

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: EXPRESSING MOOD IN ART

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| ESSENTIAL QUESTION | How do artists create portraits that capture a mood? |
| GRADES | 3–6 |
| TIME | One class period |
| ART CONCEPTS | Mood, color, foreground, background, composition, portraiture, wax resist |
| MATERIALS | Pencils, oil pastel, watercolors, brushes, watercolor paper, cups, paper towels |
| TALKING ABOUT ART | <p>German artists of the Weimar Republic favored portraiture. Their portraits tend to be unsentimental and un-idealized, though their depictions frequently departed from what their subjects looked like in real life. Instead they used portraiture to say something about their subject and communicate a mood.</p> <p>Analyze Georg Schrimpf's <i>Child Portrait</i> as compared to Mary Cassatt's <i>Mother About to Wash Her Sleepy Child</i>. What do you see? What questions do you have about these paintings?</p> <p>Compare the overall feeling or mood of each artwork.</p> <p>Discuss differences in color, brush strokes (soft in the Cassatt vs. hard brushstrokes in the Schrimpf), expressions, setting, and composition. The two paintings have very similar arrangements, but each evokes a very different feeling. What do you see that might contribute to these feelings?</p> <p>Discuss different dark and light moods that can be expressed by a work of art. Ask students to demonstrate a sad face, a frustrated face, an anxious face.</p> <p>Make a list on the board. Describe how these moods can be communicated in art through colors, setting, style, and composition.</p> |
| MAKING ART | <p>Create a “moody” portrait using watercolor and wax resist.</p> <p>Write a dark or a light mood (for instance, sad, cold, lonely, or anxious, or happy, warm, or relaxed) on the back of your paper and then choose a partner. Ask your partner what mood they chose, and then, keeping that mood in mind, quickly draw him or her in light-colored oil pastel on his or her paper. Then have your partner do the same for you.</p> <p>Exaggerate the mood by exaggerating the drawing. Press hard with your oil pastel to make the face feel more stressed or anxious, or make soft, wispy lines for a more relaxed portrait.</p> <p>Remember, this is not a realistic drawing. Use simple lines and large shapes. No filling in details! Make sure the portrait fills the page from top to bottom.</p> |

Decide what your background will be and how it will help create a mood in your drawing: bedroom, forest, city street? Outline the background in oil pastel.

When you're finished with your drawing, you can begin filling it in with watercolors. Start by painting the background and then fill in the face. Use darker colors for a dark mood, or brighter colors for a happier mood. Use less water for darker colors or more water for lighter colors.

REFLECTION

Share your art and have other students guess the mood depicted. What feeling do they get from your artwork?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING

3–6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners.

6.4 Present claims and findings, using pertinent descriptions and details.

CCSS.READING STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE

6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text (artwork) and how it is conveyed through particular details.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: CHANGING LANDSCAPES

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| ESSENTIAL CONCEPT | Our environment reveals the social forces that have shaped our progress. Photographs from the past and present can reveal much about our future. |
| GRADES | 4–8 |
| TIME | One to two class periods |
| ART CONCEPTS | Composition, design, shapes, geometry, line |
| MATERIALS | Landscape photographs |
| TALKING ABOUT ART | <p>Although the camera had recorded natural landscapes in the past, in the early 1900's, photographers now captured the transition from farmlands to urbanization. Renger-Patzsch's <i>Allotment Garden Landscape</i> can be seen as a survey of his country's land being encroached upon by modern industrialization.</p> <p>View and discuss Albert Renger-Patzsch's photograph, <i>Allotment Garden Landscape</i>, 1929. What words would you use to describe the landscape in this photograph?</p> <p>What shapes or lines can you point out in the photograph? Are they organic, man-made or both?</p> <p>Would you describe this landscape as residential, agrarian (farmland) or industrial? What visual clues tell you this? Why did the artist choose this vantage point for his photograph? Is he nostalgic or is he stepping forward into modernity by embracing urban development?</p> |
| MAKING ART | <p>We can link Patzsch's photograph of a German landscape to our society's urbanization from the 18th through 21st centuries. For example, in 1776, Mission San Juan Capistrano was a European settlement located 55 miles south of Los Angeles. Later, in an attempt to promote immigration and residential communities in the area, it was named Orange County—after the citrus fruit. Orange County was promoted as a semi-tropical paradise where various crops could grow. Then, in the mid-20th century, the railroad line and Interstate-5 Highway were developed, connecting Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego. Residential developments grew and attractions like Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm (previously renowned for its boysenberries) attracted tourists. Today, Orange County is the second most densely populated county in California, second to San Francisco County. Over the years, urban development has yielded high revenues, but Orange County is no longer the tropical paradise that initially drew people to the area.</p> <p>Examine your own surroundings. As you travel to and from school, observe the urban and/or natural landscape around you. With a camera or cell phone, take three to five photographs of what speaks to you—natural landscape, residential, commercial spaces, etc.</p> |

Choose your favorite photograph, print it and reflect on it as it relates to the natural/urban environment. Write a title on your photograph and bring it to class to be displayed.

REFLECTION

Present your artwork, addressing the following:

Why did you feel it was important to document that particular site?

How does the site impact the community?

How did you frame the site in your photograph and why?

How do you think the site might change in the future?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.6–8

4–8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners.

6–8.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

6–8.4 Present claims and findings, using pertinent descriptions and details.

CCSS.HISTORY SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS.4

4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.

6–8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary source; provide an accurate summary. 6.6 Identify aspects of a text (artwork) that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: HEROES, VILLAINS, AND YOU

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| ESSENTIAL QUESTION | Who deserves a look from our critical eye? |
| GRADES | 9–12 |
| TIME | One class period and a preview (to invite students to bring images of today’s famous leaders, politicians, and celebrities to the classroom for inspiration for the project) |
| CONCEPTS | Politics, identity, and criticism |
| MATERIALS | Pencils, colored pencils, and drawing paper; and print or digital photos provided by the students. Have the students bring to the classroom an image of a leader, politician or celebrity who they feel strongly about. |
| TALKING ABOUT ART | <p>View the painting by Georg Scholz, <i>War Veterans’ Association</i> (Kriegerverein), 1921. Make observations using the open-ended phrase, “I see...” Inventory the responses on the board, moving towards more and more detailed responses through close looking.</p> <p>Many of Scholz’s contemporaries favored portraiture. The three gentlemen pictured here are represented with symbols that identify them as individuals who supported the former government of the German emperor rather than the contemporary government of the president. During this interwar period, depictions of people frequently departed from what their subjects looked like in real life in order to convey information about their character and identity. Consider the men’s cartoonish expressions. Why do you think the artist chose to depict them with their eyes closed? How did the artist depict the individuals in a negative light? What symbols do you see that suggest their prosperity?</p> <p>Bars and restaurants are often popular meeting places where people can relax, refresh, and reflect on current events. The pub at the edge of the central square has a banner that reads “To the Iron Hindenburg.” Paul von Hindenburg, a top German field marshal during the World War I, was widely considered a hero; he was later elected as Germany’s second president. The term “Iron” refers to his strength. What other qualities are important for a hero? Do the men in the foreground appear to be “Iron Men?”</p> <p>Much of Germany was reeling from the war’s humiliating defeat, demilitarization, and economic hardships. How do you feel when looking at Scholz’s scene? The artist illustrates the ugly and even the grotesque aspects of life for many in contrast to the power and prosperity marking the lives of the few. How might the artist have chosen which details and features to include, or to not include? Scholz worked as an illustrator and used his imagination to emphasize and exaggerate details in his art. Later, the Nazis deemed his art—which criticized life in Germany—degenerate, even</p> |

though he had fought for Germany in WWI and was a wounded war veteran.

MAKING ART

The New Objectivity artists were drawn to current events in post-war Germany, creating both heroic portraits and portraits that were more critical. Angelenos are inundated with images of our leaders, politicians, and celebrities, whether online, in print, or in media viewed throughout the city. Choose someone who you think is influential in Los Angeles.

List some of the defining features of the individual in the image that you have chosen. Include symbols or locations that are not featured in the image but that you think are relevant to this person. Make a quick sketch of the individual referring both to the image and your list of the individual's key attributes.

Now, take a stand and editorialize your thoughts about this individual. Suggest through positive or negative imagery how this individual is a hero or a villain. Use strong lines and bold colors to communicate important positive and negative aspects of the individual you are criticizing or praising. Exaggerate and emphasize important features that will make your depiction of the individual memorable and effective.

REFLECTION

Display the completed artworks in the classroom. Walk around and view each example. Share the story of your artwork or practice using a critical eye by analyzing your classmates' artworks. Are the depictions of the individuals positive or negative? Speak about who you depicted, why you chose that individual, and how that individual is affecting current events of Los Angeles.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.9–12

9–12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

9–12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence.