

Movement in Art: Degas Dancers, Pattern and Unity

- How does pattern and unity invoke movement in visual art?
- How does a still image create visual flow?

LESSON OVERVIEW/OBJECTIVES

This lesson focuses on pattern, unity and creating movement in visual art. Students will learn about Edgar Degas, a French impressionist visual artist who is especially identified with the subject of dance and was a master in depicting movement. Students will invoke movement by creating dancers ala Degas and place them on scratchboard backgrounds that have been designed using concepts of pattern and unity.

KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO VISUAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM:

Based on Utah State Visual Arts Core Curriculum Requirements (3rd Grade)

Standard 1 (Making): The student will explore and refine the application of media, techniques, and artistic processes.

Objective 1: Explore a variety of art materials while learning new techniques and processes.

- Practice using skills for beginning drawings.
- Use simplified forms, such as cones, spheres, and cubes, to begin drawing more complex form.
- Establish more natural size relationships among objects in drawings.
- Explore the design possibilities of a 3-D object by examining views of it from many angles.

Objective 3: Handle art materials in a safe and responsible manner.

- Ventilate the room to avoid inhaling fumes from art materials.
- Dispose and/or recycle waste art materials properly.
- Clean and put back to order art making areas after projects.
- Respect other students' artworks as well as one's own.

Standard 2 (Perceiving): The student will analyze, reflect on, and apply the structures of art.

Objective 1: Analyze and reflect on works of art by their elements and principles

- Determine how artists create dominance in their work; e.g., size, repetition, and contrast.
- Examine significant works of art and point out how the artists have created an illusion or feeling of depth.

Objective 2: Create works of art using the elements and principles.

- Identify dominant elements in significant works of art.
- Group some significant works of art by a common element or visual characteristic.
- Discover how an artist has thoughtfully used all of the space within an artwork.
- Create a work of art that uses all of the space on the paper.
- Create a work of art that uses contrast to create a focal point. Use that to convey the most important idea or part of the work.

Standard 3 (Expressing): The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.

Objective 1: Explore possible content and purposes in significant works of art.

- a. Explain possible meanings or interpretations of some significant works of art.
- b. Invent possible stories that may explain what is going on in these same works of art

Objective 2: Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for their own artworks.

- a. Group significant works of art according to theme or subject matter.
- d. Create a work of art that uses a similar subject matter, symbol, idea, and/or meaning found in a significant work of art.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Learn about the art of dance and movement vocabulary.
- Understand and create pattern and unity in visual art.
- Understand how visual art can express movement.
- Learn about the artist Edgar Degas.
- Learn about the work of Edgar Degas.
- Create a dancer in a movement pose.

SUPPLIES

- Print samples of Edgar Degas' dancers.
- Information about Edgar Degas, pattern and unity
- Scratchboards
- Mechanical pencils without lead to scratch out designs in scratchboard
- Tin foil
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Scratch paper for drawing initial ideas
- Scissors
- Glue
- Copy paper for initial drawings

VOCABULARY

Pattern - Is a combination of elements or shapes repeated in a recurring and regular arrangement.

Rhythm - Is a combination of elements or movements repeated, but with variations.

Unity - Refers to the visual quality of wholeness or oneness that is achieved through effective use of the elements or art and principles of design. Variety is achieved when the art elements are combined in various ways to increase visual interest.

Movement - Is the design element that operates in the fourth dimension - time. Movement is the process of relocation of objects in space over time. We can speak of movement as literal or compositional.

Dance - Is a performance art form consisting of purposefully selected sequences of human movement. This movement has aesthetic and symbolic value, and is acknowledged as dance by performers and observers within a particular culture. It is the art form in which human movement becomes the medium for sensing, understanding, and communicating ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Composition - In the visual arts—in particular painting, graphic design, photography, and sculpture—composition is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art, as distinct from the subject of a work.

Impressionism - Is a 19th-century art movement that originated with a group of Paris-based artists whose independent exhibitions brought them to prominence during the 1870s and 1880s. Impressionist painting characteristics include relatively small, thin, yet visible brush strokes, open composition, emphasis on accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities (often accentuating the effects of the passage of time), ordinary subject matter, inclusion of movement as a crucial element of human perception and experience, and unusual visual angles.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Lesson Introduction:

Before beginning the lesson, introduce impressionism and the artist Degas himself. Show images of the work of Edgar Degas and specifically, the dancers for which he is famous. Talk about the movement they see in the art. Discuss ways that visual art can reflect movement. Introduce movement and visual art vocabulary such as pattern, unity, rhythm etc.

About Edgar Degas

Edgar Degas (July 19, 1834 - September 27, 1917), was a French artist famous for his paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings. He is especially identified with the subject of dance; more than half of his works depict dancers. He is regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism, although he rejected the term, preferring to be called a realist. He was a superb draftsman, and particularly masterly in depicting movement, as can be seen in his renditions of dancers, racecourse subjects and female nudes. His portraits are notable for their psychological complexity and for their portrayal of human isolation.

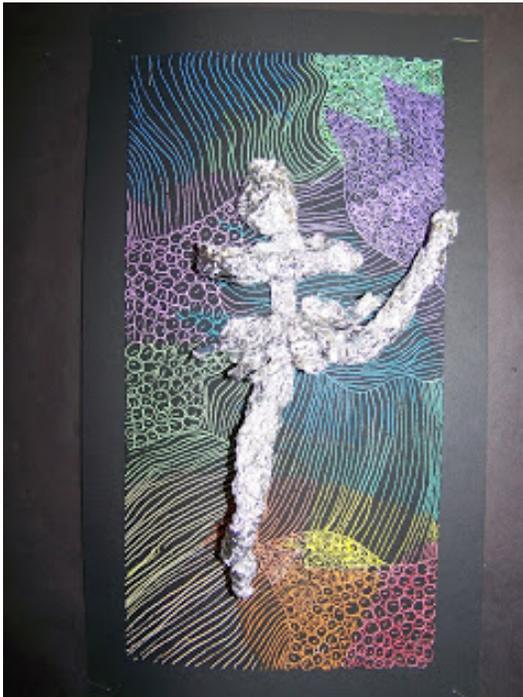
Degas is often identified as an Impressionist, an understandable but insufficient description. Impressionism originated in the 1860s and 1870s. The Impressionists painted the realities of the world around them using bright, “dazzling” colors, concentrating primarily on the effects of light, and hoping to infuse their scenes with immediacy. They wanted to express what they saw in that exact moment.

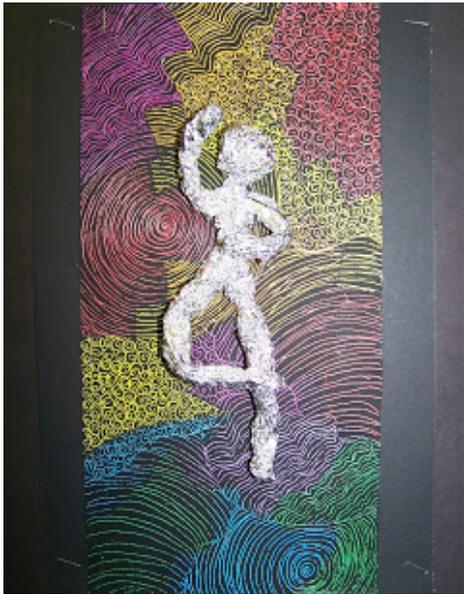
Fiocre in the Ballet La Source, exhibited in the Salon of 1868, was his first major work to introduce a subject with which he would become especially identified, dancers. In many subsequent paintings dancers were shown backstage or in rehearsal, emphasizing their status as professionals doing a job. From 1870 Degas increasingly painted ballet subjects, partly because they sold well and provided him with needed income after his brother’s debts had left the family bankrupt. wikipedia (source)

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

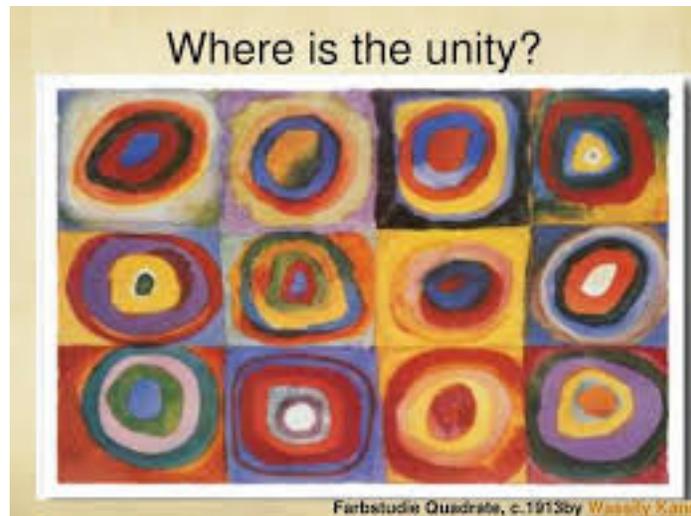
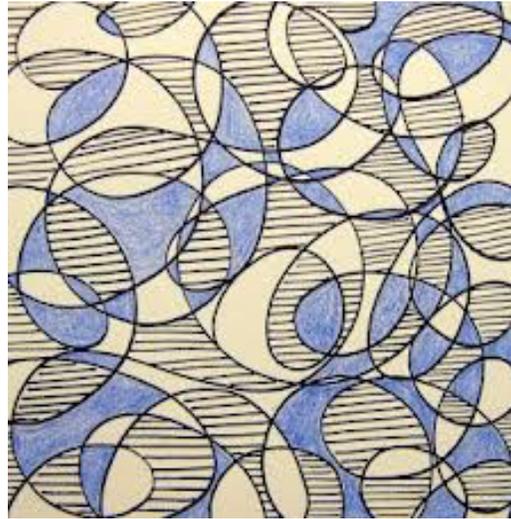
Lesson

- Start by referring to the Degas prints and images of dancers.. Talk about the movement these illustrations show. Introduce vocabulary words such as rhythm, unity, pattern, movement etc. that both dance and visual art share. Show examples of these words in movement and visual art in the work of Degas or in other examples of dancer images.
- On copy/scratch paper have students make examples of patterns and unity. Have examples on hand to show. When satisfied, have students scratch out their patterns on their scratchboards. These boards will provide the background for the dancers.
- On copy/scratch paper, have students draw some ideas of dancers in a pose. Reinforce that the drawings do not need to be detailed, but show movement and proportion.
- After students have determined their dancer and pose, have them create that image out of tinfoil. They will be able to shape their dancer in the manner of their choosing and perhaps add accessories to their dancer.
- When finished, glue the dancer to their scratchboard to complete their composition and artwork.
- Invite students to share their creations with one another! inspired by: [what'shappeningintheartroom](#)





Samples of Pattern and Unity



Additional Resources:

www.what'shappeningintheartroom.org

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/video/399937/edgar-degas's-studies-of-circus-performer-miss-lala/> Edgar Degas's Studies of Circus Performer, Miss Lala, Getty Museum

www.khanacademy.org - search Degas, The Dance Class

wikipedia - Edgar Degas