

ART

Primitive Art

By David Perez
Pajaro Valley High School

PRIMITIVE ART

Summary:

Students will be asked why there is so much graffiti in Watsonville or their community. What is its purpose? Has graffiti always existed or when would it have begun? Students will then learn to make their own primitive paints and brushes. Students will draw native plants and animals with charcoal. Students will then paint over their charcoal drawings using homemade supplies. Students will then reflect on the beginning discussion regarding graffiti and see if their responses remain true.

Subject Area(s): Visual Arts

Grade Level(s): 9th-12th

Lesson Duration/Instructional Sequence: 3 class periods

- One two-hour class period for learning the British flag grid technique
- One two-hour class period to explore school campus or ESHA (i.e. Scavenger Hunt) for obtaining materials for brushes from hair and twigs/reeds
- One (or two) two-hour class periods to mix fat based paint, draw plant and/or animal species onto stone-like surfaces by using the “grid” technique and paint using primitive materials.

California Content Standards:

1.0 Artistic Perception

Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They also use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations.

Develop Perceptual Skills and Visual Arts Vocabulary

1.1 Identify and use the principles of design to discuss, analyze, and write about visual aspects in the environment and in works of art, including their own.

2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Visual Arts

Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art.

Skills, Processes, Materials, and Tools:

2.1 Solve a visual arts problem that involves the principles of design.

2.4 Review and refine observational drawing skills.

Communication and Expression Through Original Works of Art

2.5 Create and expressive composition, focusing on dominance and subordination.

3.0 Historical And Cultural Context

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts

Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.

Role and Development of the Visual Arts

3.2 Identify and describe the role and influence of new technologies on contemporary works of art.

Diversity of the Visual Arts

3.3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art.

3.4 Discuss the purposes of art in selected contemporary cultures.

Assessment:

Evidence of student learning will be indicated by:

- Student use of a sketch book as a visual record;
- Student produces one painting of local flora or fauna;
- Products meet minimum requirements of
 - A visual record of representations of native plants illustrating stems, leaves, and blooms if present or animal in natural pose
 - Representation as accurate as possible using grid technique

Authentic assessment of painting techniques will be based on a three-part rubric to include:

- Use of a grid
- Craftsmanship
- Neatness

A subjective assessment will be completed the teacher to measure student effort based upon time, creativity and detail represented in completed projects.

Peer assessment may be accomplished by each student or groups of students assessing completed student work in terms of:

- Color,
- Expression
- Subject capture

Learning Objectives:

Students will:

1. Relate to early human artists, such as the Ohlone, through their own created art, and make comparisons to contemporary art and graffiti.
2. Understand where pigments come from.
3. Learn how to utilize the British flag grid technique to illustrate native flora and fauna.

Equipment, Materials, and Resources: (check Fitz WERC for availability)

- Pencil, paper, ruler, practice picture
- 5 soils of different colors pre-gathered from Santa Cruz and/or Monterey County (e.g. Aromas Red Sandstone, Purisima Formation Origin Shale, Adobe Mud Samples)
- Plastic bags to hold the soils
- Trowels or heavy spoons to collect soil
- Coarse garden sifter
- Mortar and pestle *or* large spoon and pie tin
- ½ cup lard or vegetable shortening for each soil sample
- Small jars and bowls with lids to store paint in
- Reeds, sturdy grasses, hair, glue, string and/or twine, and twigs for brushes
- Burnt twigs or charcoal, paper or sidewalk to be drawn on or
- Stone-like boards (e.g. 18" x18" sheets of concrete "Wonder Board or Dura-board) or

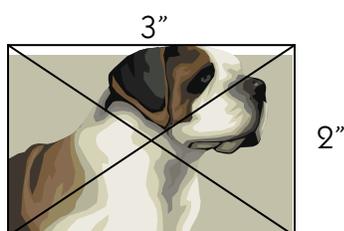
- An available concrete wall
- Original sized drawings from scientific illustrations

Lesson Narrative / Procedure:

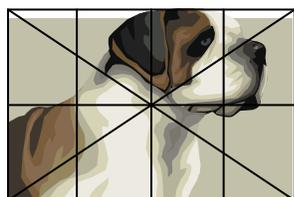
Day 1:

Warm up Prompt: Native artists such as the Ohlone, went through a lot to communicate and express themselves. What would we see on walls in Watsonville if we had to make our own tools and paints like those early artists?

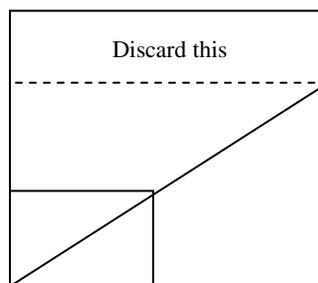
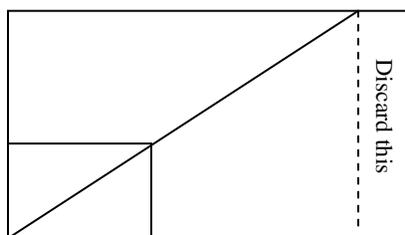
Pre-field activity: British Flag Grid Drawing. Students are given a simple picture (for example, a picture of a dog) that is 2" x 3" in dimension. The picture is then marked in pencil with an "X" running diagonally from one exact corner to another:



Have students draw a line straight up and down through the center of the X, then across the center of the X. The drawing now has a "British Flag" shape over the top. Measure the distance from the center line to the right hand edge of the page, and make a mark halfway between the two. Now draw a vertical line through this space. Do the same thing on the left hand side of the page. At this point, the drawing should look like this:



Place the drawing in the bottom left corner of a piece of paper, and using a ruler, extend the diagonal line up to the top or end of the paper. If the diagonal line ends before the corner of the paper, draw a straight vertical line down the page from this point, and discard the rectangle area at the side of the page so that the sheet being used is of the same dimensions as the picture. Likewise, if the diagonal ends on the side of the page, draw a horizontal line across from where the line ends and discard the top of the page (see below).



Remove the dog drawing and finish drawing the diagonal line to the corner of the page. Add in the other lines, mirroring those drawn on the dog drawing. Be sure that students draw these lines very lightly, as they will be erased.

Finally, have students draw what they see in each grid polygon of the dog drawing in the corresponding rectangle on their paper. For example, in the top right rectangle one over from the right are the dog's face, eye, and part of the ear. Have students draw only what is in each square and go one square at a time, until the drawing is finished. Go back to recheck and modify, then erase gridlines in their drawings.

Day 2: F.A.C.E.

Students will be going out to collect natural materials to fashion into painting brushes and tools. As a precaution have samples of Poison Oak sealed in plastic to show before heading out to the ESHA's. Have a live sample to show once down in the field to give a double reminder of the dangers of contact with the plant. Students should gather assorted twigs, feathers, fur, pieces of bark, sturdy grasses and thick sturdy leaves. Nothing should be taken, broken, stripped or peeled from live plants. Gathering should not last more than 30 minutes.

Return to the classroom where students will use glue, string, twine and rocks (to fray ends of twigs) to fashion crude painting tools.

Day 3 + 4: Location- Classroom/ Outdoor Space. Show students a copied assortment of scientific illustrations of local flora or fauna. Have them choose one to copy and paint. A grid will then be carefully drawn onto these samples with rulers and pencils in the classroom. On the dedicated wall or concrete board have a variety of pre-drawn squares and rectangles of different sizes done in light charcoal. Have students choose one of these shapes to blow up their original with grid. Having the pre-drawn shapes going horizontally will keep students from trying to work over the top of others. Students will use rulers and charcoal to grid their shapes and draw their illustrations until complete. Make sure students work lightly in charcoal due to difficulty in erasing.

Give a short explanation on paint, pigments and binders. Show examples of local colorful soils, where they came from and how when mixed with a binder such as fat or oil they can be spread and stick to rough objects such as stone. Slowly mix powdered soil into vegetable oil or shortening until color comes alive but is still a creamy paste. Students should take out their painting tools and carefully paint their images. Remind them that painting the negative space or background around objects can also help create interesting images.

Closing: After working on their paintings, revisit warm up prompt and ask for specific examples of what do they think we would see on Watsonville walls if graffiti would have to be done using homemade supplies?

References:

Boaz, Frans. 1955. Primitive Art. Dover Publications, New York.

Margolin, Malcom. 1978. The Ohlone Way. Heyday Books, Berkeley. pg. 7-45