

Still Lives of Gold: Looking Closer at The Work of M. Elizabeth Price

Looking Questions

- Describe the details you see in this painting.
- Describe the colors, shapes and textures that you can find in this work.
- What kind of effect do you think Price was trying to convey in using gold leaf? How would the work be different if she didn't include it?
- Does the gold leaf add or take away from the floral composition? Why or why not?
- Does the subject matter remind you of anything?
- If you could create a floral still life of your own, what types of flowers would you include?
- How do you feel when you look at this work?



M. Elizabeth Price (1877-1965), *Vase With White Poppies*, n.d., mixed media and gold leaf on panel, H. 23.75 x W. 19.25 inches, James A. Michener Art Museum. Michener Art Endowment Challenge Gift of D. Kenneth Leiby.

An Object of Glowing Proportions

M. Elizabeth Price was best known for her compositions of flowers on canvas and on decorative screens. She created close up images of peonies, poppies, hollyhocks, and delphiniums, set in backgrounds of silver and gold leaf. She often took her subjects from her own garden at “Pumpkinseed Cottage”. She was influenced by the Renaissance painters of Siena, Italy, known as the “Sienese Primitives”.

Gold Leaf: Explorations in Art and Craft

How has gold leaf been used in art? Not only has it been used in paintings over centuries, but it has also been used with decorative objects, such as frames. Examine works done during the Medieval and Renaissance periods and compare them to the work of Price. Then, look further to discover how gold leaf was used by local framemakers, Ben Badura and Frederick Harer. Learn more about the detailed process of gilding.

Functional & Decorative: Combing Asian and Italian Influences

A folding screen is a piece of free-standing furniture which consists of several frames or panels connected by hinges. Folding screens originated from ancient China and eventually spread to other countries. They are still used today as decorative and practical pieces for the home, made in a variety of designs and materials. Research the origins of folding screens and the earliest that were available in China and Japan. See an example of a folding screen by M. Elizabeth Price on the online exhibition, [The Painterly Voice](#).

Self-Portrait Still Life Activity

Create a still life that represents you, your interests, your personality, and the time period in which you live. Think about what your still life will include, the arrangement of the objects, the point of view of the artist, and the medium you plan to use. All of these decisions will affect your final result! Draw a sketch of it below.

