

Fooling the Eye

TROMPE L'OEIL AT THE SPRINGVILLE MUSEUM

Trompe L'oeil Activities

Art—Making

To give primary grade students the fundamental background necessary to produce somewhat realistic works of art including genre such as **Trompe L'oeil**, it is necessary for them to understand and gain some proficiency in rendering the basic elements of visual expression; line, shape, color, value and texture. Of these value and texture seem to be most frequently left out of the elementary curriculum. Here are some simple studies (practices) and production projects (finished works of art) for very young students focusing on value and texture. It is important for students not only to study and practice these ideas and techniques but also to employ them in novel and personal ways for the completion of legitimate art work. It is probably the application of these ideas that turns information into knowledge.

Texture is evasive because it has two serious and overlapping issues. Texture can be actual or tactile. That is, it can be felt with fingers as well as seen with the eye, as in ceramics and sculpture. Texture can also be suggested with the use of shadows and values of light and dark in all two-dimensional medium such as drawing and painting. If we approach texture as a deep and significant intellectual construct, then we must start with the word. For in the beginning was the word. If a student has the vocabulary, then subsequent experience with the concept has a place and an index to be built upon, stored, and recalled.

The Great Texture Hunt

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of texture as a visual concept and as a tactile reality by collecting rubbings of texture and using them in a finished work of art.

Materials: newsprint and crayons, paper, scissors and glue sticks.

Process: Use the slides in this packet to demonstrate how artists use texture to help make things look real. (For example, the texture of the corkboard in *Channel Three*.) Other fine examples of implied textures can be found in the Elementary Prints packet of Utah artists prepare by the StateWide Art Partnership and the Springville Museum. For an object to appear real, it must possess the appropriate texture. These textures are not actual

in two-dimensional works like drawing and painting. Rather they are suggested. Have students explore the classroom with eyes and fingers for interesting and unusual textures. Most young students will find any and all textures interesting and unusual because it is a rather new idea. Give them a simple definition of texture: "rough and smooth." As each student finds a texture, let him share it with the class and encourage each student to try to define the "quality" of the texture with words. It is difficult because rough and smooth will soon be used up and worn out. Have students invent other words that apply to their specific found texture such as lumpy, bumpy, scratchy, pokey, sharp, hard, soft, prickly and ripply. The list is endless.

After students have identified texture and developed a thinking vocabulary for texture, have them do some hands-on visual work with their chosen texture. With a sheet of newsprint and crayon, have students do rubbings of their favorite texture and give it a name (title). The giving of a name to a work of art is a kind of imbuing with meaning and substance. It is amazing the depth and quality of meaning that very young children can see in visual art. This rubbing technique is a kind of printmaking known as collagraphic printing. The template is under the paper and the inking or rubbing is done on top of the paper rather than on the template and then printed. The crayon is a form of wax-based paint and can accurately be called encaustic paint sticks. Using these more "artsy" terms help take art process out of the realm of "playing with art supplies" and puts it into the areas of intellectual and academic pursuits. It does not have to diminish the fun or playfulness of the experience. It just helps to not limit it to meaningless entertainment.

After students have successfully mastered the technique of texture rubbing, turn them loose with newsprint and crayons. Let them use the classroom, and if logistics allow, let them go in the school and playground. The noise of children enthusiastically gathering textures need not be disturbing. The crayons work best if the paper is striped off, and they are rubbed along their sides for a smoother, more even, application of the color. Caution the children not to just scribble but to pay careful attention to how they apply the color medium. Printmaking is a learned skill, and careful attention to the printing process is an important element.

When each child or each team of children have collected a quantity of different textures and different colors, have them use the texture samples to cut and paste a collage. The collage can be any size. Consider the size of your frames or mats and use the biggest ones available. It can be a landscape, a portrait, a still life, or a nonobjective design. Students may want to go back and collect more of a specific texture or find a new one or change the color as the needs of the collage project present themselves.

Evaluation and Exhibition: When the project is completed, have each student or group give the work a title. A short written assignment describing how the project happened could accompany each collage. A simple accounting of where each texture came from or a quiz to see if other students can identify the source of the textures is a fun way to get attention and encourage conversation. An aesthetic review answering the question, "Do you like it? Why?" could also accompany the finished work. Hang the work in a conspicuous place with title card and name tags and student-generated didactics in a way

that celebrates the art work and the student artist and not necessarily the institution or the teacher. For younger, preliterate, children, an oral account of where the textures came from and why the students like the project or don't like the project can be dictated to the teacher and printed up to accompany the work. Don't miss this opportunity to let students use their newly acquired writing skills to write about something that they did, that is important to them, and celebrates their own intellectual and aesthetic accomplishments.

Related Projects: This project can be done by having more advanced students draw the textures they have collected before they build the collage. Textured wallpaper can also be employed in the collage. For more advanced students, a kind of texture embossing can be employed with soft, wet paper pressed into the texture object and the texture preserved. If a light sprinkling of powdered tempera or other colorant is first applied to the texture surface before pressing the soft wet paper, then a slight amount of soft color can be added to the collected texture. If the objects with the texture are small enough, then they can be embossed in a small press. Small relief print presses can be purchased for under \$30. Most scrapbook supply stores can guide you to the proper paper and the least expensive tools.

For the more adventurous learning facilitator, try doing a similar project out of ceramic clay. Clay is the ultimate texture medium. Have students collect textures as described but do it in moist clay. Have students then construct a small mural using the acquired textures in damp clay and cut out the shapes desired. They can be either fitted together like a puzzle or applied onto a soft slab of clay, then fired, and glazed and displayed.

Vocabulary: Texture, collagraph, printmaking, Tromp L'oeil, tactile textures, suggested textures, collage, template.

Value

Before we get into how to paint in a "Trompe L'oeil" style work, we need to look at what kinds of skills a young artist needs. For the most part, the fool-the-eye nature of this style requires some serious drawing skill. One of the most important parts of being able to render a realistic drawing or painting is understanding the use of values and the ability to render light and dark and monochromatic values in color. Without these ideas, it is very difficult to create the illusion of three-dimensional reality on a flat two-dimensional surface such as paper or canvas. The next several lessons deal with a variety of projects and studies which will enable young art students to develop the skill and understanding necessary to approach the intimidating world of realistic and photo-realistic art.

Before we start, let's address the issue of **why we should bother**. . . have you ever noticed that most very young children love to express themselves with art materials. This enthusiasm is seldom limited to paper but can be found in most homes judiciously scattered around the walls, floors, and furniture of the house. So why isn't everyone an artist? What happened to that enthusiasm? When do we stop loving to do this visually expressive dance? Why do most of us still revere those who can make art but refuse to apply ourselves to the task? Here is an idea based on observation made over a 15-year

period of teaching art to first, second, and third graders. Most primary grade students love art. They love to draw and paint and sculpt and to manipulate nearly every kind of art medium.

Even into the third grade, this enthusiasm is such that in public education we use it to bribe students into learning less exciting things, and we use it as attention getters, and we use it as rewards, and to hang in the hall to show the rest of the school that we are actually here, and to some extent, we use it as play time. So when does this interest start to slow down? A slight waning starts to happen by the end of the third grade, and the resistance begins to grow in the fourth grade. Think back on when you stopped making art and if you didn't stop why, when many of your contemporaries had started to pull away from using visual art as a means of legitimate expression.

Developmental psychology and physiology tells us that most of the human brain is already there by age 8 or 9. That does not mean it is all working (much of it doesn't kick in until puberty), but it is mostly there. At this point in a child's development, it seems reasonable to assume the students pull away from the "internal locus", that is, seeing themselves as singular and making personal observations from within themselves, you know, that childish selfishness and self absorption that we all know so well. As the physical development of the brain becomes more complete the locus changes to external. Children begin to see themselves as others see them, and external social pressure begins to be paramount. We become the social creature that we will be for the rest of our lives.

At this stage, all it takes to destroy a struggling young artist is one unkind critical remark from a fellow student like, "That don't look like a person." or, "That's dumb." Since this criticism is seldom based on any serious critical model, what most uninitiated critics actually mean is, "That don't look real". As teachers of the arts, we should help students get past this sensitive and susceptible time.

Three strategies that seem to work with many students are: 1. encourage the young artist to answer, "You thought this was a person! Heck no! It's just lines and shapes and colors and textures and values on a piece of paper. All artists know that. How could it possibly ever be a real person!" or, 2. "Well, I was trying to draw a picture of a person, and you must have recognized that this was supposed to be a picture of a person, or you would not have said that it "didn't look like a person," so I guess I'm successful because you could tell what I was trying to do" or, 3. teach the young artist to draw a realistic rendering of a person. Any of these strategies seem to work. So it behooves us to try to help our students to learn some basic realistic rendering techniques in the visual arts and we, as teachers, must therefore overcome our own devastation in the fourth or fifth grade when we were told by someone that most of us can't even remember that we weren't any good at art so that we quit trying ourselves and have believed it ever since. It isn't very hard. It does not take a genius or any inordinate skill. It just takes courage.

Value Scale Rendering for Beginners

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the visual element "value" by shading and rendering a multi-step value scale using pencil.

Materials: Pencil, (a variety of pencils 6H, 4H, 2H, HB, 2B, 4B, 6B and TRY-REX no. 23 for beginners and decent drawing paper. Sulfite White will do.

Process: Students will first learn and use a definition of the term, "value." For very young students, "light and dark" is sufficient. Every time the teacher uses the term value say it this way, "Values of light and dark," model the use of the term in its definitional context, and it becomes a natural part of the students' thinking process rather than just a word they had to learn. Have students find values of light and dark around the classroom and on the playground. Give them the homework assignment to find something at home and notice the value of light and dark that it possesses in the morning before school and then again after school and again just before sundown. Let students use a "show and tell" window to share their findings.

Notice that value can change due to the kind and availability of light. Use some black and white prints to demonstrate value that has been rendered (made) using art processes. Any interesting print can be turned into a value rendering by using a black and white photocopier. Have students identify to each other and to the class the gradation of value by asking, "What is the darkest value? Next darkest," and so on to the "Lightest value". This becomes good contest fodder. "Which table can find the most number of values in this picture?" Use the slides in the packet to demonstrate how value helps things look "real". A very good print to use while exploring value is Trevor Southey's "Bloom". It is an etching and done in monochromatic values of the ink. Ask students how one value of ink can be used to make many values of light and dark.

After the concept of value as a visual element has been discussed [over discussion will confuse the issue], show students what a traditional value scale looks like. If you can model making one it is much better than using a commercially produced printed one because, first, you are showing the students that real people (you) really do this, second, that it is doable, third, it does not have to look like it has been printed by a machine for it to work or to be interesting. A very large value scale posted somewhere in the room is also a wonderful tool for referencing the concept whenever it arises.

When you have demonstrated and students understand the process of shading in light and dark, have students draw the boxes for the value scale. Any series of squares will do. With very young students, be adventurous and try having them use a straight edge (ruler) to make the boxes. Using a half sheet (6"x 9") of good drawing paper, put the top of the ruler on the top of the paper and scribe a line along the bottom of the ruler. This will create a "parallel" line, ruler width from the top of the paper. Now put the top of the ruler on the line you have just drawn and scribe the line along the bottom of the ruler. Continue these parallel lines until there is no more room on the paper. Now have students do the same process vertically and continue across the paper from side to side. It is easiest for right handed students to work the ruler and pencil vertically on the paper holding the ruler in at least two spots using thumb and finger and scribing down the straight edge

with the right hand. This can also be done across the top of the paper by turning the paper on its side.

When the paper is full of symmetrical little squares, have students label across the top "value scale" and explain the word "scale." Now have students begin shading in the darkest value first on the left of the paper unless the student is left handed. The teacher may want to experiment with starting off light and going darker or starting off dark and going lighter. If the student works away from the square that is already shaded (left to right for right handers) there will be much less smudging and certainly less hand washing cleanup time. Here are some Hints and Cues for neat shading within each square:

1. Start shading lightly and make it darker. Once it is too dark, there is no going back, but you can always make it darker if it is too light.
2. Use short strokes. Don't try to cover the whole square in one stroke.
3. Same direction. All of the shading strokes should go in the same direction rather than follow down the perimeter of the square in each direction and ending up with a scribble shaded square. There is nothing wrong with using scribbles and cross hatch for value, but it is better to start from a stance of control and competence rather than abandonment. The very young already have abandon down. They already know how to scribble. Try to keep them in the space to be shaded (don't worry about the old "stay in the lines" bug-a-boo cliché. There are times when staying in the lines that you have just drawn is not a bad choice, but if you can't do it, then you can't make any choice, you are coerced by your own incompetence.)
4. Slowly and Carefully. There is no rush. There is no prize for being the first one finished. Take your time and work carefully. When you are bored, stop and look around until you are ready to go back because this takes a kind of concentration and commitment that we seldom expect from children although most can easily perform this task.
5. Cover the whole space. Leave no white paper showing through the shading lines. In fact, leave no lines. We are looking for "flat, smooth, and neat" shading. Again, reassure the students that this is only one way of doing it and wild and crazy scribbling has its place, just not here at this time.
6. Avoid rubbing your hand on the place you have just shaded. Encourage the students to develop a strategy whereby they don't have to rub their hand over the area already shaded. Start by having students work left to right. If students are using short strokes, they won't have to move their hand at all. It is also o.k. to turn the paper around so the hand is planted on the table just off the paper.

For most teachers without a lot of studio art experience, the best approach is to do the project at least once before teaching it. The bugs will be obvious to an experienced teacher, and it will give an opportunity for the teacher to bend and adjust the lesson to her own specific personality, interests, needs, strengths and weaknesses.

Students should make a value scale of at least 5 separate values. Seven or nine are better, but preschoolers can easily distinguish 3 separate values of light and dark. By third grade, most students can easily distinguish the nine-step scale. Notice that only the top set of squares have been used. If a student needs to start over, there are

extra rows of squares. Students should be encouraged to keep at it until they have some semblance of mastery of the idea of "value scale".

Related Projects:

For older students or more advanced students, the idea of value scale can be continued by rendering a value scale using other techniques than flat, neat shading.

(see illustration) Cross hatch is a logical next step. Now it can be seen why we want to reiterate that flat, neat shading is only one way to render value. After cross hatch, use techniques such as scribble, diagonal lines, and stipple (little dots). The teacher and the student should notice that these last four approaches to value differ fundamentally from traditional flat shading. The flat shading gets darker as the artist presses harder on the pencil, making a darker application of the graphite and thus, a darker value. The other techniques mentioned use a different idea. The darker value is made not by pressing harder but by letting less white paper show through. Lighter values have more white paper visible.

This brings us to the next way to render value. Instead of using pencil, use pen and ink. Pen and ink is an old and honorable medium in drawing. With today's fine marker pens and prisma color pens, stipple is easy and if a bit tedious, still fun for most young artists because it affords a kind of control otherwise unavailable without a lot of experience. Stipple is akin to additive sculpture because the artist can slowly and carefully build up the forms by adding dots and can change it even after the initial sketch is drawn. Stipple is an excellent way for students to learn control and start toward realism. Start students off with the value scale. To make it a bit more interesting have students write the word **VALUE** in hollow letters and use it as a value scale. Younger students may want to write their **FIRST AND LAST NAME** in the value scale style using stipple.

Another way to render a value scale regardless of which technique, is to create a single long shape across the page which gradually changes value but isn't cut into

incremental squares. The value gradation flows smoothly along from darkest to lightest without any interruptions.

After the idea of value has been thoroughly mastered, the next step is the use of monochromatic color value scales, but that is another lesson. Student mastery of the monochromatic value color scale is an obvious over expectation, but if bypassed, it will cause an observable deficit in the ability to use color in any novel or personal way and will make any realistic rendering and painting very difficult. It is the way light falls in values upon a surface which gives it the illusion of three dimensionality. It may seem that doing these studies is boring and tedious, so it would be appropriate to intersperse actual use of the idea in finished products such as still life, landscape, portrait, and design (lines, shapes, color, value, and texture that don't make a picture of something else). But keep coming back to the idea of value scales and monochromatic color scales.

How to Create the Illusion of Depth

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the techniques of perspective drawing by rendering a small pencil landscape using the five techniques that make things look **near** and **far**.

Materials: pencil and paper

Process: Show students some of the slides in this packet which demonstrate the way artists can create the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional surface. Some other simple landscapes which work well are *Stone City, Iowa* by Grant Wood, American, 1930 or the great pointillist painting, *An Afternoon at La Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat, French, 1884. These and many other works are easy to use to demonstrate the five ways that artists can make things look near and far. They are: **overlapping, size, detail, placement, and contrast.**

Overlapping is simply when one object is apparently in front of another because it blocks out part of the "far" object.

Size is the idea that a thing looks smaller the further away it is perceived to be. Detail suggests that one can observe the most minute details close up. For example, one could count the freckles on the nose of person if she were close. But if the person was far away, not only could you not count or see the freckles but you probably couldn't even see the face. Lack of detail therefore suggests distance. Placement is the notion that objects closer to the bottom of the picture are closer to the viewer and things higher in the format and closer to the horizon line are farther away. This one can be twisted around if the point of view is above the horizon line and there are other variations; but for the most part, children will understand how placement works.

Contrast is probably the most difficult to teach to the very young. Contrast simply means differences. High contrast is a lot of difference. This can be value contrast or color contrast or intensity contrast. Low contrast means little differences between color, intensity, and value. The illusion of depth can be exacerbated by using high contrast for near objects and low contrast for far away objects.

After these concepts have been pointed out in several art prints or slides, it might be good to take students outside to demonstrate how the phenomena works in reality. Do cars really get smaller as they drive away? Or, do they just look smaller? The word perspective means point of view and perspective drawing is drawing things the way they appear to be, not the way they really are. So, if an object is far away, it will appear to be smaller, and in "realistic perspective drawing," one would render it smaller. All kindergartners know it isn't really smaller, and they therefore don't draw using this trick or lie about reality. Young children draw cylinders as a circle with two parallel lines coming down tangent from the sides of the circle and the bottom of the cylinder as a perpendicular flat line attaching the two sides. It is the truth. That is how the cylinder is constructed. Unfortunately, that is not how it looks. We call this illusion of how things appear "realistic," and it is an important part of Trompe L'oeil. We also call it perspective drawing and painting.

Another way to expose students to these fundamental ideas is to pass around calendar landscape photographs. They are easily accessible and inexpensive and each student can choose the one that is most interesting. Go around the room and have students point out the different ways things are made to appear to be near and far.

After this preliminary exposure, students will draw a landscape using these five ideas. For very young students, it might be desirable to have them use overlapping, size, and detail. Wait until the next year for working with contrast and placement. Please be cautious because it is truly amazing how many first grade students can identify and render all five. To help young students draw "photo realistic" value landscapes, it is not inappropriate to let those who want use calendar photographs. The trick is get them not to copy a photo but to use several to create their own landscape composition. Another useful approach is to show them color photos and have the students make the shift to values of black and white. If students will make several quick thumbnail sketches from photographs and then put the calendar photos away and do their own finished rendering from their thumbnail sketches, the student is free to accept complete ownership of the work.

An important cue to give young students is to ask where the sun is in their landscape. Quickly assuring them that it does not have to be seen in the sky for it to be there somewhere. The sun is not always visible. Have students look out a north-facing window and ask: Where is the sun? Is it night? Or can it be daytime without the sun always being in every sky? Even if the sun itself is not visible in the landscape picture, the light of the sun is. Have students draw a very light arrow showing from which direction the sun is shining, and that will be an excellent guide for highlights and shadows.

When students have finished their drawings, have them check that they used at least as many values as are in the value scale they have already made. Have each student check to see if he has carefully used all six hints for neat shading. Let students evaluate themselves. However, if they want to short cut just to be finished, encourage them to continue but don't get adversarial and make art an enemy. There are ways to encourage completion of the task and an occasional respite or short break or a drink of water are appropriate.

Still Life

(after all these years)

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of "Still Life" by defining, organizing, and making a value rendering of a still life of their own construction.

Materials: Found objects to create an original still life, a series of drawing pencils (6H, 2H, HB, 2B, 6B and Tri-Rex are about the minimum), good drawing paper (sulfite white).

Process: After rendering a value scale using at least 4 shading techniques (stipple, cross hatch, scribble, diagonal lines, flat shading—[see "Value Scale" lesson](#)) and learning the 6 hints for "neat shading": 1. start light, 2. short strokes, 3. strokes going the same

direction, 4. work slowly and carefully, 5. cover the whole space with no paper showing through, 6. do not rub your hand over the space you have shaded ; and learning to render the value sphere and cast shadow; students will begin to bring interesting found objects to the classroom and discuss these objects in terms of elements: line, shape, value, color, and texture, and explain which element is most interesting to them and why. This can easily be done in the context of "Show and Tell".

The students should be exposed to a variety of still-life possibilities painted or drawn by successful artists such as Apples and Oranges, by Paul Cezanne, Enamel Sauce Pan, by Pablo Picasso, My Gems, by William Harnett, Channel Three, by Edith Roberson , Iris's and Sunflowers by Vincent van Gogh and Six Persimmons, by Mu Ch'i.

When students have collected enough found objects for their group work station or their individual work station, have them arrange the objects in an interesting and compelling manner. (see lesson on composition) It is a good idea to have students work in groups because there is a learning window available dealing with cooperation, compromise, and consensus. Make sure the tables are clear of all visual obstructions so students can see the still-life model clearly. If the room is lit by fluorescent tube lighting fixtures, turn down some of the lights so a shadow can be cast or bring in some inexpensive "clamp lights" to help highlight and define the shapes and cast a shadow for contrast. It may be a good idea to have the still life organized on a large sheet of white paper so the cast shadow is more visible.

Have students study the still-life objects carefully before starting to draw. Start drawing lightly. One can always make it darker but making it lighter is tough or impossible. Discourage erasing. They are not really erasers, they are smudge makers, paper wrinklers, and texture makers. Encourage students to draw the complete composition before starting to shade. Note: some young students tend to draw small pictures in the middle of the paper; find some strategy to get them to use the whole sheet. Try this: when you see them using only a small part of the paper format available, tear off a small corner of paper, and tell the students that if they want to draw so small they should probably use this small piece of paper.

Many of the visual aspects of a still life are similar to a landscape only smaller and more specific. Remind students of the 5 ways to make things look near and far (to create the illusion of depth), 1. overlapping, 2. size, 3. detail, 4. placement, 5. contrast. These same principles will help students do a better job of accurately rendering the illusion of depth in their still life. For the youngest students a discussion of background and foreground and horizon line will help them pass beyond the "flat format" approach to drawing. There is nothing wrong with the naive child schema of drawing, however if a student knows only one way to render a three dimensional world into the two dimensional illusion of drawing and painting then the student is unable to make a stylistic choice. This is frequently limiting and frustrating. If a child wants to use an abstracted stylistic approach that is just fine. . . if it is a choice and not due to the lack of choice.

When students have finished drawing the shape of the objects, have them lightly draw the shape of the shadows. When most of the contours are drawn, they should begin to shade in the objects. A realistic rendering of color is not an important consideration in value rendering. Good contrast is much more important and will result in a more distinct version of the still life. Students should check against their value scale to be sure they are using the widest range of values that seem appropriate. As students get older, more complex ideas and processes can be added to the lesson. By third grade, most students are able to grasp the idea of contrast, and it is an important idea in still-life drawing. Contrast means "Differences." High contrast means a lot of difference and low contrast means little difference. This is good vocabulary to use in discussing juxtaposed shapes of value. Low contrast is not a bad thing; however, most young students will be more satisfied with a starker more contrasty finished product.

When students have finished shading, an art gum eraser can be used to clean up any areas that appear to be too smudged. It is also a good idea to tighten up some of the shapes and edges with pencil work. Look at the whole thing. See how it all works together and then make any adjustments or additions that might seem appropriate. Most young students are in a rush to be "done". A successful strategy to get the student to keep working and thinking about the project is to answer the plaintive, "I'm all done", with, "Yes I can see that you are but look again and see if your art work is finished; it is easy to be 'done' before your art work is finished".

Talk about the difference between done and finished. Talk about what a person means when they say "I'm done." This usually means they are tired or bored and don't want to keep working on the project. It is also grammatically incorrect. This is frequently a problem of attention span and limited vision of what it means to "complete" a project. Use "completion" as a grading criteria which does not evaluate skill-level quality of the art work. This is an important life lesson which is easily taught in the context of an art lesson. Discuss the word "respect." Respect does not mean to treat someone nicely, it means to look (spect) again (re). If artists truly respect themselves and their art work, they will want to "look again." This is also a wonderful opening to introduce and teach something about criticism.

Evaluation and Exhibition: When the students have finished their work, have them apply the classroom critical model to their work. A simple critical model can be: Who did it?(artist) What does it look like?(description) How was it done?(technique) Do you like it—Why?(aesthetic evaluation). This is a simple critical model that can be applied to any work of art. This can be used to critique others or self. A written critique is a valuable learning tool and can be exhibited with the finished work as didactics. [see "Criticism Lesson."](#) The work can be exhibited in the classroom or elsewhere in the school with title cards that should include: Title, name of artist, and medium.

When exhibiting student work, display it in a distinct and professional manner. Whenever possible, mat and frame the work. Try to avoid the traditional "wall paper" approach to exhibiting student work. An optional exhibition idea might be to do an exchange exhibition with another classroom or even another school. see "Exhibition Lesson" in

MAKING THE MOST OF THE MUSEUM, September 1999.

Related Projects: Found object exhibition with written aesthetic appraisals, found object sculpture, historical research in the tradition of Still Life: Where did it come from? When did it start? Who has worked in this manner? Still life also can be painted or rendered in water color or colored pencil. Try colored pencil as a precursor to paint because it is mixable and can be used in a painterly manner without the technical drawbacks of children working with paint. The obvious next step after value rendering is to move on to Monochromatic color rendering.

Vocabulary: Still Life, render, value, sphere, cast shadow, reflected light, highlight, background, foreground, middle ground, found objects, contrast, monochromatic, shading (tint and shade), criticism, respect.

Bibliography: Artforms, Duane and Sarah Preble; Art: Do It!, A Handbook For Artists, Peter Meyer; Understanding Art, Lois Fichner-Rathus; Art In The World, Stella Pandell Russell, 91 Artists, Leon Jones; Art Is Elementary, Charles Stubbs; Scholastic First Dictionary; Drawing On The Right Side Of The Brain, Betty Edwards.
prepared by Joseph Germaine

Art—Making

Objective: Students will improve their drawing skills and will demonstrate an understanding of cast and core shadows and reflected light by drawing an object as realistically as possible so that it looks three dimensional.

An important drawing skill is creating a sense of three dimensions through the use of shadows and highlights. Unfortunately, most approaches for teaching this skill are rather boring, such as drawing a cylinder, a cone and a ball. Use the idea of trompe l'oeil to make this a fun activity. **You do not have to be good at drawing to teach this activity!**

Materials:

fruits or vegetables or old, simple-shaped containers

material with a strong texture, such as burlap

drawing paper

spotlights (the very cheap aluminum shop type lights work fine—you may have some or be able to borrow them

prismacolor, other colored pencils, drawing pencils, or pastels

Drawing pencils come in a wide variety of hardnesses. Get at least 4 different ones.

Drawing pencils are cheap and last a long time.

If you want to try Prismacolor but can't afford them for your class, try other brands.

Alpine District lists "oil pencils" in the district catalog. These pencils are Walnut Hollow brand and are similar to prismacolor but much cheaper. Each student does not need a full set. You may be able to go in with other teachers to purchase pencils and then share them.

If you teach elementary school, your students are not likely to take advantage of Prismacolor's properties—they can be laid down in as many as five layers so the resulting

colors can be subtle, rich, and varied. Therefore, buy cheaper colored pencils such as PRANG, which sell for \$4.95 for a set of twelve or \$4.48 for 6 or more sets from Nasco (1-800-558-9595). Your best bet on price is either the district catalog or an art supplies catalog such as Nasco.

Start by showing the slides from this packet and giving the students some information from the History of Trompe L'oeil. Then have them set up very simple still lifes using one object such as a piece of fruit on a piece of material or construction paper. Older or more experienced students can use more complex arrangements. Arrange the spots so they create strong shadows and highlights on the still lifes. If possible, you will want to turn out some of the room lights so the shadows will be clear. If your students have not worked with shadows much, help them identify the places on the objects and the surface they're sitting on where they see the cast shadow, the core shadow, highlight, and reflected light. (Appendix IV)

Challenge students to produce as realistic a drawing as possible. Because young students tend to work too quickly, it can help to tell them how long you will spend on this drawing it can also help to give them some criteria such as needing to clearly

see 7 values and both shadows and highlights, for drawing pencils, and places where they have used 3-5 layers of color for prismacolor.

You may want to structure the activity to be a contest like that mentioned in the History section. Display the finished work. (see exhibiting children's art in the September 30 Evening for Educator packet, for help with an appropriate exhibit.)

First, have students set up a simple still life such as for above, then have them take a little time to experiment with the drawing techniques below.

Hatching—use small lines whose edges establish a line, then vary the closeness and angle to create different values.

Cross hatching—cross two sets of lines to establish a line, then vary the closeness of the lines to create darks and lights.

Stippling—(use fiberpoint or jelly roll pens) use dots to create lines, and vary the closeness of the dots to create value.

If using colored pencils, have them experiment with layering colors.

Art—Making

Objective: Students will demonstrate their ability to draw realistically by making a drawing of a relief that looks three-dimensional, using the grisaille technique.

Grisaille is a drawing or painting that is completed with only one color, especially gray, and is designed to produce the effect of three dimensions.

Materials: For the variation:

drawing paper dark paper

drawing pencils or charcoal light-colored hard pastel or chalk (pastel Q-tips for blending smears less)

good erasers Q-tips

good erasers

Give the students a slab of oil-base clay and have them make a tile or architectural decoration like those mimicked by trompe l'oeil work. Then have students complete a grisaille drawing of the tile they made. Look at the activity on value for help. Display the drawings with the tiles.

If you want to shorten the time required for this activity, find some tiles or decorations for the students to draw and eliminate the step of making tiles.

Variation: If you have dark paper, let students use light-colored hard pastels or chalk (not oil pastels) to achieve a three-dimensional effect. This is a good exercise because it forces students to think about light and shadows in a different way and improves their understanding of drawing techniques.

Art

Objective: The students will learn to use one- and/or two-point perspective and will demonstrate their competency in a drawing(s).

Perspective is used to create the appearance of three-dimensions on a two dimensional

surface. An earlier activity focused on the techniques of **overlapping, size, detail, placement** and **contrast**. Using one and two-point perspective are not quite as easy but can be learned quickly. Even six-year olds can learn one-point perspective although you may prefer not to have them use rulers but just draw the lines freehand.

One-point perspective is based on the phenomenon that makes railroad tracks appear to converge at the horizon. To draw using one-point perspective, students will have to know what **horizon line, vanishing point, and receding parallel lines** are. First draw a horizon line on the blackboard, then indicate where your vanishing point will be, teaching the students the vocabulary. If you put the vanishing point straight ahead, it will be as if you and the viewers are right in the middle of the picture. Perfectly centered drawings tend to not be very interesting, so place the vanishing point to one side or the other. Then draw **receding parallel lines** from the bottom of the picture plane to the vanishing point.

Add a few details to make the parallel lines look like railroad tracks, fences, or just a sidewalk. You should explain that any other vertical or horizontal lines such as fence posts or cracks in the sidewalk will get closer together as they get closer to the vanishing point. Young children can just estimate the changes, but middle school or older students can learn and apply the correct formula.

After drawing one pole, draw a guide line from the bottom and top of the pole to the vanishing point. Next, draw a line from the middle of the pole to the vanishing point. This line will help you figure out where to put succeeding poles.

Next, decide how close you want the poles to be and draw in the second pole. Now draw a guideline from the closest top edge of the first pole so that it crosses the second pole at the guideline that bisects the height of the first pole. Draw a similar line from the far edge of the first pole through the guideline. Now draw the next pole using vertical lines that start from the intersections of the diagonal lines and the receding parallel at the bottom of the poles.

After the poles are established, erase the guidelines.

This method of producing perspective is rather stiff, but after completing several drawings, students will be able to apply the techniques in a more relaxed manner in creating more natural-looking and interesting scenes. Give students an assignment to create a finished drawing of simple one-point perspective. They can create a tile floor, railroad tracks, a fence, etc.

Next, introduce one-point perspective with cubes. Have students draw a horizon line and a vanishing point. Off to one side and below, they should draw a square. From the corners of the square, they now draw receding parallel lines to the vanishing point. Next, draw a smaller square behind the first square, using the parallel lines to establish the corners. Erase the lines that are overlapped. You now have a three-dimensional square or rectangle.

A fun way for students to practice one-point perspective is to see how many cubes they can fit on an 8-1/2" x 11" sheet of paper. Have the students make light lines for the guide lines so they can be erased. You will probably need to give a minimum number so those students who do not respond to the challenge still get enough practice. Students can get as many as one hundred boxes if the boxes are small.

Students can use this same technique to produce buildings in one-point perspective.

Two point perspective uses the same theory only there are two vanishing points on the horizon line. For two point perspective, the vertical closest to the viewer is drawn first and the guide lines are drawn from the vertical to each of the vanishing points. Other verticals can then be drawn

Angled lines such as the two that establish the left side of the roof must be parallel to each other.

Objects that do not reach all the way to the vanishing point still use the same guidelines as those that do. After working with perspective for a while, students should be able to apply the principles to less regular shapes such as a meandering path or a river.

Variation: When students have mastered perspective, they can create an M.C. Escher type interior with impossible shifts in perspective that nonetheless, look real. To make this wacky perspective, draw one side of an interior using the center as the vanishing point. Then turn the paper ninety degrees and draw another view, again using the same vanishing point. Do this two more times so that each side of the paper has a view oriented ninety degrees to those on either side. Include items like stairs, doors, windows, etc.

Art

Objective: The students will make a patterned kaleidocycle.

Trompe l'oeil is one art approach that "fools the eye." Other approaches use optical or geometric effects to fool or play with our visual preceptions, such as Op art or M. C. Escher's art. This activity involves creating kaleidocycles, a fun manipulative art project based on using triangles to form a moveable ring.

Show the students some examples of M. C. Escher's work so they can see how he manipulates visual space to achieve interesting effects and designs.

Then give each student a copy of the kaleidoscope pattern. (Print these on sturdy paper.) The students should color or draw in a design, filling all the triangles and leaving the parts that say "glue" bare. (If the students color on the parts to be glued, they rarely glue as easily because the surface is now slick.) Possible patterns or designs are to create a landscape in the four seasons, one season on each section, a pattern which evolves for each section, or a pattern that has a variation for each section.

When the design is finished, students should crease the paper carefully on the lines. To put the kaleidocycle together, put glue along the tabs on the long side. Put the kaleidocycle together around a broom handle or some other cylindrical object the right size. This gives you something to push against so the glue will stick. The start at the end which has the tabs, and crease the kalideidocycle so the tabs line against each other. Then crease at each line that is horizontal across the tube of the kaleidocycle, alternating directions so you have a shape like that below.

Now form the creased tube into a circle. Put glue on one of the flaps and glue it in place by holding two sides and touching one finger to the middle. Be careful not to use so much glue that it glues the tube ends together. You want only to glue the tabs to the corresponding section, otherwise, the kaleidocycle will not work well. Then turn the kaleidocycle until the unglued flap is up. To turn the kaleidocycle, press gently up or down on the center section and it will rotate. Now carefully glue the other flap, using a toothpick to place a small amount of glue on the flap and holding as before. This is the trickiest part and sometimes two people can do it better than one. You will want to practice a couple of times so you can do it well.

For larger kaleidocycles, enlarge the pattern onto 11 x 18" paper.

When the kaleidocycle is finished, it will look like the drawing on the below.

To make more durable kaleidocycles, copy the pattern on to cardstock. Before folding, students will need to score the lines. You will need rulers with one metal edge and either dull exacto knives or some other not-too-sharp knife such as a letter opener. Show

students how to lightly score the lines before folding them. If you make the kaleidocycles out of cardstock, you will need to use a strong glue such as white glue, tacky glue, or a glue gun. If you have adults such as aides who can help, the glue gun is best.

Information on Tessellations and Activities for Tessellations

A tessellation is a repeating pattern that fits together without gaps. The most common examples are tile floors or counters and brick walls. Artists sometimes use tessellating designs. The students may be familiar with the art of M. C. Escher, which has been reproduced on ties, t-shirts, posters etc., even if they don't know his name.

Escher himself became interested in tessellations after a visit to the middle east, where he saw many intricate tile floors. After he returned from his trip, he began experimenting with tessellating designs. You may want to show the students some examples of his and other artists' work that uses tessellating designs as part or all of the artwork.

In addition to books about M. C. Escher, you may find other books with helpful information about tessellations such as Introduction to Tessellations by Dale Seymour and Jill Britton, Dale Seymour Publications, Palo Alto, Ca., or M. C. Escher Kaleidocycles, Pomegranate Artbooks, Inc., available through art catalogs. Also, search the internet using "Tessellations" and "M. C. Escher" as key words.

Students may enjoy playing with and/or making their own tessellating puzzle. The puzzle can be part of or instead of the outlined activity. Puzzles are available at many educational toy stores. The DaMert Company of Berkeley, CA makes several versions of a puzzle called "Busy Beetles." The 64-beetle size sells for about \$12.

There are an infinite number of ways to create tessellations, but the easiest is to start with a grid of some kind, such as the following examples, which were created using the graphic program in WordPerfect. Another way is to use a grid of dots.

For a geometry lesson, you can choose a shape or shapes the students are learning about, such as scalene triangles, and have the students experiment to discover how scalene triangles fit together to make a tessellating design, as shown below.

These simple designs can become interesting patterns when an object is drawn within each shape. To make more complex shapes, simply take one shape which can tessellate and modify the shape, making each modification of the shape have an opposite or compensating modification.

Have the students sketch out their tessellating design or object. As shown below, fish can create a tessellating shape that fits the space of a rectangle made from two scalene triangles.

Students can make the final tessellating design by cutting out shapes from different colors of construction paper and gluing them to paper backing, or they can draw the shapes on

white paper and color them with any appropriate medium. Added details make the designs more interesting. If you have the computer capability and want your students to gain experience with computer graphics programs, have students scan in their designs and copy and paste to make a full-page tessellation, as shown below. This was scanned into Photoshop and inserted into a WordPerfect file.

Even black and white printers can be used to produce interesting variations of the tessellation. You could tie this activity into a lesson on the art element VALUE.

If you have a color printer, advanced students can explore all kinds of ways to vary their tessellations. Even exploring color possibilities on a color monitor—without printing the designs—can help students see, and therefore understand, the differing effects color can produce and the ways artists can play with visual perceptions.

Extension: Advanced students can make complex tessellations using complex shapes such as Escher uses and coloring the designs with pen and ink and colored pencil.

Art History

Objective: The students will increase their knowledge of photorealism by researching an artist and his art and making a short presentation to the class. Students will listen to other classmates' presentations.

In the 1970s, while Conceptualist artists were expanding their horizons by moving into performance art, earthworks, process art, and wordplay, other artists were returning not just to studio art, but to trompe l'oeil and illusionist painting and sculpture that had been so rejected by modernism. As a counter-revolutionary move, this return to a discarded art form was more shocking than any of the renegade conceptualists. Because many artists and the art critics gave no support to this move, the relationship developed between dealers and collectors, who were attracted to the art. Many members of the public were delighted to see mimetic art that used verifiable rendering skills that had not been seen for more than a generation.

Although the original move was thought of as a return to earlier art forms, most of the representational work was closely related to the high modernism it supposedly rejected. After all, representational art has to represent the society it comes from, so the photorealists, as indicated by their name, produced art representing a culture more at home with photographs than with the actual world.

H.H. Arnason. History of Modern Art. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1986. pp. 589-590

To introduce the activity, show the class some of the slide from this packet and some of the artworks of the photorealists. Provide the students with some background information. It will mean more to them if you have studied or can show them some modernist art from the period. Discuss briefly. You may want to ask questions such as the following: Why do you think the artists wanted to return to an earlier type of art? What are the main differences between the modernists, especially the conceptualists, and the photorealists? (You can just ask them to compare the artworks.) Why do you think the public liked their art? Why do you think the public has always seemed to prefer realist or mimetic art?

After discussing, divide the students into groups, or have them do the activity as individuals (for secondary). Each group or student will choose an artist and research the artist and his or her artworks. Students should prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on that artist. Students should include the following information: Artist's name, dates, place of birth and where lived. Style of art, major artworks, distinguishing features of artworks. What makes the artist a realist or photorealist as well as what sets the artist's work apart from other similar artists? The following is a list of artists you should be able to find information on.

Chuck Close
Duane Hanson
Richard Estes
Antonio López-García
Claudio Bravo
Don Eddy
Janet Fish
Ralph Goings
Audrey Flack
Malcolm Morley
Robert Cottingham
Alex Katz
William Bailey
Alfred Leslie
Jack Beal

Sources:

Scholastic Arts magazine—this magazine publishes issues featuring particular artists or art styles. Nebo District does not have it in the IMC, but other districts may. Many art teachers subscribe and may be willing to loan you copies. You may also be able to get a subscription for your school and then share the magazines among the classes. If you are interested in subscribing, the address is:

Scholastic Art Inc.
2931 East McCarty Street
P.O. Box 3710
Jefferson City, MO. 65102-3710
1-800-631-1586

Look for these past articles:

Chuck Close: Working with Portraits, February 1995

Janet Fish: Working with Reflected Light, March 1996

Books have been written about some of these artists and the others will be featured in almost any books about modern art, photorealism, or 20th century realism. The Arnason book has several paragraphs about each of the artists in the list above.

H.H. Arnason. History of Modern Art. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1986

Here is a list of Photorealist artists and a website where teachers can find images by each of them.

<http://artcyclopedia.com/history/index.html>

Duane Hanson (1925-) American sculptor
Ralph Goings (1928-) American Painter

Audrey Flack (1931-) American painter/sculptor
Malcolm Morley (1931-) British/American painter/sculptor
Robert Bechtle (1932-) American painter
Idelle Weber (1932-) American painter
Richard McLean (1934-) American painter
Robert Cottingham (1935-) American painter
Richard Estes (1936-) American painter
John Salt (1937-) British painter
Chuck Close (1940-) American painter
Ben Schonzeit (1942-) American painter
Don Eddy (1944-) American painter
James Torlakson (1951-) American painter
John Baeder American painter
Charles Bell American painter
John Kacere American painter
Janet Fish American painter

Art/Science

Objectives: **1.** Students will practice and improve their drawing skills by rendering an insect as realistically as possible. **2.** Students will learn the parts of an insect and will demonstrate that learning by accurately naming the parts and by drawing an accurate rendition.

One story about trompe l'oeil tells of an apprentice, the artist Giotto, who painted a fly on the end of the nose of a man in a painting. The next day, when the master came to work on the painting, he kept trying to brush the fly off the painting. Tell the students the story, and show them some trompe l'oeil works, such as *Channel Three*, by Edith Roberson. Assign students to draw an insect and see if they can make it life-like enough to fool a viewer. Use actual insects to draw. Another teacher may have some insects, or students can catch their own. You can make this part of a science lesson on insects or on specific kinds of insects, such as beetles. Make jars for catching bugs in by putting a layer of cotton or batting on the bottom of the jar and adding alcohol to it. If you cannot use actual insects, find good-quality photographs such as from an encyclopedia for the students to look at.

If your students are too young to produce good drawings of insects, either let them do the best they can—the point is not to make artwork that looks like a professional artist but to practice drawing skills so they get better—find some line drawings the students can shade or color to look more realistic. Encyclopedias may have good color photographs to refer to and old encyclopedias, purchased at thrift stores, are a good source for line drawings of insects.

Art—Perceiving

Objective: Students will practice drawing skills and combining drawing with collage to make a unified artwork.

Some artworks that utilize trompe l'oeil techniques further fool the eye by combining real and drawn objects. Give students an assignment to bring some found objects to class. These may be natural objects such as sticks, weeds, or small rocks, or they can be two-dimensional items such as photographs, stamps, reproductions of artworks or photographs, parts of cardboard food containers, etc. The students will plan out an artwork that incorporates the objects with drawings of the objects. For 2-D items, the piece can be cut in two and the missing part drawn onto the backing.

Or, create a drawing of a cartellino such as used in trompe l'oeil works. ([See History of Trompe L'oeil](#)) This is a small label, generally bent, creased, and even with a corner bent back or peeling back.

Art—Perceiving

Objective: Students will learn about faux marbling and woodgraining and will have a chance to try one or the other.

If your class has not already completed an activity from this packet, show them the slides and give them a little information about trompe l'oeil art. Then introduce them to the area of faux finishes.

Background Information: Faux finishes date back as far as the Egyptian pyramids, which have fake wood graining inside. Some tile floors from Pompeii could be considered decorative finishes: they use different colored tile to create the effect of the tiles being at different depths. The finishes were much used during the height of trompe l'oeil architectural work. Wood graining and faux marbling were brought to America by immigrants who were skilled artisans in their own countries. These decorative techniques were in great demand in America because people wanted their homes, churches, and public buildings to look appropriately elaborate. Marble and hardwoods were either not available or prohibitively expensive, so the ability to create the look of those surfaces was a valuable commodity.

Brigham Young, who was responsible for much of the early settlement of this area was a woodgrainer by trade, as were other pioneers. Many examples of faux marbling and woodgraining can be found in historic buildings throughout Utah.

Decorative finishes are making a comeback in everything from do-it-yourself kits, to classes, to highly paid professionals. Classes are taught locally, by traveling teachers, and are advertised on the internet. One school is starting an advanced class in Italy, the site of some of the world's best marble and stone, which students will learn to reproduce in paint. One of the best-known faux artists, Martin Alan Hirsch, says "Creating detail, style and color is what allows the magic of decorative finishing to take place. Decorative art

allows things to appear to be what they are not. It bridges the gap between reality and illusion."

Today, people continue to use decorative art to enhance the appearance of their houses with fake marble columns, floors, and details. The process has been popular on both the East and West coasts, but is just gaining momentum in the central and intermountain states. These same techniques are being used to fake other too expensive or impossible effects. Hirsch recently recreated the wall of a 17th century Irish castle for a home. He used 11 layers of drywall, plaster, and concrete. Another project required him to make a wall resemble the woodgraining on old fishermen's plank boards with Old World plaster exposing faux brick and wood patches.

Although some people may find such "decorations" absurd and too ironic—paying lots of money to make your walls look really old, a particular kind of snobbery—Hirsch points out that his surfaces last forever and are not just washable, but scrubbable. Some take a light-hearted view of faux surfaces, finding them amusing. Hirsch recently used the patented "Faux Effects Decorative Finishing System" to finish country western singer Reba McEntire's home.

You can visit the site of the Faux Finishing School at <http://www.fauxfinish.com/FauxFinish/daythree.htm> From there, you can go to various pages that tell about the school, show examples of work, feature the work of Hirsch and show his business. The site has lots of good images.

After giving your students some background information on faux finishes, let them try woodgraining. You may also be able to combine this activity with a visit to an historical building or a modern building that has examples of faux finishes. Another possibility is to get an amateur or professional to come give a demonstration or help with the activity. (See page III, Appendix for specific instructions and activities)

Art—Expressing (Aesthetics)

Objective: The students will discuss the mimetic theory of aesthetics as demonstrated by trompe l'oeil art.

If your class is not yet familiar with aesthetic theories, explain them briefly, focusing on mimetic.

Aesthetic theories are ways people seek to define what art is and to establish some benchmark against which to measure artworks when judging them. These theories change to reflect societies current values as well as to keep pace with the art world. The mimetic theory states that art should look like, or mimic nature. The standard for artworks is how closely they reproduce the objects or scene depicted.

To help the students understand that art can be examined on the basis of many different ideas, introduce several other theories such as the expressivist—art should express an

emotion or idea. (Examples are van Gogh, Munch, and Chagall) The formalist—art is most concerned with the elements of art and how they are arranged according to the principles of art. (Examples are Piet Mondrian and Josef Albers)

In addition to explaining the mimetic theory of aesthetics, give the students information from the History of Trompe l'oeil, including the information that true trompe l'oeil artwork intends nothing more than to render nature so convincingly as to fool viewers' eyes, at least momentarily. Then show the class the slides from this packet and have the class discuss the artworks in relationship to the mimetic approach. The following list of questions may help spark the students' thinking:

1. Which artworks are most strictly mimetic?
2. What makes some of the other artworks not strictly mimetic? (If students do not identify the titles as one indicator of additional meaning, ask the students about *Channel Three*. Why do you think the artist named her painting for a Television channel that doesn't exist? What else might she have been referring to in the title?)
3. What other theories of aesthetics might be applied to some of the artworks and why?
4. Is mimicking nature enough to make an object art for you? Why or why not?
5. How is mimetic art different from photographs, or is it?

Art —Expressing/Contextualizing

Objective: The students will demonstrate their understanding of trompe l'oeil art by discussing or by writing a short critique of a trompe l'oeil artwork.

Art Criticism uses the term criticism in a somewhat different way than the word is usually used by itself. Criticism has, all too often, come to mean negative comments. Art Criticism is generally positive, although there are exceptions, because art critics tend to write about artworks they like. Donald Kuspit says "it is the critic's task to articulate the effects that the work of art induces in us." Art Criticism is just an effective way to talk about art. Use one of the two following approaches to critiquing an artwork with your class.

AN ELEMENTARY WAY TO TALK ABOUT ART

A Four-Step Critical Model

The following is a list of four questions for discussing and evaluating art. These questions can be used by any grade level.

1. What do you see?

The students should tell you what they see in the artwork. For example: a yellow flower, a cowboy, lots of blue, geometric shapes, fuzzy lines.

Some of the responses will identify concrete objects like "a yellow flower." Ask the students questions that will help them realize the objects are represented by color, shape,

form, etc., and are not really the objects. For example: Can you smell this flower? Why is it so flat? I've never seen a flower this flat. I've never seen a horse that stands this still. Is the horse dead?

You can have fun with the questions and comments as long as your tone is not critical or negative. Soon, you should be getting answers like "big black lines," etc.

2. Who made it?

Who is the artist? If the students don't know the artist, give them some biographical information and tell them anything interesting you know about the artist.

3. How was the artwork made?

Have the students tell you all they know or can guess about how the piece was made, For example, an oil painting on canvas or a bronze cast of a sculpture. Go into as much detail as seems appropriate. You may want to add to what the students know.

4. Did you like the artwork? Why?

The students can share their feelings about the meaning of the artwork. Encourage students to share not only their feelings and ideas but also to think about why they have a particular response.

The above questions will provide students of any age a framework for talking about art. If you use the questions several times during the year, the students will become familiar enough with the questions to use them on their own.

Criticism: The following model is a more complex approach based on the book Criticizing Art by Terry Barrett.

1. Have students **Describe** the artwork using "lively" words.
Students should describe the subject matter, the medium, and the form.

2. Students should **Interpret** the artwork, discuss what the art is *about*.
Students should use evidence from the artwork to support their interpretation.

Terry Barrett calls interpretation "the most important activity of criticism."(p. 45) Barrett suggests the following ideas are guidelines when interpreting artworks: (these ideas may help guide you in leading a discussion with the students.)

Phrase arguments persuasively.

Look for interpretations that are grounded with evidence, account for what is in the artwork, are relevant, and tell more about the artwork than the critic.

Use your feelings as guides.

Allow different, competing, and contradictory interpretations of the same artwork.

Recognize that your interpretations will probably be based on your view of the world. Aim for interpretations that are reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative and also are coherent, inclusive and that correspond to the artwork. Remember that an artwork is not necessarily about what the artist wanted it to be about. Do not become a spokespersons for the artist. Realize that interpretations should invite us to see for ourselves and to continue on our own.

3. Judge the art using informed, critical arguments that appraise, give reasons and criteria. Maintain a distance between what you like and what is valuable. (For example, Edith Roberson's work *Channel Three* is a good piece of art. It is well crafted as a trompe l'oeil work but is also imaginative. The work makes me laugh and makes me think because she has included items like the floating jelly beans that make me question what my reality is.)

Activity: Show the class the slides from this packet and/or other examples of trompe l'oeil artwork. After introducing them to trompe l'oeil art, discuss one or more pieces using a critical model. (You will need to give the students some information about trompe l'oeil art because one of the criteria they will use to evaluate the artwork(s) is how the artwork rates as a trompe l'oeil or mimetic artwork.)

Variation: For a class that is old enough to write at least short sentences, the activity can include a written critique. These can be short and simple or longer and as complex as the students' understanding allows.

Art—Making, Expressing

Objective: Students will create a drawing using an animal of their choice in an unusual setting.

Activity: Show the slides of Gregory L. Abbott's painting *Sacred Cows of Art History: At the End of Innocence* and Sam Wilson's *Crow-Crowed or I Myself*. Let students describe what they see in these paintings and discuss what is unusual about them. Have them talk about what they think the artist was trying to say or what impression they get from these paintings. Let them talk about their reaction to them.

Let them share some ideas of what they would do if they were going to create a picture like these. Guide them into developing an idea that would say something about themselves, express a feeling, or make a statement about life, etc. Have them write a statement about what idea they would like to express. Then have them choose an animal and a setting they think would best suit that idea and draw a fool-the-eye picture to express their idea.

Conclusion: Let students share their art and discuss their feelings about the project. Also let them discuss their attitude about the Wilson and Abbott paintings. (Show the slides again.)

Note: This lesson should be fun and give the students a chance to do something humorous and silly. Exhibit student work if possible.

Art/Healthy Lifestyles

Objective: The students will learn about a community project done in Frederick, Maryland, and will create their own project which utilizes their art skills and necessitates the students working together.

The Story of Community Bridge

The city of Frederick, Maryland, built a bridge as a community project. The bridge is built of concrete but is a huge trompe l'oeil artwork. The bridge has painted stones (3,000, all different), a bronze gate, a sculpture in a niche, a marble fountain, a perspective painting, more than 100 carvings representing community ideas, and many minor illusions such as ivy growing on the walls. The Community Bridge project has a wonderful website with facts about the bridge, the story of the bridge, the bridge builders, features and secrets, a muralist's message, a section on the painted illusions, and a place where readers can submit their own suggestions for symbol designs. All the sections have visuals. The address is: <http://bridge.skyline.net/facts/>

After another art activity about trompe l'oeil art, show the students the website and discuss the project. Ask the students why the project has become so successful. Then decide on a class project. The following list contains a few suggestions:

- 1.** If your school has brick walls, make rectangles or squares the size and approximate color of an individual brick. Have students sketch out a simple idea for a carved design for a brick. Then the students should make a colored drawing which includes some shading to create depth. Attach the drawings to bricks around the school. If possible, do this after school or while everyone else is in class. Watch the reactions of the students from other classes.
 - 1a.** If your class cannot draw well enough to create something close to a trompe, have them find photos of simple objects or designs they can cut out of magazines and glue those to the brick-shaped papers.
- 2.** Get permission to use a section of sidewalk at the school and create a trompe l'oeil. You may want to look at examples of trompe l'oeil artworks.
 - Make a tile floor that appears to have tiles of different heights such as was found in Pompeii.
 - A section of sidewalk that has drawings of objects that might have been dropped by other students such as gum, candy wrappers, small toys, homework papers, etc. See "The Unswept Dining Room", a Roman mosaic by Heraclitus from the 2nd Century AD. This mosaic is a copy of a Greek original by Sosos of Pergamon

from the 3rd century BC. (Because this mosaic is so important, historically, photos are included in almost every book about trompe l'oeil.)

Students could also combine drawings of objects with real objects. Document the artwork by taking photographs or by filming with a video camera. You may be able to video tape other students' reactions to the artwork to see if any of them are fooled by the trompe.

To make the trompe l'oeil, use colored chalk, or, create the trompe on gray paper the size of a section of sidewalk and glue it down with something easy to remove such as sticky tape or the sticky squares made for hanging posters.

3. A similar project to the one above could be made and put up on a wall in the school. Common trompes create illusions of doors where there are none, disguise doors that are there, create windows with views, or niches with some kind of artwork or object in them.

4. Have students think of a symbol that means community to them, just as the schoolchildren and townspeople did for the Frederick bridge. Students should draw the symbols. Create a bulletin board of the symbols, including a short explanation of what each symbol means. You could focus the symbols on some other idea such as what you want your school to be like. If possible, place the display where other classes can see it. You may want to get other classes involved in the project so that it becomes a unifying experience just as the bridge has been for the city of Frederick.

Geometry

Objective: Students will demonstrate their ability to apply geometry to real world situations by calculating and sketching the proportions for part of a trompe l'oeil mural.

Show the class the slides from this packet, and tell the students a little of the history of trompe l'oeil, including its use in creating murals, doorways, etc. that opened up rooms or provided decorative accents. Then divide students in groups and let them choose whether to design a partway open door, a cupboard with doors partway opened, or an archway. Show the class some examples from books or the internet. Have students choose the perspective they want to create—the position of the viewer. Then they should quickly sketch out their idea. Then they must use geometry to make the perspective accurate. They can use a grid or sheets of graph paper to create the design. Have students draw the finished design on large sheets of paper. Students need to understand that trompe which rely on perspective will only look realistic from one certain perspective so they must choose the viewer position with care.

<http://users.senet.com.au/~rfrancis/techniqu.htm#perspective>

An example of a perspective drawing and the finished mural, based on the drawing.

Literature:

Objective: students will explore and learn how to use descriptive language to invoke the sense of a particular place.

Show the class the slides of Charles Peterson's *Design for Drop-Curtain* and Joseph Kerby's *A Bit From the Studio of William C. Morris* from this packet and give them a little history about trompe l'oeil. These artists tried to visually reproduce the scenes as accurately as possible. On the other hand, writers must use words to create a scene in the reader's mind. In addition to fiction, many kinds of writing rely on vivid images to communicate a message. Have the students identify ways writers use language to make readers "see" ideas, places, people, and things.

Make a list of descriptive words on the board. Do not limit the list to adjectives since other parts of speech often convey as much as adjectives do. Caution students to choose their words with care. You may want to read some good examples to the students before they start or you may not want to avoid the students' copying. Give an example or two of how too many or the wrong words can create the opposite effect of what's intended.

Assign students to do one of the following, or choose your own version:

1. Find a place they have a response to—this doesn't have to mean they respond positively—and describe the place. They should be accurate, but try to convey the whole effect of the place, not just the objective details.
2. First, write an objective description of the place. Then, flesh out the description using similes, metaphors, active verbs, colorful language, etc. Have some of the students share their two descriptions with the class.

Variation: Start activity as above, but concentrate on how limiting what you include in both visual art and writing can be more expressive than including all the details.

After showing the two slides of trompe l'oeil work, show the students several other slides or posters of artworks that are more expressive and less detailed. (Past Evenings for Educator packets and the poster sets have appropriate artworks.) Then read or have them read some poetry or excerpts from fiction where the writing is not flowery. The following is an example of writing that is spare, yet it evokes images and feelings.

From the poem *Summer Comes*
by Edith Agnew

Winter was long this year,
Pushing its end far into spring;
And I was never done
Pulling our wood from under frozen snow,
Melting the river ice for us
And all the animals to drink.
In March, the baby lambs
Slept by the kitchen stove—
Died if I found them late,

In the cold wind.
Maybe the moons were mixed and made mistake,
Keeping the summer back.

Sara and John E. Brewton. Sing a Song of Seasons. Macmillan Co. New York: 1955

Find one or two examples that are suitable for your class and have the students read the poem or section of prose several times. Then discuss the poem, having the students identify which phrases are particularly evocative for them and why.

Then assign students to write a short description of a place, person, season, experience, etc. that uses spare language to evoke images, ideas, emotions, and/or memories in readers. The description can be in the form of poetry or prose. Have students who wish to share their descriptions.

Social Studies/Art —Contextualizing

Objective: The students will make connections between art and history by examining the context for trompe l'oeil art work.

Show the class the slides of the artworks in this packet and if possible, some current work from the internet. ([See History of Trompe L'oeil for sources](#))

Share whatever amount of information you feel is appropriate with your students about the history of trompe l'oeil. Identify the major points—when a particular style came into practice, when certain kinds of trompe l'oeil went out of style. Now look at a time line. See if the students can identify world events that might have affected the public's response to trompe l'oeil. If possible, look at an art time line or one that includes the major art movements. How did the popularity of trompe l'oeil relate to those art movements? What can we postulate about differences in the art world's perceptions and preferences and the general public's? What are some possible reasons the art world and the general public do not always agree?

Language Arts

Objective: The students will learn about the literary device, a conceit, and will demonstrate that learning by writing a conceit of their own.

Show the class some of the slides from this packet and introduce them briefly to trompe l'oeil art. Then introduce a similar written technique—Conceits. These elaborate or strained metaphors or comparisons have been created by poets such as Ezra Pound in *The Bathtub*, and Edward Taylor in *Wasp*, but were most commonly used by the Cavalier Poets. This group of English lyric poets was associated with the court of Charles I, and they were called "sons of Ben" because they followed the tradition of Ben Jonson. The following is a brief introduction of four poets: Richard Herrick, Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, and John Suckling.

Richard Herrick (1591-1674) was a clergyman who was given a country living when he wanted to be near court. Initially depressed, he became fascinated with the countryside and used its images in his poetry. His best-known poems are "To the Virgins Who Make Much of Time" (which became a very popular song), "Corinna's Gone A Maying," "To Daffodils," and "To His Angry God."

Thomas Carew (1595-c.1639) was the first of the Cavalier poets and probably the best. He was a courtier of Charles I and was known as a profligate and a hedonist. He is supposed to have repented of his dissolute behavior on his deathbed. Carew's work shows the influence of Donne as well as of Jonson and embraces conceits of unusual richness. His best-known works are "Ask Me No More Where Jove Bestows" and "Mediocrity in Love Rejected."

Richard Lovelace (1618-1658) was known at court for his elegance, his handsome physique, and his aristocratic chivalry. He was a passionate Royalist who was imprisoned twice during the civil wars and who died penniless in a London slum. His poetry was uneven, but he is remembered for "To Althea From Prison," "To Lucasta, Going Beyond the Seas," and "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars."

Sir John Suckling (1609-1642) was known for his wit, vivacity, extravagance and love of gaming. He was implicated in the plot to free the earl of Strafford from the Tower of London in 1641, and he died under somewhat mysterious circumstances in France. He, like Thomas Carew, was influenced by John Donne. His best work includes the poem "Why so Pale and Wan, Fond Love" from the play *Aglaure* (1637) and "Session of the Poets."

After giving the students some historical background and having them read and discuss some examples of conceits, assign students to write a conceit of their own. Allow students to share their conceits with the class. Ask for their response to this particular poetic device: Do they like or dislike conceits and why?

Information on the individual poets was taken from Benét's Reader's Encyclopedia. New York: HarperPerennial, 1987.

Language Arts

Objective: Students will learn what onomatopoeia is and demonstrate that understanding by creating their own word to replicate a particular sound.

If you have not done any of the art activities about trompe l'oeil art, you will need to give the students a little background information while you show them the slides from this packet.

After viewing the slides, tell the class you are going to learn about a language device which has some similarities to trompe l'oeil artwork. Read one or more poems with examples of onomatopoeia to the class.

You may want to ask the students if they can pick out what device the poets have used that is similar to what the artists have done. Then choose several of the examples of onomatopoeia and ask the students to respond to the words. What is the writer doing with those words? Write "onomatopoeia" on the board and have students practice saying it. Then have students create their own word to replicate a sound. Have students write a sentence using their word. Encourage the students to have fun sharing their words and sentences with the class.

Language Arts

Objective: Students will make up fool-the-ear sentences using words that have more than one meaning.

Activity: Show several of the slides from the packet and discuss some of the ways the artists have fooled our eyes with their art. Talk to the students about the English language; about how English has many words and phrases that have multiple meanings. These words and phrases can create fun plays on words that can fool our ears. Read the following sentences and ask the students if they feel as if their ears are being fooled.

- If you give me your hand, I can give you a hand.
- Frankly, Frank was less than frank.
- You can make up your own make-up if you can make up your own mind.

Make a list of words that have more than one meaning and have the students create their own fool-the-ear sentences.

Conclusion: Let students share their sentences and comment on their feelings about the activity. Did they enjoy playing with words? Did they feel as if they were having a creative experience? etc.

Language Arts

Objective: Students will write a short play with a surprise ending.

Teacher preparation: Find a play or story with a surprise ending to read to the class such as the "Paper Bag Princess".

Note: This activity may take several sessions and some discussion of Trompe l'oeil style of art. (See "Introduction to Trompe l'oeil" on the internet)

Activity: Show the Joseph Kerby slide *Design for Drop-Curtain Park City Opera House 1890* Ask the students to describe what they see and discuss what is odd or surprising about the painting.

Discuss some stories or plays they have read or seen that have surprise endings, or read

the students a play or story that has a surprise ending. Talk about why the ending is a surprise. You also can find stories by O. Henry, which all have surprise endings.

Make a list of the things that create a surprise.

Form cooperative groups and have them write a short play with a surprise ending using the techniques they have listed.

Conclusion: Let the students perform their plays and get criticism from their classmates. Have them revise their plays and give a second performance. Let them make comments on how they feel about the experience.

Variation: Have students write a short short story with a surprise ending. Allow students to share their stories with the class.

Language Arts

Objective: Students will write a description of one of the paintings in the "Fool the Eye" packet and share their descriptions with the class.

Teacher preparation: This activity may take some preliminary training for younger grades or if students are unskilled at writing descriptions.

Activity: Show the six slides in the "Fool the Eye" packet. Discuss some of the things the artists have done to fool our eyes, by either making something look real that isn't or by creating a impossible illusion. Have the students pick the painting that is their favorite. Have them make a list of the things they see in the painting. When they have made a good list of the things in the painting, inform them they are to write a description of the painting, but they cannot use any of the words on their list.

When the writing is complete, let as many as would like or as many as time allows, share their descriptions with the class. Discuss the differences.

Conclusion: Let the students comment on the experience. Have them consider whether or not they think writing their descriptions took as much work as it took the artist to paint the picture. Give them a chance to see the connections in the creative process no matter what the medium.

Drama/Dance

Objective: Students will learn about and experiment with ways to convey character, age, social class, etc. through the use of body language and movement.

Show the class the slides from this packet. If you haven't done an art activity on trompe l'oeil, give the students background information from the History of Trompe L'oeil. Then explain to students that in dance and drama, masks, make-up, and costumes can all be used to create an illusion. However, another way illusion is conveyed is through body

language and movement. You may want to have students observe someone who has something distinctive about them.

Then have students choose a character either from a play or from their imagination. They should explore ways to create the illusion of this person through the way they move and the body language they use. For young children, give small groups an assignment to come up with ways to create a character such as an old man, a shy girl, an athlete, a very bossy person. Then have groups made up of one person from each of the individual groups interact, trying to maintain their character.

For an emphasis on drama, use characters from actual plays and explore ways they move and interact with the other characters. If possible, produce a short play so the students have a chance to use what they have learned. The plays do not need to be serious drama. Young classes can act out a couple fairy tales (so all students get to play a part). Students can explore the movement of characters such as Little Red Riding Hood, her grandmother, the wolf, and the woodsman, or Hansel and Grettle, their father and stepmother, and the witch. All these individuals have distinctive characteristics that can be conveyed effectively through movement and body language.

Extension: Add costumes and make-up to the activity. If possible, have someone come to the class who can show the students fun techniques for stage make-up such as how to create wrinkles or to apply fake beards. Students may also be interested in ways stage make-up is used to create the look of a normal person.

Drama/Music/ Science

Objective: Students will learn about creating Foley effects and will each discover or create a way to make a specific sound effect. You may choose to include the physiology of hearing in the activity.

Although recording techniques and technology have improved immensely during the years of movie production, certain sound effects are still created artificially because the directly recorded actual sound either doesn't sound real enough—even though it is—or because the sound needs to be put in after the filming has finished. Some of the sounds are taken from recordings made and stored as part of a sound library, but others are created by Foley Artists who discover and invent ways to create sounds our ears register as appropriate for specific actions.

Show the class some of the slides from this packet and talk briefly about how the artists have created visual illusions. Then introduce the idea of sound illusions. You may want to show a short segment of a video that has Foley sound effects. (Animated films will, of necessity, have to have sound effects created for them.)

Have students each choose a particular sound such as a person walking on a metal roof or a table and dishes crashing to the floor and explore ways to create the illusion of that sound. You may want to allow students time to work on their sound effect at home and then bring what they need to reproduce the sound to school. Another possibility is to

collect some items that could be used and bring them to class. When students have discovered a way to create their sound illusion, have the class share them with the audience closing their eyes and trying to figure out what the sound is. Have fun.

This lesson can be related to science by including information on how we hear and interpret sounds.

If your class is producing a play or program, find some sound effects you can incorporate in the production. List the students who create the sounds on the program as Foley Artists.

Drama

Objective: The students will explore ways of using visual clues by choreographing and performing mime.

Show the class one or more of the slides from this packet and discuss how the artists have painted in trompe l'oeil (fool the eye) style. Talk about other ways we "fool the eye" such as with magic, computer simulation, cameras, and drama. We also make use of visual clues, just as trompe l'oeil artists do, with mime. Ask the students how mime fools or uses the eye? How is mime similar to these paintings? How different? Make sure you include a specific definition of what mime is and is not in your discussion. If possible, show the students an example of mime on video, or have local high school or college students come demonstrate.

Then have the students choreograph and perform their own mime acts for the class. You may want to assign groups or allow the students to choose whether to do a solo mime or group mime, and with whom. If you have had older students demonstrate mime, you may be able to get them to coach the students. If the performance is very successful, you may want to perform for one or more other classes as well, or have your class teach a younger class.