

ART NOUVEAU Self-Portraits Anew

Elizabeth Morningstar

Elegant Art Nouveau is a lesson by Kris Fontes (my cooperating teacher). She wrote an article about it, which was published in the April 2005 issue of *SchoolArts*. I enjoyed the concept and decided to adapt this lesson and make it more personal for students by making the resulting artworks self-portraits.

Rather than using images of airbrushed models and celebrities from magazines, I photographed students in unique poses, concentrating on facial expressions and arm placement. They each chose their favorite photo, which was printed in full color.

Gustav Klimt and Pattern

After an introduction about Art Nouveau and Gustav Klimt we analyzed the flat patterns and shapes and widths of lines and shapes that could be combined to make appealing patterns. In order to push students to develop interesting patterns, I required each to create sixteen interesting patterns on a decorative line handout before they could begin their actual project.

Getting Started

Students carefully cut out the head and arms from their photos. The pieces were then glued to a piece of black and gold scratchboard. Students used the photograph that the pieces had been cut from as a template to help line up the body parts.

Scratching Time

Before students began the actual project, I had them practice using scratch tools on small pieces of scratchboard. I demonstrated how to scratch with the tools and the types of line that could be achieved with the different points. Students were then given time to practice.

We analyzed the flat patterns and shapes and widths of lines and shapes that could be combined to make appealing patterns.

Students first recreated their clothing using simple contour lines. This gave them two distinct areas in which

to place their designs. I urged them to create bold patterns in one of these two areas and simple patterns in the other to allow the figure to stand out more.

The sixteen patterns that had been previously created on the handouts were used as reference for pattern

ideas. These handouts were also constantly rotated around the room so that students could see what their peers had created, share pattern ideas, and generate some new pattern ideas as well. While some students scribbled randomly without a developed pattern,

others meticulously scratched away, creating richly embellished areas that invited closer observation.

When the project was finished, the gold scratchboard glistened and shined. It was fun to hang the work up and see all the different markings, patterns, and how every student divided up the space.

Extension

Using the leftover scraps of scratchboard the students created Haiti House pins (haitihouses.org), which were sold to benefit the people of Haiti who lost their homes when the earthquake struck on

January 12, 2010. Haiti Houses were also featured in the May/June 2010 issue of *SchoolArts*.

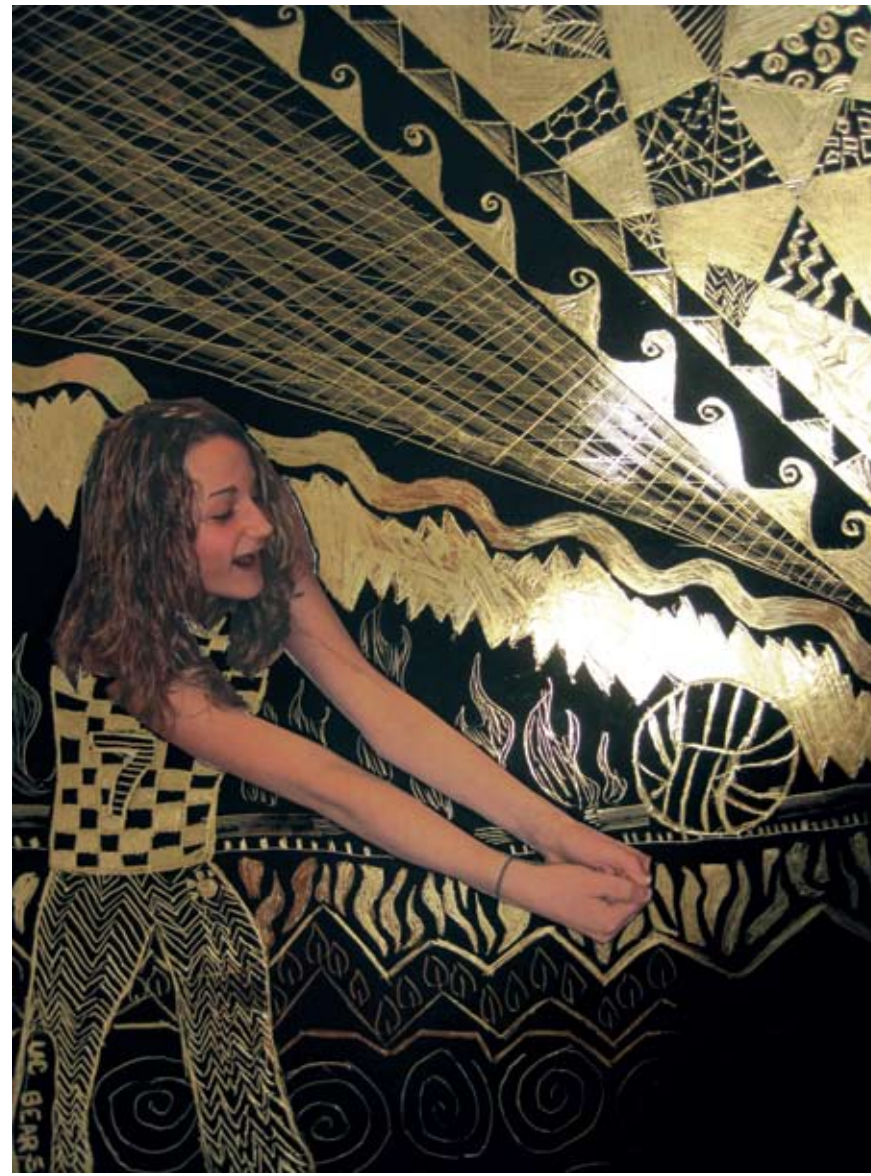
Betsy Morningstar was a student teacher from Mercyhurst College when she taught this lesson at Union City Middle School in Union City, Pennsylvania.

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

WEB LINK

www.iklimt.com





Top to bottom: Daniel Markou; Eva Demetriou.

Creating Shop Window Displays

Martha Christopoulou

The initial idea of teaching about shop window displays came from my reading about visual culture education.

Examining visual images and cultural sites from everyday life is crucial in visual culture theory because it can enrich students' understandings about their role in identity construction.

In an effort to help my first-grade students identify visual resources in the environment surrounding the school district, I decided to design a lesson about shop window displays.

Shop Window Displays

Shop window displays combine products and messages to promote certain

items, announce sales, or welcome a season, and invite passersby to look at, desire, enter, and buy. The neat and well-ordered arrangement of goods depends on composition with regard to color schemes, materials, cultural or seasonal themes, harmony, balance, variety, and effective details to convey meaning. They also produce emotion as looking at them gives enjoyment and pleasure to the consumer. Successful displays may invite repeated contemplation and become memories of aesthetically satisfying moments.

Discussing Windows

I started by asking students if they usually look at shop window displays,

when was the last time they did so, and why they looked at them. I also asked them to describe a shop window display that impressed them. I invited them to look at some photographs I had taken of local window displays.

I asked students to observe and discuss the arrangement of the goods, composition of colors, and themes. My goal was to enable them to understand that effective shop window displays are made by tasteful, harmonious, and stylish arrangements of objects, and focus on a theme or idea.

Discussing these arrangements, students identified the convention of using mannequins or hangers to display clothes. They talked about

the use of large graphics to promote sales, bargains, special offers, or just to advertise the goods by making use of memorable mottos.

Students also talked about the creative use of and emphasis given on one or more colors and brought examples of displays they remembered. They identified and discussed the themes of the displays in the photographs I showed them, the messages they conveyed, and the purpose of their creation.

Creating Display

After discussion, I encouraged students to imagine their own shop window displays. I invited them to think

of the kinds of themes, graphics, or objects they would like to include. I gave them paper and pencils and instructed them to sketch the shop window frames and the objects in them.

Examining visual images and cultural sites from everyday life enriches students' knowledge and critical understandings about their role in identity construction.

Students used colored pencils, felt-tip markers, or thick markers and/or crayons to add color to their drawings. They could use metallic gold, silver, and colored pens as well as glitter to emphasize details and decorate their pictures. Most students painted displays of fashion stores in which clothes in bright colors were worn by mannequins, hung up on hangers, or displayed on shelves.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- observe photographs of shop windows.
- discuss the displays and their possible meanings and interpretations.
- learn basic principles of design (unity, balance, harmony, repetition, emphasis).
- reflect on how and why they look at shop window displays.
- use imagination and creative thinking in the design of their own shop window displays.

Materials

- pencils
- colored pencils
- permanent colored felt-tip markers
- crayons
- glitter
- metallic gold, silver, and colored pens
- 9 x 12" (23 x 30 cm) white drawing paper
- photographs of different shop window displays

Reflection Time

After students displayed their work on our "exhibition board," I invited them to recall their own visual experiences from shop window displays and compare them with their own and others' work. They traced and discussed influences on their work from the shop window displays they had seen at the past. Finally, students brainstormed and listed possible themes or objects they could use to make their displays more imaginative, exquisite, fascinating, and attractive.

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.

WEB LINK

www.wowwindowsdisplay.com