

Recycling POP ART

Deb Pfohl

With the recent rise in popularity of eco-friendly terms like “reusing” and “recycling” comes a great opportunity to renew the concept of Pop Art and bring its ideas from the twentieth century into the twenty-first century, thus giving my eighth-grade students a greater understanding of the movement. Pop Art is “a movement in modern art that uses the methods, styles, and themes of popular culture and mass media.” (*Collins Essential English Dictionary*)

By taking everyday recyclable objects and turning them into art, students experience the way the best-known Pop Artists used common objects to inspire them. There is also a great opportunity for curriculum integration,

particularly with environmental units found in many upper elementary and middle level science classes or social studies and history units relating to American culture in the 1960s.

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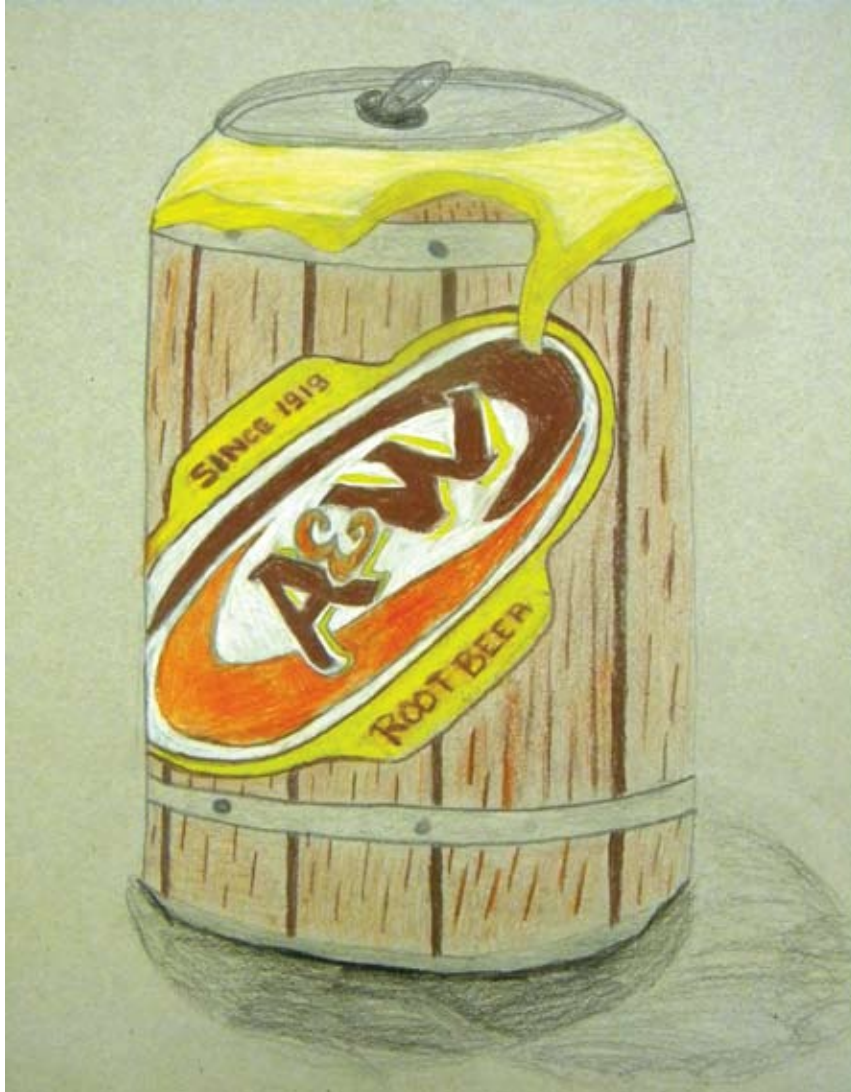
Exploring Pop Art

As a class, we began by looking at and discussing Pop Art artworks such as Andy Warhol’s soup cans and Wayne Thiebaud’s cafeteria-style food paintings, including some of his cakes, pies, and pastries. I then demonstrated a few simple steps and rules for properly drawing cylinders and ellipses, as outlined below.

Drawing Cylinders and Ellipses

Tell students that cylinders have parallel sides. Make sure the curve of the bottom foot matches the curve of the lip at the top of the can

to avoid having a skewed viewpoint. The edges of the ellipses used for the top and bottom of the cylinder should have rounded, not pointed corners. Have students practice sketching cylinders on scrap paper. Inform them



that they can bring in a soda can from home for the next stage of the lesson, or choose one from a variety of cans I’ve collected and have available for them.

Enlarging Soda Cans

Using their chosen cans, we look at the details and features on each soda can that make it unique, such as the tabs, openings, logos, foot, lip, and ridges. Students then begin enlarging their soda can, using pencil on a 12 x 18" (30 x 46 cm) sheet of gray drawing paper.

Color Pencil Techniques

Once the basic details of the cans are completed, review basic colored pencil techniques. Demonstrate how to achieve various effects through color gradation, pencil pressure, and by building color through layering, mixing, and blending.

Also look at the can’s surface, taking note of where the lightest and



Objectives

Students will:


- consider and discuss examples of Pop Art by such artists as Andy Warhol and Wayne Thiebaud.
- draw cylinders and ellipses properly and demonstrate that knowledge in their work.
- effectively use shading techniques to show value and dimension.

darkest areas are located, along with cast shadows and highlights. A spotlight can be used to help students see shadows and highlights.

Assessment and Display

Students should continue working while you observe and offer guidance where appropriate. Upon completion, students' work should be assessed for proper display of cylinder drawing, shading and color usage techniques, as well as the overall depiction of their particular soda can. Display the projects in common area hallways.

Reflections

The subject matter of this lesson and its connection to students everyday lives often leads to a finished product that they like well enough to hang on their own walls at home! The connection of art history to current cultural objects, current environmental lessons, and drawing techniques created a powerful and successful activity for both instructor and students. 

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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.wikihow.com/Draw-a-Cylinder

