



Academic Resource for Teachers & Students

RICHARD SERRA: PRINTS

06.10.17 - 08.20.17

9-12



RICHARD SERRA
PROMENADE NOTEBOOK DRAWING V
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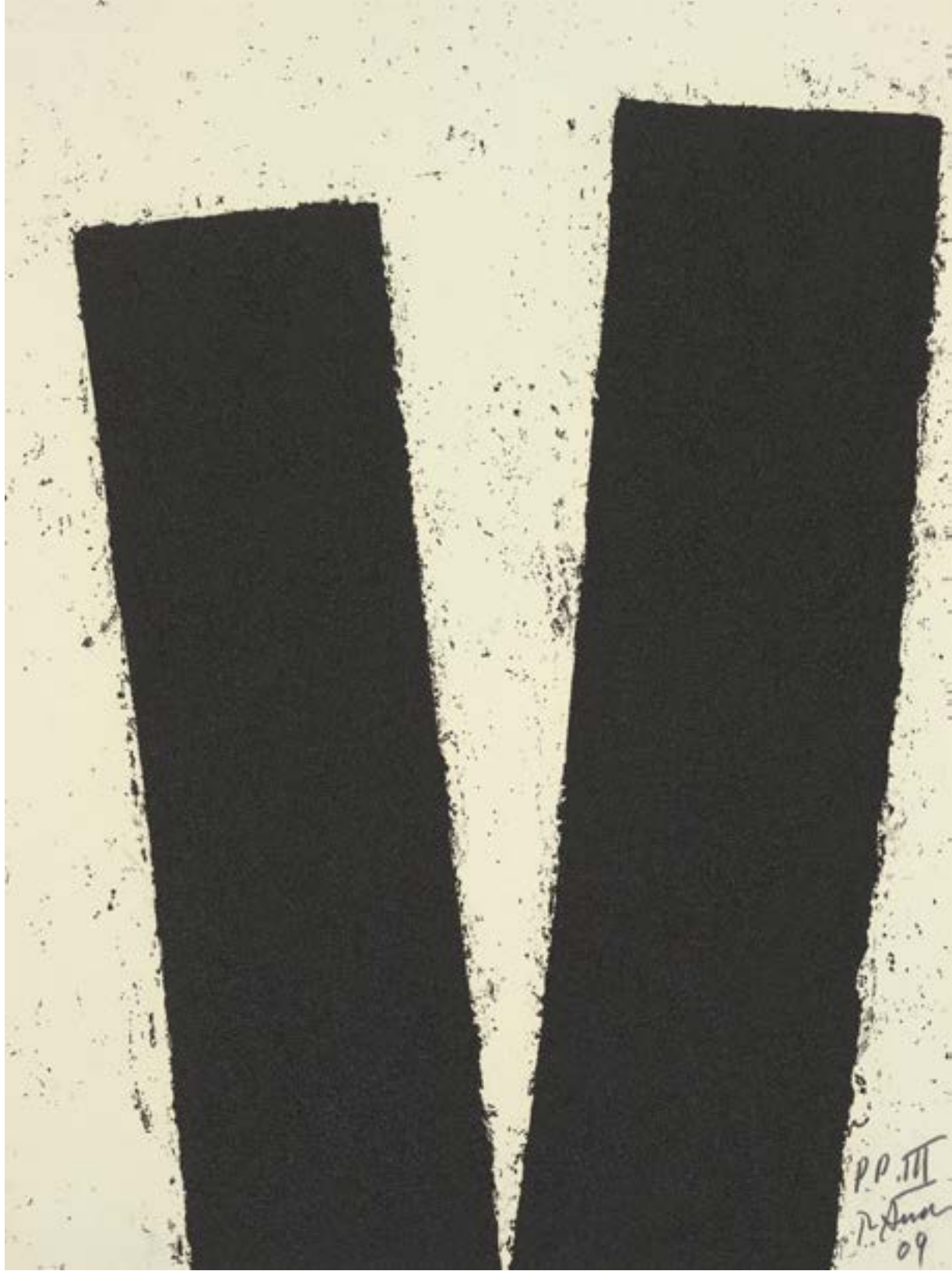


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lesson overview

lesson plan

Designed to extend and enhance the learning experience of our exhibits while linking to core curriculum subject matter.

lesson objectives

- To study the relationship between Richard Serra's titles and design choices.
- To learn about Gestalt theories and apply them.
- To create a drawing inspired by a word from a literary text.

core curriculum tie-ins

Ninth through Twelfth Grades: Language Arts, Visual Arts.

lesson overview

On the A.R.T.S. tour, students will learn about the prints of Richard Serra. Then students will apply basic design principles to create a minimalist drawing inspired by a word from a literary text.

length of class

One to three class sessions.

supplies

- Copy Paper.
- Black Construction Paper.
- Scissors.
- Pencils.
- Drawing Paper.
- Black Oil Pastels.
- Rulers.

core curriculum tie-ins

9-10th grade Language Arts

Reading: Literature Standard 4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

9-12th grade Visual Art

Standard L1.V.R.3:

Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

Standard L1.V.R.4:

Establish relevant criteria in order to evaluate a work of art or collection of works.

ABOUT *Richard Serra: Prints*

Richard Serra is well known for his monumental steel sculptures which arc and spiral, altering a viewer's experience of space as they move around them. In *Richard Serra: Prints*, the Kimball Art Center offers a fresh look at this artist's practice. Moving back and forth between these two mediums, he explores the complex relationship between his large-scale sculpture, the body and surrounding space. His pared-down black and white prints are highly evocative of this physical experience and, with new approaches to traditional techniques, represent 45 years of compelling experimentation in the medium of printmaking. This exhibition is drawn from the collections of the Jordan D. Schnitzer Family Foundation.



lesson plan

1. "The problem I was trying to resolve in my early work was: How do you apply an activity or a process to a material and arrive at a form that refers back to its making?" (from an interview between Richard Serra and Gary Garrels in 2010). Talk about this quote, ask students what the artist means. Show students drawings and prints by Richard Serra and discuss the relationship between their titles and the artwork. For example in *Rift*, how does the title or process translate to a visual meaning? On the white board take notes as students explain how they think he achieved this meaning in such a minimal way.

3. Richard Serra names the design courses

he took at Yale as instrumental to his practice. Ask students what design principles he is using. Serra talks about the "Gestalt of the image". What is Gestalt?

3. Pass out 3 pre-cut rectangles of black construction paper (1 x 5 in.) and a white sheet of 8.5 x 11 in. copy paper to each student. Explain to students that they will be experimenting with the elements of basic design and Gestalt principles before creating their own drawing.

4. In front of the class, set 3 black rectangles on white paper and point out how our eyes differentiate the black shape from the area around it. The construction paper rectangles

are perceived as a **figure** (or object) while everything around is seen as the **ground** or background. If the rectangles are piled together at the center, their individual shapes are unclear. They can then become a new shape, or a **grouping**. If all of the rectangles are pushed to one side, the ground becomes more important than the figure. (Students can also relate **figure and ground to positive and negative space**). Ask students to create a composition using positive and negative space and choose a few students to present their designs to the class.

5. Next demonstrate that when the three rectangles are placed uniformly in a row they create a **pattern**. They become **united**.

lesson plan (cont.)

Then create a triangle without overlapping the three rectangles. Show that since enough of the shape is obvious, our eyes **connect the whole**, and we see a triangle. Finally if you rip off part of one shape, this object becomes **emphasized** for its **dissimilarity**.

6. To apply these principles, chose a word as a class to prompt a design. (Examples: tilted, wedged, flat, yearning, grounded...) Write the elements of design demonstrated previously on the white board: figure/ground, grouping, pattern, unity, dissimilarity and emphasis. Each student should create a design using only three black rectangles and a piece of copy paper. Students can arrage the shapes,

cut them to change their size or geometry, crop them and glue them to the paper. Talk about the students' designs and how they relate to the chosen word.

7. For the final drawing, students will choose a key word from a literary text they are currently studying. Brainstorm as a group about which words would work well for this assignment. Emphasize a minimal approach to translate the impact of the word into a visual representation. Explain that this is not an illustration of the word but a design that conveys the impact of the word. For example 'behold'. Students should first create multiple sketches in pencil.

8. Display the sketches and give students feedback. Talk about how they are using the design principles in their drawing.

9. Students can then make changes to the sketches and draw out the final draft on drawing paper. Use oil pastels to fill in positive shapes and to acheive contrast.

10. When finished, students can present their designs to the class with the titles of the work.

vocabulary

Emphasis – Emphasis is defined as an area or object within the artwork that draws attention and becomes a focal point.

Figure-Ground – In Gestalt psychology figure-ground is known as identifying a figure from the background. For example, you see words on a printed paper as the "figure" and the white sheet as the "background".

Gestalt Theory – Gestalt is a psychology term which means "unified whole". It refers to theories of visual perception developed by German psychologists in the 1920s. These theories attempt to describe how people tend to organize visual elements into groups or unified wholes when certain principles are applied.

Minimalism – In visual arts, music, and other mediums, minimalism is a style that uses pared-down design elements. Minimalism began in post-World War II Western art, most strongly with American visual

arts in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Negative Space – Negative space is the space around and between the subject(s) of an image.

Pattern – A Pattern is an underlying structure that organizes surfaces or structures in a consistent, regular manner. Pattern can be described as a repeating unit of shape or form.

Proximity – Proximity is the property of being close together.

Scale – The scale is the ratio between the size of something and a representation of it.

Shape – A shape is a form or outline.

Unity – Unity is the state of being joined together as a single unit.

resources

Gestalt and Design Principles:

<http://www.j6design.com.au/6-principles-of-design/>

<http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestalt-principles/gestalt.pdf>

<http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestalt-principles/gestaltprinc.htm>

Design Inspiration:

<http://designspiration.net/search/saves/page/1/?q=typography>

Richard Serra:

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/oct/05/serra.art>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92haKUsVHBQ>

https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2012/08/27/richard-serras-delineator-comes-to-moma/



RICHARD SERRA - IMAGE OF THE ARTIST DRAWING