

Picasso and Cubism: Self-Portraits

- How are many sides of an object expressed at once?
- How is a subject reconstructed into planes, forms and colors?

LESSON OVERVIEW/OBJECTIVES

This lesson focuses on Cubism, a revolutionary style of modern art, and on its co-founder, Pablo Picasso, one of the world's most famous artists. Cubist art depicts real people, places or objects, from an array of viewpoints. In the Cubist style, students will create self-portraits focusing on shape, viewpoint and composition.

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.
- 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 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 work of Pablo Picasso.
- Understand Cubism.
- Learn about self portraiture.
- Create a self portrait in the style of Cubism.
- Working in the style of Cubism, learn to show many parts of a subject at one time, viewed from different angles, and reconstructed into a composition of planes, forms and colors.

SUPPLIES

- Print samples of Pablo Picasso's artwork specifically those from his Cubist period.
- Power Point presentation of Pablo Picasso and his work (optional)
- Information about face proportions
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Scratch paper for drawing initial ideas
- Air dry clay
- Paints - watercolor or acrylic
- Embellishments to enhance portraits such as beads, pipe cleaners etc.

VOCABULARY

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

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.

Cubism - Cubism an early 20th-century style and movement in art, especially painting, in which perspective with a single viewpoint was abandoned and use was made of simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, and, later, collage.

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.

Self-Portrait - In s a representation of an artist that is drawn, painted, photographed, or sculpted by that artist.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Lesson Introduction:

Before beginning the lesson, introduce Cubism and the artist Pablo Picasso. Talk about the various art periods in Picasso's life ending with Cubism, the style for which he is most famous. Show images of Picasso's Cubist artwork and focus in on faces, portraits and figures he created. Talk about how many viewpoints are represented all at once. Cubist artwork shows many parts of the subject at one time, viewed from different angles, and reconstructed into a composition of planes, forms and colors. The whole idea of space is reconfigured: the front, back and sides of the subject become interchangeable elements in the design of the work.

About Cubism

Cubism was a truly revolutionary style of modern art developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braques. It was the first style of abstract art which evolved at the beginning of the 20th century in response to a world that was changing with unprecedented speed. Cubism was an attempt by artists to revitalise the tired traditions of Western art which they believed had run their course. The Cubists challenged conventional forms or representation, such as perspective, which had been the rule since the Renaissance. Their aim was to develop a new way of seeing which reflected the modern age.

In the four decades from 1870 - 1910, western society witnessed more technological progress than in the previous four centuries. During this period, inventions such as photography, cinematography, sound recording, the telephone, the motor car and the airplane heralded the dawn of a new age. The problem for artists at this time was how to reflect the modernity of the era using the tired and trusted traditions that had served art for the last four centuries. Artists needed a more radical approach - a new way of seeing that expanded the possibilities of art in the same way that technology was extending the boundaries of communication and travel. This new way of seeing was called Cubism - the first abstract style of modern art.

The limitations of perspective were also seen as an obstacle to progress by the Cubists. The fact that a picture drawn in perspective could only work from one viewpoint restricted their options. Cubists wanted to make pictures that reached beyond the rigid geometry of perspective.

When we look at objects, our eyes scan it, stops to register on a certain detail before moving on to the next point of interest and so on. You can also change your viewpoint in relation to the object allowing you to look at it from above, below or from the side. Therefore, the Cubists proposed that your sight of an object is the sum of many different views

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN CONTINUED

and your memory of an object is not constructed from one angle, as in perspective, but from many angles selected by your sight and movement. Cubist painting was an attempt of a more realistic way of seeing.

A typical Cubist painting depicts real people, places or objects, but not from a fixed viewpoint. Instead it will show you many parts of the subject at one time, viewed from different angles, and reconstructed into a composition of planes, form and colors. The whole idea of space is reconfigured: the front, back and sides of the subject become interchangeable elements in the design of the work. artyfactory.com (source)

About Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso (October 25, 1881 - April 8, 1973), was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, stage designer, poet and playwright who spent most of his adult life in France. Regarded as one of the greatest and most influential artists of the 20th century, he is known for co-founding the Cubist movement, the co-invention of collage, and for the wide variety of styles that he helped develop and explore. Among his most famous works are the Cubist *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J. no. O), and *Guernica* (1937), a portrayal of the Bombing of Guernica by the German and Italian airforces at the behest of the Spanish nationalist government during the Spanish Civil War.

Picasso demonstrated extraordinary artistic talent in his early years, painting in a naturalistic manner through his childhood and adolescence. During the first decade of the 20th century, his style changed as he experimented with different theories, techniques, and ideas. His work is often categorized into periods namely Blue Period (1901-1904), the Rose Period (1904-1906), the African-influenced Period (1907-1909), Analytic Cubism (1909-1912), and Synthetic Cubism (1912 - 1919), also referred to as the Crystal Period.

Exceptionally prolific throughout the course of his long life, Picasso achieved universal renown and immense fortune for his revolutionary artistic accomplishments, and became one of the best known figures in 20th century art. wikipedia (source)

Lesson

- Start by looking at some of Picasso's Cubist works. Talk about how many viewpoints are represented and discuss how that occurs. Look at the way the image is reconstructed to be represented by planes, forms and colors.
- Compare Cubist style to realistic portraiture or self portraits and ask students to compare. Have some samples on hand and/or have a diagram of a face and the breakdown of proportions of how a face is rendered. Explain that self-portraits can look just like the artist creating it or it can be abstracted, made into anime, a cartoon, 3D etc. These ideas may be new to your students but you have the visual art pieces to help explain the concepts.
- Show how to draw a face in correct proportions. Have kids follow along with you as you draw on the board. They will draw all their guide lines and portrait in pencil. Be sure to use and explain words and concepts such as balance, symmetry, harmony and proportion.
- In a Cubist style, talk with students about how they can represent all the viewpoints of their faces in one art project. Talk about what shapes they may use and how they can combine them to make their self-portrait incorporate many aspects or perspectives..

Lesson continued

- On copy/scratch paper, have students draw their Cubist self-portrait ideas.
- When ready, give students air dry clay to create their Cubist self-portraits. Be sure to reinforce the idea that the front, sides and backs of their heads can be represented all in one piece. (Optional: If air dry clay is not available, you can have students draw and paint their Cubist self-portraits).
- When finished with their compositions, students can paint the clay whilst it is still wet.
- Provide accessories such as buttons, beads and pipe cleaners to add to their composition.
- Invite students to share their creations with one another! inspired by: [what'shappeningintheartroom](#)

Famous Picasso Cubist Painting Samples



Famous Picasso Cubist Painting Samples



Sample Projects



Additional Resources:

www.what'shappeningintheartroom.org

http://www.picasso.fr/us/picasso_page_index.php

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYv2J6sMWaE> - Video on how to draw a face and face proportions

wikipedia - Pablo Picasso, Cubism