

## Still-Life Composition in Adobe Illustrator

Using the tools and methods in Illustrator you explored in your logo project, and some additional ones we'll learn about here, produce a basic still-life composition. Notice that in the logo, 2-dimensional flatness was emphasized, but in a still-life, the illusion of 3-D appearance of objects in space must be considered. Try to pay extra close attention to "natural" characteristics like:

- scene and object "realism" (e.g. color, shape, texture, size, solidity)
- perspective (relationship to position and space)
- proportion and scale
- volume, mass, and depth; light and shadow detail (i.e. value)

**Assignment:** Create a scene of several objects (for example a lamp or vase and fruit or flowers on a table-top, stand, or pedestal) in a space (e.g. a room or landscape). Keep especially aware of the source of light (direction and angle it's coming from) and the point-of-view of the observer (where you're looking at the objects from -- defined by the horizon line at eye-level). These conditions will greatly affect the relative sizes and perspectives of objects, as well as the depth (mass or volume) they appear to have and the shadows they cast. **Note:** There's many different kinds of still-lives of many different "views" that can be done in many different ways. I'm just showing you one basic approach using a room view in one-point perspective. You can use your own artistic process to create your own unique views, but follow the rules of perspective, proportion, logical light and shadow, etc.

- you will use layers (and/or grids and rulers/guides) to help you layout your composition. Using layers is especially recommended, because you can build your composition in a more organized fashion, keeping objects from getting in your way.
- **Tip on getting started:** Lay out a working eye-level point-of-view perspective in Layer #1 (lowest layer). Lock that layer and build your still-life on top of it, using the lower layer as scene template. Later, you can remove the layer or make it invisible/non-printing (turn off the "eyeball" icon) before you print
- Build a basic "room" in a new layer -- put in and shade walls, floor, ceiling, windows, etc. Keep rules of perspective in mind when you build your room.
- You should then create at least 2 different kinds of objects placed upon a surface; one geometrical shape, and one organic shape (e.g. fruit, plant). You can combine the two if you wish (like a curved vase with a flower arrangement), but place at least two objects in the scene to show proportion and perspective (like two candlesticks on two ends of a table). Make sure you accurately portray some sort of shadow detail [remember: the most natural and realistic shadows are actually the ones that draw the least attention from the viewer!!!]. The objects can be fairly simple in design and form, but it's important to illustrate surface, proportion, perspective, and mass (using shading).
- Fit your work within the page borders so that it'll print on an 8.5 x 11 inch page. You may want to use the landscape (horizontal) layout rather than portrait (vertical) for this project.

Some new tools and operations to familiarize yourself with in this exercise:

- working in layers and using guides, grids, rulers; arranging objects and overlapping them
- scaling object proportions in terms of perspective; using transforms effectively
- **gradient** fills (linear vs radial) and producing objects using **blends**
- creating and placing shadows and highlights based on the principles of "logical light"
- texture and pattern techniques (e.g. filters, pattern fills, etc); building your own pattern swatches, scatter brushes; creating multiple, overlapping fills and using blend modes and transparency to achieve effects.

## SOME WAYS TO EMPHASIZE OBJECTS IN A COMPOSITION

<u>Quality:</u>	<u>Emphasized</u>	>>>>>	<u>De-emphasized</u>
Size:	larger		smaller
Contour:	irregular shape		regular shape
Contour line: (e.g. stroke)	thick		thin (or none)
object sharpness:	sharper		blurred
volume:	solid (3-D)		flat (2-D)
picture plane:	lower (foreground)		higher (background)
overlap:	in front		behind
texture:	rough (highly textured)		smooth (no texture)
color:	colorized		grayscale
color hue:	warm		cool
color saturation:	richer		duller
color value (generally)	brighter		darker

hint: putting a thickened or darkened stroke around an object does emphasize it, but also tends to flatten the object (“cartoonizes” it) and prevents it from assuming a 3-D illusion of having volume or depth. So, keep object contour stroke thickness minimal or use suggestive line to produce 3-D illusion of depth more effectively..