



A detail from Margaret Olley's teapot stand featured in this month's Still Life Challenge.

UNLOCKING MARGARET'S HOUSE

STILL LIFE CHALLENGE: WHITE STILL LIFE

Welcome to the eighth and final still life challenge for the exhibition *Margaret's House*. Since beginning these challenges in June 2020 we have loved giving special access to the objects that inspired Margaret Olley. We hope you enjoyed 'unlocking' Margaret's house with us and encourage you to try each composition we have created inspired by her paintings and collection of objects.

Margaret Olley filled her home studio with objects that she collected as subject matter for painting. With her once ever-changing home studio now a static re-creation, we love to explore opportunities to enliven this space and return it to its role as subject matter; as inspiration for artists.

We have so enjoyed the responses so far and look forward to seeing more, whether it is through painting, drawing, 3D, mixed media or photography. Don't forget to share your creations on social media with the hashtag **#unlockingmargarethouse**.

You can view the *Still Life Challenge: White still life* video [here](#) or use this link https://youtu.be/5QZ_JxRVq3I.



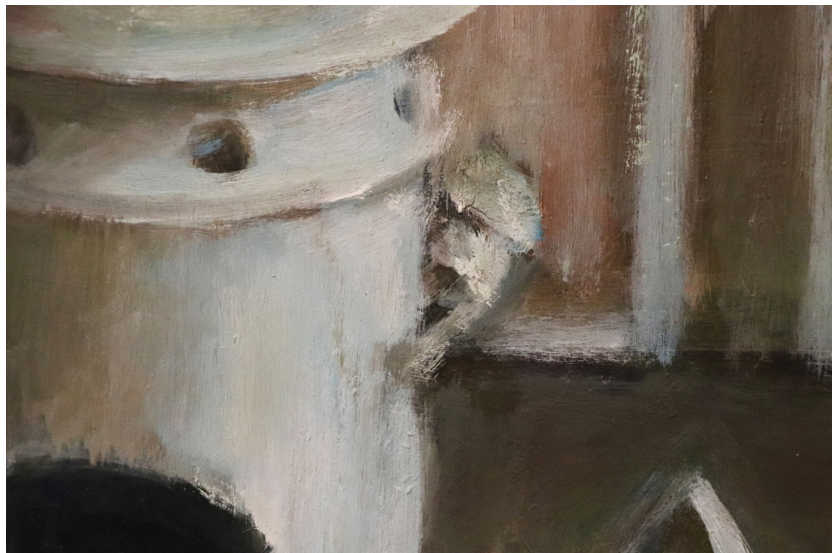
ABOVE Margaret Olley (1923–2011), *White still life* 1977, oil on hardboard, 66.3 x 89.2 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Gift of Wayne Kratzmann, 2012. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. © Margaret Olley Art Trust

Margaret Olley's *White still life* 1977 is on display in the Margaret Olley Art Centre until 25th April. It's here on loan from the National Gallery of Australia as part of our exclusive exhibition 'Margaret's House'. Olley painted this arrangement in David Strachan's kitchen in his Paddington Street home in Sydney. Strachan was a long-time friend of Olley's and fellow artist. Tragically, in 1970 he died in a car accident. For much of the 70s Olley used his home as a place to paint as she found inspiration in the objects in his home and an affinity with the light that moved through the house from morning to night.

It was here that she really started to explore the light, incorporating the time of day into her compositions. In *White still life* the objects are arranged in front of a window. Instead of revealing light, the window instead frames only the darkness of night time, intriguing and poised with possibility.

For this special still life challenge we invited local artist René Bolten to create a composition inspired by Olley's *White still life* 1977 using objects from Margaret Olley's home studio.

Details from Margaret Olley's *White still life* 1977, showing the incredible use of colour, light and shadow.





TOP LEFT: A blue bowl holds the dried egg shells from Olley's collection of objects.



MIDDLE LEFT: The teapot with stand that provide the vertical elements to the composition, and the terrine dish with its original lid.



BOTTOM LEFT: Artist René Bolten adjusts the objects within the darkened box that creates the strong light in his response to Olley's *White still life* 1977.



ABOVE This month's still life challenge created by artist René Bolten is inspired by Olley's painting *White still life* 1977

For this still life challenge artist René Bolten chose to work with two key pieces from Margaret Olley's *White still life* 1977 - a teapot with its stand and a terrine dish filled with the original egg shells from Margaret Olley's house. In this arrangement René has created 'two islands of curves' with a strong light coming from the side that emphasises the way surfaces might be painted in different ways - using either soft, gentle strokes or strong, gestural marks. For René, respecting each object and its material qualities - its delicacy, robustness, smoothness, or coolness even - helps to broaden the painterly language.

We have loved working with René on this challenge and hope you enjoy making new work in response to this still life arrangement inspired by Olley's *White still life* 1977. Using this painting and René's response to the objects within it as your starting point, you can paint, draw, collage or print as you like. Whatever you choose – we can't wait to see what you do!

Don't forget to share your artwork with us at [#unlockingmargarethouse](https://twitter.com/unlockingmargarethouse). To learn more about René's art practice visit www.renebolten.com.