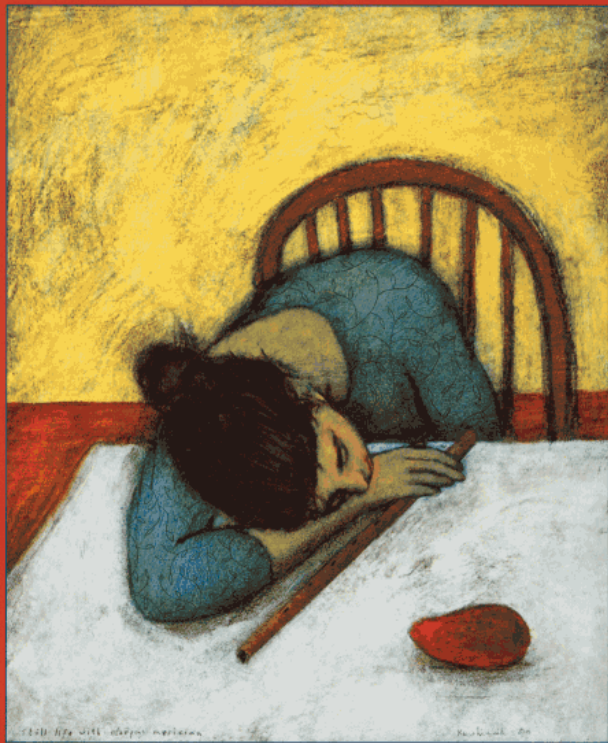


OBJECT

LESSONS



BEAUTY AND MEANING IN ART

tion of one sense arouses that of another, creating an intricate mix of sensory input. Just as the smell, appearance and weight of food all impact our sense of taste, the physical properties of the implements we use affect the experience of our food.

There is also much representational art, which appeals indirectly to the mouth by means of the eyes. Still lifes in particular seduce us with images of edible goods. Through realistic detail, carefully placed objects, and a strategic vantage point, the viewer is beckoned into the scene. These painted delights allow us the vicarious pleasure of consuming what lies before us.



BORIS BALLY. *Reproduction: He Spoon, She Spoon, We Spoon.* In the process of using these elaborate spoons we are reminded of the biological facts of life: consumption, sex and regeneration.
Photo by Dean Powell.



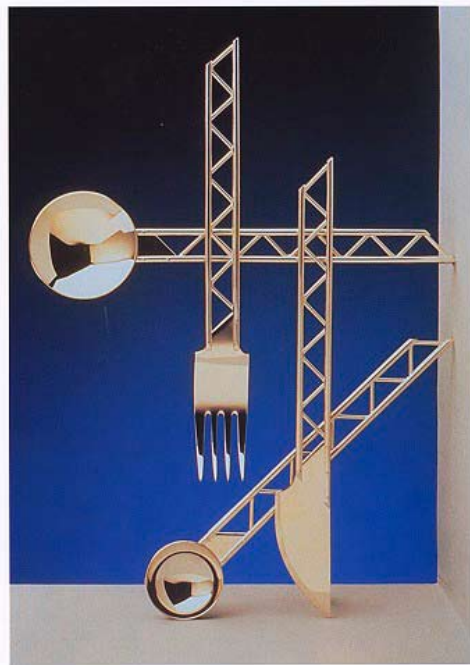
LEAH KRISTIN DAHLGREN. *Three Pears with Sugar Bowl.* This traditional still life enlists realistic detail, life-size painted fruit, and a carefully angled table to vicariously appeal to the viewer's hand and mouth.

Whether in two or three dimensions, well-crafted objects have the power to refresh our senses and engage us more fully in our daily experience. Speaking of the power of decorative arts, William Morris declared: "it is one of the chief uses of decoration, the chief part of its alliance with nature, that it has to sharpen our dulled senses . . . for this end are those wonders of intricate patterns interwoven, those strange forms invented, which men have so long delighted in."¹ Sensory enhancement is precisely the aim of a finely tuned oral object. Such items can serve as tools for greater self-knowledge. Above all, they can teach us to pay more attention and to stay present at the banquet of our lives.

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¹ William Morris, "The Lesser Arts," *News from Nowhere and Other Writings*. (New York: Penguin, 1993), 235.

BORIS BALLY



Trussware, 8" h × 2" w × 0.5" d. Four-piece silver place setting inspired by raw ceiling beams. Photo by Dean Powell.

BORIS BALLY



Long & Short Tables, short table (22" h × 26.5" w × 13" d), long table (25.5" h × 36" w × 14" d). Tables made from reused traffic signs, glass, copper rivets and fasteners. Photo by Dean Powell.