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Lesson Plan:

Tiny World Collages

Any grade level

Conversion, 2008
Graphite, intaglio, grommets and wood on cut mylar, mulberry paper, construction paper and fomecore

Introduction:

This art lesson relates to the work of Crystal Wagner. It is an interdisciplinary project that combines science and art in a fun mixed media collage project. This lesson can be tailored to almost any grade level.

Objectives:

After completion of this lesson, the student should be able to:

1. Show an understanding of printmaking.
2. Demonstrate collage techniques.
3. Explain, create, and identity patterns.
4. Understand how to use pencil and pen to create designs and patterns.
5. Demonstrate cutting positive and negative shapes.

Instructional Objectives:

The student will review the concepts of combining science and art as well as the media exploration of collage used by Crystal Wagner in a teacher led discussion and print, draw, and cut shapes and patterns found in nature to combine into one large collage to show understanding of the concepts discussed by the teacher. The students will also discuss their finished product during a critique on the end of the lesson.

Vocabulary:

- Collage
- Positive and Negative Space
- Pattern
- Microscopic
- Printmaking
- Two-Dimensional vs. Three-Dimensional

Materials/Media:

- 8.5 x 11 white copy paper
- Colored construction paper
- Tape
- Standard pencils
- Erasers
- Pens (sharpies or roller ball preferred for drawing, cheap Bic pens for printing)
- Styrofoam meat trays
- Block ink (could use thick paint if ink is out of budget)
- Brayers
- Trays for ink
- Drying Racks
- Scissors
- Elmer's glue
- Any other paper materials that could be added to the collage such as poster board, foamcore, acetate, mylar.
- Examples of patterns in nature
- Examples of the microscopic world
- Examples of Crystal Wagner's art.

Instructional Procedures:

A. ***Set*** - The teacher will show the students the example of the finished product of the tiny world collage and ask the students the following questions about the piece:

1. What do you notice about this piece of artwork?

2. What types of materials were used? What is the term to use when different materials are combined together?

3. What type of subject matter was used? Can you tell exactly what it is? Does that matter?

4. What is it called when you repeat a shape or object over and over again?

5. Do you recognize any of these patterns?

The teacher will then show the work of Crystal Wagner and explain how she is inspired by patterns in nature, specifically in the microscopic world. The teacher will show examples of patterns in nature and microscopic animals and plant life. The teacher will lead a hunt to find some of those patterns in the work of Crystal Wagner. The teacher will explain that the students will choose 3 different patterns found in nature from the examples and draw, print, and cut out paper to make a collage of their own tiny worlds.

B. ***Key Questions*** – After finishing the set the teacher will show the students the photo of Crystal Wagner's *Conversion* and ask the following questions:

1. Do you remember seeing this piece at the museum?

2. How big is the piece at the museum? We have learned that she likes to explore the microscopic world in her art, how does the scale change our perception of these creatures and patterns?

3. What materials has she used?

4. What **patterns** do you see?

5. What shapes do you see?

Who Made It?

Crystal Wagner Biography

Crystal Wagner was born on February 27, 1982 in Baltimore, Maryland. It was in Maryland where she began her exploration in art by drawing imaginative birds. Thirteen years later she moved to Pine Grove Pennsylvania where painting and creative writing became her primary focus as an artist.

Crystal attended Keystone College, a private liberal arts school in La Plume Pennsylvania where she earned her Associate Degree in Fine Art, receiving awards for both her prose/fiction writing and also her work as an artist. During her time there, she spent four months in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, experiencing the diverse terrain of the elevated landscape, studying and drawing from nature in the backcountry.

Wagner then moved to Atlanta where she attended The Atlanta College of Art. After two more years with a double concentration in both printmaking and sculpture, she earned her Bachelor Degree in Fine Art. In 2004 she was the recipient of the undergraduate Southern Graphics Council Fellowship for her achievements in printmaking.

Crystal recently completed her MFA at The University of Tennessee as a Graduate Teaching Associate. In 2006 she participated in a month long Artist-in-Residency in Poznañ, Poland. In 2007, she was a Visiting Artist at Kansas City Art Institute. The work produced by the students during the workshop led the "Print Parade" at the SGC Conference in the spring. Also during that year she self-published her novel, "Crimson Sky".

Wagner creates wall-mounted works that unite her experimentations with installation art, drawing, sculpture, and printmaking. Wagner's complex creations such as *Conversion* serve as symbols of growth and transition, and contain strong visual references to sources of inspiration ranging from microscopic life to quantum physics. Initial sketches offer the artist a starting point from which her wall sculptures grow and evolve during the course of their creation.

As Wagner states, "I am interested in the intersections between synthetic and organic, real and unreal, abstract and concrete and in that way am intrigued by the forms and concepts associated with Utopia. It is during fabrication that the myriad of materials and imagery fuse together to create from many different components, one."

Most recently she was the recipient of the Betsy Worden Memorial Artist Residency from the Knoxville Arts and Culture Alliance for the duration of six months.

Retrieved from http://www.crystalwagner.com

Classroom Strategies Day One Choosing and Drawing Patterns

1. Review the artwork of Crystal Wagner, patterns in nature, and the microscopic world.
2. Let the students choose 2 to 3 patterns or images to use in their artwork.
3. Demonstrate how to draw the patterns on paper lightly with a pencil filling up an entire page with one pattern.
4. Demonstrate how to go back over the lightly drawn patterns with a sharpie or nice roller ball pen.
5. Allow the students to begin sketching their patterns.
6. Remind the students to use one pattern per page. In the end they should have at least three pages of patterns to work with.
7. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Two Drawing Patterns continued

1. Review the concepts and techniques covered in the previous class.
2. Allow the students to work on their drawings in pencil and with pen.
3. Notify the students that next class they will be moving on to printmaking.
4. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Three Printmaking Patterns

1. Previous to the class period, prepare by making photocopies of patterns the students have been drawing. These will be used for the printmaking procedure.
2. Tell the students to choose one of their patterns to use for printmaking (review the definition of printmaking).
3. Demonstrate how to transfer the pattern from the copied paper onto the Styrofoam meat tray:
    1. Tape the pattern to the tray.
    2. Use a Bic ballpoint pen and punch along the lines of the pattern through the paper and onto the tray.
    3. Remove the paper to reveal a “connect the dots” Styrofoam board.
    4. Use the pen to dig into the Styrofoam and connect the dots (use the pen at a 45-degree angle rather than up and down to write. If the pen is perpendicular to the tray rather than angles, the Styrofoam has more of a chance of ripping.
4. Monitor as students begin to transfer their images onto the trays.
5. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies Day Four Printmaking Patterns

1. Review the artwork of Crystal Wagner, patterns in nature and the microscopic world. Specifically focus on the printed parts of her collages.

2. Review printmaking pattern techniques.
3. Allow the students one more day to finish up carving out their printmaking trays.
4. Monitor as students begin to transfer their images onto the trays.
5. Clean up five minutes prior to end of class.

Classroom Strategies ***Day Five*** Printing

1. Review the artwork of Crystal Wagner, patterns in nature and the microscopic world.
2. Demonstrate how to print the pattern trays.
    a. Choose one of the colors of ink on the trays.
    b. Roll the brayer in the ink until a nice even coat of ink is on the brayer.
    c. Slowly, evenly, and lightly roll the brayer onto the Styrofoam tray. Repeat until a nice even surface of ink covers the surface.
    d. Take a piece of thick paper, such as construction paper, and gently press the paper on top of the patterned tray.
    e. From one corner, peel the paper away from the tray to reveal the printed page.
    f. Repeat.
3. Monitor the students as they print their patterns. *Depending on the length of classes, the teacher may opt to let students print for two days rather than one.
4. Allow at least 10 minutes for clean up on printing days.

Classroom Strategies ***Day Six*** Cutouts

1. Review the artwork of Crystal Wagner, patterns in nature and the microscopic world. Specifically focus on the cut-out shapes she uses, and the variety of materials
2. Review the definition of positive and negative shapes. Demonstrate by cutting out a shape and how to use both the positive and negative parts.
3. Remind students to think about what shapes are in their chosen patterns and to work with those.
4. Monitor the cutting process and encourage students to use a variety of color and media.
5. Clean up in the last 5 minutes of class.

Classroom Strategies ***Day Seven*** Collage

1. Review the artwork of Crystal Wagner, patterns in nature and the microscopic world. Specifically focus on how she collages her work together. Does she only work on a two-dimensional plane?
2. Demonstrate how to use all of the materials: pen and ink drawings, printmaking, and cutout shapes, by gluing together to create a tiny world.

3. Encourage the students to cut up their drawings and printmaking and not confine themselves to squares or rectangles of the paper.
4. Monitor the progress of the students as they begin to collage.
5. Allow 10 minutes for clean up.

Classroom Strategies *Day Seven* Critique

1. Monitor a class wide critique.
2. Ask the students first to swap projects and write 3 things they like and 3 things to improve the work (for younger grades, skip this step)
3. Place all of the works on the tables and critique the work (about 1 minute per work).

Practice and Review:

- The students will review the artist Crystal Wagner throughout the process, addressing each of her techniques used on a different day and combining all concepts and techniques during Day Six.

- The students will review patterns in nature and the microscopic world every day of the lesson.

Learner Involvement:

- Students will answer and ask questions during the discussion.

- Students will be picked as volunteers to help pass out the supplies.

- Students will be encouraged to give feedback to the critique and be expected to talk, at least briefly, about their own piece and how it relates to the artist.

Learner Environment:

- Teacher will need to prepare by gathering examples of Crystal Wagner's art found on the Knoxville Museum of Art website as well as the artist's personal site: http://www.crystalwagner.com/.

- Teacher will need to prepare by gathering examples of patterns in nature and microscopic examples and making photocopies for the students to use as inspiration. Some helpful websites include:
  http://www.nikonsmallworld.com/gallery
  http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/sirrobhitch.suffolk/patterns_nature/
  http://polymer.bu.edu/ogaf/

http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/article/patterns-nature-galleries.html

- Teacher will need to make sure all accommodations have been made for special needs learners.

Closure:

- Close with positive statements about each student's work.
- For middle school or high school level, pass out a self-reflection/evaluation sheet to fill out.
- Students will receive a rubric that scores their individual work.

Alternative/Supplemental Activities:

- This is a project that can be tailored to any age level. The drawings of patterns can be as simple or as complicated as the students and teacher desire. It leaves quite a bit of room for low and high achieving students to be successful.
- Any of the printmaking methods can be substituted in lieu of the Styrofoam printing method. The Styrofoam printing method creates a relief print (lines are white, surrounding area is color). Crystal Wagner uses an intaglio method (the reverse). Some middle school and high school classrooms may be equipped with a printing press and if that is the case, the teacher may opt to use a more advanced method with alternate printmaking materials.

Evaluation:

Informal: Teacher will walk around the room to make sure the students understand the assignment. Teacher will check individually (time permitting) with each student.

Formal: Teacher will grade students according to rubric.

Reteaching:

- Teacher will go over the artist at successive intervals in the future.
- Teacher will ask students in successive lessons if they remember the artist Crystal Wagner and what she did in her art work

- Teacher will remind students of the wonderful job they did on this project even when it has passed, citing specific examples of student work that stood out to those individual students.

References:

http://www.crystalwagner.com/

http://www.knoxart.org/index.html

State Standards for Visual Arts:

Kindergarten-2 Grade: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1

3-5 Grade: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2

6-8 Grade: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2

9-12 Grade: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2

State Standards for Sciences:

Examples

2nd Grade: GLE 0207.Inq.1, GLE 0207.1.1, GLE 0207.2.3

5th Grade: GLE 0507.Inq.1, GLE 0507.1.1, GLE 0507.2.2, GLE 0507.5.1

Biology I: CLE 3210.1.1, CLE 3210.1.2, CLE 3210.4.2, CLE 3210.5.2