

ANIMAL STORIES IN ABSTRACTED ENVIRONMENTS

ART AND LANGUAGE ARTS

GRADES: 4-6

BASED ON

Arthur Dove (1880-1946), United States

Sowing Wheat, 1934

Gift of Theodore P. Shen and Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Fanny Bryce

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OBJECTIVES

- Students will observe abstract landscapes, particularly *Sowing Wheat*, its' abstract use of foreground and background and discuss the abstracted forms and what they convey.
- Students will review several animal fables, defining 'fable' and the plot, characters and setting.
- Students will practice creating tints and shades in watercolors, as well as wet on wet and dry brush watercolor techniques.
- Students will paint a foreground and background landscape environment, in an abstracted form.
- Students will draw an animal and use watercolors to create the details.
- Students will cut and glue the animal into the abstract environment.
- Students will write their own short fable to accompany their paintings.

CONCEPT

Students have had limited experience with watercolor techniques. Abstract landscapes are an ideal exploration of this media. With this unit, students have the opportunity to combine abstraction with realism. As the culmination to the art experience, the students write a short fable with their animal in the lead role. The artwork and the fable are exhibited together.

VOCABULARY

Observation
Realistic
Foreground
Middle Ground
Background

Depth
Landscape
Abstract
Fable
Plot, Characters, Setting

MATERIALS/PROCEDURE

- Image of *Sowing Wheat* painting
- Arthur Dove painting images and reference books
- White 9" x12" drawing paper (animals)
- Pencils/Erasers
- Brushes
- Watercolors
- Water containers
- Paper towels
- 12"x18" watercolor paper (for abstract landscapes)
- Animal reference books and magazine photos of animals
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Teacher made example
- Sharpie markers
- Several fable books

1. Introduce abstract landscape painting with the *Sowing Wheat* image. Define ABSTRACT. Discuss the foreground and the background. Review other paintings of abstract landscapes.
2. Talk about the possible story that could be told with the painting. Read aloud two short fables. Define 'fable' and identify the characters, plot and setting.
3. Students are introduced to the project, creating a realistic watercolor animal within an abstracted environment. Practice watercolor techniques: tints and shades of a single color, wet on wet and dry brush techniques.
4. Identify the chosen animal. Watercolor the abstract landscape with a foreground and background.
5. Draw the animal, using their observation skills, making the ANIMAL LARGE (touching at least 3 sides of the 9x12 paper).
6. Watercolor the animal using a dry brush technique. Add sharpie marker outlines. Cut and glue the animal to the landscape.
7. Brainstorm and draft a short fable to accompany the artwork. Exhibit the painting and the story together.

ASSESSMENT

Individual artwork evaluations will examine the following criteria:

MEETING THE GOALS OF ASSIGNMENT: abstract watercolor landscape with foreground and background, realistic (observed) animal is rendered large (touches 3 sides of the paper) and form added with dry brush watercolors

SUCCESSFUL CRAFTSMANSHIP: Animals carefully drawn, thought was given to the watercolor environment, skill is demonstrated in the care and use of materials, cutting and gluing was accurate and neat,

OVERALL EFFORT, AND CREATIVITY/VISUAL IMPACT. Story criteria will include: written as an animal fable, plot, characters and setting within the story, original/creative idea, and fundamental writing and spelling mechanics utilized.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

VISUAL ART

Standard 1: Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts.
Standard 3: Knows a range of subject matter, symbols and potential ideas in the visual arts.

LANGUAGE ART

Standard 1: Uses the skills and general strategies of the writing process.
Standard 8: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.
Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

RESOURCES

Books:

Arthur Dove: A Retrospective, Debra Bricker Balken
Arthur Dove Watercolors and Pastels, Melanie Kirschner
Arthur Dove, Barbara Haskell
Arthur Dove, Ann Lee Morgan
Arthur Dove and Duncan Phillips: Artist and Patron, Sasha Newman
Aesop's Fables, Brad Sneed
Bird of a Feather, Tom Paxton
What's the Hurry, Fox?, Joyce Carol Thomas
When Jaguars Ate the Moon, Maria Cristina Brusca