



***Still Life with Raisins, Yellow and Red Apples in Porcelain Basket, c.1820-22***  
**Raphaëlle Peale (American, 1774-1825)**

**In this traditional still life painting, every blemish on the fruit is clearly visible, but not a single brushstroke shows.**



Oil on wood; 12¾ x 19 inches  
The Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Mrs. Francis White, from the Collection of Mrs. Miles White, Jr., BMA 1973.76.276

In the early 1800s, still life painting was viewed somewhat disdainfully and thought to be a subject for amateurs. However, Raphaëlle Peale's compositions were regarded as exceptionally good. He excelled at painting tightly grouped still life arrangements of fruits, vegetables, cakes, fish, and meat. Raphaëlle Peale was one of 17 children of the famous American colonial painter and scientist Charles Willson Peale. Three of his brothers, Rembrandt, Titian, and Rubens Peale were also named after famous artists.

How do these apples look?

- The apples appear firm but their skin is marred with spots and blemishes.
- The yellow apples are painted in shades of yellow and yellow/brown; the red apple is painted in shades of red and reddish/brown. There are no additional colors.

How did Peale use his brush?

- No brushstrokes are visible except for tiny touches of white that indicate light reflecting off of the raisins.

How did Peale make the apples appear spherical (like a ball) rather than flat (like a circular disk)?

- Peale's colors move very gradually from highlight to shadow, creating the illusion that each fruit is a solid, round, three-dimensional object.
- To suggest an indentation around the stems of his yellow apples, he used colors that get progressively darker. However, he added a tiny speck of white to the tip of the stem to make it pop forward. One of the stems casts a tiny shadow, enhancing the effect further.

What colors did Peale use to create shadows?

- The shaded areas on the yellow apples remain yellowish, while the darker underside of the red apple is reddish in tone.
- The shadow under the lip of the white porcelain bowl is gray. However, a portion of the bowl is slightly red, reflecting the color of the red apple nearby.

How did Peale arrange the apples?

- The four yellow apples are placed in the bowl so that each apple touches at least one other.
- Instead of outlining the apples, Peale distinguished between them by making the edge of the foremost apple lighter (or darker) than the apple behind.