Still Life, Then and Now

Opening reception: 14 October, 6 – 8.30pm

Exhibition dates: 14 October – 18 December

38 Dover Street, London W1S 4NL



For its autumn exhibition, Robilant is delighted to present a major survey of still life painting, opening in London on 14th October during Frieze Week. The ambitious show charts over 400 years of still life, tracing the changing essence and status of the genre from the 16th century to the present. Drawing upon the gallery's wide expertise across Old Masters, Modern and Contemporary art, Robilant offers a sweeping historical encounter which has seldom been attempted in other museum and gallery exhibitions.

The exhibition will include many of the pre-eminent masters of the still life genre, with works by **Osias Beert the Elder, Willem Claesz. Heda, Bartolomeo Cavarozzi, Michelangelo Cerquozzi, Giovanni Battista Recco, Francisco de Zurbarán, Victoria Dubourg, Henri Fantin-Latour, Odilon Redon, Pablo Picasso, Juan Gris, Nicolas de Staël, Philip Guston** and **Andy Warhol** amongst others, from private collections as well as on loan from notable institutions such as the Female Artists of the Mougins Museum (FAMM), France. These will sit beside rising voices in the contemporary art world, including **Poppy Jones** and **Asher Liftin**. Robilant will publish a catalogue to accompany the exhibition, written by Yale professor and art historian Carol Armstrong.

For a subject so relatable and appealing, the humble still life spent much of its existence overlooked in favour of history painting and portraiture. Indeed, it ranked lowest within the 'Hierarchy of Genres' espoused by the European Academies. It was often thought of as a subject most suitable for amateur artists – yet protagonists of still life have produced some of the most visually striking and technically skilled works of centuries gone by. Across time, artists have been enticed by the challenges and opportunities inherent to the genre; the pursuit of a deceptively vivid realism, of celebrating materiality and elevating the quotidian, of finding and expressing themselves through the objects they depict.

With its roots in classical antiquity, our exhibition picks up the narrative of the European still life tradition in the 16th century. From the early proponents in Germany and the Low Countries, the genre has constantly evolved: flourishing alongside the growing collector classes of the 17th century, refined and expanded by French artists in

the 18th century, transformed by the visionary approaches of 20th-century artists, and arriving today as a genre that holds a relevant and nuanced place in contemporary art.

Highlights of the exhibition include Caravaggesque arrangements by Bartolomeo Cavarozzi and Antonio Ponce; a poignant *Ram with its legs tied* by Francisco de Zurbarán; a large, richly detailed work by Neapolitan artist Giovanni Battista Recco; a stately banquet still life by Willem Claesz. Heda; a fruit still life by Henri Fantin-Latour; flower paintings by Victoria Dubourg and Odilon Redon; a serene example of Nicolas de Staël's vessels; a Warhol skull; and a Picasso still life from his Cubist period.

The still life of the early modern period exalted curiosities, riches and the luxury of material objects, while today we are overwhelmed with things in a society of mass consumerism and wastage. Does the rise of industrial methods of production and of consumer society mean that still life has changed more in the last seventy years than in the preceding four centuries? Has the fading novelty of things changed the meaning of still life painting? Or rather, do we now covet material goods more than ever, elevating the still life genre to the status of quasi-religious icons for the present age?

Through works from the 16th century to the present, the exhibition will grapple with the questions above, tracing the evolution of this quiet yet charged genre. The exhibition will examine why painters return to this humble genre time and time again, and how their works, through the inanimate objects they depict, offer a very human insight into the values and tastes of their time.

ABOUT ROBILANT

Robilant is a new London-based gallery specialising in Old Masters, Modern and Contemporary art. Founded by the established Old Master and 20th-Century art dealer Edmondo di Robilant (formerly of Robilant+Voena) in 2026, the gallery unites over four decades of experience with a distinctive approach to curation and engagement.

The contemporary programme is directed by Michele di Robilant, working with international artists whose practices display the same enduring strengths as those of the historic masters the business has long represented.

Under the direction of Edmondo, the gallery has placed significant works with major institutions worldwide, including the National Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Frick Collection, the National Galleries of Scotland, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Musée d'Orsay, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Museum of Western Art, Tokyo and numerous other American and European museums.

Robilant offers world-class expertise and an unparalleled eye for artistic quality that is reflected in its varied exhibition and fair programme. This includes both period-specific presentations and dialogues across time. The gallery's wide network comprises not only private clients but prestigious public institutions and leading scholars, with whom the gallery regularly collaborates on exhibitions and publications.

For press enquiries, contact: Helen Record, helen@robilantgallery.com

Selected highlights:



Osias Beert the Elder (1580–1623)
Bouquet of Flowers in a Serpentine Vase, c. 1610–19



Bartolomeo Cavarozzi (1587–1625)
Basket of Fruit on a Stone Ledge, c. 1615–25

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Willem Claesz. Heda (1594–1680)
A vanitas still life with a broken roemer, an upturned tazza and a peeled lemon, on a ledge, 1648



Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664)
Ram with its legs tied, c. 1635–40



Giovanni Battista Recco (c. 1615–c. 1660)
Still life with a turkey, hare and other animals alongside cheeses, cured meats, a pie and kitchen utensils in an interior, mid-17th century

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Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904)
Basket of apples on a table, 1888



Odilon Redon (1840–1916)
Vase de fleurs, early 20th century



Andy Warhol (1928–1987)
Skull, 1976

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