

Visual Arts Assignment – Still Life from the Front

Overview

Using artifacts from the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) Regimental Museum and Archives and the Glenbow Western Research Centre at the University of Calgary, such as the taxidermy horse, veterinary kit, and farrier tools, you will create a still-life drawing that honours the unsung contributions of horses and their caretakers during World War I. Your artwork should blend technical skill with symbolic storytelling.

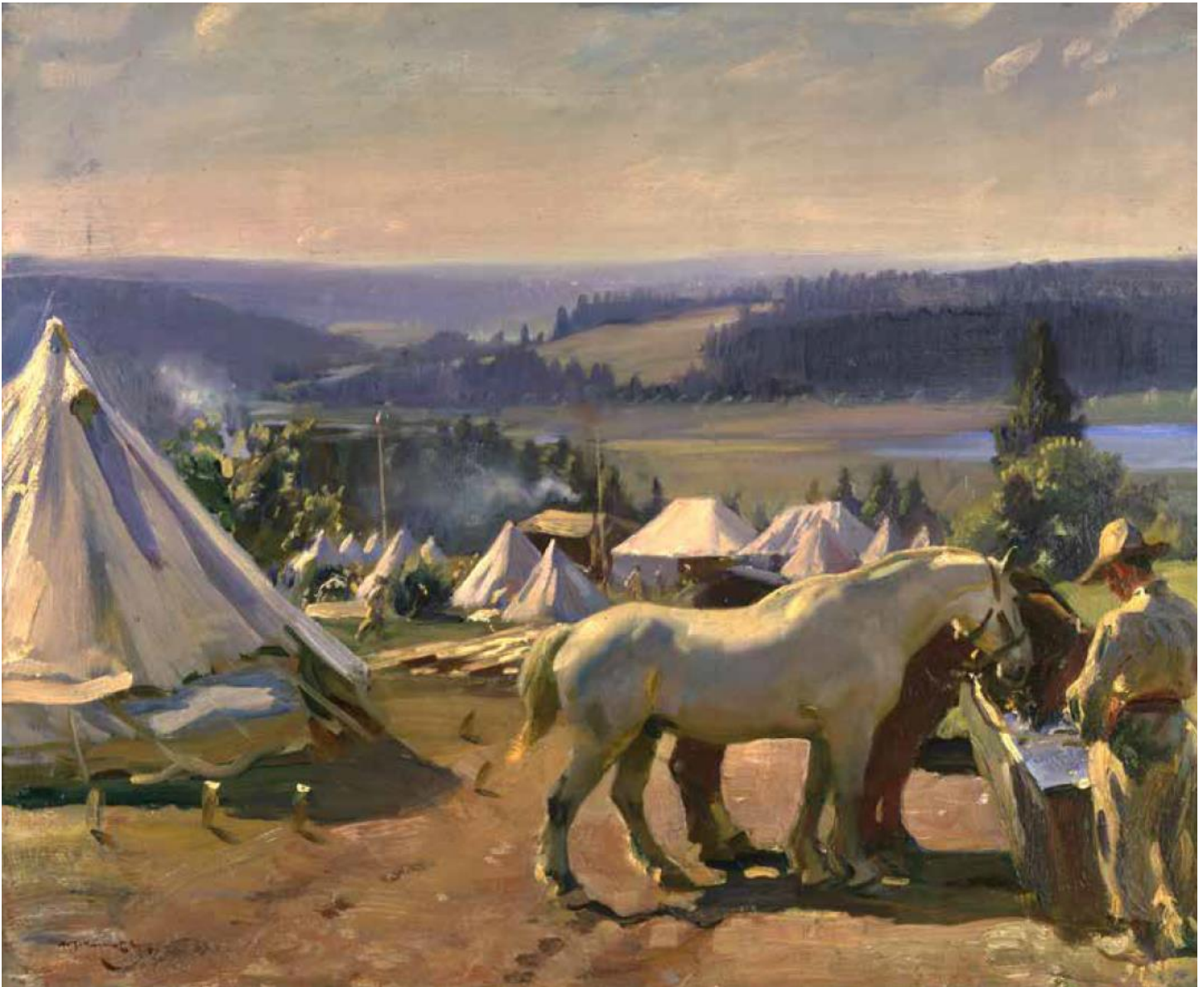


FIGURE 1. ALFRED MUNNINGS, CAMP AT MALBUISSON, NEAR PONTARLIER, 1918, OIL ON CANVAS. BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART, CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM, OTTAWA.

Essential Question

How can still life drawing bring attention to the overlooked tools and animals that carried the physical and emotional weight of war?

Instructions

1. Observation & Research
 - Study the artifacts from the museum.
 - Consider the emotional and historical meaning behind each object.
2. Composition Planning
 - Select 3–5 items to compose your still life.
 - Create 3 thumbnail (minimum) sketches and value studies to help you refer to when working on the final copy
 - Take a photo if possible with your phone for reference.
3. Final Drawing
 - Medium: Graphite or charcoal (soft pastel optional).
 - Minimum Size: 9x12 inches.
 - Demonstrate perspective, contrast, texture, and concept.
4. Artist Statement (100–150 words)
 - Describe your choices and how they relate to WWI horse labour.

Curricular Connections – Alberta Visual Arts 10–12

Focus Area	Outcome Code	Description
Encounters	1.1	Use visual vocabulary to investigate and develop ideas for artmaking
Encounters	4.2	Understand historical roles and symbolism in art and artifacts
Drawing	1.2	Apply drawing techniques with increasing complexity and control
Composition	2.3	Communicate an idea, emotion, or message using visual composition

Suggested Visual Elements & Ideas

- Farrier tools laid out like surgical instruments (symbolic of care/injury)
- Veterinary kit representing dual care (animal and soldier)
- Harness or saddle to symbolize burden and service
- Cropped eye or hoof to evoke emotion and vulnerability
- Contrast of organic vs mechanical forms (horse vs tools)

Rubric

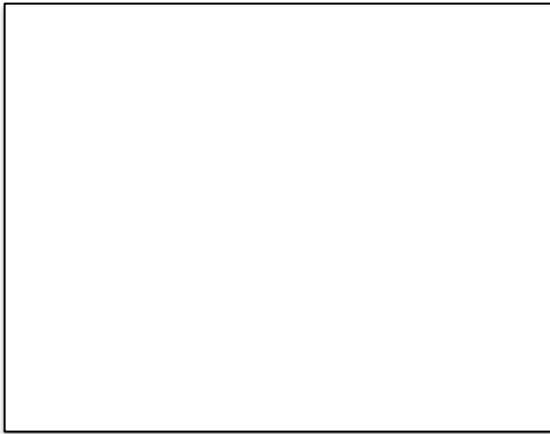
Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Curricular Outcome: 1.1 – Idea Development & Symbolism	Exceptional use of symbolism and historical reference; composition ideas are thoroughly developed and thoughtful.	Strong development of composition and symbolism with clear historical links.	Some symbolism is present; ideas show moderate development.	Minimal evidence of planning or symbolic thinking; unclear historical intent.
Curricular Outcome: 1.2 – Technical Skill & Drawing	Mastery of value, contrast, form, and proportion; confident control of media.	Good application of technique with minor issues in value or perspective.	Basic understanding of form and value; inconsistent technique.	Limited technical control; drawing lacks proportion or clarity.
Curricular Outcome: 2.3 – Expression of Message or Mood	Powerful emotional or conceptual impact; strong connection to war themes.	Clear expression of theme; thoughtful mood or message.	Attempt at theme expression; emotional impact needs strengthening.	Unclear or missing narrative intent or emotional tone.
Curricular Outcome: 4.2 – Historical Awareness	A deep understanding of the artifact's context and historical significance is clearly integrated.	Historical references are present and support the theme.	There is a historical connection; however, it needs further integration.	Little or no evidence of historical awareness in the work.
Artist Statement	Insightful and well-written; clearly connects imagery, symbolism, and historical narrative.	The statement is clear and addresses most artistic and historical decisions.	Basic explanation provided; missing depth or clarity.	The statement is incomplete or unclear in explaining the work.



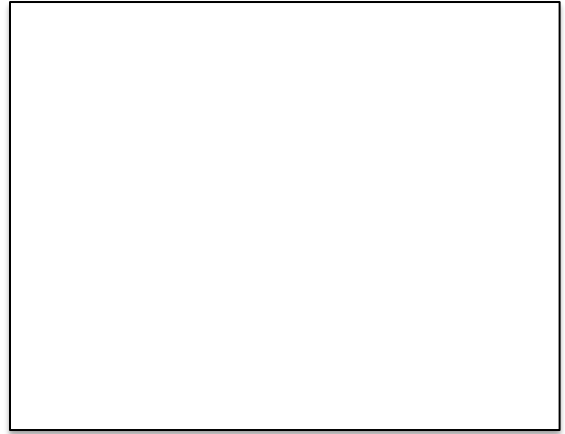
Thumbnail Planning Template

Use this section to sketch 2–3 composition ideas and label your objects, light source, and focal point.

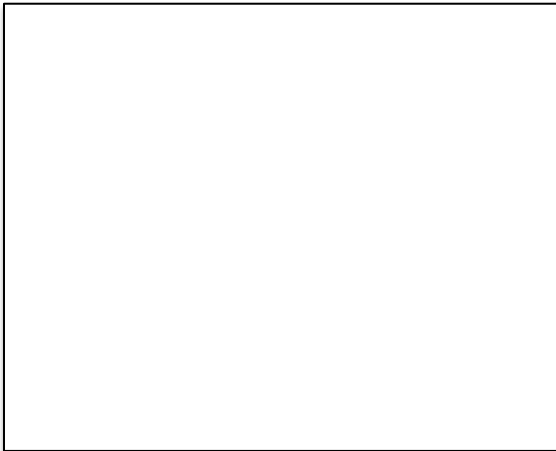
Thumbnail 1:



Value Study 3:



Thumbnail 2:



Value Study 2:



Thumbnail 3:



Value Study 3:

