

# DEPICTING THE ABSTRACT

Mysterious Abstract Landscapes with Whimsical Trees

ART AND MATH

GRADES: 11-12

## BASED ON



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1795-1875), French  
*The Dreamer (Le Songeur)*, 1854  
Cliché-verre  
Gift of Herbert Greer French, 1940.563



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Dutch  
*Undergrowth with Two Figures*, 1890  
Oil on Canvas  
Bequest of Mary E. Johnston, 1967.1430, F 773

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about Post-Impressionism and participate in discussion describing each artwork in the PPT—VTS.
- Students will reflect on their own life and brainstorm ways to illustrate one important event in their life, as an illustrated landscape with whimsical trees—must have a mysterious quality.
- Students will create an original work of art drawing or painting—referencing a moment in their life.

## CONCEPT

Students will brainstorm what their dreams, hopes and aspirations in life will be and what they will look like using the dare to dream handout. Students will use color, to guide their drawing and thought process as we discuss the color meanings and how they can influence how the viewer interprets their artwork. After completing the handout students will sketch out various ideas they want to convey while also including a few different trees that could be used to tell their story. Students must be sure to illustrate their story clearly without completely explaining it, leaving some interpretation up to the viewer—giving it a mysterious quality. I will be continuously referencing both Corot's and Van Gogh's works above, as they work reminding them of our discussion and how each one of them interpreted it differently. The ultimate goal is for each student to choose a medium and illustrate a moment in their life figuratively and expressively (abstract).

## MATERIALS

9"x12" Watercolor or Mixed Media Paper  
Acrylic Paint—primary colors, black and white  
Brushes  
Charcoal  
Pencil  
Kneaded Eraser  
Workable Fixatif-- spray

## VOCABULARY

- **Post-Impressionism**— The work or style of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century to early 20<sup>th</sup>- century artists: Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin and Paul Cezanne. They reacted against the naturalism of the impressionists to explore color, line, and form, and the emotional response of the artist, a concern that led to the development of expressionism.
- **Whimsicality** – the trait of acting unpredictably.
- **Cliché verre**— combination of painting or drawing with photography—Corot’s specialty.
  - **Method:**
    - Etching, painting of drawing on a transparent surface (glass), then printing on a light sensitive surface

## PROCEDURE

1. PowerPoint on Abstract Landscapes
  - a. Discussion on *Undergrowth with Two Figures* and *The Dreamer*.
    - i. VTS
      1. What is going on in the picture?
      2. What do you see that makes you say that?
      3. What more can we find?
      4. \*Note: we also discussed Camille Pissarro’s landscape—listed in resource section
    - ii. As students were answering each question, I was paraphrasing each response to help the next student responder.
  - b. Discussion on Whimsicality—unpredictability of the trees
    - i. All different
    - ii. Angles—how the trees directed our focus
    - iii. Discussion on Elements of Art- line, value, texture, shape and color
    - iv. Use the trees to tell a story—guide the viewer’s eye to the center of interest (emphasis)
2. Students will complete a detailed sketch to develop which moment or event in their life they want to illustrate.
3. Students will be working on 9”x12” Charcoal or Multi-Media paper, depending on their choice of media
  - a. 10 art production work days
4. Art Critique—using critique cards and VTS.

## ASSESSMENT

Rubric is attached.

Self-Evaluation is attached.

Effort—25 points

Creativity/Mysteriousness—25 points

Drawing/Design—25 points

Craftsmanship—25 points

Self-Evaluation—25 points

## NATIONAL STANDARDS

### National Visual Arts Standards:

HS Accomplished—VA:Cr2.1.IIa

Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

HS Accomplished—VA:Cr3.1.IIa

Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, reengage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

### National Common Core State Standards for Mathematics:

## HS Geometry

Apply geometric concepts in modeling situations

1. Use geometric shapes, their measures, and their properties to describe objects (e.g., modeling a tree trunk or a human torso as a cylinder).

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

While discussing each work of art in the PowerPoint in art terms, there was also a discussion about the angles and use of line and shape with the trees to guide the viewer through the works of art. The angles of the trees were used purposefully to convey a message or tell a story.

## RESOURCES

Dare to Dream brainstorming HO

### Images of:

*Undergrowth with Two Figures*-Vincent van Gogh

*The Dreamer*- Jean Baptiste-Camille Corot

*Wooded Landscape at Hermitage, Pontoise*- Camille Pissarro

Slides below from my PPT:

### Wooded Landscape at the Hermitage, Pontoise



Camille Pissarro, 1879, soft ground, aquatint, dry point and scraping

### Your project:

- Create an original whimsical landscape that illustrates an aspect of your life— past, present or future.
- Requirements:
  - Whimsical trees
  - Minimal people
  - Focus is on the landscape!



### NOTE:

To find images of Whimsical Trees—use Clip Art or Google.



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890)  
*Undergrowth with Two Figures*, June 1890  
Oil on canvas  
Bequest of Mary E. Johnston, 1967.1430, F 773



Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1795-1875)

*The Dreamer (Le Songeur)*, 1854

Cliché-verre

Gift of Herbert Greer French, 1940.563