

OBJECT of the month

July 2021



BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Summertime is picnic time! Hello, I'm Fabienne. I'm a Museum Guide at the Dayton Art Institute. This painting, *Embroidery from Uzbekistan* is by Janet Fish and it gives us a snapshot of a summer picnic.

This painting is a still-life showing a mix of foods and dishes on a brightly colored cloth. Let's analyze it using our five senses. First of all, I need you to imagine that you are joining this picnic. Notice the beautiful, embroidered cloth. Such rich colors: orange, yellow, red, blue and white all in a stylized pattern. The sun is shining with such intensity that it brightens all the colors and it heightens the shadows. Notice how the artist's uses brushstrokes of light and dark colors right next to each other.

That watermelon... Up close it's hardly recognizable. But from a distance, doesn't it look perfectly ripe? The attention to detail by the artist on the bowls and the hard surfaces provide great contrast against the soft cloth. Her technical skills allow the colors of the cloth to radiate through the transparent plate. These pears are so realistic they appear freshly picked with branches and leaves still attached. The yellow lemons are rendered in such a way that you can see the texture clearly. And this vase of fresh flowers has been delicately painted to provide the illusion of depth—the refracted light through the water.

Now that we have visually examined the different elements, I would like you to close your eyes and imagine what you would hear if you were a part of this scene. Is there a murmur of a gentle breeze? Would the leaves on the trees be rustling? Do you hear children laughing and shouting as they chase each other? Maybe there's other picnickers nearby and you hear bits and pieces of their conversations.

Next, I can imagine the smell of fresh green grass and trees that's unique to big open spaces. I can also imagine the smell of freshly picked flowers—the musky perfume of these daisies. What would you be able to taste if you were part of this picnic? Would you grab the watermelon first? I personally enjoy a good pear—that crunchy first bite. Did anyone remember to bring napkins?

Finally, if you stepped into this painting, what would you feel? What are the textures? Closely consider how the painterly quality is juxtaposed with the surface of this painting. There's a delicate contrast between the lifelike softness of the cloth and the flowers, with hardness of the hard bowls and of the firm ripe fruit. Would you feel the warmth of the sun, of the breeze flowing across the meadow?

DAYTON ART INSTITUTE

Janet Fish is a contemporary American realist Artist. She explores the interaction of light with everyday objects in the still-life genre. She uses plastic wraps, water, plastic bags, glass objects, plastic containers to show and depict the effects of light and color. She also enjoys multiple overlapping patterns that show bold high color values, and she has been credited with revitalizing the still-life genre.

This immersive artwork can be found in the James F. Dicke Gallery of Contemporary Art, Gallery 201 at the Dayton Art Institute. I hope you enjoyed this artistic picnic and plan to visit the museum soon!

END TRANSCRIPT

Click [here](#) to access the video presentation.

ARTWORKS FEATURED IN VIDEO*

Janet Fish (American, born 1938), *Peaches*, 1971, pastel. Private collection. © Janet Fish

Janet Fish (American, born 1938), *Painted Water Glasses*, 1974, oil on canvas. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from Susan and David Workman, 74.15. © Janet Fish / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Janet Fish (American, born 1938), *Sequins*, 2003, oil on canvas. Courtesy of D.C. Moore Gallery, New York. © Janet Fish

Janet Fish (American, born 1938), *Bag of Bananas*, 1996, etching with aquatint. Courtesy of RoGallery, New York. © Janet Fish

Janet Fish (American, born 1938), *Kraft Salad Dressing*, 1973, oil on canvas. Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, MA. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barancik, MH1983.15

Janet Fish Painting, Photo © www.stewartstewart.com 1994

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