

California Landscape Mural

Related Subjects: Visual & Performing Arts & History-Social Sciences

Grades: 4-5

Medium: Oil Pastel

Author: MCASD Office of Education

Time: 90 minute class session

Summary:

This lesson deals with the visual art standards of using complementary colors and contrast successfully in an artwork. In this lesson, students will create a collaborative mural of a landscape.



Materials:

- Oil pastels
- Baby wipes (if sink is not available)
- White butcher paper on long roll (cut to size)
- White construction paper 12x18 or larger
- One piece each of blue, orange and yellow construction paper (for demonstration purposes)
- Color wheels
- Scissors
- Masking tape (to tape butcher paper down to floor)
- Glue, glue stick, or paste
- Push-pins to hang the mural
- Photos or transparencies/PowerPoint slides of local murals
- Strong hairspray or matte fixative

Glossary:

Complementary colors – Colors opposite one another on the color wheel. Red/green, blue/orange, and yellow/violet are examples of complementary colors.

Contrast - Difference between two or more elements (e.g., value, color, texture) in a composition; juxtaposition of dissimilar elements in a work of art; also, the degree of difference between the lightest and darkest parts of a picture.

Mural – A very large image, such as a painting or enlarged photograph, applied directly to a wall or ceiling.

Muralist – A person who paints murals.



MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SAN DIEGO

Preparation for Teachers:

- Cut butcher paper to size where mural will be exhibited.
- Prepare sample images to show to students. Images are included in this pdf on the final pages, and if you would like the images as digital files, please email education@mcasd.org

Pre-project class discussion:

1. Begin by showing works of local murals. Ask students the following questions: *Where have you seen these before? Why do you think they were created? What do they mean to you? How do some murals change the feeling of the neighborhood?* Explain the definition of a mural.
2. Show overheads of artwork from the museum. *What do you see in these images? How are these murals different if they are inside a museum? In your opinion, which murals are more important; the ones in the museum or the ones in the neighborhood? Why?*

Project procedure:

1. Explain to students that they will be creating a mural based on a familiar landscape using complementary color and contrast. One idea for this landscape would be for the students to depict the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego's sculpture garden, the *Garden Gallery*, and surrounding coastal area.
2. Pass out color wheels to students and have them first identify primary and secondary colors. Have them locate the complementary colors on the color wheel. Hold up the piece of orange construction paper next to the blue construction paper. Ask the students: *What do you notice when we put these two colors next to each other?* Take away the blue piece of construction paper and replace it with the yellow. Hold up the orange and yellow construction papers. Now ask the students: *How does the orange color look to you now?* Students should notice the orange and blue combination seems to "pop" while the yellow and orange combination is very similar and mutes the two colors.
3. Explain to the students that one way to show contrast is to use multiple shades of the same color in a piece of artwork. For example, ask the students to name the many shades of green they might see in a field of grass.
4. Demonstrate for the students how to use complementary color and contrast in a drawing. For example, draw a plant using complementary colors (green and red). Then draw the same plant using contrast (different shades of green).
5. Divide the class into three groups to equally represent the components of a landscape (i.e. landforms, vegetation, and animals/people). Have the students brainstorm with their group on chart paper, making a list of items they could draw for the mural.
6. Students will then draw these items on white construction paper. They will color them with oil pastel, cut them out, and then paste them onto the butcher paper taped to the floor to form a cohesive mural. Remind students to use complementary color and contrast while working on their mural pieces – they do not have to use natural (local) color.
7. When finished, have students use baby wipes for clean-up if sink is not available or if students are having difficulty removing oil pastel from their hands.
8. Together, hang the mural in the designated space using push-pins or thumb tacks
9. Have all of the students sign the bottom of the mural (making sure no one writes on anyone's drawing). Students can also write a short paragraph explaining what the mural is about and how it was created. These paragraphs can be attached to the mural.



Extensions:

- History-Social Science: Fourth grade students can complete this project depicting the four California regions
- History-Social Science: Fifth grade students can complete this project depicting the major pre-Columbian settlements.

Teaching Tips:

- This lesson was designed to create a temporary mural. You can modify this lesson to make it a permanent mural by using ¼" plywood, painting directly onto the wood rather than using oil pastels on paper, and drilling it into the wall with screws.
- Use images of local murals, such as those found in Chicano Park. Or, plan a class outing and visit the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego's *Garden Gallery* where native plants and Ed Ruscha's *Brave Men of La Jolla* mural can be found.

CA Content Standards:Fourth Grade Visual Arts

- 1.1 Perceive and describe contrast and emphasis in works of art and in the environment.
- 1.3 Identify pairs of complementary colors (e.g., yellow/violet; red/green; orange/blue) and discuss how artists use them to communicate an idea or mood.
- 2.8 Use complementary colors in an original composition to show contrast and emphasis.

Fifth Grade Visual Arts

- 1.3 Use their knowledge of all the elements of art to describe similarities and differences in works of art and in the environment.
- 2.5 Assemble a found object sculpture (as assemblage) or a mixed media two-dimensional composition that reflects unity and harmony and communicates a theme.

Fourth Grade History-Social Science

- 4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.

Fifth Grade History-Social Science

- 5.1 Students describe the major pre-Columbian settlements, including the cliff dwellers and pueblo people of the desert Southwest, the American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, the nomadic nations of the Great Plains, and the woodland peoples east of the Mississippi River.



Bibliography/Webography

Braun-Reinitz, Janet and Rochelle Shicoff. *The Mural Book: A Practical Guide For Educators*. New York: Crystal Productions, 2001.

Capek, Michael. *Murals: Cave, Cathedral, to Street (Art Beyond Borders)*. Minneapolis, Minn: Lerner Publishing Group, 1996.

Roochfort, Desmond. *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998.

Chicano Park Murals - www.chicanoparksandiego.com/murals/index.html
Great resource to San Diego's most famous murals and their history.

Diego Rivera Web Museum - www.diegorivera.com/
This Web site has images of Rivera's famous murals.

Artcyclopedia - www.artcyclopedia.com/media/Muralist.html
A list of famous muralists with links to museums and sites where these murals can be found.





Alexis Smith. *Men Seldom Make Passes at Girls Who Wear Glasses*. Wall painting with two framed mixed-media collages, 1985. Museum purchase with partial funds from Ansley I. Graham Trust, Los Angeles.



Sol Le Witt. *Isometric Pyramid*. Color ink washes, 1983. Museum purchase, Contemporary Collectors Fund.

If you would like either of these images as digital files (for educational purposes only), please email education@mcasd.org.



MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SAN DIEGO