

Creating an Expressive Portrait

A Lesson based on the works of art in

Jim Dine, some drawings

At the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University

April 7-June 18, 2006

This exhibition of nearly 80 works on paper, the majority from private collections, illustrates the range and mastery of Jim Dine's draftsmanship over more than four decades. Early tool collage drawings are shown alongside powerful portrait and figure studies drawn in a variety of media. In recent years, Dine has created large painterly pastels executed with a bravura that places them somewhere between painting and drawing.

Goals of this Lesson:

1. To examine how artists uses lines, color, and composition to express themselves.
2. To realize that color, shape, and medium help convey meanings.
3. To explore materials and objects to create an expressive portrait.

Illinois Learning Standards fulfilled:

Fine Arts

State Goal 25: Know the language of arts.

State Goal 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

<p><u>Age Level:</u> Elementary and Middle School</p> <p><u>Estimated Time:</u> 80 minutes (can occur over several class periods)</p> <p><u>Specific Topic:</u> Life-size portraiture</p> <p><u>Subtopic:</u> Exploring mediums</p>

Key concepts:

- Learning to express oneself
- Interpreting the use of color
- Becoming familiar with different media

Objectives of this lesson:

1. Students will learn how to convey themselves on paper.
2. Students will use certain shapes, colors, and media to convey meaning.
3. Students will learn to “use the entire paper” in their composition.
4. Students will familiarize themselves with many different media and how they interact with each other.

Suggestions for student assessment:

Evaluate student work using the following criteria. It is advisable to share the criteria with your class before asking students to begin the assignment. Does the student work:

1. Convey an understanding of different types of media and how they can interact with one another?
2. Realize that a portrait does not always need to be accurate to be expressive?
3. Acknowledge that an artist may use many different media, but they may still function as one work of art?

Teaching resources necessary to support this lesson: color wheel, slides or large copies of Jim Dine's portraits (especially the one where he uses collage with artist tools and overlaps several different types of media.)

Lesson Plan:

I. Share works of art by *Jim Dine*, specifically portraits and self portraits and pieces that use several different media overlapping and have sanded and overworked surfaces.

[10 minutes]

II. Discuss by asking the following questions:

- What kind of lines do you see?
- What kind of colors do you see?
- Describe the surface of the piece.
- What does the portrait reveal about the person? I.e. Their likes and dislikes, personality, hobbies, etc...

[10 minutes]

III. After discussion make sure each student has their own (or is sharing) a piece of scrap paper. Instruct the students to test out their crayons, colored pencils, (pastels), and oil pastels. Be sure to instruct them to especially pay attention to the pressure that they use with each material and what happens when colors/mediums combine. Also instruct students to try using their eraser and sandpaper on the materials to see how it affects the surface. **[5 minutes]**

IV. Once students have experimented with their materials, explain what a contour drawing is and how one creates it. Be especially sure to emphasize that a contour drawing is only the outside line of a person, like a cookie-cutter, and includes no details. After this explanation show the students how to create a contour drawing using the charcoal only and the entire piece of large paper. If you have space in your classroom, the best way to set up is to tape life sized pieces of kraft paper to the wall for students to work on-one per student.

[5 minutes]

V. Instruct students to make a contour drawing of themselves also using the charcoal and large piece of paper. Be sure to remind students to not only think about what position they would like to be in (one hand in the air, on their head, kicking, etc...), but also continue to remind them while they are creating their contour not to include any detail that falls within the lines, use the whole paper, and try to include everything from their head to their feet.

[5 minutes]

VI. When students have finished their contour drawing, instruct them to put their charcoal away and find their colored pencils. Instruct students that they will now have time to color from their feet to their knees with only the colored pencils. Encourage them at this point to add details, such as socks, shoelaces, etc... **[7 minutes]**

VII. When students have finished coloring, instruct them to put away their colored pencils and find their crayons. Instruct students to color from their knees (where they left off) to their waist with only the crayons. Again encourage students to add details at this point. **[7 minutes]**

Supply List

- ✓ Large Paper (Kraft roll)
- ✓ Scrap Paper
- ✓ Crayons
- ✓ Colored Pencils
- ✓ Oil Pastels
- ✓ Pastels (optional)
- ✓ Charcoal
- ✓ Kneaded Eraser
- ✓ Masking Tape
- ✓ Sand Paper
- ✓ Double stick tape
- ✓ Small paintbrushes (inexpensive, could even be used)

VIII. (Optional. Skip if you cannot afford a bit of a mess on the ground/walls. If you would like to skip this step, simply re-allocate the body so that pencil is from the feet to the waist, and crayon is from the waist to the neck.) When students have finished coloring, instruct them to put away their crayons and find their pastels. Instruct students to color from their waist to their neck (including arms) with the pastels. Again encourage students to add details at this point. **[7 minutes]**

IX. When students have finished coloring, instruct them to put away their pastels and find their oil pastels. Instruct students to color their head, including their hair and neck (if they did not do so already). Again encourage students to add details at this point. **[7 minutes]**

X. When students have completed coloring their body, instruct them to either include an object or environment that represents them. Instruct the students to use whatever material or combination of materials they would like to depict the object or space. Encourage overlapping of materials. **[7 minutes]**

XI. Once students have completed coloring their entire work, instruct them to put all materials away and find their eraser, sand paper, and paintbrush. Instruct students to use the sand paper to give texture to their work wherever they desire and erase any unwanted marks. Also instruct students to think about where they would like to collage their paintbrush within their composition. As students are working to distress their work, visit each student and attach their paintbrush on their paper with the double-sided tape. **[7 minutes]**

