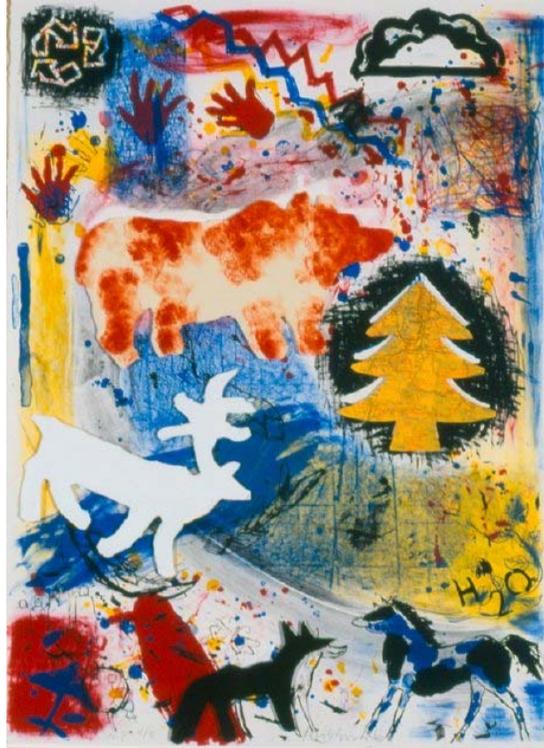


CUT OUTS: Shapes and Symbols

4th /5th Grade Art Lesson Jennifer Ogden, 2008



J. Quick-To-See Smith *Ode to Chief Seattle*.1991, lithograph 20"X 22"

Description:

Students will create a cut out collage inspired by *Ode to Chief Seattle*, by Juane Quick-to-See Smith, as well as the “cut outs” done by Henri Matisse.

Duration:

Four one-hour sessions, depending on the amount of support information used by the instructor.

Materials:

Color paper, including pieces from the scrap box, as well as new sheets of color paper and a large sheet of color paper to be used as a ground for the artwork. Scissors, glue. (Optional items: polymer medium, stiff bristle brush, Sharpie markers, animal and nature books or magazines).

Background Information: Quick-to-See Smith was commissioned to create *Ode to Chief Seattle* as a reference to the Pacific Northwest watershed. It reflects an eco system, an ancient native homeland, as well as a site for contemporary practices, such as airplane manufacture. Quick-to-See Smith pulls from a variety of ideas that blend together in a fitting tour de force. She honors Suquamish Indian leader, Chief Seattle in the title of her piece. Chief Seattle lived from the late 1700s and well into the following century. He

rose to leadership in his region, and bore witness to the changes visited upon his people by white settlers, and is attributed to a speech in reaction to treaties signed in 1854.

Learning Sparks:

Have students study *Ode to Chief Seattle*, by Juane Quick-to-See Smith, looking first for sensory elements such as line, shape, texture, value and space. There are essential strong shapes such as trees, and animals. Go over vocabulary for categories and aspects of shape.

A second reading of the image will be for meaning, utilizing the clues given within the compositions, such as symbolism, and clues from the title of the work itself. We see a variety of symbols, ranging from plants and animals rendered in both tight and loose styles, to the circling arrows of the recycle symbol, to pictographic imagery of ancient people. There is a cloudlike shape, and an airplane, as well as differently colored zigzag lines which seem to indicate lightening and water.

Students will brainstorm Montana flora, fauna and geographic symbols inspired by the environment, perhaps focusing on imagery found in the “Great Seal of the State of Montana” as well as other state symbols, such as the Grizzly Bear, the Western Meadowlark, Bitterroot Flower, Ponderosa Pine, and Mourning Cloak Butterfly etc...

Shift gears and discuss the cutout work of French artist, Henri Matisse, whose interest in color led to the cutting into painted sheets of paper color and the juxtaposition of shapes. Review the shapes vocabulary.

Goals and Learning Objectives:

Students will study *Ode to Chief Seattle* by Juane Quick-to-See Smith in order to identify recognizable symbols and shapes, textures and color.

Students will hypothesize possible meanings they find from the combination of symbols found in the artwork.

Students will learn about Suquamish leader, Chief Seattle

Students will translate ideas about a chosen ecosystem into shapes and arrange them in a collage.

Vocabulary:

Symbol- Something used for or representing something else. An emblem, token or sign.

Shape- A form or object defined by its contour or outline.



Positive Shape- Looking at Robert Indiana's LOVE sculpture, the letters are the positive shape or space.

Negative Shape- Looking at Robert Indiana's LOVE sculpture, the air around the letters and the space where the person is standing is considered the negative shape or space. (The same rules for positive and negative shape apply to flat images on a picture plane).

Geometric Shape- Shapes which are simple, clean and straight sided, or generally symmetrical, such as squares, triangles, rectangles, etc...

Organic/Living Shape- Shapes based on natural forms, or are generally curvilinear, complex and detailed, such as a tree or plant shape.

Symmetry: Something that is the same on both sides of a central line. For example, a human is symmetrical, having the same number of parts on either side of the body.

Asymmetry: Something that is not the same on both sides of a central line, for example, the side-view of a car or animal.

MONTANA STATE SYMBOLS:

Animal, Grizzly Bear
Bird, Western Meadowlark
Butterfly, Mourning Cloak
Fish, Blackspotted Cutthroat Trout
Flower, Bitterroot
Fossil, Duck-billed Dinosaur
Gemstones, Sapphire and Agate
Grass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass
Tree, Ponderosa Pine

Steps and Procedures:

A straightforward procedure of cutting out and arranging shapes onto a piece of paper or cardboard, utilizing symbols that represent a particular ecosystem. Once a satisfactory arrangement has been made, the students can glue the shapes down. A final coat of acrylic polymer medium brushed over the surface will help keep colored paper bright and also glue down the edges of the cutout shapes.

Students may notice how the colors they use vary when paired with other different colors. If students desire additional information in their work, they can use the Sharpie marker for

fine detail, and simulated texture from magazine photos that resemble animal fur patterns, etc...

Assessment:

A variety of assessments for learning may be used, ranging from demonstrating knowledge of the particulars of the life of Chief Seattle, to watersheds, to ecosystem, habitat and State symbols.

As for visual arts assessment, students should be able to identify categories and aspects of shape, whether informally through verbal checks, or through a descriptive statement written by the artist about his or her art piece.

A great way to direct feedback and focus on student artwork is to discuss the class products piece by piece. Have all finished work displayed where the class can refer to and discuss it in a positive manner. Ask who wishes to discuss their piece first. Ask that student first why they think their work is successful, noting the particular areas they like. Find something to agree with that student about and emphasize any learning points, including vocabulary words that are part of the lesson. To continue covering the whole class have another student volunteer to discuss their work and or pick something they like about another student's art piece and continue the discussion until all pieces have been complemented and used as springboards that indicate learning and new discovery. The key to this activity is to emphasize the positive, discourage self-defeating criticism and value a variety of solutions.

Teacher Resources:

www.missoulaartmuseum.org

(Click on "experience", then "search the collection", search for ODE TO CHIEF SEATTLE, click on descriptive list, as well as image.

<http://www.chiefseattle.com/history/chiefseattle/chief.htm>

(This is good for read-aloud biographical information on Suquamish leader, Chief Seattle).

www.Montanakids.com

(This website includes information on state symbols, geography, flora and fauna etc... an excellent resource for teachers and students).

<http://www.nga.gov/exhibitions/matisseinfo.shtm>

The Cut Outs, Jazz series by Henri Matisse