

USING LINE CONSTRUCTIVELY: TREE LINE DRAWINGS

Grade One

For their first lesson of the year, first graders revisited the element of Line and discussed how lines can be found everywhere in our world and that artists can use different kinds of lines to express their ideas more fully. Students examined and discussed several examples of line drawings by various artists, explaining how each artist used Line. Next, students were shown several paintings of trees done by different artists and explored how each tree was represented differently using various and often unexpected types of lines. Students were led to notice how using a particular type of line changes the way we expect a tree to look.

Finally, students were instructed to create a line drawing of their own choice. That said, everything in the picture had to be constructed from a variety of appropriate lines AND the subject had to include at least one tree. They were encouraged to think about how lines can be used to represent the many parts of a tree and different species of trees. Students were given artworks created by Asian artists which depicted different species of trees during different seasons to help them think about the many ways line can be used.

PINCH POTS REVISITED

Grade Four

Students in grade four were shown examples of ceramic pinch pot vessels created by a method of clay construction known as “hand-building”, which differs from wheel-throwing construction. Pinch pots are a fundamental method of construction, created by using the thumbs and fingers, simultaneously, to squeeze and press the sides of the vessels into uniformity. Artist examples all depicted a variety of additional techniques which were used to create interest and more complex designs. Techniques included relief building, scoring, textural impressions and altered form that differs from the standard circular form of a traditional pinch pot.

Students were then guided through the pinch pot construction process together, and then were later encouraged to include some of the additional techniques discussed in the artist exemplars. Once the pots were fired, the pieces were glazed with color and fired a second time.

PAPER PENDANTS

Grade Two

Why do people wear jewelry? Students in grade two learned that people everywhere have decorated themselves with jewelry since ancient times, often for many different reasons. Students examined and discussed several different artisan pendants, some of which incorporated necklace structure, as well. The examples ranged in time period and materials, and students were asked to look for clues to help them determine how each pendant was created. They enjoyed seeing how different cultures have varying styles, how different artists use the same materials differently and how styles have changed over time. Despite the differences, however, some jewelry-making techniques have remained similar over the centuries.

Students were instructed to design and create their own pendant from paper and aluminum foil. They were encouraged to include additional decorations with markers and pencils.

TINY TREASURE BOXES

Grade Three

Third graders discussed the use and decoration of container design. They discussed how this wooden box created by a Japanese artist, had the special purpose of storing incense. Noting the planning and execution of design upon a three-dimensional cube, and its possible function and purpose, allowed students to realize that everyday objects can be made beautiful by artistic skills.

Students were given a template of a box which they were then instructed to decorate using pencils and/or markers, giving special attention to how one side of the box could impact another side, as well as the top and bottom, in a wrap-around design. Attention was brought to the fact that there are several ways to accomplish a wrap-around design, but a specific theme had to be chosen to successfully unify all sides of the box.

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OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING: STILL-LIFE *Grade Five*

Each school year starts with drawing a still-life arrangement for students in grades 2-5. In past years, each grade approached the still-life differently, using different skills or fresh approaches to a revisited subject. But after collecting student responses for their Hopes and Dreams for Art class this year, every class contained a large number of responses stating hopes for learning to draw *better*. I decided to address this by including a "guided discovery" of eight different drawing materials, ranging from pencils, pens, charcoal and pastels. Students were led through a series of explorative techniques that can be done in each material to create more interest in a drawing. These techniques included hatching, blending, stippling and sgraffito. The level of interest among students grew considerably!

Once the exploration was over, students in grades 3-5 were then directed to draw the still-life, but with the choice of drawing in their sketchbooks or choice of drawing paper, and were allowed to choose which of the eight drawing materials they would prefer. Many students chose to "mix" materials, opting to draw some objects in ink, and others in oil pastel, for example. All students were required to include at least one of the drawing techniques they were taught in their guided discovery session. I was very pleased with this level of renewed interest for observational drawing as evidenced by the many comments from students. Below are examples from grades 3, 4 and 5.