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Lesson Plan: “From the Far Away, Nearby” Inspired by Georgia O’Keeffe

Grades

All

Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Language Arts

Media Type

Drawing

Estimated Time

Varies according to grade levels; two to four 50 minute sessions

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Student Learning Objectives

Students will collaboratively observe, analyze, and interpret the art of American artist **Georgia O’Keeffe** (1887-1986), focusing on content, style, technique, and formal composition.

Students will create, and draw in chalk pastel, a finished composition of a *still life* of up to three objects (O’Keeffe used shells, flowers, leaves, bones, etc). Students should be encouraged to plan the overall composition in the style of O’Keeffe, with the overall composition tightly cropped so that the select object(s) feature as dominant form(s) within a flattened picture plane. (See the *Jack-in-the-Pulpit* series in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington for an example). Older students should create a composition with the select objects/still life in the foreground and a background *landscape* of an actual site, as in O’Keeffe’s painting *Ram’s Head, White Hollyhock, Hills* (1935) in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum.

Students will demonstrate facility with the direct drawing technique of pastel painting with chalk, including drawing with the tip of the pastel, the side of the pastel, hatching and cross-hatching, scumbling and blending directly on toothed and toned paper as in O’Keeffe’s, *Pool in the Woods, Lake George* (1922). Students will follow health & safety precautions when in proximity with workable or permanent fixative spray, taking care to be working in a properly-ventilated studio or *en plein air*.

Students will select a quote from O’Keeffe that inspires them using either print or digital approved sources, and then write their artist statement to be displayed along with the O’Keeffe-inspired project.

Essential Question

How does knowing the subject, style and process of her art inspire students to create a work of art in the manner of Georgia O’Keeffe?

National Coalition for Core Arts Standards

VA:Cr1.1.1a *Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors*

VA:CR2.3.5a *Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance*

VA:Re8.1.1a *Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.*

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Common Core State Standards/Anchor Standards for College and Career Readiness/ English Language Arts/Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 *Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*

Resources

Georgia O'Keeffe (1881 – 1986), *Pool in the Woods, Lake George*, 1922. Pastel on paper. Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse in memory of E. Carter, Nancy Susan Reynolds, and Winifred Babcock, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, 1984.2.9

reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/pool-in-the-woods-lake-george

“About Georgia O’Keeffe”: Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico

okeeffemuseum.org/about-georgia-okeeffe

Georgia O’Keeffe, biography and works of art (including the Jack-in-the-Pulpit series), National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

nga.gov/Collection/artist-info.2311.html#works

Georgia O’Keeffe, *Ram’s Head, White Hollyhock-Hills*, 1935

brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/2096

Quotes from Georgia O’Keeffe

goodreads.com/author/quotes/140943.Georgia_O_Keeffe

Georgia O’Keeffe, Shell and Old Shingle series

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle No. I*, 1926, Oil on canvas; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA 1987.535

mfa.org/collections/object/shell-and-old-shingle-no-i-34864

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle No. II*, 1926, Oil on canvas; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA 1987.536

mfa.org/collections/object/shell-and-old-shingle-no-ii-34865

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle No. III*, 1926, Oil on panel; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA 1987.537

mfa.org/collections/object/shell-and-old-shingle-no-iii-34866

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle No. IV*, 1926, Oil on panel; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA 1987.538a

mfa.org/collections/object/shell-and-old-shingle-no-iv-34867

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Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle V*, 1926, Oil on canvas; Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain, Inv. no. 698 (1980.10)

museothyssen.org/en/collection/artists/okeeffe-georgia/shell-and-old-shingle-v

Georgia O'Keeffe, *Shell and Old Shingle VI*, 1926, Oil on canvas; St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO; Gift of Charles E. Claggett in memory of Blanche Fischel Claggett, 345:1980

emuseum.slam.org:8080/emuseum/view/objects/asitem/search@/0?t:state:flow=f24e89b5-ee83-4412-a5e1-b85b6a83ae56

Vocabulary

Atmospheric perspective: an alternative to linear perspective for indicating depth in a two-dimensional image. Objects in the foreground are rendered with saturated colors, defined contours and more clarity of detail while those placed in the background appeared blurry and are generally rendered in cool hues, i.e., blues, purples, and/or grays.

Foreground: the area on and just above the bottom edge of the picture plane that appears closest to the viewer; **middle ground** is above and overlapped by objects in the foreground area and above that would be the **background** that appears to be ever more distant from the viewer

Horizon line: the implied line in a view of the distance where the sky appears to touch the ground plane (or body of water)

Landscape: an image referencing the outdoors or natural surroundings, either representational, imaginary, or abstracted.

Pastels: dry crayons made with powdered pigment held together in a solution of gum tragacanth or methyl cellulose. Pastels come in a range of grades: soft, medium, or hard, and shapes: thin, fat, cylindrical, or square.

Pastel fixatives: spraying a fixative solution of polyvinyl acetate resin (PVA) in methyl acetate coats and protects the artwork's surface, adhering the layer of dry pigment to the support.

Pastel papers: specialty drawing papers are sized with a coating of glue size and have some tooth or surface texture in order to allow the pigment to catch and cling; also common is commercially prepared colored paper or white paper that has been tinted by the artist with watercolor

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Materials

- Dry media paper for charcoal & pastel
- Chalk pastels, either boxed sets or color-sorted. If the latter, students can make their own set, selecting a collection of hues appropriate to their artwork.
- Material/found objects for student still life arrangements
- Cell phone to record compositional arrangement (*optional*)
- Kneaded and Gum Erasers
- Blending tools (Q-tips, chamois cloth, tissue, paper towel, fingers)
- Workable fixative (*to be used outdoors or in well-ventilated space*)
- Permanent fixative (*to be used outdoors or in well-ventilated space*)

Procedure

- Together look at images of O’Keeffe’s paintings and pastels. Online, review the image of Reynolda House’s *Pool in the Woods, Lake George* (1922) to try to see how O’Keeffe used pastels, blending and layering them. Collectively discuss other selected images of her work.
 - Suggested questions for conversation with *Pool in the Woods, Lake George*
 - Pay attention to what colors you see.
 - Try to describe the textures
 - What do you notice in this artwork? What do you imagine about it?
 - What do you think the artist was thinking about when she drew this?
 - What colors does the artist use? Dark? Light? Cool? Warm?
 - Look at the borders between the colors. Are they sharp or blurry? Blended?
- Students should be shown and then set to practice drawing using chalk pastels on toned and textured paper, experimenting with blending, hatching and scumbling and other types of mark-making.
- After the first class and before the second, students should start looking at the identified resources to become more familiar with the artist.
- By the start of the second class, students will have chosen up to three objects to draw.
- Students deliberate about their final composition. They can use their smart phones to photograph their compositional arrangement. They can use the crop feature in photo editing on their camera to more closely crop the image if necessary. If they do not have phones, students can make quick “thumbnail”

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sketches. These thumbnails drawing should place the objects within the overall composition, i.e. the objects depicted do not extend outside the picture plane.

- Students will work on their final pastel drawing. Encourage them to draw on their paper with a pastel crayon, not pencil, using the lightest color first and building up to darker values.
- Students will find a quote by the artist to share with the class.
- Students will write an artist's statement for their completed drawing.

Adaptations and Accommodations

For older students, this initial drawing could be the first in a series with subsequent drawings increasingly becoming more abstract. (See the Jack-in-the-pulpit series at the National Gallery of Art or the shell and old shingle series listed in Resources to analyze and consider O'Keeffe's process of abstraction).

For younger students, select only one object to draw and emphasize drawing it larger than it is in real life.

For students sensitive to the feel of materials on their hands, use latex or nitrile gloves to hold the chalk pastel. Alternatively, tempera in a tube would create an approximation of the drawing process and is amenable to blending (use paper towel or Q-tip for this).

Take it outside! Use sidewalk chalk and create drawings on pavement at the school. Document with a camera.

Assessment/Rubric

Students will be assessed on

- the quality and extent of their research on Georgia O'Keeffe,
- the relevance of their artwork project to the work of O'Keeffe,
- demonstrable mastery of technique in using pastels,
- and overall strength of composition.