

Interdisciplinary Unit Plan



Understanding Art Through Nature

Connecting Art and Science through Expeditionary Learning

7th Grade Life Science

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Tufts/SMFA Art Education

Lesson 1:
Explorers of
the Great
Unknown

Lesson 2:
Celebrating
Biodiversity



Peonies. Pierre-Joseph Redouté. C. 1820



Lilies, Claude Monet C. 1906

Lesson 3:
Inspired by
Nature

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Unit Rationale

- In this unit of study, students will explore the connections between art and science through the expeditionary learning model. In each lesson, students will have the opportunity to travel outside of the classroom to explore their surrounding environment and to take on the role of investigators of their natural world. Through the study of exploration, biology, and finally, art making, they will learn about how for many years, art and science have informed each other. Over the course of the unit plan, the students will experiment with a range of materials, and, most importantly, engage with their local environment and community.

Enduring Understandings

- For many years, art and science have been used together for study, discovery and exploration.
- Scientists who have a background in art can use their skills to further their scientific understanding.
- Artists often find inspiration for their work from nature.

Essential Questions

- How does science inform art?
- How does art inform science?



Massachusetts State Standards Addressed

Visual Arts (Grades PK-12)

- **2. Elements and Principles of Design.** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the elements and principles of design.
- **3. Observation, Abstraction, Invention, and Expression.** Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques.
- **6. Purposes of the Arts.** Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theater, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.
- **7. Roles of Artists in Communities.** Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
- **8. Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change.** Students will demonstrate their understanding of styles, stylistic influence, and stylistic change by identifying when and where art works were created, and by analyzing characteristic features of art works from various historical periods, cultures, and genres.
- **10. Interdisciplinary Connections.** Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social sciences, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

Earth and Space Science (Grades 6-8)

2. **1. Structure of the Earth.** Recognize, interpret, and be able to create models of the earth's common physical features in various mapping representations, including contour maps.

Life Science, Biology (Grades 6-8)

1. **13. Ecology.** Give examples of ways in which organisms interact and have different functions within an ecosystem that enable the ecosystem to survive.

Unit Objectives

Students will make connections between art and science through exploration, discovery and interpretation.



Thomas Moran, *Cloudy Day at Amaqansett*, 1884
Private Collection

Lesson 1 Explorers of the Great Unknown

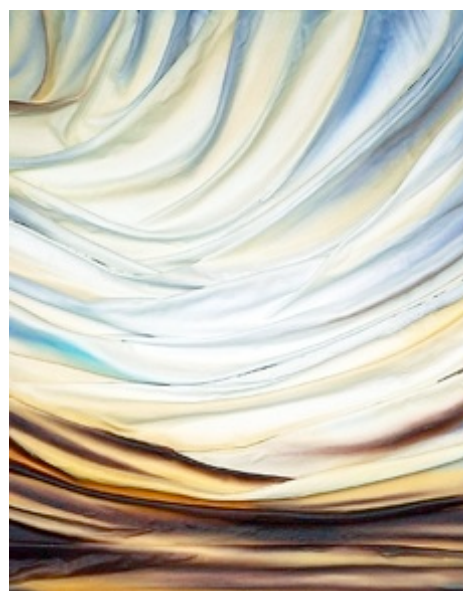
In this lesson, students will consider what is unique or interesting about their environment and what they would like to communicate to others about their environment. Students will create a final piece that is not only representational, but also evokes a mood or a feeling.



John James Audubon, *Yellow-crowned Night Heron*, 1860
Mass Audubon Art Collection

Lesson 2 Celebrating Biodiversity

In this lesson, students will practice observational drawing while also carefully studying the plants and animals that live in their community. Students will experience observational drawing as an important part of biological study and discovery.

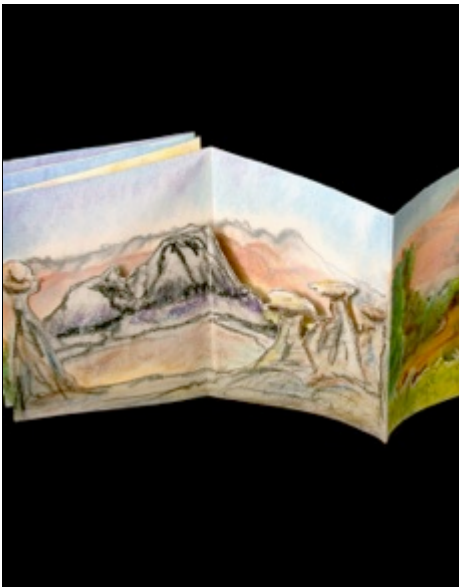


Dawn, Vivienne Edgar, 2010

Lesson 3 Inspired by Nature

In this lesson, students will spend time exploring their natural surroundings and collect objects, or artifacts that interest them. Students will use the object as inspiration for an abstract painting. The level of abstraction is left up to the judgment of the student artist.

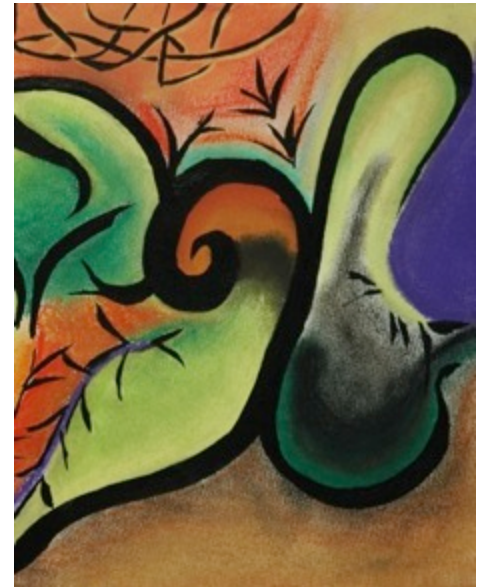
Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence



Sights of Enchantment. Santa Fe, New Mexico.
Lorraine Klinger, 2004.



Student Sample



Student Sample

Lesson 1 Explorers of the Great Unknown

Students will create an accordion-style book that will communicate both a visual representation as well as evoke an emotion about his or her environment.

Lesson 2 Celebrating Biodiversity

The end product for this lesson will be a representational color drawing or painting depicting an animal or plant found in the local environment.

Lesson 3 Inspired by Nature

Students will create an abstract drawing or painting that is inspired by a natural object or objects found in their local environment.

	Unsatisfactory	Needs Work	Proficient	Excellent
Planning	-The student did not make preliminary sketches.	-The student made only 1 sketch. -The student's sketches are lacking detail or thoroughness.	-The student made 2 thorough sketches in his or her sketchbook. -The student made notes about his or her thoughts and ideas in his or her sketchbook.	-The student's sketches contain a high level of detail. -The students produced 3 or more sketches. -The student created a statement of intent for the project.
Composition	-The student's final piece lacks consideration for composition.	-The composition of the student's final piece needs work.	-The student created a thoughtful and interesting composition.	-The composition and complexity of the piece exceeds the basic guidelines.
Mastery of Materials	-The student does not demonstrate control of the materials and does not make an additional effort to improve technique.	-The student may not demonstrate mastery of materials but makes concerted effort to improve technique.	-The student demonstrates a competency with the materials	-The student demonstrates a high level of competency with the materials.
Use of Class Time	-The student does not use class time well. -The student is easily distracted and/or distracting to others. -The student does not clean up after himself for herself at the end of each class.	-The student is somewhat productive during class but spends the majority of class time off-task.	-The student conducted his or herself responsibly during all class time including the field trip. -The student was not distracting to his or her peers. -The student remained focus and on task throughout the duration of the lesson. -The student cleaned up his or her space at the end of each class.	-The student conducted his or herself in a professional manner -The student not only cleaned up after himself or herself but also after others.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Scope and Sequence of Lessons



Castle Geyser, Upper Geyser Basin. Thomas Moran. No date.

Lesson 1

Explorers of the Great Unknown

In this lesson, students will spend an entire class period outdoors in their environment (rural, urban, suburban). They will consider what is unique or interesting about where they live and what they would like to communicate to others about their environment. The students will make sketches before creating their final piece. The final work will be both representational and evoke a mood or a feeling. They will present their final work as an accordion-style book.



Flamingo, John James Audubon

Lesson 2

Celebrating Biodiversity

Students will learn about local plants and animals through research or by visiting a nature center. The students will select a plant or animal to draw from observation and will write a reflection on what they know about the animal or plant before creating an observational study. Students will make an observational drawing or painting. Students will write a reflection on what they know or understand about the selected animal or plant after studying it further.



Avond (Evening): The Red Tree. Piet Mondrian. 1910

Lesson 3

Inspired by Nature

In this lesson, students will spend time exploring their natural surroundings and collect objects or artifacts that interest them. The students will create quick observational sketches of the collected objects, highlighting their defining characteristics, including shape, color, and distinct features. They will then begin the process of using the object as inspiration for an abstract painting. The level of abstraction is left up to the judgment of the student artist.

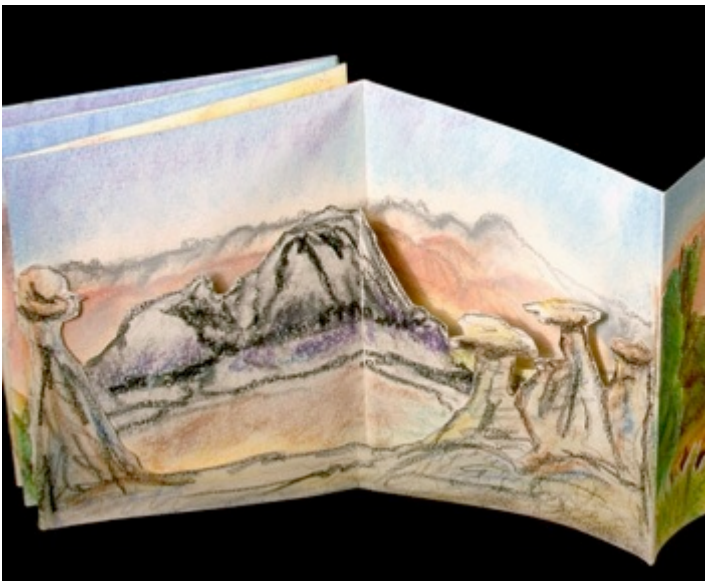
Unit Web





Looking Up the Yosemite Valley, Albert Bierstadt c. 1863-75.

Lesson 1



Sights of Enchantment. Santa Fe, New Mexico. Loraine Klinger, 2004.



Castle Geyser, Upper Geyser Basin. Thomas Moran. No date.

Explorers of the Great Unknown

Introductory Information

Title: Explorers of the Great Unknown

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Lesson Topic & Description: In this lesson, students will learn about the early explorations of the American West. They will explore their local environment and consider what is unique or interesting about where they live and what they would like to communicate to others about their environment. Students will create a final piece that is not only representational but also evokes a mood or a feeling. Their piece will be put together in an accordion book.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

B. Enduring Understandings

1. Paintings and drawings can be used to communicate an idea, thought or emotion.
2. Paintings and drawings can be tools for research or exploration.

C. Essential Questions

1. How can a painting or drawing evoke an emotion or feeling?
2. How can a painting communicate an idea or thought?
3. What can we discover about our environment or community by studying it through painting or drawing?

D. Massachusetts State Standards Addressed

1. Visual Arts Frameworks:
 - a. **6. Purposes of the Arts.** Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theater, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.
 - b. **7. Roles of Artists in Communities.** Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
 - c. **10. Interdisciplinary Connections.** Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social sciences, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.
2. Grade 6–8 Earth and Space Science Frameworks:
 - a. **1. Structure of the Earth.** Recognize, interpret, and be able to create models of the earth's common physical features in various mapping representations, including contour maps.

E. Learning Objectives

1. Students will learn about the early US Government expeditions to the West.
2. Students will observe their surrounding environment.
3. Students will consider a feeling or emotion that they would like communicate through a work of art.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

A. Performance Task or Final Product

Each student will spend time examining his or her local environment, be it rural, urban or suburban. Using their sketchbooks, the students will draw sketches of what they see. They will also make notes about what characterizes this particular environment, including feelings or emotions associated with being there.

The students will create a final painting or drawing in color on paper. The painting will then be folded, accordion style, and bound into an accordion book. The book symbolizes that it is something that can be passed from one person to another and teach another person about a place that they explored.

B. Continuum of Assessments

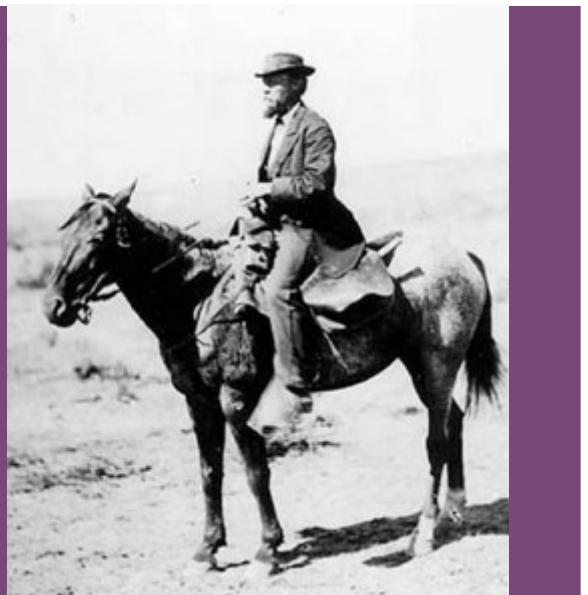
1. Students will make sketches and take notes in their sketchbooks.
2. Students will check in with teacher after creating sketches.
3. Students will check in with teacher after creating plan for composition.
4. Students will check in with teacher after creating painting.
5. Students will hand in final accordion book with sketches for assessment.

C. Criteria

1. Did the student make his or her thinking visible in his studio journal?
2. Did the student document source material for painting with sketches or photographs?
3. Did the student show different variations of the composition?
4. Was the student able to evoke a mood or feeling through the painting?



Thomas Moran, *Cloudy Day at Amagansett*, 1884, Private Collection



Photograph of F.V. Hayden, 1871, Smithsonian Institution Archives

Stage 3 – Learning Activity

A. Materials and Equipment

This materials list is by no means exhaustive. The final project can be created in and with a variety of media. The list below offers suggestions of what to use.

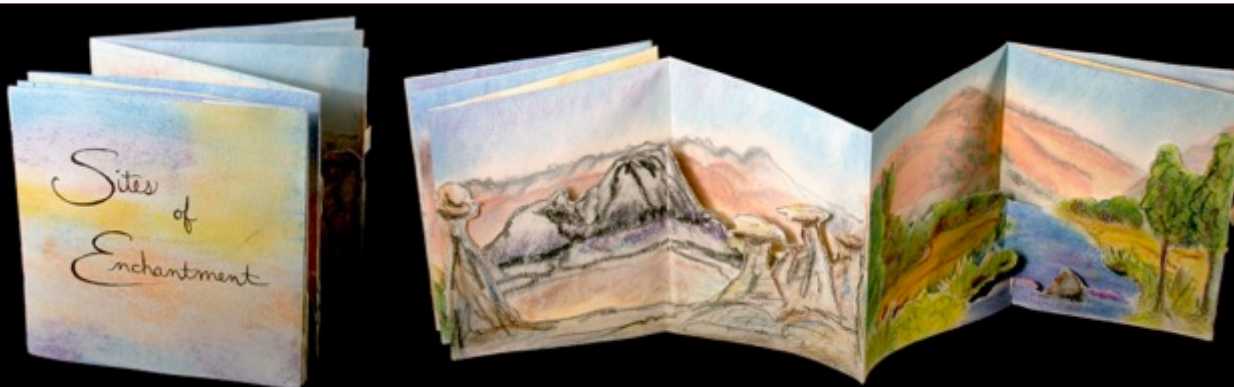
1. Studio Journal (sketch book) – 1 per student
2. Pencils – 1 per student
3. Watercolor paper – 1 approximately 18”x24” sheet per student
4. Tape and glue for book binding
5. Particle board or other board for making book covers
6. Watercolor, colored pencils or other desired material for final painting/drawing – enough for each student
7. X-Acto® knife or scissors – 1 per student
8. Cardboard or paperboard for book cover.

B. Vocabulary with Definitions

1. explore – to traverse or range over a (region, area, etc.) for the purpose of discovery.
2. evoke – to call up or produce (memories, feelings, etc.).
3. emotion – any of the feelings of joy, sorrow, fear, hate, love, etc.
4. inspiration – a thing or person that affects a feeling, emotion or idea

C. Visual Image, Text, Media and Web Resources

1. *Thomas Moran*. National Gallery of Art. <http://www.nga.gov/feature/moran/>
2. *Albert Bierstadt: the Complete Works*. <http://www.albertbierstadt.org>
3. *The United States Exploring Expedition, 1830-1842*. Smithsonian Libraries. Smithsonian Institution. <http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/usexex/learn/philbrick.htm>
4. *Maine*. Brenna Crothers. <http://brennamcrothers.weebly.com/>
5. *Santa Fe*. Loraine Klinger. www.vampandtramp.com/finepress/k/loraine-klinger.html
6. *SEEING AMERICA: Albert Bierstadt's The Sierras Near Lake Tahoe, California, 1865*. University of Rochester Magazine. <http://mag.rochester.edu/seeingAmerica/pdfs/19.pdf>



Sights of Enchantment. Santa Fe, New Mexico. Loraine Klinger, 2004.

D. Teacher Instruction

1. The teacher will introduce a lesson about US Government expeditions, and painters that were invited to join the expeditions in order to visually document the region including Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt. The teacher will ask the following questions and facilitate a discussion about art and exploration:
 - a. Why do you think painters were invited on these exploratory expeditions?
 - b. What materials do you think they brought with them?
 - c. What would be the most efficient way to work while painting outdoors?
 - d. If you were to go on an expedition today, what materials would you bring with you?
2. The teacher will lead the students on their own expedition for an entire class period. The students will bring their sketchbooks and colored pencils

D. Learning Activity

1. The students will spend time exploring and sketching outdoors.
2. The students will also be able to take photographs using digital cameras or smartphones as source material.
3. If possible, the students will continue to draw or even begin painting outdoors if time allows.
4. The students will use their sketches and photos to create a composition that both illustrates the landscape and evokes an emotion or feeling about the place. (i.e. if the environment is harsh or dangerous, the student may choose to use darker colors).
5. The students will create a composition on watercolor paper.
6. The students will then fold the final piece into an accordion, then glue or tape between two pieces of cardboard. The student may choose the size of the final composition as well as the over all book. (i.e. if the student chooses to show that the landscape is grand, he or she may create a larger composition and make a large book).
7. Differentiation/Modification of lesson: For those students who struggle with fine motor skills, they may rely on photography more heavily than drawing and painting. They may also use computer editing software for their final piece, rather than creating a painting and a bound book.



Maine Coast. Brenna Crothers. 2012



Blue Jay. John James Audubon

Lesson 2



Sample Student Work.



Spreading Orange-Crowned Hermione. Robert Sweet. 1835

Celebrating Biodiversity

Introductory Information

Title: Celebrating Biodiversity

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Lesson Topic & Description: In this lesson, students will learn about how painting and drawing have played a large role in the understanding and study of biology and ecology. The students will spend time exploring their natural surroundings, and, if possible, visit a local Audubon Center or nature center to learn more about the plants and animals that live in the local environment. As part of the Massachusetts Science Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to participate in *Biodiversity Days*. This lesson will facilitate involvement with *Biodiversity Days* for 6-8th graders.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

A. Enduring Understandings

1. Paintings and drawing can be used to communicate an idea or an emotion.
2. Paintings and drawings can be tools for research or exploration.
3. Scientists can use painting and drawing to observe and study in great detail.

B. Essential Questions

1. How can scientists use art for scientific research?
2. How can art enhance an understanding of science?

C. Massachusetts State Standards Addressed

1. Visual Arts Frameworks:

- a. **6. Purposes of the Arts.** Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theater, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.
- b. **7. Roles of Artists in Communities.** Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
- c. **10. Interdisciplinary Connections.** Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social sciences, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

2. Grade 6-8 Life Science (Biology) Frameworks:

- a. **13. Ecology.** Give examples of ways in which organisms interact and have different functions within an ecosystem that enable the ecosystem to survive.



Spreading Orange-Crowned Hermione. Robert Sweet. 1835



Flamingo, John James Audubon

D. Learning Objectives

1. Students will discuss how art and science are interrelated.
2. Students will research artist-scientists like John James Audubon, Pierre-Joseph Redouté and Robert Sweet who used their art skills to study animals and plants.
3. Students will observe their surrounding environment.
4. Students will visit a local nature center like Mass Audubon.
5. Students will practice observational drawing.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

A. Performance Task or Final Product

Each student will pick an animal or plant (depending on resources) to study through scientific drawing. If possible, the students will be able to draw taxidermy animals from observation for this lesson. The student should examine the animal or plant from many different directions and make at least one preliminary sketch. The final product should be a full color drawing or painting (colored pencil, watercolor, watercolor pencil, gouache), that also includes one element that indicates the environment, in which this animal or plant is found.

B. Continuum of Assessments

1. Students will make notes about what they know or understand about the plant or animal before studying it.
2. Students will make sketches and take notes in their sketchbooks.
3. Students will check in with teacher after creating sketches.
4. Students will check in with teacher after creating preliminary plan for composition.
5. Students will check in with teacher after creating painting.
6. Students will write an artists statement that describes what they have learned about the plant or animal after studying it.
7. Students will hand in final drawing as well as preliminary notes, sketches and Artist statement.



Sample Student Work



Sample Student Work

C. Criteria

1. Did the students make their thinking visible in his studio journal? Did the student document source material for painting with sketches or photographs?
2. Did the student show different variations of the composition?
3. Did the student incorporate something about the animal or plant's environment in the final composition?
4. Did the student create an Artist Statement?

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

A. Materials and Equipment

This materials list is by no means exhaustive. The final project can be created in and with a variety of media. The list below offers suggestions of what to use.

1. Studio Journal (sketch book) – 1 per student
2. Pencils – 1 per student
3. Watercolor paper – 1 approximately 18"x24" sheet per student
4. Watercolor, gouache, watercolor pencils, colored pencils or other desired material for final painting/drawing – enough for each student
5. Taxidermy animals
6. Potted plants
7. Digital camera or smartphone for taking pictures

B. Vocabulary with Definitions

1. explore – to traverse or range over a (region, area, etc.) for the purpose of discovery.
2. taxidermy – the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals with lifelike effect.



Peonies. Pierre-Joseph Redouté. C. 1820



John James Audubon, *Yellow-crowned Night Heron*, 1860
Mass Audubon Art Collection

C. Visual Image, Text, Media and Web Resources

1. *Artists in Mass Audubon's Art Collection*. Mass Audubon. http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/MABA/artists_gallery.php
2. Biodiversity Heritage Library. <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/>
3. *Biodiversity Days*. Massachusetts Association for Conservation Commissions. <http://www.macweb.org>
4. University of Delaware Library <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/hort/botany.htm>
5. Antique Prints. <http://www.panteek.com>

D. Teacher Instruction

1. The students will visit their local nature center (like Mass Audubon) to learn about animals and/or plants that live in their local environment. (curriculum provided by nature center or science teacher).
2. The teacher will show the students examples of work by John James Audubon and other artists like Larry Barth, Mark Catesby, Robert Sweet, and others.
3. The teacher will ask the students what they notice about the different artists' styles and techniques.
4. The teacher will introduce observational drawing with pencil.
5. The teacher will discuss the importance of paying attention to detail, and including detail in the painting
6. The teacher will ask the students to consider the different parts of the plant or animal while creating the observational paintings.
7. The teacher will introduce using watercolor pencils as well as watercolor.
8. Students can select either medium to use for their final painting.



Water Thrush. Larry Barth.
Mass Audubon Art Collection

E. Learning Activity

8. Students will select a plant or animal to draw from observation (taxidermy animal, transplanted plant, or, if necessary a photograph). The students will either draw on-site, or the Audubon Society will loan taxidermy animals to the art teacher for the duration of the lesson.
9. In their sketchbooks, students will write a reflection on what they know/understand about the selected animal or plant before creating an observational study.
10. Students will make 2-3 sketches of their chosen subject in their sketchbooks using pencil or colored pencil.
11. Students will decide on a composition for their final study. They will use what they learned about their particular animal or plant from their time at the nature center and include at least 1 element in their final design.
12. Students will use pencil, colored pencil, watercolor pencil or watercolor or gouache to complete their final work. This decision can be left up to the discretion of teacher or of the student.
13. After completion of the painting or colored drawing, the students will write an Artists Statement, outlining what they discovered about the plant or animal after spending time studying it. This artist statement, as well as the first reflection, will be part of the final assessment.
14. Differentiation/Modification of Lesson: For those students who struggle with fine motor skills, they may rely on photography more heavily than drawing and painting. They may also use computer-editing software for their final piece, rather than creating a painting or drawing. Students may also pick out patterns or colors that they see in the animal or plant they are drawing, rather than trying to draw the entire animal or plant.

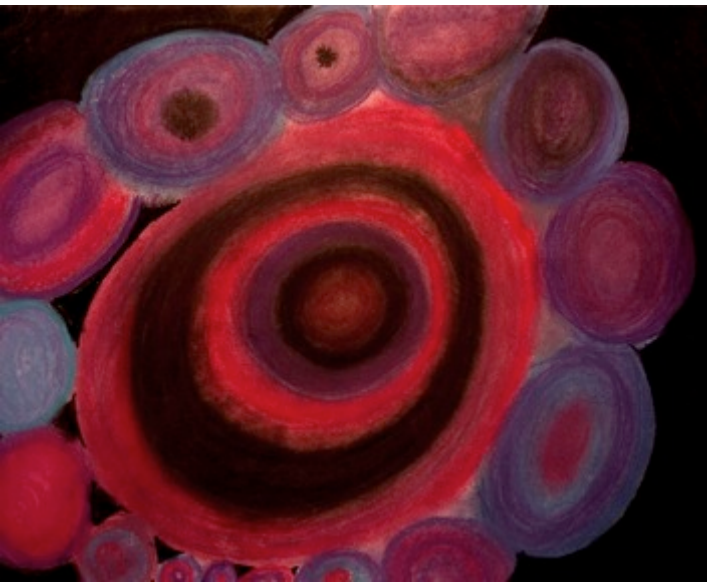


Pigeon. Mark Catesby. 1749



Dawn, Vivienne Edgar, 2010

Lesson 3



Sample Student Work



Lilies, Claude Monet. C. 1906

Inspired by Nature

Introductory Information

Title: Inspired by Nature

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Lesson Topic & Description: In this lesson, students will spend time exploring their natural surroundings and collect objects or artifacts that interest them. The students will create quick observational sketches of the collected objects, highlighting their defining characteristics, including shape, color, and distinct features. They will then begin the process of using the object as inspiration for an abstract painting. The level of abstraction, as well as the scale is left up to the judgment of the student artist.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

A. Enduring Understandings

1. Artists find inspiration for abstract art from many sources, including nature.
2. Successful abstract art is not random, and requires much thought and planning before creating a final piece.

B. Essential Questions

1. How can artists use nature as inspiration for abstract art?
2. What can we use in our environment as inspiration for abstract art?

C. Massachusetts State Standards Addressed

1. Visual Arts Frameworks:

2. Elements and Principles of Design. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the elements and principles of design..

3. Observation, Abstraction, Invention, and Expression. Students will demonstrate their powers of observation, abstraction, invention, and expression in a variety of media, materials, and techniques.

8. Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change. Students will demonstrate their understanding of styles, stylistic influence, and stylistic change by identifying when and where art works were created, and by analyzing characteristic features of art works from various historical periods, cultures, and genres.

10. Interdisciplinary Connections. Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social sciences, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

Grade 6-8 Life Science (Biology) Frameworks:

13. Ecology. Give examples of ways in which organisms interact and have different functions within an ecosystem that enable the ecosystem to survive.



D. Learning Objectives:

1. Students will discuss how art and nature are interrelated.
2. Students will research artists like Piet Mondrian and Claude Monet who use nature as inspiration for their work.
3. Students will explore their surrounding environment.
4. Students will collect natural objects to use as inspiration for an artwork.
5. Students will practice abstraction.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

A. Performance Task or Final Product

Students will create an abstract drawing or painting that is inspired by a natural object or objects found in their local environment. Before completing the final product, the students will make preliminary sketches in their journals, highlighting key characteristics of their object(s) including color and shape. The sketches will be used as inspiration for the final abstract drawing or painting.

B. Continuum of Assessments

- a. Students will make notes about what they know or understand about the plant or animal before studying it.
- b. Students will make sketches and take notes in their sketchbooks.
- c. Students will check in with teacher after creating sketches.
- d. Students will check in with teacher after creating preliminary plan for composition.
- e. Students will hand in final work as well as preliminary notes, sketches and Artist Statement.

C. Criteria

- a. Did the student make his or her thinking visible in his studio journal?
- b. Did the student document source material for painting with sketches or photographs?
- c. Did the student show different variations of the composition?
- d. Is the composition of the final piece interesting and dynamic?
- e. Did the student create an Artist Statement?



Further abstraction of trees. Piet Mondrian.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

A. Materials and Equipment

This materials list is by no means exhaustive. The final project can be created in and with a variety of media. The list below offers suggestions of what to use.

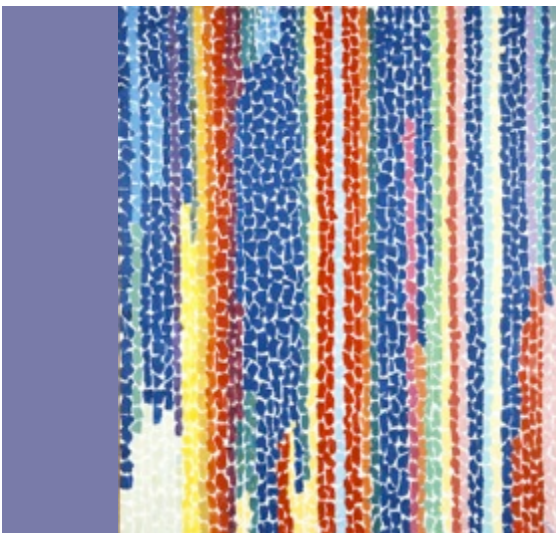
1. Studio Journal (sketch book) – 1 per student
2. Pencils – 1 per student
3. Large drawing paper or watercolor paper – 1 approximately 18"x24" sheet per student, or other material desired for final piece.
4. Watercolor, gouache, watercolor pencils, colored pencils, acrylic paint, oil pastel, chalk pastel or other desired material for final painting/drawing – enough for each student.
5. Paintbrushes – 2-3 in a variety of sizes if using paint
6. Digital camera or smartphone for taking pictures
7. Natural objects collected from outdoors – pinecones, twigs, sticks, leaves, berries, wild grass, flowers etc.

B. Vocabulary with Definitions

1. abstract – (adj) thought of apart from concrete realities, specific objects, or actual instances
2. abstract – (v) to divert or draw away the attention of. To consider as a general quality or characteristic apart from specific objects or instances.
3. inspiration – a thing or person that affects a feeling, emotion or idea

C. Visual Image, Text, Media and Web Resources

1. Museum of Modern Art. <http://www.moma.org>
2. Artcyclopedia. <http://www.artcyclopedia.com>
3. *Piet Mondrian*. Surreal Art. <http://www.surrealart.blogspot.com>
4. *Alma Thomas*. Smithsonian American Art Museum. <http://americanart.si.edu/>



Iris, Tulips, Jonquils and Crocuses Alma Thomas. 1969



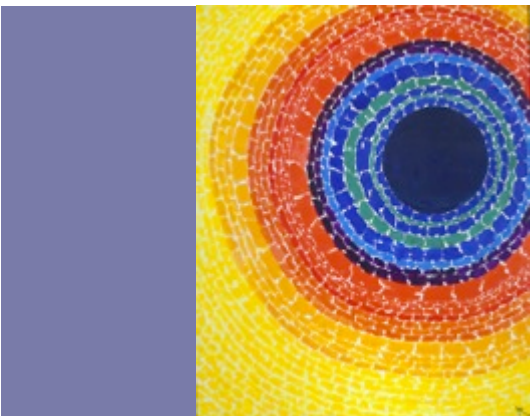
Lillies. Claude Monet. C. 1906

D. Teacher Instruction

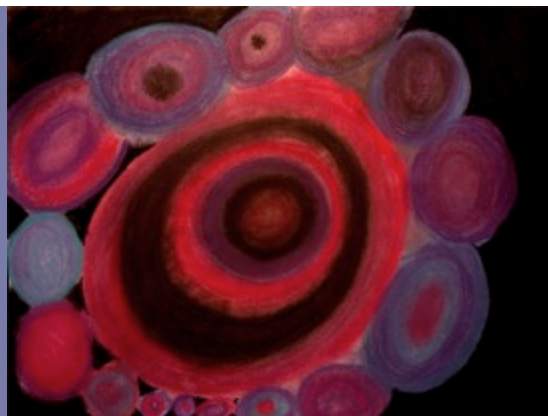
1. The teacher will introduce the idea of abstract art and what it means to abstract something.
2. The teacher will introduce different artists that use nature as inspiration for their abstract artwork.
3. The teacher will show the students the example of Piet Mondrian's multi-stage process of abstracting a tree, over time, into rectangles and lines.
4. The teacher will tell the students that they also will be engaging in a similar project to what Mondrian did with his work.
5. The teacher will lead the students on a field trip outside of their school.
6. The teacher will ask students to take pictures of and/or collect objects like leaves, sticks, twigs, flowers, berries, pinecones, etc., that they find in their local environment.
7. The teacher will ask the students to do 2-3 observational sketches of the object(s) collected, focusing on the shape and color of the object.
8. The teacher will then ask the students to create an abstract design based on the shapes and colors that they found in their objects.

E. Learning Activity

1. The students will take pictures of and/or collect objects like leaves, sticks, twigs, flowers, berries, pinecones, etc., that they find in their local environment.
2. The students will make 2-3 observational sketches of the object(s) collected, focusing on the shape and color of the object.
3. The students will begin to plan their final composition in their sketchbooks.
4. The students will then begin to work on their final piece, which should be at least 18-24" in size.
5. The students will create an Artist's Statement, which explains what inspired them to make their abstract painting.
6. Differentiation/Modification of lesson: For those students who struggle with fine motor skills, they may rely on photography more heavily than drawing and painting. They may also use computer-editing software for their final piece, rather than creating a painting or drawing.



Eclipse. Alma Thomas. 1970



Sample Student Work