

## EXPRESSIVE



**The Painting:** Bottle and Knife  
Oil paints on canvas

**The Artist:** Juan Gris 1887-1929

**Style:** Cubist painting

**Movement:** Cubism

**Composition:** Although arranged on a table top “bottle and knife” has a straight on perspective. His composition is grid like with lots of lines and angles within the objects. The views eye is lead around the painting due to the overlapping shapes of the objects.

Although only a few objects the composition is busy with overlapping and repeated shapes within the painting.

There are many focal points within this painting however larger object were often at the centre of his work to draw your eye in and then be lead around the painting by the overlapping objects.

### **Content:**

Although broken up and fractured you can clearly see the shapes which make up bottles, a knife and a plate sitting on top of a table.

Use traditional still life materials and portrays them in a unique way.

**Media Handling and Brushwork:** Gris works mainly in oils paints but also used collage pencil and gauche paints. Often using more than one at once means his work is known as mixed media. Gris uses diagonal brushstrokes to convey the angles in this painting. Gris deliberately shows these brushstrokes to “fraction” or “shatter” the image.

### **Line:**

Diagonal lines cut through this image distorting our perception of reality. The lines are confident and carefully placed by the artists. The broken objects give the viewer the sense that they are looking through broken glass or a reflection.

**Tone:** Tone in this image is quite dramatic with lots of white and black paint applied next to one another. The tone around each object is smooth and glowing, this emphasises the shape on the objects in the still life.

The shadows on the ellipses clearly show the direction of light in this still life. Only the knife breaks this rule with the shadow cast in the opposite direction.

This fractured image plays around with our idea of reality; we try to piece the image back together trying to figure out where the objects really lie

**Colour:** Gris used muted colour, working with a mainly tertiary pallet. Within this muted pallet there are clear contrasting colours. The main objects in the painting are greys focusing mainly on tone rather than colour. However there is a warm brown colour highlighting an ellipse of a bottle in the centre. This contrast draws our eye into the centre of the painting and the main objects. There is also a slightly warmer tint in the background showing a clear edge in the suggested table.

**Texture:** There is a fine painterly texture throughout this image shown by the artist’s brushstrokes. These brushstrokes are even and all flowing in the same direction.

The paint in this image is applied thickly and can clearly be seen in its layers. This shows that Gris is a skilled artist as the thick paint is definite, controlled and equal throughout the painting.

**Pattern:** This image shows a clear pattern in the line around the objects. Gris uses a similar and **stylised** outline to emphasis his objects.

Pattern is also present in the diagonal lines that cut through the image creating repetition of similar shapes. The repetition of colour can also be seen to make up pattern in this abstract piece.

**Form:** As this is an example of cubist painting the idea of view object from one angle has been abandoned. The shattered image allows us to see objects at slightly different positions shows the 3D form of the objects. Although there are 3D qualities in the ellipse of the objects the painting has been simplified and stylised into geometric shapes rather than realistic form.

**Thoughts and Opinions:** Personally, I like this painting because of its cubist style. I am interested in how Gris has taken simple everyday objects and transformed them into an interesting image in which your eyes dart around trying to understand the distorted reality.

Give you own thoughts and opinions. This example is how I would approach writing about this painting.