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VERiTage
Integrated European
Cultural Heritage for VET

Food photography

Telling stories through visual images



Image caption: [Joseph Nicéphore Niépce](#) 1832



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General overview

The idea for this exercise born from a shot by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce - French inventor and pioneer of photography - who snapped the first food photograph in 1832: a still life photograph representing a table with a bowl, a few utensils, a goblet, and a heel of bread.

Starting from this point, the exercise focuses on the connection between food and visual art: proposing the exploration of XVII and XVIII centuries art, as a basic source of inspiration, the exercise suggests a journey throughout the world of contemporary food photography combining two photographic subjects that are closest to many: culture and food.

The exercise presents in detail one activity and design one more that teachers and trainers will be able to finalise following the model.

Taking inspiration from the past

Activity overview

The activity requires the students to reflect on the connections that link the cultural and artistic heritage of the past to forms of contemporary artistic expression, in particular to photography and asks them to realize, as a final product, a photographic project representing themselves in the activities they carry out at school. Medium-long term objective to participate in the Cedefop Photo Award: a competition organized by Cedefop, the European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (www.cedefop.europa.eu).

The activity proposes, as a starting point, the study of the still life of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the juxtaposition of this form of artistic expression from the past to contemporary food photography. Through the proposed activity, the students will discover unexpected elements of communion, the revival of schemes, quotations and connections that they can use as a source of inspiration in the realization of their final photographic project.

The activity has been designed for students of the HORECA sector.



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Final product

- Photographic project

Level of difficulty

The exercise, as a whole, has a medium-low level of difficulty as it presupposes a basic entry level for the skills and knowledges on which it works:

- Multilingual competence
- Literacy
- Cultural awareness and expression
- Digital competence

Specific knowledge

- History of photography
- Painting of the XVI-XVII centuries, in particular the painting of the genre "Still Life".
- Contemporary photography
- Tasks and roles of the Cedefop European Agency

Descriptive activity sheet

Stage 1

Description

Give a brief introduction to the genre "Still Life" in Europe in the 16th-17th centuries and present the special features of the genre to your students. In order to go deeper we suggest you to propose the video we have selected for you: [Fruit and Insects](#) (1711)

The hyperlink leads you to a video about the Dutch painter Rachel Ruysch and, in particular, describes one of her works: "Fruit and Insects" (1711, oil on wood, 44 x 60 cm - Uffizi Gallery, Florence). The video lasts about 4 minutes and is rich in suggestions as it presents both the historical context in which the painter lived and her didactic path. The video is in English but a textual transcription is available.

Divide the students into small groups. Ask them to select, through a web search, examples of representative works of the genre.



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Objectives

- Increase the students' ability to understand spoken messages, to read, understand texts in English (Multilingual competence).
- Increase the students' abilities to distinguish and use different types of sources, to search for, collect and process information (Literacy).
- Increase the students' knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products, and an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual (Cultural awareness and expression).

Key competences

- Multilingual competence
- Literacy
- Cultural awareness and expression

Resources

- Teacher contact person for the activity
- The group of teachers that we suggest is also composed of: teachers of the linguistic axis; teacher of artistic subjects or expert in the field.
- Equipment: Internet connection, computer.

Duration

- 60 minutes - introduction to the topic
- 30 minutes - resources research

Stage 2

Description

Make a short introduction, presenting the specific characteristics of the genre "contemporary food photography" to your students. As a reference you can use the list of artists presented in the "Resources" section.

Ask your students to select, through a web search, examples of representative works of the genre.



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Objectives

- See Stage 1

Key competences

- See Stage 1

Resources

- Teacher contact person for the activity
- The group of teachers that we suggest is also composed of: teachers of the linguistic axis; expert of photography art.
- Equipment: Internet connection, computer, video projector.

Duration

- 60 minutes - introduction to the theme
- 30 minutes - resources research

Stage 3

Description

This phase is for small groups.

Invite your students to compare the selected paintings and photographs. As a reference you can use the example proposed in the "Examples" section.

Ask your students to answer the following questions:

- What are the common elements of 16th-17th century still lifes and contemporary food photography?
- How do 16th-17th century still lifes influence contemporary food photography?
- What are the most relevant differences?
- What was the reason for the success of the "Still life" genre in the 16th-17th centuries?
- What is the reason for the success of contemporary food photography?

After answering the questions, ask your students to make a short written report collecting their impressions.



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Objectives

- Increase the students' skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation (Literacy).
- Increase the students' abilities of critical thinking (Literacy).

Key competences

- Literacy

Resources

- Teacher contact person for the activity
- The group of teachers that we suggest is also composed of: teachers of the linguistic axis; expert of photography art.
- Equipment: Internet connection, laptops.

Duration

- 90 minutes

Stage 4

Description

Introduce your students to Cedefop, inviting them to visit the [official website](#). The website is in English. Some sections are available in other languages. As a source of inspiration you can suggest your students to visit the [CedefopPhotoAward 2019](#)

This phase is for small groups/couples. Support your students in designing a photograph project representing their classroom activities with the aim to take part in the competition. After this preliminary activity, ask your students to work on a photographic project representing their classroom activities. Medium-term goal: to take part in the competition.

Objectives

- Increase the students' ability to read, understand texts in English (Multilingual competence).



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- Increase the students' ability to use digital technologies to support their collaboration with others, and creativity towards personal, social or commercial goals (Digital competence).
- Increase the students' understanding of their own developing identity and cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity and how arts and other cultural forms can be a way to both view and shape the world (Cultural awareness and expression).

Key competences

- Multilingual competence
- Digital competence
- Cultural awareness and expression

Resources

- Teacher contact person for the activity
- The group of teachers that we suggest is also composed by a technician.
- Equipment: pen and paper, a digital camera or a mobile camera.

Duration

- 60 minutes - presentation
- About a week to take the photographs

Stage 5

Description

This phase is for the whole class.

Support your students in involving students from other classes in the school in voting for their photographs. There are many ways to collect grades: you can use a simple printed form, a Google form, Kahoot, or other, depending on the students' previous skills and abilities. After the selection of the most voted photographs you can decide whether to participate in the photo contest promoted every year by Cedefop.



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Objectives

- Increase the students' ability to use digital technologies to support their collaboration with others, and creativity towards personal, social or commercial goals (Digital competence).
- Increase the students' skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation (Literacy).

Key competences

- Digital competence
- Literacy

Resources

- Teacher contact person for the activity
- Equipment depends on the tool selected for voting

Duration

- The time needed to carry out the activity cannot be foreseen as it depends on external elements.

Valorising the present

How can food photography improve a business activity

Activity overview

The activity requires the students to reflect on photography as a tool of communication able to improve a business activity and suggest, as a final product, the creation of a photograph book to be realised in collaboration with a micro enterprise at local level. The activity proposes, as a starting point, the study of some case stories represented by famous restaurants at European level from which the students can take inspiration.

The suggested steps of the activity are the following:



1. Visit, with your students, the website and social media of the following restaurants. The list is a proposal and you can make a different one, according to your personal experience or to your trainees' experience.
 - [Sture](#) (Sweden)
 - [Piazza Duomo](#) (Italy)
 - [Sweet roots](#) (Lithuania)

On the restaurant website you can also find a book: "Proud of Lithuania. A Fairy Tale by Sweet Root " The book tells about the beauty of the country through the gastronomical lense of Sweet Root restaurant and brings back some of the forgotten heroes of our country to the table: local ingredients, magical flavours, emotions & memories.

- [Cocina Hermanos Torres](#) (Spain)
2. Ask your students to make a selection of some images from the website (or social media) of each of the restaurants listed above, commenting on their choice. Guide the students to answer the following questions:
 - What is the function of the images (on the website and/or on social media)?
 - What is the story the images tell?
 - Do the website's (or social media) images represent the style of the restaurants? If yes, how?
 3. Select, with your students, a local micro-enterprise (bar, restaurant, canteen...)
 4. Ask your students to make an analysis of the website and/or social media used by the company
 5. Invite your students to identify potential areas for improvement in photographic storytelling and ask your students to write a short summary report of the evaluation carried out.
 6. Contact, in collaboration with your students, the company and present the report, highlighting opportunities for business improvement through better use of images on the web and social channels.
 7. Accompany your students to the company and invite them to take pictures of the environment, the people and looking at everything they think can be useful to tell the story of the company.
 8. Invite your students to select the best photographs and support them in designing a photo book to give to the company, as a present.



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Examples

- As an example of comparison between still life paintings of the XVII century and contemporary art, we propose you the following two pictures:



Image caption: Rachel Ruysch



Julia Sent

The first image is by Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750): a Dutch artist who specialized in still-life paintings; the second is by Julia Sent: a contemporary Still Life and Portraiture photographer based in New York.

- As an example we propose you two pictures taken from the project “Skinny Chef” by Economic and Tourism school of Daruvar (Croatia), runner up of the 2019 Cedefop Photo Award competition.





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Resources

Taking inspiration from the past

1. To learn more about Joseph Nicephore Niepce. you can visit the following [hyperlink](#)
2. The hyperlink takes you to a [video](#) presenting the Dutch painter Rachel Ruysch and, in particular, her “Fruit and Insects” (1711, oil on wood, 44 x 60 cm - Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence). The video lasts about 4 minutes and it is full of suggestions as it tells both the historical context and the education path of the painter. In addition it describes, in detail, the art work: colours, elements, hidden meanings.
3. [Cedefop](#) ((Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) is one of the EU’s decentralised agencies. Founded in 1975 and based in Greece since 1995, Cedefop supports development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation.
4. The hyperlink takes you to the [Cedefop Photo Award 2019](#) photo gallery.
5. Contemporary photographer suggestions
 - Julia Sent
 - James Ramson
 - Renée Kemps
 - Oddur Thorisson
 - Kraut Kopf - Susann Probst & Yannic Schon photographers
 - Urban Koi
 - Issy Croker
 - Nicole Franzen
 - David Loftus
 - Louise Hagger
 - Maja Danica Pecanic
 - Chloé Crane-Leroux