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The Shape of Things: Still Life in Britain

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Bright Intervals (1928), Edward Wadsworth. Museum & Art Swindon

When France's Royal Academy of Art established its hierarchy of genres in the 17th century, still life was ranked last, trumped by history painting, portraiture, genre painting and landscape. An unfair pronouncement, suggests this exhibition at Pallant House Gallery in Chichester, which highlights still life's value as a vehicle for all manner of artistic explorations across history, movements and mediums (11 May–20 October). Featuring the work of more than 100 artists, the exhibition tracks the chronology of the genre in Britain, from early works inspired by the mortality-minded *vanitas* paintings of Flemish masters to experimental contemporary examples. At its core, the show emphasises what compositions of inanimate objects offer, not just in their physical qualities and aesthetic appeal, but also in their ability to reflect complex human experiences, from motherhood to migration.



Still Life with Golden Goblet (after Pieter de Ring 1640–1660) (2017), Gordon Cheung. Courtesy the artist and Cristea Roberts Gallery, London; © Gordon Cheung



Falling Façade (1991), Cornelia Parker. Courtesy the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London



The Silver Casket and Red Leather Box (1920), William Nicholson. Private collection