



Dale Chihuly Watercolors Lesson Plan

Grade Level: Elementary

Subjects: Visual Arts and Math

Media: Mixed Media

Selected Artwork:



Persian Ceiling (detail)

Dale Chihuly

Glass and steel

Purchased with funds provided by Robert and Betty Kelso
2003.34

Theme:

The *Dale Chihuly Watercolors* theme provides an opportunity for students to view an artwork by a contemporary artist. The hands-on project asks students to observe, think about, discuss, and explore different art materials in response to colors and shapes found in artwork.

About the Artwork:

Glassmaking is an ancient process which dates back to 3500 BC in Mesopotamia. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans worked with glass and made objects which survive to this date. Contemporary American glass artist Dale Chihuly uses the same techniques today to transform liquid glass into beautiful objects. Chihuly has traveled to Ireland, Japan, and Italy to visit glassblowers who use traditional methods and he incorporates the knowledge he gains on his travels into his glass-blowing process.

In SAMA's installation *Persian Ceiling*, Dale Chihuly and his team arranged a variety of glass forms in a steel and glass case which is installed on a ceiling in the San Antonio Museum of Art. The artist combined glass organic shapes in a variety of sizes and colors. The organic shapes found in Chihuly's *Persian Ceiling* feature radial lines and patterns.

"In the beginning, the Persians had to do with the contrast between two colors ... between open and closed forms ... and the intensity of the body wraps," Chihuly has recalled. ("Body wrap" is Chihuly's term for the stripe of color applied to the body of a piece.) Soon, the early Persians' color-saturated, contrasting body wraps were seen by the artist as alternately "Persian," "Byzantine," and "minaret-like," almost "Persian and Roman too." More interested in the East than the West, Chihuly liked the sound of the word "Persian," the associations it inspired, and the series found a name. - Tina Oldknow



Enduring Idea:

Studying contemporary art and artists can be used as a vehicle to investigate big ideas, explore the creative response, and promote critical thinking. Students investigate the concepts of shapes, color, line, symmetry, and radial design in artwork with a focus on exploration, experimentation, and process over a final product. Through this investigation, students will create connections between the title, qualities, and theme of the selected artwork and concepts learned across disciplines and cultures.

Essential Questions:

- What media could be explored to create shapes and colors similar to the ones in the selected artwork?
- How can organic shapes be created using intersecting radial lines and symmetry?
- How can lines be seen through translucent colors?
- How can individual shapes be organized and arranged organically in an installation to create visual appeal?

Understandings and Outcomes:

Students will be able to-

- Understand how contemporary artists use a variety of media in their art.
- Paint with watercolors and oil pastels to explore the concepts of organic shapes, pattern, line, and the wax-resist process, inspired by the glass art of Dale Chihuly.
- Explore the translucent qualities of watercolors by layering and overlapping colors.
- Understand how oil pastels resist watercolors, allowing for lines and patterns drawn with the oil pastel will still show up even when watercolor is applied on top.
- Discuss and identify symmetry and radial design in their own artwork and the artwork of others.

Discussion:

Ask students to silently look at the suggested artwork. Give them several minutes to look closely. Discuss Dale Chihuly's *Persian Ceiling* with students using the following suggested prompts:

- What does this artwork make you think of?
- What do you think this artwork was made out of? What other materials could have been used?
- How many organic shapes can you find?
- What types of lines does Chihuly use?
- Find an area where the shapes and colors overlap and describe what you see.

Vocabulary:

Organic shapes- Organic shapes are irregular shapes found in nature, such as clouds and leaves.

Intersecting lines- Two or more lines which cross each other.

Symmetry- Symmetry in art refers to the harmonious proportion and balance.

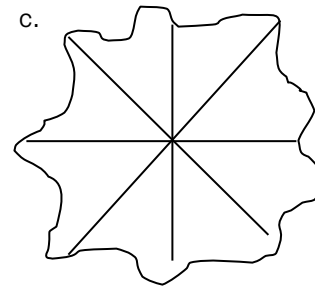
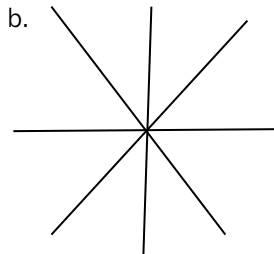
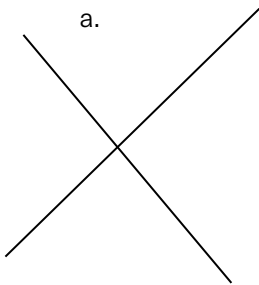
Radial design – refers to lines that begin in the center of a composition or shape and move to the edge of a shape, like spokes in a wheel.

Materials:

- 12" x 18" white construction paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Oil pastels
- Watercolor sets
- Brushes
- Water containers
- optional: rulers

Process:

1. Review the difference between geometric shapes (circle, square, triangle, etc.) and organic shapes with students.
2. Demonstrate how to draw a radial matrix on the 12 x 18 "paper and then enclose the edges with a wavy line to create an organic Chihuly-inspired shape.
3. Distribute the paper, pencils and oil pastels to students (and rulers if they will be used).
4. Students will draw a radial matrix on the 12x18 construction paper:
 - a. Each student will draw a large X in the center of their paper.
 - b. An additional horizontal and vertical line will be added to create a radial matrix, and these lines will be extended towards the edges of the paper.
 - c. The outer edge should be drawn with a wavy line to create a Chihuly-inspired blossom shape.



5. Students will trace over their pencil lines with oil pastels and then fill in the sections of the radial matrix with different kinds of lines to create patterns – wavy, zigzag, loopy, etc. Encourage the use of white oil pastels in one or two areas.
6. Distribute the watercolors and brushes to the students. Demonstrate the wax-resist technique: when watercolors are applied over oil pastels, the wax binder in the oil pastels will resist (push away) the watercolors and show through. The binder is what holds the pigment in a crayon shape.
7. Students will apply watercolors over their Chihuly shapes. Encourage the students to explore color mixing and layering of colors. Use a very wet brush for the best results – a wash of watercolor is most effective.
8. Once the watercolors are dry, students will cut around the perimeter of their shapes.
9. Finished Chihuly watercolors may be folded to provide extra dimension and hung in a group installation, or displayed as flat works of art.

Standards:

TEKS:

§117.114. Art, Grade 4, Adopted 2013.

(b) Knowledge and skills.(1) Foundations: observation and perception. The student develops and expands visual literacy skills using critical thinking, imagination, and the senses to observe and explore the world by learning about, understanding, and applying the elements of art, principles of design, and expressive qualities. The student uses what the student sees, knows, and has experienced as sources for examining, understanding, and creating artworks. The student is expected to: (B) use appropriate vocabulary when discussing the elements of art, including line, shape, color, texture, form, space, and value, and the principles of design, including emphasis, repetition/pattern, movement/rhythm, contrast/variety, balance, proportion, and unity; and (2) Creative expression. The student communicates ideas through original artworks using a variety of media with appropriate skills. The student expresses thoughts and ideas creatively while challenging the imagination, fostering reflective thinking, and developing disciplined effort and progressive problem-solving skills. The student is expected to: (C) produce drawings; paintings; prints; sculpture, including modeled forms; and other art forms such as ceramics, fiber art, constructions, mixed media, installation art, digital art and media, and photographic imagery using a variety of art media and materials.



(3) Historical and cultural relevance. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture by analyzing artistic styles, historical periods, and a variety of cultures. The student develops global awareness and respect for the traditions and contributions of diverse cultures. The student is expected to: (D) investigate connections of visual art concepts to other disciplines.

§111.6. Grade 4, Adopted 2012.

(1) Mathematical process standards. The student uses mathematical processes to acquire and demonstrate mathematical understanding. The student is expected to: (A) apply mathematics to problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace;

(6) Geometry and measurement. The student applies mathematical process standards to analyze geometric attributes in order to develop generalizations about their properties. The student is expected to: (A) identify points, lines, line segments, rays, angles, and perpendicular and parallel lines; (B) identify and draw one or more lines of symmetry, if they exist, for a two-dimensional figure

National Standards: 4th Grade

VA:Cr2.1.4a Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.