

Eye on Art -Visual Art

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The purpose of the program

To explore the elements of visual art and have participants, through study of the suitcase contents, come to a heightened understanding and awareness of visual art. The material will generate dialogue and sharpen the senses.

The content of the program

The materials that constitute this program are contained within a suitcase for easy storage and portability. This manual provides the core information.

Introduction

What is art? That is a question that has been asked down through the ages. The dictionary defines art as human effort to imitate, supplement, alter, or counteract the works of nature. Throughout time man has attempted through his creativity to arrange and produce sounds, colour, forms and movement that have become known as art. He has produced visual art, literary arts and performing arts. Society is deeply influenced by the arts.

What is art?

- There are many ways to describe art. But perhaps the easiest way to explain art is to say it is the **expression** of human creativity or imagination. It is when someone uses materials and, or their skills to express their ideas.

What is expression?

- Expression is the way humans show or speak what they are feeling or thinking or seeing.

What is creativity?

- Creativity is having the ability or power to create. Most likely the idea for creativity comes from our imagination which is what gives us our images or ideas in our minds. Creativity is the follow through of ideas.

What is the meaning of the word Art?

- The word art is derived from the Latin word *ars*, which means to have skill.

How do you begin to define what art is?

- Art is divided into categories. Visual art, that which appeals to the eye, is the art of putting what we see all around us, or feels within ourselves, onto paper or canvas or other surfaces. Some of its forms include painting, photography, and sculpture.
Literary arts are the art of taking single words and putting them together in a way that tells a story. Performing Arts include dance, theatre and music. Dance is the art of movement with the human body. Theatre, a performing art, is the art of creating a story through dance or speech or movement. Music is the art of sound

Do we need art?

- Society would be very different if we had no forms or vehicles for self expression. Who would we be as a people? Use your imagination to think what our world would be like if all forms of art were removed from it. Imagine there are no books, no music, no paintings, no movies, and no theatre. Close your eyes and imagine your bedroom with no posters, no paintings, and no books.

Could we survive as a people without artistic forms of expression? What would become of our creativity?

- There are some basic needs in humans such as connection to the earth and our environment. Creativity would find an outlet.

The Story of Visual Art

How long do you think visual art has been around?

- The earliest known art is 40,000 years old. It dates from the pre-historic age, or Paleolithic period. Many people know this time in world history as the Stone Age. It is called pre-historic because there were no written records to tell about the life of people.

How did people express themselves in the stone-age?

- The cavemen had two known forms of expression. They made sculptures from rocks, and on the walls of caves, and on rocks, they carved and painted pictures. These pictures told the stories of their everyday life- such as hunting wild animals. The pictures are referred to as stick drawings as they are very simple. They were a form of storytelling for the caveman who most likely did not see himself as making art. For later man the pictures turned out to be both great history records and forms of art. The cavemen had two methods for making their stick paintings. They used small rocks to rub or scratch out the pictures and they used paint made from iron oxide in the soil.

Why do you think the cavemen used stones or rocks to work with?

- It was the material they had to work with. The last ice age had taken away most of the trees and they didn't know about the metals in the earth. Flint, which they did know about, would get brittle and break when it got cold. Some cave pictures were done with paint. The cavemen used iron oxides in the soil and mixed it with water or animal fat to make paint. This would give a reddish brown colour
- The caveman had no form of written language. It is believed humans used painting to communicate six times longer than they have used written language. The Sumerians, who lived in what is now southern Iraq, are believed to have developed the first written language about five thousand years ago. It was symbols done on clay tablets.

Stone Age Project

Take a trip back to the Stone Age by making a stone etching.

Materials needed:

Smooth flat stone or rock

Small sharp stone for carving.

Procedure:

Using the small, sharp stone carve out a stick picture on the larger flat rock. Carve something that happens in daily life.

The Story of Visual Art Unfolds

- For early man the main objective of life was survival. The majority of his time was occupied with getting enough food to eat, clothing to wear and basic shelter. But he still desired to experience beauty, most of which came from the surrounding nature. As man discovered materials in his environment that could be used to create man-made beauty he began to intimate nature with his own creativity.
- Much of what man produced was called workmanship rather than art for it was practical, although beautiful, in adding to the comfort of daily life.
- By the 1700s the practical arts such as pottery, needlework, metalwork and furniture making were called crafts. Drawing, painting, and sculpture were called fine art as they were aesthetic. However, by the middle of the 20th century the line between the two was beginning to blur and art could be both practical and aesthetic.

- Art became a way to express and record life at a particular time and place. The art that was being produced said much about the society. Art reflected the values of the times and the artists.
- As civilization developed society was able to support fulltime artists as well as those who created art in their spare time.
- Different cultures placed different values on the arts. For some cultures arts was highly sought after and valued. For other culture it was seen only as a pursuit of the upper classes.
- Artists throughout time have worked with the materials surrounding them. Materials went in and out of favor depending on what else was discovered at a given time and what was available.
- Man's creativity has stood the test of time and no matter what else changes in society the desire for the beauty of art and the interest in art has never disappeared.

Elements of Visual Art

What makes up visual art?

- There are seven elements of visual art. Elements are the individual parts that make up the whole. They are color, form, line, shape, space, texture and value.

Colour: Element of Art

- Colour is a part of our world that we take for granted. It is all around us. Try to imagine your world with no colour other than what you see in nature. What would your home look like? What would your clothing look like? For early man the only colour in his life was what was in the nature around him. Then, 20,000 years ago early man discovered how to extract colour from nature and use it to change his world.
- How did early man discover he could utilize colour? Like many other things it was discovered mainly by accident. When people are doing one thing they often discover something else. They discovered pigment. Colour is made by pigment, a dye like substance found in plants, minerals, clay, matter, animals and people. People have pigment in their skin, which gives them their colour. Pigment absorbs and reflects light thus giving it colour.
- Early man discovered that pigment could be made by grinding up minerals, plants, clays, and animal parts. Modern pigments are chemically made.

- Pigments are insoluble, which means they cannot be dissolved and made one with something else.

What is the difference between pigment and dye?

- Dye is also colour that is taken that is taken from plants, objects and animals. But dye is soluble. It is absorbed and becomes one with what it is added to.
- The dying of items is known to have been going on in India and the Middle East for over five thousand years.

Experiment

Show participants how pigment is insoluble and dye is soluble.

Materials needed

Dye- One teaspoon

Pigment- One teaspoon

Two glasses of water

Procedure

Put pigment in one glass of water- stir- watch what happens. Put dye in the second glass- stir - watch what happens.

- The caveman knew he could make paint from mixing clay with water or animal fat that would be the colour of the soil he used, but it was the ancient Egyptians who discovered that they could make more than one colour from the pigments of the soil. They discovered that by mixing different types of soil they could make yellow, orange and red. These discoveries were made by experimenting. It would be later that the study of colour would become a science.
- The Egyptians were greatly impressed by colour. They thought it was magical and could heal people.
- The Romans learnt about colour from the Egyptians.
- The Romans discovered they could make the colour purple by crushing into a powder, mollusks, which are shellfish and snails. It took four million mollusks to make one pound of purple dye. This made it very expensive and is likely the reason that purple is the colour of royalty.
- Ground gold was the most expensive pigment.
- The Aztecs in South America discovered red by crushing beetle bugs. They valued red colouring even more than gold. It took one million bugs to make a pound of red colouring.

- Over time the science of making colour became more complex. Man learned there were three main colours. They called them primary colours because from these three colours all other colours could be made. The primary colours are **red, blue and yellow**.
- If two of the primary colours are mixed together they will make a new secondary colour. The three secondary colours are **green, orange and purple**.
Blue plus yellow makes green
Red plus blue makes purple
Red plus yellow makes orange
- Even more colours called intermediate colours can be made by mixing one secondary colour with one primary colour.
- The neutral colours are black, grey, white, brown, and beige. They have low saturation of light therefore are not bright or intense.
- Black is made by adding equal amounts of the three primary colours
Grey is an equal mix of black and white
- In early history much of the mixing of colour was done by experimentation.
- Artists use a colour wheel to show them how to mix pigments to get different colours. Sir Isaac Newton, who lived between 1642 and 1727, invented the first colour wheel by splitting light. He discovered the spectrum of colours contained in white light by passing it through a prism. He found that the colours were in the white light and not in the prism.

Projects

Use the primary paints supplied in the box to mix secondary paints. Take an equal amount of each colour and see what you create. The second step is to take a primary paint and equally mix it with a secondary paint to create an intermediate colour. Use the colour wheel to assist you in this project.

Look through the prism and name the colours that you see.

- The idea that colour heals has again become popular in society. People associate particular colours with certain feelings. Science has proven that the cool colours of green and blue (they remind people of cool forests and lakes) can actually decrease body temperature by slowing down circulation. The warm colours of red, orange and yellow (they remind people of the sun and fire) can increase body temperature by increasing body circulation.
- Colour stands for different things in different cultures. In our culture black is the symbol for death and mourning. The colour white is for purity, weddings and

baptisms. But in Asian cultures white and sometimes yellow, which we think of as a happy colour, are for mourning. Red is for marriage.

Experiment

In our culture, colors evoke certain feelings. Take the swaths of material provided in the box and hold them up one at a time. Ask the participants what feelings are experienced as they look at each of the colours.

Black is for strength

Blue is for calmness

Green is for relaxation

Violet is for peacefulness

Yellow and orange energize

Red stimulates the brain

- The Cherokee Indians of North America associate colour with the four directions.
Blue is for the North meaning cold, defeat and trouble.
White is for the South meaning warmth, peace and happiness.
Red is for the East meaning sacred fire, blood and success.
Black is for the West meaning problems and death.

How did man take colour and turn it into paint?

- The caveman took pigment and mixed it with different liquids to make simple paint. Two of the liquids they used were water and animal fat. As civilization developed people used other liquids such as types of oil (like linseed) and eggs to mix the pigment with as well as other substances. These became known as binders.
- It was the Chinese who first figured out how to manufacture paint.

Projects

Making pigment

Use the shells or sandstone rocks supplied in the box to make your pigment. If you wish you can use materials of your own such as nut shells, spices or charcoal.

Grind the raw material into a very fine powder. This can be done using a mortar and pestle or two flat stones.

Making Paint

The making of paint is a very simple procedure. You need either dye or pigment, which you will add to a binder. The binder can be any number of materials such as oil, glue, or even dish soap. For this exercise the binder being used is eggs.

Procedure to Follow

Crack open an egg and divide the yolk and white into separate dishes. Each can be used as a binder. Add the pigment and stir until you have achieved the desired colour.

Now you are ready to paint.

Form: Element of Art

- What do you think form is? Form is three dimensional. It is height, width and thickness.
What would be some examples of forms? You would have used them in math classes.
Sphere, cube, cylinder, cone, pyramid are forms, they have height, width and thickness. Some forms are organic. That means they appear naturally in nature. An example would be a tree stump.

A visual artist can create or express his ideas through the use of form.

Project

Examine the forms in the box. How do you see using them in art? Draw the image of the human body using a triangle as the chest, arms, and legs and the circle as the joints. Follow the example in the box.

Lines: Element of Art

- Lines are an element of art. What is a line? It is a thin continuous mark or perhaps a better way to describe it is to say it is a dot going for a walk. When a line begins to bend or is joined to another line shapes are made. What are some types of lines?

Straight, zigzag, perpendicular, wavy, parallel, horizontal, dashed or dotted, diagonal, curved.

Projects

Draw the different types of lines with a pencil.

Participants can make lines with their bodies.

Study the Diana Lemire Savidant painting of the Lighthouse. Where do you see lines? Does the amount of lines surprise you?

Do a line painting by placing a piece of paper on the bottom of a Styrofoam container. Squeeze a drop of several different colour paints on the paper. Put a marble in the container and roll it about by moving the container. See what design you can make with your line painting.

Shape: Element of Art

- Shape is one of the elements of art. What is a shape? A shape is an outline or a contour. An example of a shape is our bodies. How are shapes made? Shapes are formed by lines. Shapes are flat. Some shapes are geometric- squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, ovals – other shapes are irregular shapes that appear organically in nature. An example would be a mud puddle.

Projects

Take pieces of yarn, which in their natural form are straight lines and bend them into defined shapes.

View the sculpture and name the different shapes that you see within it. The body is a human sculpture. If someone in the group is comfortable being a sculpture have them stand before the group and have their shapes determined.

Texture: Element of Art

- Texture is an element of art that relates back to the feel or raised treatment of a surface. You can appreciate texture visually as well as through tactile experience. In painting texture can be created by the application of paint and the use of brushes or other means. Visual artists can create an illusion of texture.

Projects

View the art work labeled texture and discuss the impression they give. Discuss how you think the artist achieved the sense of texture.

Try to achieve different textures by applying paint to paper using different items. Use thick paint for this project or glue colored with tempera paint. You can put sand in the paint. Try applying it with different brushes, plastic spoons, combs, feathers, bottle caps, corks. What are the results?

Value: Element of Art

Value is an element of art. What is meant by value? Value is the lightness or darkness of a color. Shades and tints are achieved through adding black and white to colour. Shades are done by adding black and tint is done by adding white.

Project

Select two colours and dab a small amount of each onto a piece of paper. Add black to one and experiment with shading. Add white to the other colour and experiment with tinting.

- Now that you know the elements of art you are ready to compose a painting using your own paint. Use a piece of cardboard or stock paper for your canvas. How will you apply your paint? The choice is yours as there a number of options. Fingers and hands are the oldest known painting tools. Sticks, feathers, and parts of plants have served as painting tools. Brushes have their own history.

The History of Brushes

- Early paintbrushes were made from long hairs of animals such as sable, wolf, goat, squirrels, and badgers. Today paintbrushes are made out of natural and man-made materials. Paint brushes come in many different sizes and shapes to give different looks.