

---

### Neil Shawcross - Biography

Neil Shawcross was born in England in 1940 and trained at Bolton College of Art and Lancaster College of Art. He has exhibited internationally and won many awards. His work is represented in many private and public collections.

#### Try to consider these questions about *Still Life*

1. Just stand for a few seconds and look at this work, try to figure out what it is you can see. Let your imagination run free.
2. The title of this painting is "Still Life". Why do you think artists name their paintings?
3. What is a still life, when did artists start making them and why did they start making them? Try to figure out these answers by yourself then go looking for the answers, see how well you scored.
4. What are you looking at? Is this abstract or representational? Does it cross over between the two and if so what effect does that have on you?
5. The choice of colour and the application of paint are very unique in this work. Do you think a choice like this underlines how difficult it is for an artist to make striking or individualistic work or is it an indication of how naturally different one artist is from another?
6. This piece is a particular favourite with many younger visitors to the exhibition. Why is this and what can we learn from this fresh instinct?

On the reverse of this sheet is a short one-page exercise to assist you while looking at the painting. It comprises of five questions. Feel free to fill it out and take it home with you or you can simply use the questions in your mind as prompts to look at the painting more thoroughly. (If you do fill it out, please tell a member of staff so we can replace it for the next visitor)

1. Answer the first question, "Like/Dislike", with just one of these two words.
2. The next one is "Description", here describe all the physical details you can about the painting such as the name of the artist; the title; medium; dimensions as well as how the paint is applied and so on.
3. For the next one "Imagery", note down what the painting is of. For example Barrie Cooke's Two Lough Key Islands might include, "an island in mist, sort of abstracted, out in the lake but sort of floating in the painting" or Blaise Drummond's *Wreck of Hope* might include "a passenger aeroplane flying through a circular gap in stormy clouds in the centre of the painting. The plane is very small for the size of the painting" Describe as much as you can, everything you notice such as the choice of colours, the position of things in the painting and so on.
4. In the next one "Interpretation". Try to figure out what the artist was trying to communicate, what they meant by putting these things on the canvas, why are they there, what does the choice of colours signify, how does one bit relate to another, what was the artist feeling? Think about this for a couple of minutes before you come to your conclusions.
5. Finally you come to "Like/Dislike" again, but this time rather than just one word, give a sentence or two about your answer.