

Humor in Art: A Few Funnies from the Field



Art is a joyful experience. Laugh!

Pam Stephens

As we all know, being a teacher involves much more than instruction. A typical day in an art classroom usually includes a bit of teaching wedged between administrative minutiae and classroom management. But, it's not all business. Sometimes our students slip in funny little zingers—often unintended—that brighten our days. Keeping a sense of humor in these situations can make for a teachable moment as well as form a lasting memory.

Comical Color Conversation

My daughter-in-law, Shannon, had been teaching about analogous colors and their relative placement on the color wheel when a child asked a question that gave her reason to pause:

"Mrs. Stephens, are pink and orange in a relationship?" the little girl asked.

Slapstick Science

A science teacher who also teaches in Shannon's school reports about the response he received while teaching a lesson about the food chain. One of his students said that people must be at the top of the food chain because we are carnivores. "What about someone who doesn't eat meat? What would you call that person?" the teacher asked. The little boy, serious as could be, responded, "A hippie."

Age Antics

Jan, a recently retired art teacher, tells of a time when a third-grade boy approached her about getting some help with a writing assignment.

The boy explained that the report was about the Jurassic Period and he thought Jan would know all about it; the implication being that she lived during the Jurassic Period. The class became quiet as the student reflected upon what he insinuated. Jan quickly assured the student that she wasn't alive during that time, but that she'd help him find a book about it.

Merry Mistakes

Each spring I teach a writing course for art majors. Assignments for this course include an artist's statement, a teaching philosophy, and a research paper about an artist. Here are three misplaced modifiers that never fail to make me chuckle. For the record, the students got a good laugh when I pointed out their errors:

- "As a ceramics student I always wanted to make pottery in the worst way." As opposed to in the best way?
- "I will provide my students with a variety of opportunities before they fail." Does this mean the pass rate will rapidly decline?
- In a descriptive paragraph about John William Waterhouse's, *The Lady of Shalott*, a student wrote about a mirror and Sir Lancelot: "In the background is a mirror with the reflection of Sir Lancelot with a large crack." Now this is a painting I really want to see!

Do you have a funny story to share? Join our round table discussion at schoolartsroom.blogspot.com or on the *SchoolArts* Facebook page. 

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