



MOAC Curator & Collections Manager, Ingrid Hedgcock, sets up the still life re-creation in front of the striking black and gold screen featured in many of Olley's yellow room interiors.

UNLOCKING MARGARET'S HOUSE

STILL LIFE CHALLENGE: CHINESE SCREEN AND YELLOW ROOM

Welcome to the Gallery's ninth still life challenge, and the second challenge for the exhibition *At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty*. Since June 2020 we have been setting still life challenges inspired by the exhibitions on display at the Margaret Olley Art Centre, and have loved giving special access to the objects that inspired Margaret Olley. This time the beautiful black and gold screen used in so many of Olley's paintings is the backdrop for the still life challenge.

Whether this is your first challenge or you have tackled each challenge we have set so far, don't forget to share your creations on social media with the hashtag #unlockingmargarethouse.

You can view the *Chinese Screen and Yellow Room* video by using this link <https://youtu.be/fMoUwGongDI>

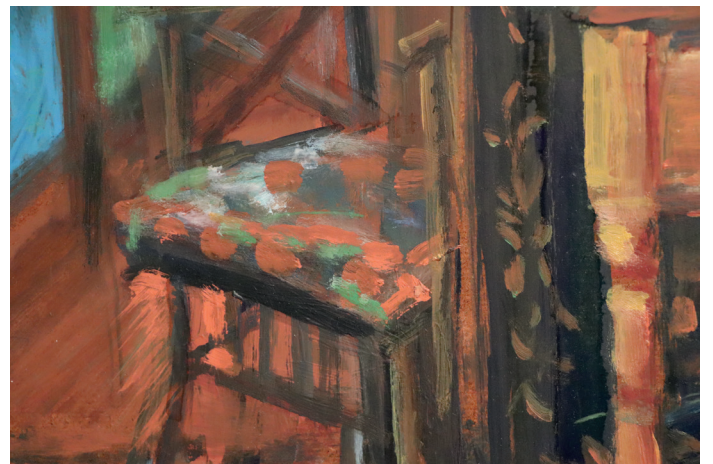
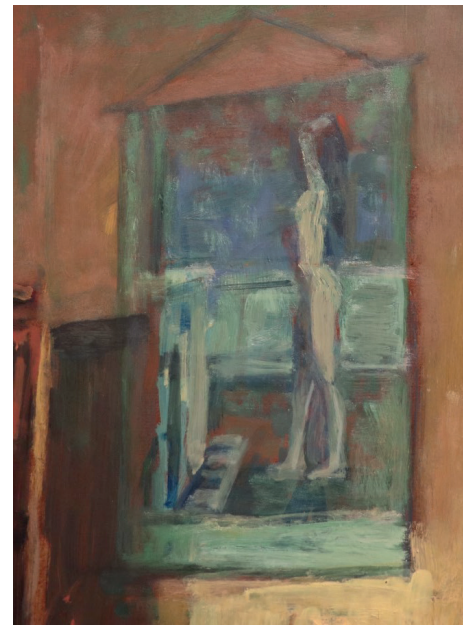


LEFT: Margaret Olley (1923–2011) *Chinese screen and yellow room* 1996, oil on board, Art Gallery of New South Wales collection. Purchased 1996. © Margaret Olley Art Trust.

The inspiration for this still life challenge is Margaret Olley's *Chinese screen and Yellow Room* 1996. Featuring the small, unassuming room on the ground floor of her Duxford Street home studio in Sydney – Olley described it as her favourite room in the house, her sanctuary – she painted still lifes and interiors in here for decades. By re-arranging posters, furniture, textiles and objects and capturing them in morning, afternoon and evening light, she made this room a 'subject of endless possibilities'.

The black and gold screen in the painting forms a decorative backdrop to a still life arrangement on a marble topped table. The still life is nestled within a composition bursting with pattern and colour and texture. And although no actual figures are depicted, everything is suggestive of life; of a story within a story – the figure in the poster, the view to the next room, the empty chair, the open drawer. Even the objects on the table turn to each other as though they are actors on a stage.

BELOW: Details from *Chinese screen and yellow room* 1996.





ABOVE This month's still life challenge inspired by Olley's *Chinese screen and yellow room* 1996.

For this challenge we have focussed on Olley's beautiful arrangement of objects in front of the of the black and gold screen. The green jar, the fluted tea cup and jugs, and delicate handles on the marble topped table add colour and pattern to the setting. We have so enjoyed re-creating this scene for you. Whether you paint, draw, photograph or sculpt, we can't wait to see what you do!

Don't forget to share your responses with us as [#unlockingmargarethouse](#)

RIGHT: This detail from *Chinese screen and yellow room* 1996 shows the exquisite use of paint suggesting the figures on the screen, a sweep of flowers and the reflective and patterned surfaces of the vessels.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: MOAC Curator & Collections Manager, Ingrid Hedgcock, sets up the still life re-creation; fluted jugs of varying sizes and the beautiful green vase are all part of the collection of objects found in the re-creation of Olley's home studio.

