

Visual Interpretation of a Poem



Hope is the Thing with Feathers
By Emily Dickinson
Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Target Group: Grade 11-12

Goal (Terminal Objective): Students will create a mixed media work of visual art that uses a selected poem as inspiration.

Objective: Upon studying poetry in English class, students will take inspiration from literature to the Art room and interpret a selected poem as a creative mixed media visual art piece.

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 3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

Visual Arts Grades 9-12 Content Standard 6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Purpose: Students will discuss selected works of poetry chosen for visual interpretation. Students will develop personal subject matter that reflects to them the meaning of the selected work of poetry. Students will use mixed media to complete a personal and expressive visual interpretation of a selected work of poetry. Students will discover the power of expression through both the written word and visual art. Students will see a connection between literary works of art and visual works of art.

New Vocabulary: mixed-media, visual interpretation, relief

Materials: variety of craft materials such as feathers, beads, wire, etc., old frames appropriate for reusing, foam board or chip board, and the following Sargent Art supplies:



#56-6000 Mixed Hair Brush Assortment



#66-5611 6 ct. Liquid Metals Jar Set



#22-8811 16 oz. Acrylic Glitter Glaze



#22-8812 128 oz. Acrylic Gloss Medium



#22-3000 2lb. Bright White Air-Hardening Clay



#22-1103 Craft Glue



#23-9111 11 ct. Sculpting Tool Set

Time: approximately 5-8 class periods

Instruction and Motivation (Set): This is a great project to do during the month of April, which has been designated as National Poetry Month. Introduce the idea of how different people express thoughts and ideas in different ways, particularly poets vs. artists. Engage the students in a discussion of how in the visual arts, we most often use our own ideas as a source of creative inspiration and expression, but what are the possibilities when we branch out to others' written thoughts, specifically poets. Read some poems with the class and have them try to visualize the verse as a picture. What things could be used to symbolize the meaning of the poem? What colors would be appropriate for the mood of the poem? Ask similar questions. Allow students to browse through poems for a while on their own until they find one that really strikes their inspiration and interest.

Instruction:

1) When working with mixed media, begin by laying down thin layers of medium for the background.



thin layers of liquid metals and tinted glitter glaze used to establish background



tinging acrylic glitter glaze with liquid watercolor pigment

- 2) Students will be required to include some type of relief element in their composition. Construct this out of air hardening clay.



constructing bird from air hardening clay

- 3) When the clay component is dry, paint it.



- 4) Build up more detail in the background by adding textural mixed media elements.



feathers being added along with relief painted dots

5) Complete the composition by gluing in place the clay relief element. Also, consider adding text - - part of the chosen poem perhaps?



6) Incorporate colors used in the composition into “recycling” an old frame to complete the presentation of the project.



painting the frame with coordinating colors of the composition - - using tinted glitter glaze for corner accent



finished mixed media composition with painted coordinated frame

Activities:

(1) Guided Practice:

- a) Students read poems and discuss ideas of visual interpretation as a group.
- b) Students use creative problem solving to develop a strong idea for their composition.
- c) Students expressively use a variety of media to complete their creative interpretation of the selected poem.

(2) Independent Practice and Check for Understanding:

- a) As students work, teacher circulates room to help with individual design questions.
- b) Teacher offers individual assistance with students' composition layout and handling of new material.

(3) Closure:

- a) Have the students recite the poem they chose to interpret as they present their finished visual piece to the class. Do the classmates think the visual interpretation matches the literary mood and/or meaning of the poem?

Evaluation:

Level One -- The finished piece is a very successful personal visual interpretation of the student's selected poem. The use of mixed media demonstrates excellent capability of the student's skill in incorporating a variety of materials to achieve a personal expressive work of art. Composition - - placement of subject matter and relief element is excellent. Craftsmanship and effort is outstanding.

Level Two -- The finished piece is a successful personal visual interpretation of the student's selected poem. The use of mixed media demonstrates good capability of the student's skill in incorporating a variety of materials to achieve a personal expressive work of art. Composition - - placement of subject matter and relief element is good. Craftsmanship and effort is good.

Level Three -- The finished piece shows evidence that the student tried to visually interpret their chosen poem. The use of mixed media is fair in exhibiting the student's

skill in using a variety of materials in conjunction with one another. Composition - - placement of subject matter and relief element is fair. Craftsmanship and effort is fair.

Level Four – The finished visual piece doesn't do a good job in interpreting the student's choice of poetry. There is no relief element and poor use of mixed media to complete the final project. Composition - - placement of subject matter and relief element is poor.

Craftsmanship and effort is poor.

Extension: Team up with an English teacher and do this project outside the art room with her or his class as enrichment for their poetry unit. Work in pairs or teams to create a diptych or triptych interpretation.

Resources:

<http://www.poets.org/>

<http://www.poetrymagazine.org/>

<http://www.heartsart.com/info/ingallery.asp>

<http://www.artpromote.com/mixedmedia.shtml>

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