

STILL LIFE ACTIVITY: Amir H. Fallah:

Scatter My Ashes on Foreign Lands is the first large-scale survey of this prolific and important painter. Working collaboratively with those that he paints, Fallah utilizes personal history as an entry point to discuss race, representation, the body, and the memories of cultures and countries left behind. As an Iranian-American immigrant, his work employs nuanced and emotive narratives that evoke an inquiry about identity, the immigrant experience, and the



history of portraiture.

WHO ARE YOU?

This activity challenges us to consider how we are both perceived by and perceive others. Amir Fallah's portraits show figures shrouded by brightly colored patterned fabrics. Skin tones are purposely obscured with the use of different hues like orange and purple. What determinations do you make about someone based on their body? What if you could not see their body? How would you know about them?



LOOK:

Look at the painting below. What is happening in this painting? What objects can you see? How many figures are there? What else do you see? Take your time and look closely.

INTERPRET:

What did you find? Let's look closely at Amir's painting.

Amir H. Fallah, *Scales of Justice*, 2019.



↑ Why do you think this camera is here? Who does it belong to? Why do you think the artist included this in the painting? What else can we find?



What about this object? 

These are Matryoshka dolls, or Russian nesting dolls. Why do you think Amir included this object? Why is the figure holding this object? Look again at the painting and see what else you can find.



CREATE: Now it's your turn! Look around your own bedroom or home. Here is the hard part: choose only 3 *objects* that you think will tell people about who you are. You want to tell people as much as possible, such as where you or your family are from or where you live now, what you like to do or how you express yourself, and anything else that might help us understand you. You will need the following supplies to complete this project:

- Paper
- Pencil and eraser or drawing pen
- Markers
- Patterned fabric (this could be a towel or a sheet)
- A light source

For this activity you will create your own still life portrait using the three objects you have chosen. A still life is when you set up inanimate (non-living) objects and draw or paint them.

Step one: Place your patterned fabric on a table or stool and set up your objects, like a still life. Think about how you display your objects. If you change the display does it change the story?

Step two: Practice drawing your objects a few times. Make sure you place your objects next to a light source (a lamp or next to a window) so that there is light on one side and shadow on the other. Don't forget to draw the fabric, too! This will help ground your still life. Once you have drawn the fabric and **shape** of your objects you can move to the next step.

Step three: Now it is time to shade your drawing. This gives the objects **form** and makes them appear three dimensional. Notice how Amir uses shading in his painting.

Here are some different techniques you can try:



Hatch

Contour

Cross hatch

Stippling

Scumbling

Step four: Add color! Now you can use markers to add color to your still life portrait!

SHARE: We want to see what you created! Please tag us on social media if you decide to share your work! You can find us here:   