

Exploring the Work of Deaf Artists

by
Julia
Robinson



Preface

This resource document is written in honour of all of the artists from Robarts School for the Deaf – students and teachers alike. Pride and self-awareness emerged from the artwork created by the many talented individuals at our school. This inspired me to search for new and innovative teaching methods and ideas. Art history and studio techniques became two invaluable starting points for many classes but one element was missing – the inclusion of Deaf artists and their work. The vision for this resource document grew from frustration during research and the countless hours spent trying to locate Deaf artists, their agents, or work in museums or private collections.

Julia Robinson

Acknowledgement

This resource was developed through generous support from the Janice Thomson Memorial Grant program that commemorates the goals Janice Thomson achieved as an educator. (See www.curriculum.org for more details.)

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Introduction

Art is a universal language. Differences in customs, values, language, and culture do not limit our appreciation and enjoyment of the arts from all over the world.

Art has been created by every country and culture – both past and present. These creations tell us of both the culture and individuals that produced them.

Environment, experiences, heritage, and lifestyle determine the cultural standards of individual groups. For example, in India, China, and Asia, the native arts have been influenced by their worshipping practices that are based upon nature and natural phenomena. In contrast, most of the early European artworks are based on the activities, teachings, and beliefs of the Christian Church. Although there are stark differences in style and composition, both can be equally enjoyed and appreciated by individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Deafness and Deaf People

The use of terminology related to deafness and deaf people is a complex issue and varies from individual to individual. In recent years, the word “Deaf” has been written with a capital ‘D’ when referring to members of a specific socio-linguistic and cultural group – the Deaf community. The capitalized “Deaf” is used when referring to individuals who belong to and embrace both the culture and community that is defined by the use of American Sign Language (ASL), and affiliations with related organizations, events, and disciplines. The word “deaf” with a lower-case ‘d’ is used to describe the medical/audio-logical deafness of an individual.

History of Deaf Culture

To understand the growth of Deaf culture in North America it is important to have a clear grasp of its history and growth. The history of Deaf people is strongly reflected in the history and evolution of the education system. The education of Deaf and hard-of-hearing people has been laden with controversy. Educators have argued over the best strategies and/or use of language for teaching Deaf students for decades.

1760 – First Deaf School

Abbé de l'Épée was the founder of the first school for Deaf students in Paris, France. He modified the native sign language used by the French Deaf into an artificial "Signed French." This system used spoken French word order in combination with invented grammatical markers for word endings.

1817 – First North American School for the Deaf

Thomas H. Gallaudet and Laurent Clerc opened the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (now known as the American School for the Deaf). Opened in Hartford, Connecticut, the school used an artificial sign system developed by the two founders.

1830 – ASL as the Language of Instruction

The artificial sign system developed by Gallaudet and Clerc was dropped and the American School for the Deaf adopted the natural sign language, used by Deaf people in the United States – American Sign Language (ASL), as the preferred language of instruction. For several decades, ASL was used and flourished in most schools for the Deaf. This period between 1830 and 1870 has been referred to as the "renaissance period" in the history of Deaf education.

1831 – First Canadian Deaf School

The first school for Deaf students in Canada was opened in Quebec City.

1858 – First Ontario Deaf School

Toronto was the site for Ontario's first Deaf school. In 1864, this school was relocated to Hamilton and then moved to Belleville, in 1870. One of the first teachers hired was a Deaf man, Samuel Thomas Greene. He taught his students and staff members to use sign language (ASL), which became the language of instruction of the school. English was taught through its written form. Oralism began to be accepted as the modern practice for educating Deaf children in Canada and the USA. Use of any sign language was strongly discouraged and often a punishable offence in schools. Speech teaching and reading became the number one priority of most school programs. The number of Deaf teachers began to decline, as they left the schools or were fired, and eventually there were none left in Ontario schools until 1973.

1880 – The Milan Conference

The Congress of Educators of the Deaf, mainly hearing individuals, met in Milan, Italy. They voted to ban the use of sign language from classrooms and to solely use the oral method to teach Deaf children. Sign language disappeared from the classroom and was replaced by an oral approach to teaching the Deaf. Decision making by Deaf adults was not permitted with regards to the education system. Deaf teachers lost their jobs to hearing counterparts.

1880 – Formation of The National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

Deaf leaders held a conference in Cincinnati, Ohio and founded a nationwide Deaf organization – NAD. The goal of the organization was to help Deaf people and to protect their right to make decisions for themselves and to control their own destiny. Today, more than 100 years later, NAD has:

- defended the right to use sign language in schools
- protected the right of Deaf people to drive cars
- supported closed captioning for television and movies
- helped individuals with court matters
- established a central office for state deaf organizations

1970 – Methods Begin to Change

Teachers began to notice the ill effects of the oral methods. Spoken and written English levels of Deaf students were low compared to their hearing peers. Educators decided to adopt a new philosophy called Total Communication, a combination of spoken English, speech/lip reading, finger-spelling, and signs used in English grammatical order. Other artificial systems were developed to model English in a visual mode: Rochester Method, Pidgin Signed English, Signing Exact English (SEE 2), Signed English 2, Seeing Essential English (SEE 1), and Cued Speech.

1988 – Deaf President at Gallaudet University

Gallaudet University in Washington, DC has the only institution of higher education in the world for Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing students. Students at Gallaudet University began a heated protest demanding that the president for the University be Deaf. This protest marked the beginnings of a new movement in Deaf history. Deaf people demanded to be recognized as capable individuals who are linguistically and culturally distinct. A bilingual-bicultural (bi-bi) approach to Deaf education was promoted and support by a foundation. The bi-bi approach emphasizes both ASL and English as distinct and separate languages with separate grammatical structures, history, and linguistic markers. This approach also embraces Deaf culture as a minority culture with a distinct heritage, values, norms, and sense of pride.

1989 – Deaf Ontario Now

The Deaf community in Ontario held a rally demanding change in the three Provincial Schools for the Deaf. A pilot project following the bilingual-bicultural model began in the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, Ontario.

1993 – An Official Bi-Bi Policy

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training officially supported a bilingual-bicultural approach to education at the four Provincial Deaf Schools:

- London: Robarts School for the Deaf
- Milton: E.C. Drury School for the Deaf
- Belleville: Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf
- Ottawa: Centre Jules Leger

Deaf Art

A unique, vibrant, and eloquent minority genre of art arising from Deaf culture was given international attention: it is called DEAF VIEW/IMAGE ART, or DE'VIA. This art "uses formal art elements with the intention of expressing innate cultural or physical deaf experiences."

For centuries, most Deaf artists sought to compete with hearing artists for the attention of the general public and they avoided including, Deaf experience or themes in their artwork. Beginning in the 1980s, Deaf themes and experiences started to be more clearly illustrated in the work of many gifted Deaf artists.

Deaf Art communicates more than the sensory experience of silence. Many artists include ideas about:

- the beauty of sign language
- oral training
- frustrations in communicating
- painful oppression
- cultural pride
- breakdown of family life when hearing parents cannot communicate
- joys of Deaf bonding and heritage
- residential school life
- technology used within the Deaf community (TTY/TDD, closed captioning, etc.)
- turning points in the artist's acculturation to Deaf culture, such as the discovery of language
- turning points in the history of Deaf people, such as the 1880 Milan Congress prohibiting signed languages in Europe and America

1960s: De'VIA art began to take root in North America in the late 1960s as a result of the breakthroughs of the Civil Rights movement.

1972: Deaf artist Betty Miller presented the first exhibition in the U.S.A. devoted to art that expressed themes from Deaf culture. Miller's courage and artistic talent led to her being called "the Mother of Deaf Art."

1975: Spectrum: Focus on Deaf Artists was founded and brought together 22 Deaf artists, dancers, painters, and actors from around the country to celebrate Deaf culture in art.

1985: Creation of Deaf Artists of America

1988: After the Gallaudet Revolution and the drama *Children of a Lesser God*, hearing Americans discovered what has been coined "the new ethnicity." Deaf Art began to emerge into the "mainstream" hearing culture.

1989: Deaf Way International Conference on Deaf Culture at Gallaudet University presented a major exhibit of Deaf Art from around the world.

The De'VIA Manifesto (Deaf View/Image Art)

In May, 1989, eight Deaf artists gathered for a 4-day workshop immediately before the Deaf Way Arts Festival at Gallaudet University. At this workshop, led by Betty G. Miller and Paul Johnston, these artists produced a manifesto defining Deaf Culture Art. They called it De'VIA, short for Deaf/View Image Art.

De'VIA represents Deaf artists and perceptions based on their Deaf experiences. It uses formal art elements with the intention of expressing innate cultural or physical Deaf experience. These experiences may include Deaf metaphors, Deaf perspectives, and Deaf insight in relationship with the environment (both the natural world and Deaf cultural environment), spiritual and everyday life.

De'VIA can be identified by formal elements such as Deaf artists' possible tendency to use contrasting colors and values, intense colors, and contrasting textures. It may also most often include a centralized focus, with exaggeration or emphasis on facial features, especially eyes, mouths, ears, and hands. Currently, Deaf artists tend to work in human scale with these exaggerations, and not exaggerate the space around these elements.

There is a difference between Deaf artists and De'VIA. Deaf artists are those who use art in any form, media, or subject matter, and who are held to the same artistic standards as other artists. De'VIA is created when the artist intends to express their Deaf experience through visual art. De'VIA may also be created by deafened or hearing artists, if the intention is to create work that is born of their Deaf experience (a possible example would be a hearing child of Deaf parents). It is clearly possible for Deaf artists not to work in the area of De'VIA.

While applied and decorative arts may also use the qualities of De'VIA (high contrast, centralized focus, exaggeration of specific features), this manifesto is specifically written to cover the traditional fields of visual fine arts (painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, printmaking) as well as alternative media when used as fine arts such as fiber arts, ceramics, neon, and collage.

Created in May, 1989, at The Deaf Way.

The signatories were: Dr. Betty G. Miller, painter; Dr. Paul Johnston, sculptor; Dr. Deborah M. Sonnenstrahl, art historian; Chuck Baird, painter; Guy Wonder, sculptor; Alex Wilhite, painter; Sandi Inches Vasnick, fiber artist; Nancy Creighton, fiber artist; and Lai-Yok Ho, video artist.

Source: <http://www.deafart.org/>

For the Teacher...

In this resource, the images Deaf artists create, what inspires them, and what they say about their artwork and process aid students in seeing diversity in approach and/or common motifs or themes. The resource can be used in both Deaf and hearing learning environments to encourage young people to see Deaf individuals as role models, while gaining knowledge of their contributions to Deaf culture and its heritage.

The resource provides support for the Visual Arts program throughout the elementary and secondary school curriculum. Each activity focuses on a technique or art form to present and develop concepts that form part of the learning expectations of the curriculum.

Each of the activities can be adapted to make it suitable for various age levels and capabilities and to link it with grade-level curriculum.

The context for presenting the visual arts concepts is the work of Deaf artists. Students are encouraged to learn more about these artists or their contemporaries and their contributions to the world of art. Throughout the resource, websites are identified for the specific artists, where available.

Defining Deaf Culture

Focus

Defining Deaf culture in art

Concepts

The function of art in various cultures
Visual characteristics and themes found in art

Deaf Culture

The study of general cultural characteristics and those characteristics specific to Deaf culture helps students understand that all people view the world around them in a way that is shaped by their collective experiences and that Deaf people view the world in a way that is visually based.

American Sign Language (ASL)

The study of ASL guides students to the understanding that ASL is a language in its own right, and that, as an art form, ASL is essential to the preservation of the culture of the Deaf community.

Deaf Community

The study of the Deaf community helps students understand how Deaf people meet their social and political needs in the areas of education, entertainment, employment, and civil rights.

Deaf Cultural Behaviours

- Direct eye contact is mandatory during both expressive and receptive signing.
- Yelling and stamping of feet is an acceptable way to gain attention.
- Asking personal questions of someone you have just met is acceptable.
- Touching someone's shoulder is a means to gain attention.
- Flashing a light gets a group's attention or the attention of an individual who is beyond reach.
- Waving hands gains the attention of a person at a distance.
- There is a tendency to have long, drawn out good-byes.
- Deaf people often point to things with their eyes.
- Deaf people twitch their noses to show understanding or to say "yes."
- Deaf people walk a little further apart so they can watch each other's faces and hands.

(adapted from: Deaf Studies Resource Teacher, California School for the Deaf)

The Activity...

- In a group brainstorming session, students think of key words that are related to “culture.”
- Students identify the types of things they think have an impact on the development of a culture, e.g., language, food, clothing, social norms, art, ...
- The class agrees upon six words students feel are mostly related to the concept of “culture.”
- Students add the words to the worksheet, Key Aspects of Culture.
- Working in pairs, they compare and talk about their heritage and cultural backgrounds and complete the appropriate columns on the worksheet.
- In a class discussion, students share their ideas about whether the Deaf community has a culture and why, and record their responses on a T-chart under the headings Yes and No.
- Select several images created by Deaf artists for the class to view.
- Working in their original pairs, students explore ways political, religious, and social conditions have impacted the work of these artists and complete the final column of the worksheet.
- Review the steps to use when viewing art:
 - Discover what is in the artwork; list all of the people and/or objects in the artwork.
 - Describe the details; notice the subtle items in the artwork.
 - Describe the elements of art; note the different hues, values, lines, shapes, textures, and spatial relationships.
 - Analyze how the artwork is organized; review the design qualities of the artwork – how well the artwork is “put together.”
- The pairs complete the worksheet, Viewing Art to organize their collective thoughts on a chart.

The decision process can be completed in a variety of ways: debate, vote, research on the word culture, ...

If students say they are not a member in any culture, remind them that they are Canadian.

Key Aspects of Culture

Names:

Key Aspects of a Culture	Culture:	Culture:	Culture: <i>Deaf Culture</i>
1) <i>Language</i>			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			
6)			

Viewing Art

Artist's Work:

Reviewed by:

Principles of Design								
Elements of Design		Balance	Emphasis	Unity	Variety	Rhythm	Proportion	
	Colour: - hue - intensity - value							
	Line							
	Texture							
	Shape							
	Form							
	Space							

1. Interpretation (Meaning, Feelings, Mood or Idea):

2. Judgement: Is this a successful piece of artwork? Defend your answer.

Recurring Images in an Artwork

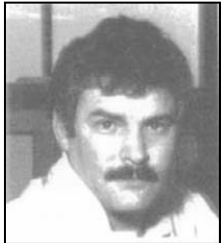
Focus

Using colour and multi-media art techniques in a collage to communicate a visual message

Concepts

Elements of design – colour, shape
Expression through collage

Meet the Artist... Paul Johnston



"I am infatuated with the shape and gestures of the hand. The perception of the 'hand instrument' and the 'mask-of-hands' relates the poetic beauty of hands using either sign language or gesture to the expression of mood and emotion on the face or through the voice."

Paul Johnston

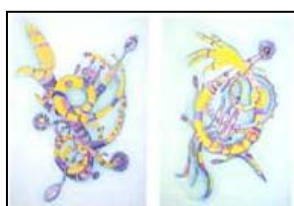
http://deafart.org/Biographies/Paul_Johnston/paul_johnston.html

Deaf artist Paul Johnston was born to hearing parents in Los Angeles, California in the early 1950s. Johnston attended oral schools, such as the John Tracy Clinic (named and founded for actor Spencer Tracy's deaf son), until he transferred to the California School for the Deaf at Riverside. It was there that Johnston was first exposed to American Sign Language and to art. However, his family moved north to Oregon when he was thirteen, and he was enrolled at the Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD) in Salem, a small town an hour south of Portland. The oralist philosophy for education of the deaf reigned at this school during the 1960s, when Johnston first arrived, but he was a teen with a strong personality and an unwillingness to conform to other's expectations. He had embraced ASL and his Deaf identity, and established a trailblazing mind set, becoming the first Deaf person to graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in furniture design and woodworking from the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York State.

Johnston broadened his horizons with the Connecticut-based National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) and made his acting debut with the company in 1975. While Johnston honed his considerable artistic and imaginative talents through work as an instructor and director of Experimental Theatre, he studied under the auspices of renown art educator, Dr. Kenneth Beittel, at Pennsylvania State University, earning first a Master of Science degree (1980) and then a Doctorate in Art Education (1988). He also minored in sculpture and in philosophy, the latter of which continues to shape his personal and artistic perspectives.

There are many artistic styles and artists that have influenced and inspired Johnston, including surrealisms, Art Nouveau, and the French Impressionists. He considers himself to be a semi-abstract artist. Johnston creates and exhibits his own work at various festivals and galleries and provides workshops to help other emerging artists explore their creativity and imaginations.

The Artist's Gallery



Materials:

- large drawing paper (thick bond or Bristol board)
- large pastel construction paper
- paper scraps
- thin tipped black markers
- scissors
- glue
- pieces of sponge
- large paint brushes
- paint in pastel colours

Place large sheets of paper on tables with paint mixed and ready in small bowls.

A colour wash can be created by mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ paint with $\frac{3}{4}$ water and applying with a large brush.

Ensure that shapes are cut or torn from different coloured sheets of paper, so that each student has a variety of colour schemes.

Remind students that Paul Johnston always had his shapes touching, overlapping, or connected.

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist Paul Johnston.
- View and discuss the subject matter of the artworks, the use of eyes, the use of hands, and the colour scheme found in several of his paintings.

Creating a Background...

- Students use one of several techniques to create a background for their collage (sponge painting, colour wash) or use a sheet of pastel construction paper.

Sponge Painting a Background

Demonstrate or review how to sponge paint – dab the sponge in the paint and then dab off the excess on a paper towel. Lightly dab the sponge over the paper with even, light pressure.

Students sponge paint the papers, ensuring that there is a nice blend of colours and shades.

Colour Washing a Background

Demonstrate or review how to create a “colour wash” over a white piece of paper.

Students create the background.

Creating Paper Shapes...

- Briefly review Johnston’s work, focussing on the shapes in his images.
- Demonstrate how to use scissors to cut similar shapes. Students could sketch their shapes before cutting or cut free-hand.

OR

Demonstrate how to tear the paper carefully into similar shapes.

- Each student makes approximately a dozen shapes.

Creating the Collage...

- Students place their paper shapes in a satisfying arrangement on the background paper.
- They glue the shapes to their background.

Adding the Images...

- Discuss why eyes are important, e.g., to see, to view sign language, to help lip read, ...
- Working in pairs, students look at each other's eyes, focusing on their shape.
- Students use their fingers and lightly trace the outline of their own eyes to gain a sense of their shape.
- Students practise drawing eyes on paper scraps.
- Review Paul Johnston's image, *Unity of Communication* (1998) that shows a series of eyes.
- Students identify where they could place eye(s) on their collage and use a fine tipped black marker to draw eyes in the identified locations.

Reflecting on their Art...

Whole Class

Students share their collages and describe what their artwork is about, e.g., the message in their work.

Individual

Students reflect on their artwork and give it a title.

Photographic Images of Multimedia Artwork

Focus

Understanding the use of colour and multi-dimensional images to portray thoughts and feelings

Concepts

Secondary colours or pigment (purple, orange, green)
Elements of design using a variety of art materials, tools, and techniques

Meet the Artist... Helen McNicoll



"One of the most profoundly original and technically accomplished of Canadian artists... she had been continually developing her powers right up to the time of her last exhibition. Possessed of an aggressive and active intellect, she was constantly applying herself to new problems of light, line and beauty... Miss McNicoll was no amateur – there are indeed few painters in the Dominion who take their art as seriously as she did."
Saturday Night, (10 July 1915) – "A Loss to Canadian Art"

<http://www.ccsdeaf.com/mcnicoll.html>

Helen McNicoll, born in 1879 in Toronto, moved to Montreal at the age of one and died in 1915 to diabetes. She was Deaf. Her impressionist paintings have been in various private collections in Canada and the USA for 75 years.

She is one of Canada's most accomplished women painters. In 1906, when Helen was 27 years old, she exhibited her work publicly at the Art Association of Montreal's (AAM) spring exhibition. In 1908, she was awarded the AAM's first Jessie Dow Prize for the most meritorious oil painting by a Canadian artist. Her prize-winning impressionist landscape painting was *September Evening*. Her election to the Royal Society of British Artists in 1913 gave her work a presence in the London art scene, but caused friction in the Royal Society of British Artists who were not used to her style of art. Helen was awarded the Women's Art Society Prize in 1914 and her work was acclaimed as "a triumphant study in reflected light; pure painting."

Helen McNicoll spent many years in England and France, where she painted personal, intimate glimpses of everyday late Victorian and Edwardian life as she saw it to convey her views of the world. Her paintings exemplified primarily her quiet contemplation of the sensory pleasures of a world of contemporary womanhood.

In her paintings, she used an impressionist art style to depict beautiful nature scenes while the women in the portraits are inside in domestic activities, perhaps yearning for nature. Several pictures show the conflict between the formal life of an upper middle class woman and her yearning for freedom and may reflect her yearning for visual beauty found in nature versus the constricting role she may have felt in her life. There were also many pictures of children and the pure natural beauty of her surroundings.

The Artist's Gallery

Source <http://www.ccsdeaf.com/mcnicoll.html>



The Activity...

Materials:

- cameras (digital, 35 mm or Polaroid)
- old clothes, shoes and accessories
- fabric, cloth or paper to make costumes
- glue
- paint
- paper for mounting the final product

Send home a letter outlining the project and requesting old clothes or fabric.

This multi-part activity is designed to be a collaborative effort between two classes that requires co-ordination with a colleague, e.g., planning the lesson and implementation details.

Sufficient time needs to be allocated so that the students can plan and create their costumes and artwork.

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist Helen McNicoll.
- View and discuss several of Helen McNicoll's paintings, using the background information about her to discuss the era in which she lived and how that may have had an influence on her artwork and choice of subject matter.

Questions to guide discussion:

- Where and when was the artist born?
- What things did this artist like to paint?
- What questions would you like to ask this artist?
- Look carefully at one of the paintings. What does this painting make you wonder, think, or feel?
- Create a list of themes found in the artist's work, e.g., colour, subject, style, etc.

Creating a costume...

- Partner students based on skills, strengths, and abilities. Each pair examines the clothing worn by the subjects in one of Helen McNicoll's paintings.
- Each pair completes a chart that details what they need for the costume and where they will get the items.
- They use borrowed clothing, found objects, or sew/create objects from fabric and/or paper to create a costume that mimics the clothing, accessories, etc. found in the painting.

Designing a background...

- Students view several of the artist's paintings and complete the worksheet, Colour Analysis.
- Discuss the artist's use of colour and how they can imitate this work as they create backgrounds for their costumes.
- Students paint their backgrounds of natural surroundings (trees, etc.), on large sheets of paper with found objects added.

Costumes	
What we need	Where we get it

Students may need a lesson on how to operate the camera before the picture-taking session.

Enlarge the photos and print them on a colour copier.

Putting the images together...

- Once the costumes, background, and accessories are completed, the students hold a photo session.
- Students review the artist's paintings for ideas of how to position the images before taking the photographs.
- One of the pair takes photos of the other in costume with their painted background as a backdrop.
- Brainstorm methods of mounting their photographic artwork, e.g., borders that keep with the theme of McNicoll's images, designs that could be applied to the edges, etc.
- Have the pairs create a frame for their images.
- Display the artwork along with work from the artist.

Reflecting on their Art...

Each pair shares their experience with another pair, telling what they learned, what they like about their work, and what they would do differently.

Colour Analysis

Names:

What colours are used in the painting's background?

What colours are in the clothes?

Divide the colours into two groups.

Warm Colours	Cool Colours

Which colour group dominates the painting?

Look at two other paintings done by the same artist.

a)

(painting's title)

b)

(painting's title)

What colour group dominates painting a) ?

What colour group dominates painting b) ?

What conclusions can you make about this artist's preferences for colour in her paintings?

Capturing Images in Tableaux

Focus

Using ASL signs to create images in the foreground, middle ground, and background of artwork

Concepts

Foreground, middle ground, and background
Elements of design – colour, line, shape, patterns

Meet the Artist... John O'Malley



"Some hearing people don't understand the message in my work because they cannot connect its relevance to Deaf Culture."

John O'Malley

John O'Malley is the youngest and only Deaf member of his family. He was mainstreamed in an oral program in Windsor, Ontario until he was eleven years old and then transferred to Robarts School for the Deaf in London, Ontario, where he began to use and cherish sign language. John lives in Windsor and is a full time independent artist who has held several exhibits of his artwork. He primarily uses handshapes and American Sign Language images in his work and many of his paintings are the pride of the Robarts School and interpreter programs across Ontario.

John's earliest memory involving an interest in the visual arts happened at the age of four when he witnessed his sister being hit by a car. This accident had an incredible impact on John and he replayed that event over and over again in his mind. He drew a picture of the image and his family were amazed at the detail and accuracy of his artwork. Subsequently, John used his creativity and ability to express himself through drawing as a form of communication.

The Artist's Gallery



Materials:

- digital or Polaroid camera(s)
- overhead projectors
- pencils and erasers
- crayons or pastels
- large sheets of white paper

Place large sheets of paper on tables with paint mixed and ready in small bowls.

Review the concept of foreground, middle ground, and background.

These images could be used later for students to respond in a journal about the experience or to create a fictional story based on the photographs.

As a further activity, students can work in pairs to create artwork, using overhead projectors and their hands and arms to make shadow images that they trace, colour and place in the foreground, middle ground, or background of their art.

If students produced work using projected shadows, they write a journal entry explaining their use of images, colour, and detail in the areas of their artwork.

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- As a class discuss how looking closely at art is like being a good detective.
- Assign half of the class to look at one image created by John O'Malley and the second half to examine a different image. Discuss the meaning of each sign language image they find in the painting and how the artist used hands and arms to create environments.
- Students become "art detectives," looking at the image for visual clues such as: colour, line, shape, patterns, design or the mood the artist is sending to the viewer.
- Each group lists the visual clues and records specific images found in the foreground, middle ground, and background of the painting.

Creating a tableau...

- Explain how each group must work as a team to re-create the painting, using their bodies in a frozen tableau. Use one group to demonstrate how each group member becomes one of the shapes from the painting.
- The team members collaborate and determine the key elements of the painting before the group re-creates the painting. The group must have actors in all areas of the painting (foreground, middle ground, and background).
- Once the groups have practised their tableaux, take several photographs of each group.

Presenting the tableaux...

- As each group presents its tableau, the other groups identify images from the painting that are being re-created.

Reflecting on their Art...

Group

The group reviews the clues they identified in the painting and reflects on how all of the ideas they had about the painting were illustrated in its tableau.

Individual

Students write a journal entry to describe their experience with imitating art through tableau.

Soft Sculptures

Focus

Using ASL hand signs in a soft sculpture to portray the emotional quality of lines

Concepts

Use of lines and shapes
Use of two- and three-dimensional art work to convey ideas, feelings, and thoughts

Meet the Artist... Chuck Baird



"I no longer paint what people would like me to see, I paint for myself. It is about my own experience, my love of ASL and pride in our Deaf heritage. I sometimes create works that have no particular relation to the Deaf."

Chuck Baird

<http://www.chuckbaird.com/>

Chuck Baird was born in Kansas in 1947 to hearing parents. He and his three older sisters are Deaf. Chuck attended the Kansas School for the Deaf where he began his love of the arts. At the age of thirteen he won a Scholastic Magazine Art Contest for an oil painting of a two story house covered with snow. He also won numerous regional art competitions in the categories of oil, water-colour, and drawing. Chuck went to Gallaudet University and then attended the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York, where he studied painting and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1974. Following graduation, Baird worked at a number of Deaf elementary schools in Texas and California as an "artist in residence."

Chuck worked with the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) for five summers, painting all their sets for different plays. In 1989 the Theatre put on a play called, "King of Hearts", and every night while the actors performed, Chuck painted the sets in the background during each scene!

Baird uses Deaf themes and sign language motifs as part of his subject matter. The animals are painted around the hand shapes that show their sign in ASL. Looking at Chuck's animal paintings helps the viewer learn and remember the signs for each animal!

In his paintings, Baird breaks down the sign language symbols into slow motion to show handshape, location, movement and orientation (the four basic components of ASL). He often uses double or triple identical images to show motion. By strategic placement and shadings, Baird also helps the observer to understand that an exchange of communication has taken place. In 1993 Baird created a coffee table book that published his work and helped him gain a wider audience, both Deaf and hearing.

The Artist's Gallery



Materials:

- large white drawing paper
- pencil crayons or crayons
- digital camera, computer/colour printer
- pencils and erasers
- scissors

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist Chuck Baird.
- Share Baird's background with the students and view several of his paintings.
- Discuss the subject matter of the paintings, the use of ASL symbols, and the multiple meanings of the sign language.
- In groups of three, students discuss Baird's work and choose three ideas for incorporating ASL motifs into a visual art piece, e.g., colourful butterflies, snail, spooky old tree.

Creating art work using ASL images...

- Students examine the artist's work and decide on three ideas for an art piece in which they can incorporate an ASL sign and develop an image around the sign.
- As each student signs the chosen ASL sign, use a digital camera to capture the image. Print out a colour copy of each sign.
- Students cut out the images and arrange each item on a large piece of paper to determine which image they want to expand upon, using pencil crayons. Their expansion could include background, foreground, central image, etc.
- They decide on the basic design and theme of their ASL image.
 - Where will the ASL symbol be located in the design?
 - Does the image reflect a mood or an idea?
 - Is the ASL symbol the focal point or does it complement another image?
- Using pencils, students sketch out their design, adding details, shading, and elements to create mood.
- They glue their ASL symbol onto their completed sketch.

Remind students to press very lightly with the pencil so as not to leave design lines.

Making a 3-D Soft Sculpture...

Background: Name Signs

In Deaf culture, there are two methods of assigning a sign name to an individual: descriptive or arbitrary. Most name signs are assigned arbitrarily and frequently have no meaning. Historically, name signs were used exclusively by Deaf people, with hearing teachers and hearing children of Deaf parents being the exception. With the increased interest in sign language, many hearing people have been given sign names. When several people in the same community have the same name signs, the older or Deaf person has the honour of retaining the name sign. The younger or hearing person adds a handshape representing the first letter of their last name to their sign name.

Supalla, Samuel. The Book of Name Signs: Naming in American Sign Language. San Diego: DawnSign Press, 1992.

Materials

- large amount of tin foil
- colourful paper for mounting
- scissors

- Discuss the use of name signs.
- Students demonstrate their sign names and discuss if any other people they know have the same name.
- They explore other cultural aspects of sign names — how assigned, family groupings having similar locations for sign names, identity issues, and who uses sign names.
- Distribute two pieces of tin foil to each student. One piece of tin foil should be large enough to cover the surface of the student's face and the second should be large enough to cover one of their hands.
- In groups of three, a student presses tin foil on to one of their partner's faces, revealing the curves and crevices while the other student assists. Repeat for the three students in the group.
- In turn, each group member illustrates the shape of his/her name sign. One student presses the foil over another's hand, revealing the shape of the name sign. Repeat for the three students in the group.
- Students mount their tinfoil face mold along with their hand name sign on a large sheet of paper.

Students could create a 3-D soft sculpture, using ASL symbols as the basis for the project. They might make a model of a streetscape, seascape, animal habitat, landscape, etc. Each design should incorporate a minimum of three ASL handshapes/signs into the sculpture, e.g., a streetscape could include ASL signs of a house, a tree, and the sign for street.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students share their completed work and explain their use of the ASL symbol in their art.

Shading Techniques

Focus

Using shading to create depth and imagery

Concepts

Elements of design – line, shape, form
Use of line in defining shapes and forms and creating movement and depth

Meet the Artist... Forrest Nickerson



"To become a good illustrator you must first love the work – love it well enough to work hard year after year, at least until you have earned a name for yourself and your work is in demand."

F. Nickerson

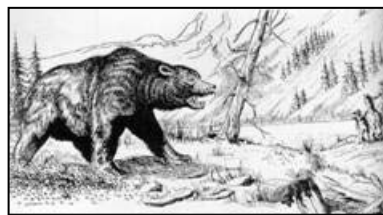
<http://www.ccsdeaf.com/for.html>

Forrest Nickerson was born in 1930, profoundly Deaf. His parents were hearing, and two of his four siblings were Deaf. Forrest attended the School for the Deaf in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He enjoyed the arts and upon graduation took a correspondence course from the Washington School of Art where he earned a diploma in commercial art. He began his career in Halifax and then moved to Edmonton, Alberta and later Winnipeg, Manitoba where he felt there would be more opportunities for his new career. He married and had two children.

Forrest Nickerson was both an illustrator and a commercial artist. Most of his arts assignments were freelance work and he contributed to many provincial and national wildlife and outdoor magazines. It is estimated that during his lifetime, Forrest created more than 50 000 pen-and-ink line drawings, logos, and cartoons. He enjoyed technical and graphics work, and working in water colours but his wildlife illustrations in pen and ink brought him the most recognition.

Nickerson was involved in the Deaf community and was the founder of the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf. Most would agree that Forrest Nickerson is singularly worthy of the title "The Father of Deaf Culture" both nationally and internationally. Forrest Nickerson died on June 6, 1988 after a long battle with cancer.

The Artist's Gallery



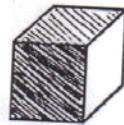
The Activity...

Materials:

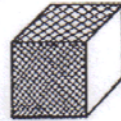
- pencils and erasers
- pen and ink sets
- water containers
- paper towels
- newspapers for tables
- smocks
- 9" × 12" drawing paper
- collection of geometric shapes (balls, cubes, cylinders, etc.)
- pencils and erasers
- fine tip markers
- sketchbooks

Setting the Stage...

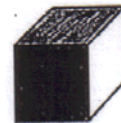
- Introduce artist, Forrest Nickerson and view several of his paintings/drawings.
- Discuss the subject matter of his paintings/drawings, his techniques, and the medium he used.
- Look at how he was able to create depth and imagery with one colour and various brush strokes. Compare his work with various shading techniques. What technique did Nickerson favour? Why?



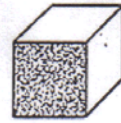
Hatching



Crosshatching



Blending



Stippling

Experimenting with shading techniques...

- Set up an arrangement of geometric forms, using boxes and books, balls and cylindrical containers.
- Students study the way light reflects from the surfaces of the objects.
- Review the various shading techniques: hatching, crosshatching, blending, and stippling.
- Students experiment with pencils and techniques for shading curved and flat surfaces.
- Repeat the process, using pen and ink.

A range of values must be evident, from black to white.

Creating a still life...

- Using geometric forms, students set up a "geometric still life."
- They draw shapes that have an illusion of three dimensions, using the medium and shading technique of their choice.

Keeping a Sketchbook...

- Discuss Nickerson's process of creating his artwork.

Forrest Nickerson was able to create illusion of three-dimensional form on a two-dimensional surface. His images gave the impression of depth and solidity by changing the value of light and dark. Using wet media such as black ink or dry media such as pencils, Nickerson sketched landscapes, people, and animals creating thousands of images. He used sketchbooks as well as photographs and video clips to capture the movement of wildlife so that he could study them later prior to creating the animal on paper.

- Students keep a sketchbook as a visual log of their artwork.

They must make three or four entries where they put into words or images the impressions, images, feelings, and moods that they experience in everyday life.

- They choose one image from their collection to enlarge or to create into a more detailed image. Shading techniques must be evident and clearly demonstrated in their final image.
- Display their completed images.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students add an entry to their sketchbook that describes what they learned about shading techniques.

Explain that as artists they must be open to everything in the world: the sights, the small details, the tensions, excitement, and boredom of ordinary situations, e.g., patterns of movement on the street, the relaxation of lunch time, the pressures of a game or other competition. All of these images become the foundations of imagery and the building blocks of their creative minds.

Portraiture

Focus

Using colour, line, and shape to create unity and harmony in images and to convey meaning and mood.

Concepts

Identifying colour relationships
Use of texture to evoke emotional response

Meet the Artist... Vanessa Vaughan



"Art is essential to everyday life. It offers creative ways of looking at things, hence provides tools for constructive problem solving. I was able to learn the English language through Art. My mother would draw with me for hours to explain the abstract. Art allowed me to learn language and to develop a strong visual sense and creative awareness."

Vanessa Vaughan

www.vanessavaughan.com

Vanessa Vaughan was born in Toronto in 1969. Her hearing parents discovered that she was deaf when she was 17 months old. She worked very hard to learn to speak English clearly and later she learned sign language.

Painter, actor, film producer, director... this is just a short list of Vanessa's many talents. She began her acting career in 1979 in a television movie called *Clown White*. She co-starred with Canadian actor Keiffer Sutherland in the 1985 film, *Crazy Moon*, and since then has honed her acting skills in many venues. She was nominated for a Gemini Award in 1993 for her portrayal of Mabel Bell, the deaf wife of Alexander Graham Bell. Tarragon Theatre and A Show of Hands are stage production companies that have also helped Vanessa showcase her talents. She produced her own short film, *Edda's Song*, shown on the Women's Television Network and on Air Canada international flights.

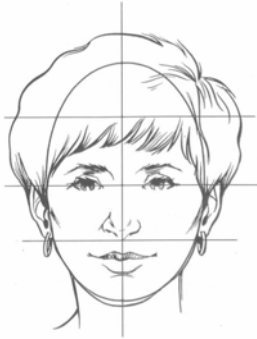
Vanessa, an accomplished painter, completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from York University in the early 1990s and spent a year at Ryerson University in Toronto studying film. She exhibits her paintings around Toronto and for Deaf Expo in Los Angeles, and is a fast rising portraitist. Vanessa lends support to the artistic community by offering workshops that combine the use of ASL and physical theatre, and tries to increase the exposure of Deaf artists through her own production company, Handscape Media. Vanessa is one of two leading artists in the Deaf Arts Association of Canada (DAAC). She was directly involved with Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth across Ontario, creating large scale murals about the students' experiences.

The Artist's Gallery



Materials:

- pencils and erasers
- tempera paints – variety of colours
- brushes – variety of sizes
- paint mixing trays
- water containers
- paper towels
- newspapers for tables
- smocks
- 9" x 12" drawing paper
- small mirrors



Students could work in pairs and draw each other's head shape.

Hair and forehead take up almost half of the entire shape. Edges of the ears are parallel to the eyes and nose.

Note that the length and width of the nose varies with each individual.

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist Vanessa Vaughan and view and discuss several of her paintings.
- Review the artist's work for elements of design. Specifically look at her use of colour, line, and shape to create unity and harmony in her images.
- Discuss how Vaughan has used the elements of design to convey meaning and mood.

Identifying head shapes...

- Students draw a face, using a grid as a guideline.
- Demonstrate how to make the grid by folding paper into eight sections. Fold the paper in half (like a hot dog bun). Fold the paper in half again (like a hamburger bun) and in half again.
- Review the shapes of heads - ovals and variations of ovals.
- Demonstrate drawing an oval on the folded grid and note that the shape of the head should fill almost the entire page.
- Students view themselves in a mirror and draw their head shape on their folded paper grid.

Working with proportion...

- Guide students to understand typical proportions. Follow the horizontal lines on the grid:
 - the edge of the hairline
 - the eyes
 - the tip of the nose
- Students draw the eyes on the second horizontal fold. Note the curves along upper and lower eyelids, the size of the pupils, and the space between the eyes.
- Draw the bottom edge of the nose along the third horizontal fold.
- Students carefully examine the shape of the hair and hairline. The top of the hair should typically end at the first horizontal line, however, hairstyles may vary.

Contrasting colours are opposite to each other on the colour wheel, e.g., purple/orange or red/green.

To mix a light colour, begin with white and add "dots" of the colour until the desired colour is achieved. To darken a colour, begin with colour and add "dots" of black.

Wash the brush in the water, wipe on the edge of the container and blot on the paper towel before using a new colour.

- Students complete the rest of the drawing independently, noting the shape and location of lips, ears, neckline, etc.

Comparing the artist's work...

- Review Vanessa Vaughan's work. Examine how her portraits follow the guidelines for traditional portraiture work.
- Discuss the artist's colour choices. Review the colour wheel and determine if she is using a particular colour family: warm colours (red, orange, yellow) or cool colours (blue, green, purple).
- Students further examine her work to note any contrasting colours.
- Students suggest the mood or feeling they get from viewing Vanessa Vaughan's work.

Painting a portrait...

- Students make their drawings into paintings, following the colour choices and intensity noted in the artist's work.
- Students select the colour palette they will use to colour their portraits.
- Demonstrate step-by-step how to darken or lighten colours.
- Review how to use a brush to paint to keep their colours bright and vibrant.
- As students work, they can experiment with blending colours.
- Display the portraits. Some students may wish to add a frame to their art.

Reflecting on their Art...

Working in pairs, students look at their partner's portrait and answer questions such as:

- How do you feel when you look at this painting?
- What mood do you think the artist is trying to create?
- How did the artist do this?
- What advice would you give this person about their painting?

Designs in Artwork

Focus

Using repetition in designs/patterns on 3-D artwork

Concepts

Repetition of elements to create rhythm
Use of principles of design to organize a work and convey ideas

Meet the Artist... Tony McGregor



“Art should be appreciated for what it is and not by whom it has been done. Art should not be judged as either “Deaf art” or “hearing art;” the artist’s own style should be respected and valued. Art should be thought of as art for all people.”

Tony McGregor

Tony McGregor was born in Garland, Texas on November 18, 1958. He became deaf at 18 months of age from hereditary causes. As a boy, Tony was encouraged to pursue art, and studied drawing and painting in both private and “mainstreamed” public schools. He took some studio art classes at Gallaudet University in 1977 but transferred to the University of Texas in Austin, from which he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts with honours. Tony also majored in Engineering Design Graphics at Austin Community College. He earned an Art Education certification and a Masters of Education in Multicultural Special Education. He pursued a doctorate in Multicultural Special Education with an emphasis in museum studies at the University of Texas.

McGregor has worked as a research assistant, a computer graphics designer, a technical illustrator, an art teacher and was a Resident Artist-in-Education at the Austin Museum of Art.

The Artist’s Gallery



Materials:

- balloons (one per student)
- sand
- newspapers
- papier mâché paste
- paint (neutral palette: browns, taupes, caramel shades)
- sponges
- permanent black markers
- paper for sketches
- images of desert animals and/or animals from the Southwestern United States, e.g., lizards, bears, coyotes, fish

Remind students to use repetition/patterning to unify the design.

Repetition or patterning, often referred to as rhythm, is created by the careful placement of repeated images/elements in a work of art. The use of repeated elements allows the viewer to smoothly view the image. Repetition of line, colour or shape is one way that an artist can unify a design.

Sponge painting two or more colours will give a more natural effect.

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist Tony McGregor.
- As a group, discuss McGregor's background and view several of his gourd creations, discussing the subject matter, the use of sign language, desert animals, etc.
- Draw attention to the repetition in design/patterns in the artwork.

Creating a plan...

- Students create a plan for a gourd design.
- Prior to sketching any images, students review books and images of Southwestern animals and themes.
- On plain paper, each student sketches an original design for their gourd.

Making a papier mâché gourd...

- Mix a large batch of papier mâché paste.
- Rip/tear old newspapers into approximately 1" wide strips.
- Put a handful of sand into a balloon.
- Blow up and tie the balloon.
- Stand the balloon in the desired position for the final sculpture.
- Dip the newspaper strips in the paste mixture; remove excess paste and smooth onto the balloon.
- Cover the entire surface of the balloon with two or three layers of newspaper strips leaving an opening at the top of the sculpture.
- Allow to dry.

Painting the gourd...

- Students burst the balloon at the opening and discard both the balloon and the sand.
- They tidy the opening of the sculpture by carefully cutting the edge.
- After mixing paint to a desired colour, they use sponges to dab paint over the sculpture.

- Allow to dry.
- Using the sketch they made during planning, students plot out the design on the sculpture with a pencil.
- They trace out the completed design using a permanent black marker.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students share their creations and describe the significance of their design – what influenced the lines, shapes, and colours they used.

Costume Design

Focus

Using symmetry and asymmetrical balance in composing a 3-D figure.

Concepts

Principles of design - emphasis, balance, rhythm, unity, variety, proportion
Focal point in a work of art

Meet the Artist... Laura Walker



Laura Walker was born Deaf, into a hearing family in Swan River, Manitoba in 1961. She attended the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Detroit, Michigan for seven years before transferring to Balmoral Hall School for Girls, a private school in Winnipeg that she attended for three years. She transferred to the Manitoba School for the Deaf to complete high school and took a few art classes at Shaftesbury Public School, which was located across the street. Laura graduated from Gallaudet University in 1984 with a Bachelor's degree in Studio Art. During university, she was selected as runner-up in a photography competition and made the Dean's List in her junior year. She moved to Toronto and spent two years studying Fashion Illustration courses at the Ontario College of Art and Design.

When she began her professional career as an artist and fashion illustrator, she soon became known well enough to sell her illustrations to fashion magazines such as *Flare*, *Wedding Bells*, *Domino*, and *Harry*, and to *The Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* newspapers. She received a Merit Award from the Studio Magazine for the best art direction in shoe illustration for the *Toronto Star*. She also created the logo design for the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW) and consulted to five Deaf illustrators for the book called *River of Hands*, a Deaf Heritage project sponsored by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf.

Laura Walker experiments with new media and her goal is to work as an artist specializing in visual display, merchandising, and other promotions of still life and fashion.

Materials:

- 8 ½ × 11 white paper
- newsprint paper
- pencils and erasers
- stove pipe wire (approximately 2 metres per student)
- masking tape
- newspaper
- glue/paste
- fabric remnants
- acrylic paints – various colours
- old fashion magazines and/or books with costume designs

As a good safety practice, models should keep both feet on the floor or be in a sitting position.

One minute is the maximum time per pose.

For effective results, students use crayons for this activity.



Michelin Man™ sketch

Old fashion magazines or books of costumes are good sources of reference.

The Activity...

Setting the Stage...

- Introduce artist *Laura Walker*, discuss her background and view several of her designs and paintings.

Sketching a pose...

- Review body proportions.
- Students fold their piece of newsprint into four boxes.
- Ask a volunteer to “strike a pose” and freeze.
- While the volunteer is frozen, demonstrate how to make a quick sketch of the pose.
- Using a circular movement and without lifting the writing utensil from the surface, create an outline of the pose. This method is often referred to as the “Michelin Man™.”
- Students use crayons to make eight different quick sketches of posed volunteers.

Sketching figures for the artist’s designs...

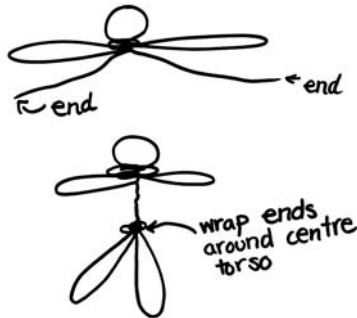
- Students review the artist’s costume designs and envision what the body pose looks like under each costume/design.
- Students create a “Michelin Man™” figure for each of the artist’s designs.

Sketching a costume...

- Students review all of their “Michelin Man™” sketches.
- Working with a partner, they discuss their best sketch, using the terms *body proportions*, *symmetry*, etc., to justify their choices.
- Using this sketch, students create a rough sketch for a costume or clothing design. Students should keep their original sketch in mind as they work on their costume sketch.

For safety, students place the two loose ends of wire towards the floor while working.

The fold in the wire becomes the top of the figure's head.



Using a mix of glue, flour, and water, create a papier mâché paste.

Papier mâché can also be used to create shoes, hair, facial features.

This mixture makes the fabric manageable for arranging the clothing, tucking in any frayed ends and determining final look of the clothing.

Remind students to constantly check that their figure is standing and stable.

Creating a wire body frame...

- Working with two metres of stovepipe wire, students fold it exactly in half.
- They create a wire human figure.
 - To create the chest cavity, use two fingers from one hand (middle and index finger) placed along the spine of the figure. With the free hand, wrap the wire loosely around the two fingers 5 – 8 times to create a rib cage. Slide the two fingers out and arrange the wires to represent a human rib cage.
 - Manipulate the wire figure until it is able to stand up independently in a satisfactory pose.

Adding to the body frame...

- Students cover the entire figure with two layers of masking tape.
- Students cover the entire figure with two layers of papier mâché strips.

Completing the figure...

- Students paint the figure, using either natural skin tones or an abstract palette.
- Using fabric remnants, students cut out clothing for their figure, taking into consideration size, pose, and proportion.
- Demonstrate how to dampen the fabric by dipping each piece into a glue and water mixture prior to placing the fabric on the figurine.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students reflect on the process of creating their art and write a journal entry about what they like about it and what they would like to learn to do better.

Collage

Focus

Expressing cultural connections in works of art

Concepts

Applying the creative process to produce a work of art

Critical analysis of the function of and expression in a piece of art

The connections between art and cultural identity or context

Meet the Artist... Betty Miller



"Much of my work depicts the Deaf experience expressed in the most appropriate form of communication: visual art. I present both the suppression, and the beauty of Deaf Culture and American Sign Language as I see it; in the past, and in the present. I hope this work, and the understanding that may arise from this visual expression, will help bridge the gap between the Deaf world, and the hearing world."

Betty Miller

<http://bettigee.purple-swirl.com>

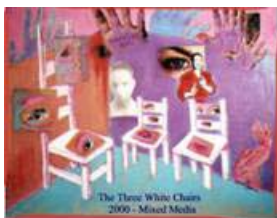
Dr. Betty G. Miller was born to Deaf parents. She is a well-known professional Deaf Artist who taught art at Gallaudet University for 18 years. She left Gallaudet in 1977 to co-found Spectrum, Focus on Deaf Artists. In 1986, she was an Artist-In-Residence at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) in Washington, DC.

As a professional artist, she is known for her expression of her Deaf experience – a genre that has come to be named Deaf View/Image Art or De'VIA. Dr. Miller participated in numerous art shows in Washington DC, Maryland, Texas, California, and Massachusetts. Some of her visual representations of her Deaf experience were published in *Deaf Heritage* by Jack Gannon (1980). Her first one-woman show entitled "The Silent World" was held at Gallaudet College in 1972. In the eighties and nineties, she continued with her one-woman and group art shows, on the theme, "The Deaf Experience." Dr. Miller's artworks also appeared with those of eight other Deaf artists in a first of its kind art show of works relating the Deaf experience at Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, MA, in September, 1993. In 1996, she completed a 16' x 6' neon work commissioned by the North Carolina Arts Council for the recreation center at the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf, Wilson in NC. In 1998, she completed a neon artwork commissioned by a deaf couple for their home.

Among her influences she cites her father, the Deaf artist Ralph R. Miller, Sr.; one of her art education professors (also an artist) at Pennsylvania State University; and Nancy Creighton.

The Artist's Gallery

– <http://deafart.org>



Materials:

- pencils and erasers
- acrylic paints – variety of colours
- brushes – variety of sizes
- matte board for designing and layering project/work
- various old magazines, newspapers, fabric, etc.
- variety of paper and tissue paper (different textures and colours)
- glue and glaze

Lead students to consider the attributes of cultures such as, youth, rappers, Deaf, family, etc.

The Activity...**Setting the Stage...**

- Ask students to record cultural groups to which they belong and to think about what makes these groups distinctive.
- Using this information, students decide what or who defines their group, using the headings:
 - Appearance
 - Organization
 - Beliefs/Values
 - Purpose

Portraying cultural groups in art...

- Brainstorm a list of the various cultures in students' local community (family, school, etc.) and in a global context (ethnic background, race, etc.).
- In small groups, students dialogue about the various cultures to which they belong.
- Review and analyze the work of Betty Miller. Students use evidence from her images to verify the culture groups to which Miller belongs.
- In a group discussion, students respond to the question: How does art communicate cultural values, beliefs, and roles?

Making a collage...

- Review collage techniques and approaches to design/composition, including:
 - gathering and sorting images
 - arranging and experimenting with composition
 - tearing and cutting paper/pictures
 - gluing/adhering items in place
 - adding colour and textured media to achieve desired effect
 - glazing and matting final product
- Students choose two cultural groups to which they belong, or any two contrasting cultural groups.

Emphasize the process of purposeful manipulation of images and symbols on the surface paper before fixing permanently.

- They find photographs, images from magazines and newspapers, symbols, words and objects that represent the beliefs, values, and roles of the two cultures they have chosen.
- Students add colour or other textured materials (gauze, acetate, wool, etc.) to achieve a desired effect.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students write a short paragraph or artist's statement about their collage in which they identify and describe the various cultural elements/symbols/images they used. They respond to the questions:

- What is the message you want to communicate to the viewers of your artwork?
- Does your collage communicate your intentions clearly and effectively?

Symbolism in Art

Focus

Using symbolism in a work of art to express ideas and events

Concepts

Elements and principles of design
Use of personal imagery related to themes and issues
Significance of symbols in art

Meet the Artist... Susan Dupor



“As an artist who is Deaf, I am constantly exploring my identity as a Deaf woman. I have been painting within this theme for the past ten years and my perspective has changed throughout the years. There were moments when I vented my emotions, and others when I wanted to celebrate the uniqueness of Deaf culture and seek the ironies of being Deaf in a hearing world.”

Susan Dupor

www.duporart.com

Susan Dupor was born deaf and has an older brother who was born hard of hearing. She grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, where she attended “hearing impaired” mainstream programs from Kindergarten through twelfth grade. In 1987, she enrolled in the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) as a cross-registered Rochester Institute of Technology student majoring in illustration. She transferred to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she earned her Bachelors in Fine Art. She then worked for a year in an animation studio before going on to earn a Masters in Science in Deaf Education and Art Education from the University of Rochester and NTID. She taught at NTID for three years before she moved back to Wisconsin, where she taught art at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Her work has been included in many group exhibitions as well as solo exhibits.

The Artist's Gallery



The Activity...

Materials:

- oil paint
- hard board, canvas, or paper
- glass jars with lids for mineral spirits
- palettes
- gesso or latex house paint
- mineral spirits (petroleum distillate)
- paper towels
- smocks or old clothes

Setting the Stage

- Introduce the artist, Susan Dupor.
- As a group, discuss the artist's background and view several of her paintings, noting the subject matter and her use of symbolism.
- Discuss the aspects of symbolism that are related to hearing, deafness, education, oppression, and culture.

Interpreting symbolism...

- Review the artist's use of symbolism and chart or detail students' ideas about what each symbol suggests.
- In small groups, students choose two paintings and chart their interpretations of the symbolism.
- In a group discussion, compare ideas.

Painting:	Symbol	Interpretation # 1	Interpretation # 2	Interpretation # 3
Ganesha Child	6 fingered hands	"Abnormal" hands represent disability OR overachievement /ability	6 th sense	Uniqueness; all people are different
	<i>Snakes</i>	Lack of sound; snakes feel sounds through vibrations	Movement: ASL is a fluid, moving language	Anxiety
	<i>Monkey</i>	Vocal sounds that Deaf people make; unintelligible sounds	Research has shown that monkeys/apes can learn sign language	Family members of the elephant
	<i>Peacock</i>	Male peacock represents the founders of Deaf education (all men)	Pride, beauty of Deaf culture; hiding their tails – hiding Deaf culture	Teachers

Identifying symbols...

- Students think about a personal event or idea and create a preliminary drawing or web of ideas to incorporate into their own composition.
- In their journals, students detail a variety of symbols that could represent their event or idea.
- They sketch a basic design, creating an "underdrawing" on the canvas or paper.

Discuss with students the hazards of working with oil-based paints and mineral spirits. Mineral spirits are highly flammable, and should be stored in a fire cabinet. They can easily combust if exposed to flame. Cloth or paper towels with oil paint or mineral spirits on them should be disposed of in grease disposal pails as these cloths can combust in direct sunlight.

Applying the paint...

- Review paint application:

Underpainting: This technique is similar to that in acrylic painting. Usually it is completed in a monochromatic scale, green, blue, or brown with black and white and diluted with mineral spirits to a wash. In the underpainting the artist designs the artwork and creates tonal value.

Glazing: Glaze is a transparent layer of colour. The glaze can be placed over a ground, underpainting, impasto, or another glaze. By adding varnish to the oil paint, it creates a glaze and builds up layers of transparent colour over the underpainting.

Staining: This technique is similar to water colour on paper. The old paint is diluted with mineral spirits to make it translucent and is applied to untreated canvas. In this process, there is no underpainting or priming of the canvas. Due to the oil in the paint, staining can cause the canvas to deteriorate with time – acrylic staining does not present the same problem.

Broken Colour: Colours can be mixed optically by the viewer's eye due to their proximity to one another. The use of broken colour can unite a work. In this case, the artist takes the dominant colour in the main subject area, and adds this colour to the foreground or background in small quantities as a "tie" between all areas in the composition.

Alla Prima: Alla Prima or direct painting is a technique in which the paint is applied quickly and opaquely to the canvas, usually completing the painting in one session. There is no underpainting in this process, unless as a guide, but an underdrawing replaces that process. Each colour of paint is applied as it will appear in the final artwork, giving the painting a fresh look. Artists typically incorporate the mark of the brush or palette knife as an important aspect of the final product.

Wet-to-Wet: This is a variation of Alla Prima. The artist may work for several sessions on the same work due to the extended drying time of oil paint. Wet-to-wet allows the artist to make changes and to blend colours together. One problem is that of "muddy" colours from excessive blending and overworking.

Impasto: The paint is used straight from the tube and applied using a brush or palette. This method is often combined with Alla Prima and completed in one session.

The combination of "underpaintings" and "glazes" were widely used from the Renaissance until the nineteenth century.

The impressionists typically used this method for painting outdoors.

- Students choose the method that they would like to use in creating their painting.
- Frame and display their work.

Reflecting on their Art...

Group

Ask volunteers to describe the creative process they used in producing their work of art.

Individual

Students document their work in their portfolios, providing evidence of their learning process, e.g., plans, sketches, final product, and include a brief description of their painting.

Legend Painting

Focus

Using representational drawing as an expressive art form, specifically the images of contemporary Native artwork

Concepts

Characteristics and trends in contemporary Native art
Comparative analyses of the visual, symbolic and conceptual aspects of a specific art work

Meet the Artist... Samuel Ash

"All young people can be artists. Study nature, how birds fly, how the sun sets in the sky, the way the tree blows in the wind."
Samuel Ash

Samuel Ash was born in 1951 in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. His mother died at his birth and he was raised in Pickle Lake by foster parents until he entered the School for the Deaf in Belleville, Ontario. After his graduation from Sir James Whitney in 1970, he lived in Thunder Bay, Ontario, where he felt he would be closer to his sources of inspiration about legends and the Ojibway people.

Ash gave each of his paintings a title and wrote a short story to go with it that gives the viewer a greater understanding of the art work. From a technical standpoint, Ash's genres of legend paintings are not easy to do. Apart from properly visualizing the figures on paper, the artist must simplify any moment within a legend's stream of narrative in order to have a coherent and focused picture. This is one artistic challenge that Ash masterfully handled in all of his acrylic paintings. Aesthetically, Ash's images are compelling and bold. In his earlier work, the lines are steady and demonstrate admirable craftsmanship.

After a successful first exhibition of his work in Thunder Bay in 1973, many of his paintings were purchased and exhibited in galleries from coast to coast. Ash's strong Native legend imagery made his work the pride of the Provincial School for the Deaf, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, and the University of Toronto.

Materials:

- heavy paper, cardboard, or canvas
- thick water-based paint
- paintbrushes and water
- examples of Norval Morrisseau's work
- images of animals

Morrisseau is arguably the most well known Ojibway Artist, perhaps even the most recognized First Nations artist in the world. He is the founder of the Canadian-originated school of art called "Woodland" or sometimes "Legend" painting. His work has influenced a large group of younger Ojibwe and Cree artists, among them Blake Debassige, Tom Chee Chee and Leland Bell.

http://www.kstrom.net/isk/art/morriss/morr_bio.html

http://www.canadahouse.com/dynamic/artists/MorrisseauNorval_public.htm

<http://www.coghlanart.com/Norvalpainting.htm>

Students use these word lists as reference when writing about this image.

<http://www.turtle-island.com/artists.html>

<http://www.kstrom.net/isk/art/art.html>

The Activity...

Setting the Stage

- Introduce artist Samuel Ash and discuss his background.
- Focus a discussion on the genre of Legend Paintings.

Viewing Aboriginal artwork...

- View the work of Canadian Ojibway painter, *Norval Morrisseau*.
- Discuss the question: Was Ojibway artist Samuel Ash influenced by the work of Ojibway artist Norval Morrisseau?
- Students defend their responses with references to both artists' images.

Analyzing the artist's work...

- After a review of Samuel Ash's work, students decide which painting they prefer and write a defense of their choice.
- In small groups, students have open discussion about their choices.
 - What ideas do the paintings have in common?
 - What ideas are different in each painting?

Describing the images...

- Assign one image to each small group.
- Individually, each student writes down four or five single word associations that immediately come to mind when they view the work.
- In their small groups, they combine their word lists.
- As a large group review a painting and the corresponding legend written by Samuel Ash.
- Have students' research Ojibway culture, customs, and beliefs.
- Each group writes a collaborative legend that draws from the assigned image, their word lists, and from the information they gathered about Ojibway culture.

Viewing art work from a technical perspective...

- Review the use of symbolism in Ash's and other Ojibway artists' images.

- Students explain how the technical approaches and the elements and principles of design found in some of the images support the expression of ideas in the work and contribute to its function.
 - Circle: The circles tell about the life cycle, the sun, the moon and directions (North, South, East, West).
 - Lines: Spirit Lines or Energy Lines extend from the hand or the body of a figure. Sometimes they are connected ... sometimes they are alone or isolated.
 - Eyes: Large eyes are a symbol of a shaman or medicine man.
 - X-Ray: This technique shows the interior as well as the exterior of a figure. The various parts of a body are expressed with different colors and lines.
- Students describe characteristics and trends in contemporary Native art that apply to the style/genre of Morriseau and Ash.
- They research the history and stylistic evolution of Legend and Woodland painting.

Creating images inspired by wildlife...

- Students research wildlife from the Ontario regions where Ash and Morriseau found inspiration for their images.
- Each student chooses one animal and creates several sketches, producing images that capture the “energy” or “emotion” inside their subject.
- Students choose their favourite image and transfer it onto canvas or poster board, using acrylic paints and trace a heavy black outline to finish the image.
- Students write a corresponding story/legend for their artwork.

Reflecting on their Art...

Students document and evaluate their creative process and art work in their portfolios. They include rough sketches, story/legend outlines, etc.