

## Impressions of Nature



**Target Group:** Grades 9-12

**Goal (Terminal Objective):** Students will learn painting techniques with oil pastels by studying colors, patterns, and textures from nature.

**Objective:** Upon observing and studying the colors, patterns, and textures from nature, students will apply a variety of oil pastel techniques to complete an original painting. Students will practice good composition skills by visually dealing with foreground, middle ground, and background.

**National Standards:**

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

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 2: Using knowledge of structures and functions

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

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:** Students will use aesthetic scanning to view and discuss examples of works of art dealing with nature as subject matter, specifically those depicting deep space by using foreground, middle ground, and background. Students will learn a variety of oil pastel techniques that will allow them to create very painterly finished projects. Techniques include oil pastel wash, scraffito, and of course, freehand. Students will visually demonstrate expressive color in their individual choices. Students will also visually

demonstrate simulated texture in their composition. Students will apply creative problem solving through the unique presentation of their final painting.

**New Vocabulary:** wash, scraffito, Fauve, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Impressionism

**Materials:** Bristol pencil, odorless paint thinner, cotton balls, toothpicks, and the following Sargent Art Oil Pastels:



#32-2007 Metallic Oil Pastel



#32-2009 Fluorescent Oil Pastel



#22-2018 Standard Size Oil Pastel

**Time:** approximately 3-5 class periods

**Instruction and Motivation (Set):**

Take students on a nature walk and have them record colors, patterns, and textures they observe in a sketchbook. Spend some time looking at a variety of nature inspired images from throughout art history. Point out composition elements to students, particularly the use of foreground, middle ground, and background. Examples from the Impressionists often exemplify these compositional qualities. Vincent Van Gogh is a good artist to use for applying the element of texture in his paintings. The Fauves are good to view for a visual example of outrageous and expressive colors; Tiffany stained glass windows are also good examples to use for composition and texture. It is such an open-ended focus (nature) that really, many different artists have a lot to offer for students' aesthetic inspiration - - to give them a role model perhaps, to think about throughout their own project.

**Instruction:**

1) Begin by doing a pencil sketch of the layout of the composition with pencil on Bristol. Include objects in the foreground, middle ground, and background - - open up the space!

2) Lay down color first in areas by creating an oil pastel wash. Once some colors are on the paper, put a small amount of odorless paint thinner on a cotton ball and blend the colors together.



Cotton ball being used to blend oil pastels, creating a color wash effect.



background shown before cotton ball used to blend colors

3) After areas are filled in with a color wash, use oil pastels free hand to create textures and details. Also, at this point, a toothpick is a simple tool that can be used to scratch through layers of oil pastels to help create varied textures.



creating texture on top of color wash with free hand oil pastel



Finished project depicting foreground, middle ground, and background, and creative use of color, textures, and patterns from nature.

### **Activities:**

#### **(1) Guided Practice:**

- a. Students use aesthetic scanning to look at and discuss examples of artwork that use nature as subject matter, especially those that show the presence of foreground, middle ground, and background.
- b. Students observe and record examples of colors, textures, and patterns from nature.
- c. Students practice oil pastel techniques including color wash, scraffito, and freehand.
- d. Students demonstrate visual understanding of composition basics foreground, middle ground, and background.
- e. Students demonstrate creative problem solving through the unique way they compose a unified composition that is visually rich with color, patterns, and textures of nature.

#### **(2) Independent Practice and Check for Understanding:**

- a. As students work, teacher offers individual help with layout of their compositions.
- b. Teacher circulates and helps individual students with technical questions while they use the oil pastel medium.

#### **(3) Closure:**

- a. Finished paintings are beautiful hung for display throughout the school. It seems almost everyone enjoys viewing artwork that represents subject matter from nature.

b. Teacher may choose to hold a class critique and talk about successful composition layouts and students' representations of the textures, colors, and patterns of nature.

**Evaluation:**

Level One -- The finished oil pastel painting very successfully demonstrates the student's understanding of foreground, middle ground, and background. The student has shown strong technical skills in the varied way in which oil pastels can be used. The student has shown a high level of creativity in completing the painting. Craftsmanship is outstanding.

Level Two – The finished painting shows good understanding of composition. The student has shown good technical skills in the use of oil pastels. The painting is completed creatively and craftsmanship is good.

Level Three -- The finished painting shows limited understanding of composition. The student has limited technical success in the use of the medium oil pastels. Creativity and craftsmanship is minimal.

Level Four – The finished painting shows no conscious understanding of good composition. The technical skill of the use of oil pastels is poor and sloppy. Creativity, effort, and craftsmanship are poor.

**Extension:** These oil pastel painting techniques can be applied to projects with varied themes. Oil pastels can also be used on canvas boards to offer students a different and new surface to work on.

**Resources:**

<http://www.fineartinvestments.org/inc/ArtGlass/windows/LouisCTiffanyWisteriaWindow.htm>

<http://www.nga.gov/press/2004/227/images.htm>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/glo/impressionism/>

[http://www.art375.org/artgallery/eng/autors/autors/7/img\\_52.html](http://www.art375.org/artgallery/eng/autors/autors/7/img_52.html)

<http://www.oilpastelsociety.com/>

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[www.sargentart.com](http://www.sargentart.com) 10/14/2007