focused on conveying the plastic and color qualities of an individual object, in this case, a flower and a plant branch. The specifics of teaching painting to future traditional art crafts artists are reflected in the works of N.G. Kuznetsov, V.F. Maksimovich [8] and P.E. Serov [9]. However, this topic requires more in-depth study.

The study and execution of the assignment “Still life with a bouquet of flowers” is one of the key stages in teaching painting to students at the Russian university of traditional art crafts. Flowers are one of the main elements of composition, which are used in most works of specific types of traditional art crafts: artistic fabric painting (Fig. 1⁸⁶), artistic lace-making (Fig. 2), artistic embroidery

⁸⁶ Figs. 1-3. Kurakina I.I. Theory and history of traditional art crafts: Textbook for students majoring in “Theory and history of arts”, “Decorative and applied arts and folk crafts”, specialization “Painting”. Part I /. Edited by W.F. Maksimovich. 2024. – Saint Petersburg: HSFA, 2024. – pp. 128, 96, 67.

(Fig. 3), Nizhny Tagil decorative painting (Fig. 4⁸⁷), artistic bone carving (Fig. 5⁸⁸), jewelry art (Fig. 6). This demands that students develop the ability to see and render the forms of buds and flower branches in their chosen material.



Fig. 1. E. Pashkova. "Poetry of flowers", 2012.
Decorative fabric painting.
Supervisor: Yu.S. Saltanova



Fig. 2. N. Vechkunina.
Dress "The beginning of
the scented summer".
2018.
Artistic lace-making.
Supervisor:
D.Yu. Khristolyubova



Fig. 3. V. Voronina.
"Variety of decorative
processing of floral
ornamentation in a
women's dress". 2016.
Artistic embroidery.
Supervisor:
E.V. Sayfulina

Achieving high-quality results in mastering the depiction of flowers within a limited timeframe is possible provided that the instructor adheres to a specific algorithm. This methodology should involve: structuring the execution of the assignment, monitoring and evaluation of each stage, the gradual increasing complexity of learning tasks.

N.F. Neonet emphasizes the importance of initially depicting individual flowers in graphic form (structurally and tonally), and only then – in color, in his textbook "Painting". He recommends executing "pictorial studies of flowering plants – garden flowers of various species using the alla prima technique, having determined the warm-cool qualities of light and shadow" [7, p. 26].

After students have studied individual flowers of various types by completing pictorial studies (Figs. 7-9⁸⁹), they are proposed to execute a painting of a flower bouquet included in the still life composition (Fig. 10).

⁸⁷ Figs. 4,6. Kurakina I.I. Theory and history of traditional art crafts: Textbook for students majoring in "Theory and history of arts", "Decorative and applied arts and folk crafts", specialization "Painting". Part II /. Edited by W.F. Maksimovich. 2024. – Saint Petersburg: HSFA, 2024. – pp. 62, 132.

⁸⁸ Fig. 5. Kolobov V.N. Materials science: Textbook for future artists of traditional art crafts. Specialization: artistic bone carving, edited by W.F. Maksimovich. 2017. – Saint Petersburg: HSFA, 2017. – P. 73.

⁸⁹ Figs. 7-16. Photo by the author of the article E.I. Vasilyeva.

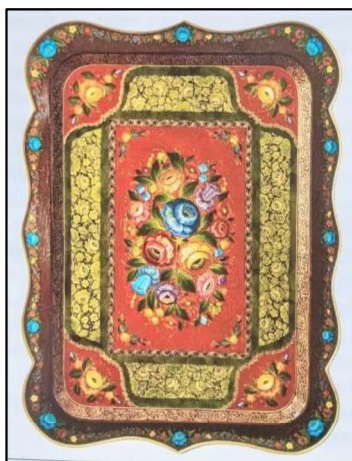


Fig. 4. Yu. Mitryukova.
Tray from the “Luxury” set
of items, 2024.
Nizhny Tagil decorative
painting.
Supervisor: M.S.
Kalmykova



Fig. 5. V. Kaligina. Casket
“Openwork filigree”. 2015.
Artistic bone carving.
Supervisor: V.N. Kolobov



Fig. 6. M. Pankova. Necklace
“Summer melody”. 2023.
Jewelry art.
Supervisor: M.V. Churakova



Fig. 7. K. Savelieva.
Study of a chrysanthemum.
2025



Fig. 8. A. Lobanovskaya.
Study of bellflowers.
2025



Fig. 9. Yu. Gorina. Study of a
chrysanthemum branch
2025

The execution of a painting study can be divided into distinct stages. Let us consider the main ones.

At the first stage, the scale of objects relative to the format is determined, as well as the major tonal and color relationships in the future study.

The optimal time for sketching is 15–30 minutes. At this stage, the main difficulty lies in the detailed rendering of numerous details: branches, leaves, stems and buds.

In the sketch, objects are rendered with a high degree of generalization, which always presents a challenge for students. As a rule, students tend to become overly engrossed in excessive detailing, causing the work on the sketch to turn into a

prolonged miniature-format study. To avoid typical mistakes, students' attention is focused on the overall silhouette of the bouquet and the prominent flowers that stand out due to their size. These elements should be depicted in the sketch first and foremost.



Fig. 10. Still life with a bouquet of flowers

It is advisable to execute several sketches: the first – using graphic media or in the grisaille technique; the second – in tone but without color, which facilitates achieving wholeness of composition as well as emphasizing the silhouette of the bouquet and still life objects. A series of sketches allows for comparing them against one another and selecting the best option based on artistic qualities (tone, color, composition) (Figs. 11–12). One of the key criteria for mastering this stage effectively is the joint participation of instructors and students in analyzing the works: the student must clearly understand why a particular sketch has been approved over others.

At the second stage, after completing and approving the composition, the image is transferred onto the designated format. At this stage, it is crucial to preserve the scale relationships between the bouquet, the objects and the background setting (Fig. 13). Having determined the placement of objects within the format, students proceed to create a preparatory drawing for painting, refine proportions, define the character of the form of the depicted objects and construct their structure.



Fig. 11. K. Drogunova. Graphic compositional sketch. 2025



Fig. 12. K. Drogunova. Study in color. 2025



Fig. 13. S. Goryunova. Linear-constructive drawing for painting. 2025

When working on a study in watercolor technique, the drawing is first executed in pencil. For oil painting, the underdrawing can be made using charcoal or paint and a brush. Students must be guided towards accurately rendering the form of the subjects, especially the main object – the bouquet of flowers. The more precisely the form is rendered, the easier it will be to focus on modeling the form with color when depicting the flowers and branches of the bouquet. At this stage, under the instructor's guidance, a preliminary group review should be conducted. During this process, errors made will be identified and ways to correct them will be determined. Only after the mistakes have been corrected and the drawing has been approved by the instructor do students proceed to painting.

The third stage begins with establishing the major tonal and color relationships in the still life [6] (Fig. 14). At this stage, it is crucial to constantly compare the study with the live setup. Comparative analysis is best conducted from a distance that allows both the academic study and the actual setup to be within the same field of view. Changes in lighting affect the color characteristics of the object and its surroundings: "It is possible to successfully compare the shades of leaves, flowers and pigments coloring the objects only under equal lighting conditions" [5, p. 20]. "It is advisable to place the setup by a window, using side lighting" [3, p. 11]. Enhancing the tonal contrast on the illuminated side of the bouquet will help reveal warm-cool relationships, which significantly enriches the expressiveness of the painting [1, p. 167].

At the fourth stage, students begin modeling the form of the objects and the floral bouquet using color and tone. This stage is critical for professional training, as the forms of flowers and plant branches in artworks of various types of traditional art crafts are always well-developed and highly detailed (Fig. 15).

At the final stage, to achieve compositional and pictorial wholeness of the image, the student – under the instructor's guidance – analyzes the completed work and eliminates identified shortcomings. A typical mistake at this stage is fragmentation, when the foreground, middle ground and background are rendered with equal color and tonal contrast. Secondary details are softened ("smoothed out"), while main details are emphasized by means of color and tone (Fig. 16).

The step-by-step structuring of practical activities makes the learning process more manageable for the instructor and clearer for learners.

Each subsequent stage of the work is based on the knowledge and skills acquired during the previous stage. Without a thoroughly developed sketch, the preparatory drawing of the still life objects and floral bouquet will always appear

incomplete. Proportional and plastic distortions in the underdrawing will not allow for competent modeling of form with color when depicting the flowers.



Fig. 14. K. Drogunova. Pictorial study of the color-tonal stage in still life depiction. 2025

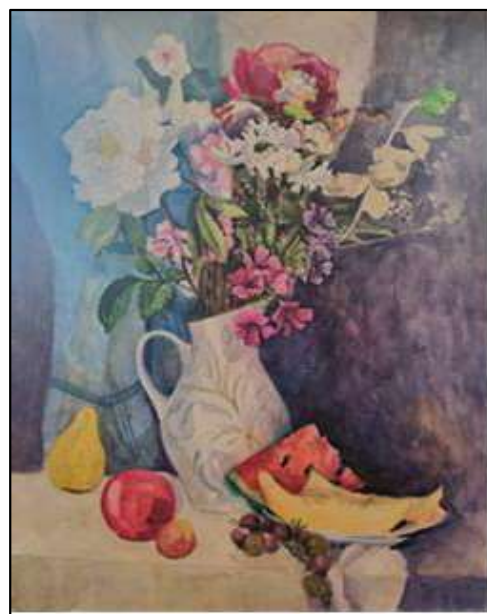


Fig. 15. S. Goryunova. Pictorial study of the modeling stage (volume and details) in still life depiction. 2025

Incorrectly established color and tonal relationships at the beginning of the study will lead to a large number of retouching in the work. This manifests itself as “dirtiness” of the paint layer.

Monitoring the results at the end of each stage allows for the prompt identification and correction of mistakes made. Consequently, the student can proceed to the next learning task. The analysis of each completed stage during independent work, followed by corrections and the identification of specific features and characteristics of flowers, contributes to the formation of students’ stable skills in sequential, accurate and truthful depiction of plant forms using the means of realistic painting [2]. The application of the proposed pedagogical algorithm guarantees the sustainable development of skills in pictorial still life representation featuring a floral bouquet.



Fig. 16. S. Goryunova. Completed pictorial study of a still life. 2025

To consolidate these skills, a workbook has been developed. It describes an algorithm based on “the application of the fundamentals of visual literacy, compliance with compositional requirements for

arranging still lifes in arbitrary formats, execution of sketches and creative tasks that develop color associations, imaginative imagination and coloristic skills' [4, p. 7].

The staged approach to teaching allows for taking into account the individual needs and proficiency level of each student. In cases where a student experiences difficulties in rendering the plastic characteristics of flowers and plant branches during the preparatory drawing stage, the instructor may recommend additional nature studies or studio setups for an in-depth study of the object. Sketches are executed specifically of those fragments that present difficulties. If difficulty arises at the initial color application stage, an effective solution is creating a series of short-term color studies of still lifes. This promotes the development of color perception and tonal values in painting.

Creating a painted study of a still life with a floral bouquet constitutes a complex dynamic process. The application of the proposed pedagogical algorithm allows one to minimize compositional, plastic and coloristic errors while achieving maximum results in the painting training of future traditional art craft artists.

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