



The the raffia-corded ginger jar featured in this month's still life challenge.

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## UNLOCKING MARGARET'S HOUSE

# STILL LIFE CHALLENGE: KATIE'S APPLES

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Welcome to the first still life challenge for the exhibition *At Home: Margaret Olley & Ben Quilty*. To celebrate this exhibition we are releasing three online still life challenges across Summer of 2021 - 2022.

Since beginning these challenges in June 2020 we have loved giving special access to the objects that inspired Margaret Olley. We hope you have enjoyed 'unlocking' Margaret's house with us, and encourage you to try each challenge inspired by her paintings and collection of objects.

We have loved seeing your responses. 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 *Still Life Challenge: Katie's Apples* video using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/32VwwedMJMA>



ABOVE Margaret Olley (1923–2011), *Katie's apples* 1989 – 1992, oil on board, 76 x 102cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales. Purchased 1995 ©Margaret Olley Art Trust

This is *Katie's apples* by Margaret Olley. She painted this still life at home, in a ground floor room in the Victorian Terrace that made up the front section of her famous Duxford Street home studio. The apples, brought to her by her friend's daughter, Katie, look fresh and brightly coloured.

Olley's mentors of still life painting were European modern masters – and in this work we see her thinking of Cezanne, who once declared 'with an apple I want to astonish Paris'. Olley even includes a raffia-corded ginger jar that echoes the jar Cezanne featured in dozens of his own still life compositions, and shown here in a postcard belonging to Olley. Instead of overlapping the objects, Olley raises the perspective so we look down and across the table, showing us the spaces in between the objects, evoking a sense of depth and feeling.

In *Katie's apples*, Olley sculpts form through light. Deep shadowy tones unify the composition and bright white highlights glint off the fullness of the curves in the apples, vase, jar and plates. Olley creates a new space for us to contemplate these everyday objects - ordinary things become beautiful and meaningful. Even the plain yellow wall in the background, tinted with light from a window across the room, becomes an array of colour and tone mixed on the board with feathery brushwork.



RIGHT A detail of the raffia-corded ginger jar in *Katie's apples*, and the jar in situ in the re-creation alongside a Cezanne postcard of a similar jar.





ABOVE This month's still life challenge inspired by Olley's painting *Katie's apples*, 1989-1992.

**F**or this still life challenge we have used fresh apple branches in the jug used by Olley in *Katie's apples*. The raffia-corded ginger jar sits to the right, and one of the many square-bottomed baskets collected by Olley holds more apples and branches.

Whether you set up your own still life using the produce from your garden, use the re-creation here, or Olley's painting *Katie's apples*, we look forward to seeing your interpretation of this still life arrangement. Share your artwork responses with us at **#unlockingmargarethouse**.

RIGHT: A detail showing the jug used to hold the branches in *Katie's apples*.

BELOW: The jug on display at the Margaret Olley Art Centre.

