

Flowers in a Glass Vase



Target Group: Grades 9-12

Goal (Terminal Objective): Students will create a strong composition by learning and using fundamental visual elements. It will also contain art historical references.

Objective: Students will strengthen their observational and design skills, experience expressive mark-making, and observe how light and texture affect color. They will also learn some art history by studying how artists (past and/or present) have interpreted similar subject matter. Teachers can substitute or add relevant artists of their own choice.

National Standards:

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

Purpose: For students to learn and experience important building blocks for making a sophisticated piece of artwork: 1) how to work out a composition, 2) how to see and mix color, and 3) how to trust their own interpretations of the subject by experimenting with different types of mark-making, brush strokes, and exaggerations.

New Vocabulary: composition, negative and positive shape, expressive mark-making, local and reflected color, critique

Materials:



#22-4115 Charcoal Square Pastel



#22-4148 Colored Square Pastel



#22-8423 Art-Time Premium Half-Pan Watercolor Set



#22-7205 Watercolor Pencils

Time: 1-2 double block periods; 1-1/2 – 3 hours

Instruction:

1. Teacher shows how materials should be laid out on the side of the student's favored hand.
2. Teacher lays down same size paper in front of her/him as the students will use.
3. While observing the still life, teacher will demonstrate techniques for handling charcoal square, showing how different line qualities can be achieved. This will result in expressive marks: thick, thin, fast, slow, curvilinear, straight, long, and short.
4. Teacher will demonstrate each of the other materials (assuming this is the first time students are using them) and the possibilities in mixing materials.
5. Teacher will demonstrate proper clean-up and storage of art supplies.

Activities:

(1) Guided Practice:

1. Teacher shows students reproductions of Van Gogh's Sunflowers (focusing on expressive brush strokes and color) and/or any of Georgia O'Keefe's flowers (focusing on positive and negative shapes and overall composition).
2. Teacher demonstrates how to fill rectangle (drawing paper) with image (composition).
3. Teacher shows and has students point out positive and negative shapes within still life.
4. Teacher draws students' attention to glass vase and has them point out areas where shapes of stems and colors distort through the glass and above and below the waterline.
5. Students walk around table, observing how shapes, colors, and composition change depending on their point of view.
6. Teacher will have students draw three thumbnail sketches.

(2) Independent Practice and Check for Understanding:

Students choose one thumbnail sketch. Using both the sketch and referring to the still life setup, the student will transfer the composition, using charcoal to the larger piece of paper.

After the basic composition is transferred, student will go back into the drawing to accentuate and exaggerate shapes and curves, looking for negative shapes to emphasize.

Watercolor, watercolor pencils and/or chalk pastel should be added at this point.

Students should be encouraged to put feeling and expression into their piece, avoiding “perfection”. Particular attention should be paid to the color and shape distortions that occur within the glass vase.

Teacher will circulate among students, asking questions when appropriate, and pointing out areas of the painting that need more thought or attention.

(3) Closure: Project will be complete when student and teacher agree that all requirements have been met: good composition, expressive marks, and observant color. Students will display their work.

Evaluation:

A teacher-guided critique will help students to see and understand what makes a strong and effective piece. Students will be encouraged to use vocabulary words that they may have previously learned and that apply specifically to this project.

Level One -- The finished work incorporates separate elements, including different mediums that hold together to make a complete composition or statement. The finished work shows extra effort made by student to incorporate all concepts that were covered.

Student’s work has a unique quality that reflects that student’s vision. Craftsmanship is excellent.

Level Two -- The finished work incorporates separate elements, including different mediums that hold together to make a complete composition or statement. The finished work shows that an effort was made by the student to incorporate all concepts that were covered. Craftsmanship is good.

Level Three -- The finished work contains most of the visual elements discussed during the making of this project. Some effort was made by the student to learn and experiment with these concepts. Craftsmanship is fair.

Level Four -- Student put little or no effort into understanding or experimenting with the concepts put forth in the project. The finished project has little or no visual impact.

Extension:

This project can be extended to incorporate more art historical material as a learning tool.

Van Gogh's body of work as a whole can be studied as it relates to different expressive mark-making techniques, both in drawing and painting. Van Gogh's ink drawings in particular can be used as examples for students to experiment with different kinds of expressive mark-making.

The work of Georgia O'Keefe is an excellent source for further studies in shape, composition, and abstraction.

Dutch still life paintings often contain flower bouquets as part of their subject matter and are good examples of texture and reflective surfaces in painting.

These three examples can also be expanded to illustrate how a similar subject matter has been interpreted during different historical periods.

Resources:

www.vangoghgallery.com

www.soho-art.com/georgia_o_keefe.shtml

www.ngv.vic.gov.au/dutchmasters/themes06.html:

[www.nationalgalleryimages](#) (flowers)

BY JANICE BELOVE
Art Consultant

www.sargentart.com 09/06/07