

Nature Abstractions

Aim/Goal

The aim of the “Nature Abstractions” project is to build students’ technique in watercolor painting, introduce students to the color wheel and color schemes in an artwork, and expand students’ knowledge of representational vs. abstract art. Students will discuss the meaning of abstraction and apply their knowledge of watercolors and abstract art in order to create a work of art that abstracts a form from nature.

Fine Arts Goals

- 25A.1: Identify the aesthetic criteria for evaluating an art work (e.g., value, purpose, context, creativity/uniqueness).
- 25A.3: Demonstrate an understanding of contour and cross contour lines.
- 25A.5: Construct a color wheel which consists of primary, secondary, and intermediate colors.
- 25A.8: Describe the moods depicted in a variety of art works with the same subjects.
- 26A.1: Create unique specific effects using a combination of media, tools, and processes
- 26A.2: Analyze how the selection of media or tools can enhance the communication of an idea.
- 26A.3: Demonstrate processes that create special effects.
- 26A.4: Evaluate the significance of special effects in 2D art work.

Materials

The following materials will be used in demonstration and final project:

- “Color Wheel” Powerpoint
- “Nature Abstraction” Powerpoint
- Students’ sketchbooks
- Practice Watercolor Paper
- 12”x18” Watercolor Paper
- Watercolor Sets
- Watercolor crayons
- Elmer's Glue/Glue Bowls
- Q-Tips
- Pencils/Erasers
- Brushes
- Paint Palettes w/ lids
- Water cups
- Paper towels
- Rulers

Objectives

- Students will view a demonstration on various watercolor techniques. After learning about the different ways to use the medium, students will discover/practice the watercolors on a separate sheet of watercolor paper.
- Students will learn about the colors and color schemes of the color wheel. Students will create their own example of the color wheel using watercolor crayons.
- Students will view a powerpoint presentation on abstraction and nature. After learning about various abstract artists and the meaning of nature, students will combine both concepts into beginning their sketches for the final project.
- Students will lightly draw the contour lines of their abstract image onto the watercolor paper. Using elmer's glue, students will cover their lines to create a watercolor resist.
- Students will watercolor their abstract image onto the glue resist. Students will discover the significance of using the resist to create an interesting effect in their artwork.
- Student's will be required to watercolor at least (1) color combination (complementary, analogous, monochromatic) on their final project.

Artists/Artworks Studied

- *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket*. James McNeil Whistler. 1874.
- *Skull and Pitcher*. Pablo Picasso. 1945.
- *Lavender Mist: Number 1*. Jackson Pollock. 1950.
- Andy Goldsworthy.
 - *Dandelions*.
 - *Portrait image*.
- Georgia O'Keefe
 - *Poppy*. 1927.
 - *Yellow Hickory leaves with daisy*.
 - *Iris*. 1927.
 - *An Orchid*.
- *ohne Titel*. Franz Plahs. 2010.
- *Reflection of the sky in pond - water abstract*
- *The Last Moments*. Journey of Light Photography. 2009.
- *Ice Blue*. Journey of Light Photography. 2009.
- *Abstract Nature Patters from Waterton-Glacier Peace Park*. John Dempsey.
- various stock photo images.

Vocabulary

- Color Wheel: A circle with different colored sectors used to show the relationship between colors
- Color Theory: A basic set of rules that guide color mixing and help explain the visual impacts of color and combinations
- Primary Colors: The three main colors (yellow, red, and blue) from which all other colors are mixed from
- Secondary Colors: Orange, Violet, and Green - formed by mixing two primary colors together

- **Tertiary Colors:** Created when you mix one primary color with one secondary color
- **Nature:** the elements of the natural world, as mountains, trees, animals, or rivers
- **Abstraction:** the act of considering something as a general quality or characteristic, apart from concrete realities, specific objects, or actual instances
- **Close-Up:** to zoom in
- **Watercolor:** Pigments in a gum solution; applied by adding water with a brush
- **Wet-in-Wet:** The action of adding wet watercolor into a another wet color
- **Wash:** A thin application of a watercolor
- **Dry Brush:** A technique in watercolor used when adding color using a dry brush
- **Value:** The lightness or darkness of a surface
- **Contour Line:** The line that defines the edge of a form

Procedures

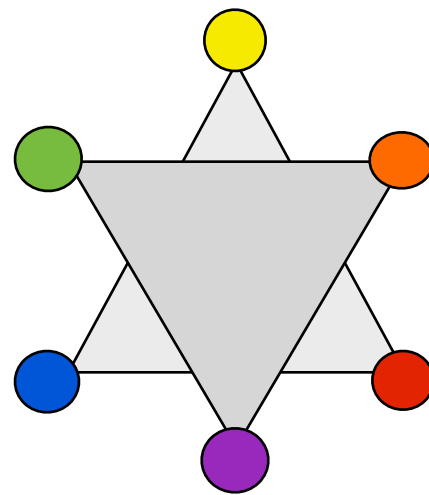
Day One: Watercolor Intro

- Introduce students to the medium of watercolors.
 - *It's a very cool way to create artwork, because the medium is very free and you can achieve a ton of cool effects with it.*
 - *Now they are called "watercolors" because in order to use them, we have to add a good amount of water to turn it into what we paint with.*
 - *Really the only way to learn about watercolors is to watch how to use them and practice for yourself!*
- Have students gather around the middle of the classroom and demonstrate different ways to use watercolors; *Remember to keep your hands to yourself so everyone can have a chance to view the demonstration.*
 - Wet-in-wet
 - Graded Wash/Wash
 - Overlapping colors
 - White Crayon - *This type of resist we will be using with glue in our final project!*
 - Using Salt
 - Dry Brush
- After the demonstration, have students use the remainder of time to practice using the watercolors.
- Students should start by trying out the techniques demonstrated to them, then follow up and discover the medium through their own exploration.



Day Two: Color Wheel Intro

- Gain students attention to begin class. Start by asking questions to lead into color wheel presentation; *How do you think we, as artists, know how to use colors? How many of you have seen a color wheel before? Do you know what a color wheel is?*
- Begin powerpoint presentation on the color wheel/color theory;
 - Slide 1: *What does color theory mean?* - Color theory is a basic set of rules that guide color mixing and help explain the visual impact of color.
 - Slide 2: *The color wheel is a planned organization of colors in that circle, that help us learn about color mixing and combinations. When you mix red with yellow you get what color? Orange right? Do you notice how orange is in between red and yellow on the color wheel?*
 - Slide 3: *Primary Colors. The primary colors, red, blue, and yellow. These three colors are what you begin to mix to achieve all of the other colors!*
 - Slide 4: *Secondary Colors. If you mix two of the primary colors together, you form a secondary color. I always remember this, because two colors, second like two is secondary. These colors are violet, green, and orange.*
 - Slide 5: *Tertiary Colors. These colors are also sometimes called Intermediate Colors. You create these when you mix one primary color with one secondary color. Also when you name them, you always start with the primary color, like red-orange.*
 - Slide 6: *Color theory is a way of helping us know how to read our color wheel.*
 - Slide 7: *Complementary Colors. These colors are directly across from each other on the color wheel. You'll usually see these color combinations for sports teams, because they have a strong contrast and stick out.*
 - Slide 8: *Analogous Colors. This refers to colors that are located right next to each other on the color wheel. So they are very similar.*
 - Slide 9: *Monochromatic Colors. These colors are made up of the tints and shades of the same color.*
- Following the powerpoint presentation/discussion students will begin creating their own color wheel.
- Student tables will be instructed to go retrieve the watercolor paper and rulers from the supply table and wait at their seat to begin working.
- Students will observe how to begin their color wheel up at the board.
- *Now, when I create my color wheel, I like to measure out where my colors will be placed so I can get them in the right spot. I like to start first creating a triangle, each point on this triangle will show where my primary colors will go. So yellow at the top, red on the right, and blue on the left.*
- *Next, I like to draw in an upside down triangle, to show where my secondary colors go. So orange in between red and yellow, violet in between red and blue, and finally green in between blue and yellow.*
- *Lastly, we need to create the tertiary colors. These I mix together by layering the different colored watercolor crayons on each other in between the primary and secondary color. Followed up by adding water to all of my colors in order to turn the crayon into watercolor! Then we it's completely dry, we're all done!*



Day Three: Color Wheel Work Day

- Begin class by reviewing the color wheel; *What are the primary colors? Secondary colors? How about an example of a tertiary color?*
- *Today in class, like I said yesterday, we are going to complete the color wheels we started by adding the colors using the watercolor crayons. I kept the color wheel diagram up on the board so if you have any questions of where to place your colors you can refer to that.*



- Tips to completing the color wheel;
 - Take your time.
 - Be careful when mixing the colors.
 - Watch the water at your table!
- Students will spend the remainder of the class period completing their color wheels.
- Work will be stored on the drying rack.
- *Now tomorrow, come prepared for an awesome powerpoint! I'm going to introduce our new project, which is really awesome so be excited!*

Day Four: "Nature Abstraction" Powerpoint

- Show students the final project example. *Pretty neat huh? Well this powerpoint is going to help us think of some great ideas for ourselves to use our watercolors to create our very own images like this one.*
- Nature Abstraction Powerpoint.
 - **Abstraction** Definition: The act of considering something as a general quality or characteristic, apart from reality, specific objects or actual representations.
 - *What is your definition of abstraction?*
 - Lead students into discussion about the abstract art works; *Why is this abstract? Can you tell what those abstract shapes are representing?*
 - **Nature**: Simply put, the word nature refers to anything related to the natural world around us.
 - *What does nature mean to you?*
 - *What are some examples of nature you can think of?*
 - **Andy Goldsworthy**: A British sculptor, photographer, and environmentalist. He works outdoors and takes different objects from nature and morphs them into his sculptures.
 - **Georgia O'Keefe**: An American artist, O'Keefe is well known for her paintings of flowers, rocks, shells, etc. that combine both abstraction and representation.
 - Continue showing students examples of different abstractions found in nature.
 - *Look at how the lines or textures, when viewed close up, can abstract our view. But with our color choices you can still figure out what is represented in the image.*

- Following the powerpoint presentation/discussion, students will use their sketchbooks to plan out their designs for their nature abstraction.
- Discuss how students need to pay attention to the line drawing of their design. *Now all of the lines you create will end up white, this is because we will be putting glue over them to create a resist in the watercolors like we did with the white crayon the other day.*

Day Five:

- Review previous powerpoint; *What did learn last week the mean of abstraction was again? What are some objects that we find in nature? Does anyone want to share their idea for their project with the class?*
- *Today, our goal is for everyone to have their line drawings onto the final watercolor paper. So after you finish your design sketch, call me over, and we'll talk about it then you'll be able to begin.*
- Students will finish their sketches/planning in their sketchbooks. When students feel they are ready to begin they will discuss their design with the teacher. Once they have their design approved, students may begin drawing their final line drawings.
 - *Remember to draw lightly because we don't want our pencil lines to show through our watercolors!*
- Students who finish with their line drawings may begin adding their glue to their final projects.
- Projects with glue will be stored on the drying rack.

Day Six:

- Begin class by discussing why the glue resists watercolors.
 - *Why do you think the watercolors won't create color where we put the glue?*
 - Show students how to use the q-tips to apply the elmer's glue when they are done drawing their final line drawing.
- Students who have not completed their line drawings, should finish at the beginning of the class period.
- *Class, while applying our glue, we need to work slowly and carefully. We want to make sure we cover all of our lines and also that we put enough glue on there for a good resist to the watercolors.*
- Students who finish with the glue should practice their color combinations for their final in their sketchbook. Remind students of the different color theories we discussed with the color wheel.
- *Great job today class! Tomorrow all of our glue should be dry and we can begin watercoloring the final project. Remember to think of your color choices and how it will convey your abstract design/object.*



Day Seven/Eight/Nine:

- *Great guys, we are at the final step of our final project. This is the fun part now, where we really get to add life to our abstraction through our color choices!*
- *In the color wheel, what were the color combinations we discussed? (Complementary, Analogous, Monochromatic)*
- *While you are watercoloring your abstraction image, you have to include one of those color schemes in your colors.*
- During the last few days of the project, students will be adding their watercolors onto their final product.
- Students who finish early, will be prompted to keep exploring their watercolors.
- *(Informal Critique) If entire class completes their project with enough time, have students walk around the classroom together and view their classmates work.

Closure

- *How is abstract art different from a picture of a person?*
- *What type of art do you think you enjoy doing better, real or abstract? It's fun to do both!*
- If time, have students walk around the classroom and view the other works in the class.

Student Work



Lilly Pads. Tyler. 2011.



Coconuts. Jacob. 2011.



Grass. Cole. 2011.



Sea Shell. Mallory. 2011.



Strawberry. Matthew. 2011.



Flower. Kelly. 2011.