South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Myra Miller
“Flower Power”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Unit of Study: Myra Miller, painter

Title of Lesson Plan: Flower Power

Grade Level: 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

Fine Arts:

Visual Arts Standard Two 3-4:
Students will understand selected techniques which give artwork detail.

Visual Arts Standard Two 5-8:
Students will describe the various techniques which give artwork definition and detail.
South Dakota Content Standards

Science:

3.L.1.1 Students are able to identify basic structures, functions, and needs of plants in relation to their environment.

4.L.2.1 Students are able to identify behavioral and structural adaptations that allow a plant or animal to survive in a particular environment.

5.L.2.2 Students are able to describe structures and processes involved in plant reproduction.
South Dakota Content Standards

Writing:

4.W.1.2 Students can create sentences using words that describe, explain, or provide additional details and connections.
Assessment Strategies

- Individual observations using VTS
- Class discussion
- Proper identification of the structure and function of flowers/plants
- Proper explanation of the structure and processes involved in plant reproduction
- Evaluation of student writing using 6+1 Writing Traits as a guide
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist Myra Miller.
- Students will evaluate the painting using VTS techniques.
- Students will identify the basic structures and functions of this plant represented in the painting.
- Students will explain the structure and processes involved in plant reproduction.
Time Required

- One 45 minute class period

Materials/Technology Needed

- Myra Miller painting: untitled (gladiolas) SD Art Museum Reference Number 1973.08.03
- Writing paper
- Pen/pencil
- Drawing paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
Background Information

- This untitled painting by Myra Miller (subtitled gladiolas) is a wonderful example of depth and detail in art. This painting would work well in a unit identifying specific structures and illustrating elements needed for plant reproduction. Gladiolas typically do not survive in the ground during cold weather. The flower bulbs are replanted in the spring as the ground warms up.
Lesson Description

- Using VTS observation, have students discuss elements of the Myra Miller painting subtitled Gladiolas. Some VTS questions could be:
  - What do you see?
  - What do you feel (in the painting)? How do you know? (illusion of depth, etc.)
  - What do you smell?
  - How does this painting make you feel?

- This would then go onto a lesson on identifying parts of a plant (parts to be identified would depend on grade level - 3rd grade: stem, leaf, petal, etc., 5th grade: pistil, stamen, etc.).
Lesson Description continued

- Have students use drawing paper to create their own drawing of a flower identifying specific parts of the plant. Students could create a key to explain the role of each of the parts identified.
  - For the 5th grade, they could illustrate the elements and process of plant reproduction.

- Students could also discuss how plants “protect” themselves during the winter (dormant in bulbs, etc.)
Enrichment

- Students could grow a flower that comes from a bulb to watch the growth cycle and journal on its progress once a week.
Bibliography/Resources

- Miller Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum
  - Myra Miller painting: untitled (gladiolas) SD Art Museum Reference Number 1973.08.03
Myra Miller Presentation to Students
Myra Miller

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Myra Miller

• 1882 – 1961
• Painted for her own pleasure
• Only training in art was with the Rogers sisters, Laura and Anna, well-known Milbank, SD artists
• Mainly a self-taught artist
• Best known for her paintings on South Dakota game birds
• Began painting about 1900, when she was 18 years old
• Paintings look very realistic
• Also was a farm wife on a 1000 acre farm with 3 children
• Also collected rocks, moths, and butterflies
• Practiced photography
Bibliography

• South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  • Myra Miller

*For more information about Myra Miller, contact the South Dakota Art Museum*
untitled (gladiolas)

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Other Examples of Myra Miller’s Artwork
untitled (pheasants)

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
untitled (pansies)