

REAL OR IMAGINED...

creating the UNEXPECTED



A Three-Part Lesson

Suggested Grade Levels: Grades 3 to 5

In this art lesson, students first describe, analyze, and find meaning in art through a comparison of a series of paintings, *As Time Floats By*, 2010, by John Wehrle (whirlee) and a sculpture installation, *Dewey Decimal's Delegation*, 2008, by Otto Youngers. Students then make a drawing combining real places, objects, and/or living beings in unexpected ways. These elements are arranged in compositions that create the illusion of depth in space through overlapping. Drawings are finalized by enhancing shapes and details and developing color. Last, students write a captivating title to add meaning to their art.

Student learning targets:

I can analyze similarities and differences in art.

I can draw what I observe using contour lines for shapes and details.

I can arrange elements in a composition in unexpected ways.

I can create depth in space.

I can add meaning to my art by writing a creative title.

The Big Idea

Arranging and combining familiar things in surprising ways can invite us to enter imaginary worlds.

Teaching and Learning Process Part I

1. Teacher: Guides responding to art. Students compare: *As Time Floats By*, 2010, a series of paintings by John Wehrle; and a **sculpture installation**, *Dewey Decimal's Delegation*, 2008 by Otto Youngers.

- Draw a Venn diagram to help analyze and compare the art.
- What do you see?
- Make a list of shapes, colors, textures, objects that you see in each work of art. Label each circle with artwork name and add describing words.
- What do the **sculpture installation** and the **series of paintings** have in common? (List the words in the overlapping area of the diagram.)
- What do the artworks make you think about? Why?
- How do the artists surprise us or challenge our expectations about what is real?
- What happens when we combine objects, places, and living in unexpected ways?
- What ideas do you think are being communicated by the artists?

Students: □ Describe both works of art and what they have in common.

2. Teacher: Guides a closer look at John Wehrle's paintings:

What is trompe l'oeil (tromp loy)?

- A **series**: A group of paintings or artworks with one theme or title.
- John Wehrle's series creates **illusions**: This style of art is so **realistic** it is called **Tromp l'oeil**, meaning "fool the eye," in French.
- Since "fooling the eye" is making things look very realistic, John is doing a lot of **observation** of real things (often in unusual positions) while he makes these paintings.
- Describe places where you think you see Tromp l'oeil effects.
- Match objects in John Wehrle's studio with objects in the paintings (photographed at an early, and then a later stage, below).

Artist's Statement

I designed a series of connected paintings to create the illusion of objects floating through windows.

- John has created the illusion of **depth in space** through having elements extend beyond edges of openings and **overlapping**.

Students: Study and talk about paintings.

Vocabulary

Two-dimensional
Three-dimensional
Composition
Contour lines
Depth
Detail
Installation
Illusion
Observation
Overlapping
Movement
Realistic
Sculpture
Series
Shapes
Space
Space
Tromp l'oeil

Materials

HB drawing pencils (light)
White vinyl erasers

Watercolor paper 8x10 inches

Fine-tipped permanent markers
Watercolor (or color) pencils

Small brushes
Water containers, paper towels

Collect real objects to inspire fantastical drawings: toy animals and cars, food, musical instruments, balls from different sports, furniture, cups, plates, tools, books, plants...

AND

Photo/computer resources if needed: images of mountains, clouds, planets, trees, fish, birds, insects, reptiles...



3. Teacher: Guides a closer look at Otto Younger's sculpture: What is a sculpture installation?

- A group of **three-dimensional** objects found or created by an artist that are installed as a connected group is often called a **sculpture installation**. Sculpture installations can become whole environments that surround the viewer.
- Otto makes all of his sculpture out of recycled or reclaimed wood. This installation is composed of more than one-hundred wooden objects, creatures, and various other hybrids suspended from the ceiling, as well as four giant, wood, pop-up books mounted on the walls.
- Think about things you have noticed and ideas you have about Otto's work. What are the pop-up books communicating about reading? Are they telling us a story?
- In the picture, the artist is creating a **composition** by arranging and installing the sculpture pieces.
- Find surprising, fantastical combinations of objects, animals, and other things in photographs of the installation. **Students:** Study and talk about installation.



Artist's Statement

Dewey Decimal's Delegation exemplifies the possibilities of the imagination when reading and learning. The pop-up books are portals to other worlds.

Teaching and Learning Process Part II

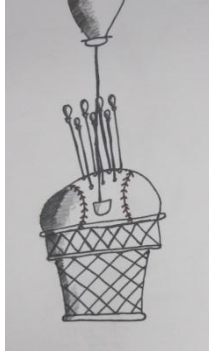
1. Teacher: Guides brainstorming ideas for student compositions.

- You will be creating a drawing inspired by the art we have studied and the artists we have just met. **Your job is to spark the imagination of the viewer by combining things in space in unexpected ways.**
- You will include at least three things in your picture. They can be objects, parts of places, tools, animals. They also can be hybrid combinations, like flying violins or pencils.

about possibly placing your objects in an unexpected outdoor or indoor setting.

- Be thoughtful and plan ahead. Look at all objects and resources and think about what you will draw. Choose 3 to 5.
- Make a draft sketch of the things you selected — also think about how they might suggest an imaginative story or title.

Students: □ Brainstorm by beginning to arrange plants, animals, objects, and parts of landscapes in space in imaginary (unrealistic) ways.



2. Teacher: Demonstrates and guides creative process.

- Think about creating **depth** in your drawing. Make sure there is some **overlapping** of objects in space for depth. Also, you can draw something that extends off the edge of the page to enhance this effect.
- **Arrange** all of the elements in your **composition** in very surprising and imaginative ways (a frog peeking out of a volcano, a ukulele hiding behind a cloud out a window, an upside-down tree). Notice in Otto's and John's work that there are all different sizes of things. Use your whole paper. (Also encourage students not to draw a stereotypical sun in the corner of the paper.)
- Keep your eyes focused on the subject most of the time as you draw each thing. Use a slow, continuous **contour line** that follows the edges of the object. Also you will be adding contour lines to show the **details** inside of the object. This is just the beginning. We will be adding fine-tipped marker and watercolor pencil later. You will make lots of changes as you develop your composition, so draw lightly!

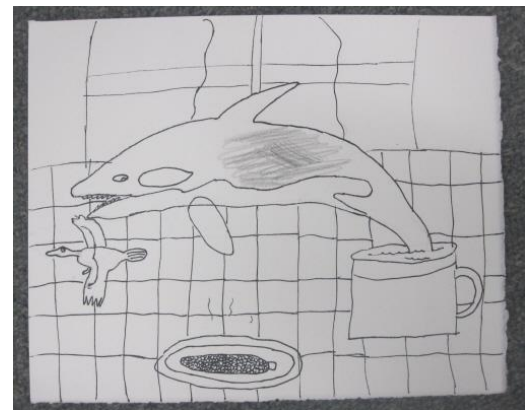
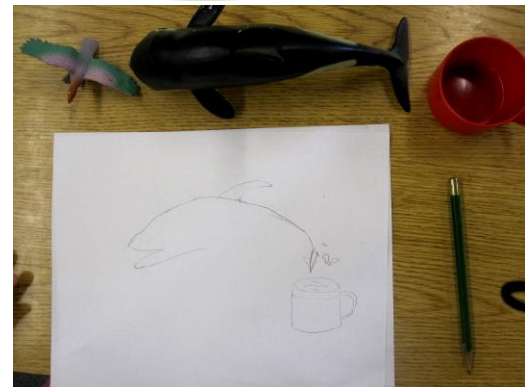
Students: □ Study and draw at least three objects, parts of places, or living things using contour lines for shapes and details, and overlap for depth.

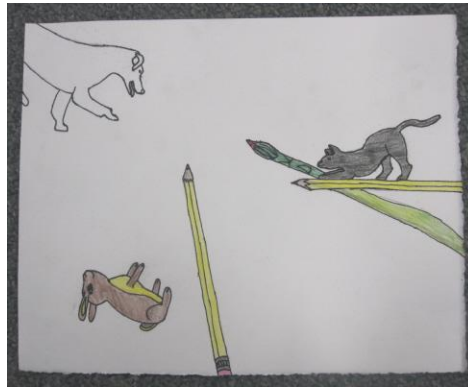
Studio Tips

Spread out all of the interesting objects and resources available to draw, and have students come through in groups to choose 3 to 5 things to draw.

Encourage students to start to imagine a relationship between, or placement of, these objects in their compositions as they choose them.

Think





3. Teacher: Demonstrates outlining all contours and details, adding color using watercolor pencils, and last, creating watercolor effects using a wet brush.

- *Thoughtfully use a fine-tipped, permanent marker to outline contours and details.*
- *Cover all areas of the composition with watercolor pencil color. Really work to create as big a range of rich color as you can by creating different shades of color and by overlapping color. Once color is applied to all areas with drawing, dip brushes into water and soften and extend the color.*

Students: Finalize drawings by enhancing shapes and adding color.

Check for all lines emphasized and color in all areas of composition.

4. Teacher: Guides titling art.

- *Look closely at your finished composition and select a title that captures a story or meaning in your artwork. Use vivid, descriptive, and precise language.*

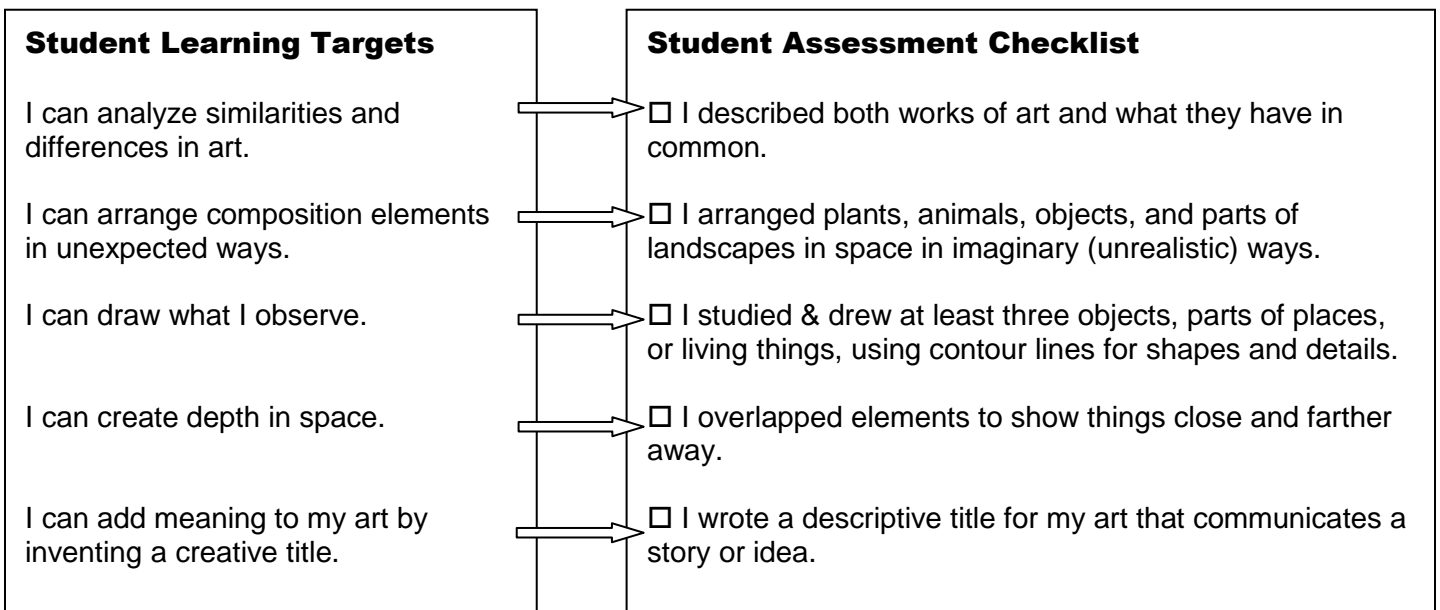
Students: Write a descriptive title for their art that communicates a story or idea.

Studio Tips

Remember that pencil pressure and color overlapping can create a range of effects. Controlling the amount of water on brush and paper using a paper towel is helpful.

Reflection Questions, Self Assessment

- *Show a place where you see depth in space in another's art. Describe a particularly creative combination of elements you see. Describe an interesting technique you used to help make your art. How did you decide on your title, and how does it connect to your artwork? Use the checklist to assess.*



Lesson Alternatives or Extensions

A collaborative version of the lesson:
Each student draws one object/part of a place/living thing (or combination), develops contours and color, and then cuts out.

Students then work collaboratively in a group of 3 to 5, arranging their objects in surprising ways to create depth and engage the imagination.

A final composition and title is developed by the group and shared with the class.

Washington State EALRS

Visual Art

- 1.1.1 Concepts and vocabulary: Line: contour
Space: depth through size and overlapping
- 1.1.2 Principles of Organization: Composition
- 1.2 Skills and techniques: Drawing
- 2.3 Applies a Responding Process: Describes, analyzes, interprets

Writing

- 3.2.2 Uses precise words: vivid verbs, specific nouns, descriptive adjectives

Family Communication/Wall Display Text

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- We looked at a series of paintings, *As Time Floats By*, 2010, by John Wehrle (whirlee); and a sculpture installation, *Dewey Decimal's Delegation*, 2008, by Otto Youngers. Both artworks were created for schools.
- We used a Venn diagram to analyze and compare the art work by these artists. We talked about similarities and differences in their work and shared ideas about what we think the art is communicating. Then we learned more about each artist.
- We made drawings inspired by the art we studied by combining recognizable elements in surprising ways. We combined real places, objects, and/or living beings in our drawings.
- We arranged elements, using overlapping to create the illusion of depth in our compositions.
- We finalized our drawings by using fine-tipped markers and watercolor pencils to enhance shapes and details.
- We wrote a captivating title that communicates a story or meaning in our art.

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