

Art History in the Classroom

Why should we spend time studying art?

One of the ways in which man is created in God's image is as a creative being. God has gifted men to create with music, with language and with images. In the Bible, we learn that God inspired and equipped men to write the scriptures, David and others to write and sing music, and in Exodus we read that God equipped Bezalel and Oholiab (see Exodus 31) to create works of fine workmanship for the tabernacle. Our students have been likewise gifted to create with language, music, and images.

The visual arts, like music and literature, are informed by the time period in which they were created. The visual arts of a period tell us about the people who lived in a certain time and place when sometimes writing or music doesn't exist. For example, the Minoan civilization has almost no decipherable writing, yet we can learn about the Minoans' life and beliefs from their art.

People take the time to create images of things that are meaningful to them.

Art is something that can be enjoyed especially when one understands the basics of art.

Students need to have the experience of working with materials that artists use to create works of art: clay, brushes and paints, pens, found objects, etc. An understanding of art history and great works created by artists who were gifted by God to create inspires them and gives them a point of reference. Just as we practice imitation in writing, we can practice imitation in creating works of art.

Goals of Studying Art History in the Classical Christian Classroom

I believe art history in the classical Christian setting should:

- seek to help children learn to identify truth, beauty, and goodness in visual images.

- Equip children to practice imitation of works that they study.
- Equip children to identify the use line, color, light/dark, realism/symbolism, and texture in achieving artistic goals for a work of art.
- Help children to understand why art was created in the context of its time period to help the child understand more about the history he is studying.

The Grammar Stage

In the Grammar stage the study of art should include the following:

Students should learn about the types of art that exist in history: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Mosaic, Decorative.

Students should practice using materials used by artists: stone, glass, paint, ink, paper, wood, clay, metals, etc. As students practice, they can imitate artists styles and works of art from history.

Students should learn the basics of composition: line, shape, light, dark, texture, relief, etc.

Students should learn the facts about works of art and the artists.

The Dialectic Stage

Students should continue to do review all of the above, but begin to learn to independently analyze meaning in works of art, make judgments about the effectiveness of the work of art, and compare works of art of similar subject with a time period.

Students should continue to develop skills in working with different mediums and begin to learn to represent ideas visually.

The Rhetoric Stage

Students should review and practice all of the above, but at this point the student is ready to begin producing unique works of art that are expressions of the individual.

Art History Concepts

Type of Art:

Sculpture: relief (bas and high), in the round

Painting: landscape, portrait, genre, abstract, still life

Decorative Arts: Furniture, Vases/Pottery, Jewelry

Architecture: Temples, Government Buildings, Homes, Monuments

Composition:

Lines, color, balance, realistic/unrealistic, texture, perspective, point of view, light/dark

History:

Purpose of art: glorify the king or the diety, decorate, teach, expose truths or injustices, tell a story

Getting Started

Find images that go with what you are studying and ask students to observe the image.

1: Allow students to look at an image for a period of time noticing all they can and the cover the image and allow them to share what they remember.

(Memory training like we saw at Heritage)

2. Look at the image again and ask questions (see attached lists of suggested questions.)

3. After observing the image, tell the students the name of the image and the name of the artist if available. Also, tell the students when the image was created.
4. Write the name of the image, the artist and the date on the board and recite it together while looking at the image.
5. Later, review the image by looking at it again and ask if anyone remembers the name of the image, name of the artist, and date of the piece.
6. Put a picture of the piece of art in your room if possible.

Ideas for integration

With Math:

Counting – paintings with multiples of a thing (still lifes, narratives (number of people))

Shapes – identify shapes you are learning in class

With Literature:

Paintings of stories that you are reading – many examples exist from Greek Mythology and Legends like King Arthur

History:

Narratives of events from History (painting, sculpture, architecture)

Important works from the time period you are studying

Bible:

Art history is laden with examples of paintings of events in the Bible

Science:

Botanical and Scientific images (Audubon)

Latin:

Manuscript Illuminations (hand written copies of the Bible from the Middle Ages were written in Latin)

Composition

Use an image as a story starter or a poem starter

Suggested images for each class:

PreKindergarten and Kindergarten

Still lifes are great for counting, shapes and colors:

See: The Still Lifes of Paul Cezanne (There are many!),

Also see Cut outs of Henri Matisse and paintings by Wassily Kandinsky (for circles!!)

There are a multitude of images inspired by stories in the Bible:

Henri Ossawa Tanner: Nicodemus Visiting Jesus, Daniel in the Lion's Den, The Annunciation

Rembrandt van Rijn: Belshazzar's Feast, Balaam and the Ass, Jacob Blessing the Children of Joseph, Jacob Wrestling with the Angel, Simeon's Prophecy to Mary, and many more!

Leonardo da Vinci: The Last Supper

There are some great paintings to look at to go with holidays throughout the year:

Thanksgiving: The Mayflower in Plymouth by William Halsell 1882, Signing the Mayflower Compact in 1620 by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe 1914

Christmas: Adoration of the Shepherds by Gerard van Honthorst 1622 (There are so many, but this is a favorite and a great opportunity to talk about light and Jesus being the light of the world)

President's Day: George Washington by Gilbert Stuart

1st grade/5th grade

The Ancient Period

Lascaux, France cave paintings c. 15,000-10,000 BC discovered by boys who fell into a hole that led to the underground chamber in the cave

Stonehenge c. 2000-1700 BC

Palette of King Narmer c. 3000 BC

Menkaure and His Wife c. 2500 BC from the funerary complex at Giza

The Great Pyramids c. 2500 BC (Tombs of Menkaure, Khafre, and Khufu)

The Great Sphinx c. 2500 BC

The Book of the Dead (any examples, dates vary as there were many of them)

Akhenaton and His Family c. 1355 BC

Nefertiti (bust) 1350 BC

Cover of Coffin of Tutankhamen c. 1330 BC

Statues from the Abu Temple, Tell Asmar, Iraq c. 2700 BC

Ram and Tree Offering Stand Ur c. 2600 BC

Code of Hammurabi Stele c. 1800 BC

Ishtar Gate c. 575 BC (from the time of Nebuchadnezzar)

Frescoes from the Palace at Knossos Crete c. 1700 BC

Snake Goddess Knossos, Crete c. 1700 BC

The Lioness Gate Mycenae c. 1250 BC

Dipylon Vase Athens c. 750 BC

Blinding of Polyphemos and Gorgons Amphora c. 675 BC

Herakles Strangling the Nemean Lion by Psiax c. 525 BC Black figure

Herakles Wrestling Antaios by Euphronios c. 510 BC Red figure

Ajax and Achilles by Exekias c. 540 BC Black figure

The Battle of Alexander and the Persians c. 100 BC Mosaic copy from a painting from c. 315 BC

The Parthenon c. 450 BC

Kouros c. 600 BC archaic

Kore c. 530 BC archaic

Doryphoros (Spear Bearer) by Polykleitos c. 450 BC

Romulus and Remus c. 500 BC

The Pantheon Rome 118 AD

The Colosseum 75 AD

Augustus of Prima porta c. 20 AD

Arch of Titus c. 81 AD

Constantine the Great c. 300 AD

Column of Trajan 110 AD

Wall paintings from Pompeii c. 80 AD

2nd grade/6th grade

Catacomb wall paintings Rome 4th century

Early Christian Basilica such as S. Apollinare in Classe 540

Mosaics such as The Parting of Lot and Abraham in Santa Maria Maggiore Rome c. 430 and the Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora and San Vitale c. 547

Hagia Sophia Istanbul (Constantinople) 532

Madonna and Child Icons like Madonna Enthroned c. 1270

Osberg Ship Burial Saxon c. 825

Illuminated Manuscripts such as Lindisfarne Gospels, Book of Kells, Gospel of Ebbo (personal favorite) c. 800

Cathedrals: Reims, Chartres, Notre Dame 1100-1200

The Bayeux Tapestry c. 1070

Florence Cathedral (dome by Brunellschi) 1300

Bronze Doors from the Baptistry of S. Giovanni in Florence by Lorenzo Ghiberti (scenes from the Bible) 1400

Duccio (late medieval prerenaissance) Madonna and Child and Christ Entering Jerusalem c. 1310

Giotto (Frescos from Arena Chapel in Padua) 1305

The Limbourg Brothers The Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry 1415

Donatello statues of St George and David c. 1415-1425

Fra Angelico The Annunciation 1440

Botticelli The Birth of Venus 1480

Da Vinci The Last Supper and Mona Lisa c. 1500

Micheangelo David and The Sistine Chapel c. 1501-1510

Raphael frescos from Stanza della Segnatura 1510 esp. The School of Athens

3rd grade/7th grade

Colonization to Early America

Hans Holbein the Younger Henry VIII 1540

Carravaggio David with the head of Goliath and The Calling of Matthew 1600

Rembrandt The Night Watch and The Blinding of Samson 1640

Vermeer Girl with the Pearl Earring, The Astronomer, Woman Holding a Balance c. 1660

St Paul's Cathedral Christopher Wren 1675 (and other buildings designed in the rebuilding of London after the great fire of 1666)

Jacques Louis David Death of Marat, The Death of Socrates, The Oath of the Horatii 1780-1790

Paul Revere John Singleton Copley 1768

George Washington Gilbert Stuart 1796

Washington Crossing the Delaware by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze

Death of General Wolfe by Benjamin West 1771

The Death of Nelson by Benjamin West 1806

The Nativity by John Singleton Copley

John Singleton Copley painted a lot of portraits of people living during the American Revolution

Goya The Third of May 1808 1814

Hudson River Valley Painters Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Church landscapes celebrating the beauty of America, promoting Manifest Destiny

The Jolly Flatboatmen by George Caleb Bingham 1846

The County Election by George Caleb Bingham 1852

4th grade/8th grade

Modern

The Statue of Liberty Auguste Bartholdi 1875-1884

Photography: Alexander Gardner, Matthew Brady Photographs of the Civil War 1860's

Edouard Manet The Fifer 1866 and The Bar at the Folies Bergere 1882

Claude Monet Impression Sunrise 1872 and Red Boats at Argenteuil 1875

Renoir Luncheon of the Boating Party 1881

Degas Ballerinas and Horse Racers

Mary Cassatt 1890's Mother and Child paintings

Whistler Arrangement in Gray and Black (Whistler's mother) 1871 and Nocturne in Black and Gold 1874 and Symphony in White 1862

Winslow Homer The Gulf Stream 1899, Snap the Whip 1872

The Banjo Lesson by Henry O Tanner 1893

The Thinker by Auguste Rodin 1880

The Crystal Palace by Sir Joseph Paxton London 1851

The Eiffel Tower by Gustave Eiffel 1887

Still Life with Apples by Paul Cezanne 1879

Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat 1885

Starry Night and Self Portrait by Vincent Van Gogh 1889-1890

The Scream by Edvard Munch 1893

Portrait of Mme Matisse and the Dance by Henri Matisse 1900

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon by Pablo Picasso 1907 (Cubism)

Guernica by Pablo Picasso 1937

Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow by Piet Mondrian 1930

Early Sunday Morning and The Night Hawks by Edward Hopper 1930

Photography by Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans (WPA Depression relief photography subsidized by US Government) 1930's

Any paintings by Jackson Pollock (action painting) 1950's

Pop Art by Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol 1960's

Resources

Books:

The History of Art for Young People by Janson

Come Look With Me books by Gladys Blizzard

13 Artists Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel

13 Paintings Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel

13 Buildings Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel

13 Sculptures Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel

Angela Wenzel has written many books in this theme along with other writers. Search for one of these above on Amazon and then look at the list of books suggested below.

Sister Wendy books (She is a nun who loves Art History and has written some books on Art Appreciation)

Discovering Great Artists by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Kim Solga (This is a book that explores artists and their styles of working with art projects for children. This is a good source for imitation.)

Websites:

<http://www.bergerfoundation.ch/> good resource to look for high quality digital images to use in class. You can search for a work or an artist or a period.

<http://www.arthistory.net/> an easy to use website summarizing art movements and biographies of important artists.

<http://www.artcyclopedia.com/> this is a search engine that is helpful in finding specific images or websites for artists or movements.