

Cedric Michael Cox: Interactive Cityscape

Grades 4-8
2-3 Lessons
Visual Arts

Lesson Description:

Based on Cedric M. Cox's interactive magnetic painting for The UnMuseum®, students will create their own moveable cityscapes using magnetized canvas and magnet strips. Students will express their feelings toward their neighborhood in shapes and colors that can be redesigned and rearranged by the viewers of their work.

Cincinnati's rich urban environment is an inspiration for native Cedric Michael Cox. As a resident of Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, he finds beauty in the architectural details, gestural splashes of graffiti and pulsating rhythm of this historic district. His dense quilt-like imagery is also inspired by his love of music. To this artist, the act of creation in music and art is very similar. For example, a change in rhythm or pitch can be compared to a shift in line, brush stroke, gesture, or pattern. In Cox's paintings the rhythm and sights of the city combine to create elaborate tapestries expressing the spirit of the city.

Objectives:

- Students will apply the basic elements of art to their work, including an understanding of color composition, line, form, etc.
- Students will learn about abstraction by deconstructing images.
- Students will create an interactive work of art and consider how the imagery they provide affects the viewer/participant.

Materials and Resources:

12 x 12 inch Masonite boards pre-primed with 3 coats of magnetic paint
Drawing paper and assorted drawing materials for planning out ideas
Permanent markers
One large 25-foot roll of magnet strip
Scissors
Images of architectural details for reference (doors, moldings, roof lines, etc.)
Brushes
Acrylic paint



City Creation

Cedric Michael Cox, 2009

Canvas, magnetic paint, acrylic paint, and magnets

Critical Questions:



Spiritual Horizons #2

Cedric Michael Cox, 2009

Acrylic on canvas



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- What types of line, shapes and colors best describe your neighborhood?
- What happens when you alter shapes? How do they change the composition?
- People will be able to move and change the final artwork. How do you want these viewers to feel about your neighborhood?

Activities:

Anticipatory activity:

After sharing some examples of Cox's work and his interview

(<http://contemporaryartscenter.org/unmuseum/artists>), the teacher will explain how his work was influenced by his environment and where he lives in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati. Students will be asked a series of questions before they begin the project.

- Where do you live?
- What are some of the patterns you see on a daily basis when you walk around your city?
- How does Cox make his work abstract?
- How is your city/ neighborhood different from Cox's interpretation? How is it the same?

Artmaking activity:

- On drawing paper students will begin planning out the elements of their abstracted cityscapes.
- Students will then transfer their drawing to a 12 X 12in. piece of magnetic strip.
- Have students paint the work.
- Students should draw in the lines that they will later cut (the simpler the forms the easier it will be to cut out and rearrange). Stress the importance of planning and that these pieces need to be able to be rearranged into new compositions.
- Using sharp scissors have the students cut the pieces.
- Now the students can rearrange their compositions as they put the magnetic painted parts back onto the magnetic board.

Assessment:

- Participation in brainstorming and preliminary sketching.
- Execution in planning and designing a composition based on their own abstracted interpretation of their neighborhood.
- Mastery of painting techniques demonstrated in class.

National Standards:

Using Knowledge of structures and functions

K-4.2 Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas.

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

K-4.3 Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

5-8.1 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.