South Dakota Artists Curriculum Unit

Myra Miller
“Still Life”

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:** Still Life

**Grade Level:** 3 – 5
Visual Arts Standard One 3-4:
Students will describe how visual arts tell stories, express moods, or convey ideas.

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

Geometry:

3.G.2.1 Students are able to demonstrate relationships between figures using similarity and congruence.

4.G.2.1 Students are able to compare geometric figures using size, shape, orientation, congruence, and similarity.

Science:

5.P.3.3 Students are able to describe basic properties of light.
South Dakota Content Standards

Speaking:

3.S.1.1 Students are able to present oral information in a clear and organized manner.

3.S.2.2 Students are able to participate in informational and dramatic communication activities that incorporate various presentation strategies.

4.S.2.2 Students are able to use informational and dramatic presentation strategies when communicating orally.

5.S.2.2 Students are able to support informational communication through the use of various presentation strategies and tools.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation using VTS
- Creation of still life picture following guidelines from a rubric
- Class presentation following guidelines from a rubric
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist Myra Miller.
- Students will evaluate the painting using VTS techniques.
- Students will create a still life display evaluating size, shape, lighting, etc.
Time Required

- Two class periods of 45 - 60 minutes each (may use less time creating the still life, but may use more time with class presentations)

Materials/Technology Needed

- Image of the Myra Miller painting: untitled (pansies) SD Art Museum reference number 1995.02.1
- Digital camera
  OR
- Paper, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- Writing paper
- Pen/pencil
- * 3 – 4 objects students bring from home
This untitled painting by Myra Miller (subtitled pansies) is a wonderful example of depth and detail in art. Students will need to incorporate elements of good still life object placement, effects of lighting, etc.
Lesson Description

- Show students the Myra Miller painting: untitled (pansies) SD Art Museum reference number 1995.02.1.

- Using VTS observations, have students discuss what they see in the picture, how the flowers are arranged, the effect of lighting, etc. Discuss these observations in a class discussion.

- In the discussion, have students talk about shape and height of the flowers, how the paper or fabric under and above the flowers shows depth and definition. Have students explain the ways in which light has affected elements in this print.
Lesson Description continued

- For their assignment, have students bring 3 - 4 objects from home that they could use to create a still life image that would explain themselves, their hobbies, places they have traveled, etc.

- Set up about four areas around the classroom where students could create their still life display (with a backdrop of paper or fabric).
  - Remind students to think about item placement due to dominant colored objects, height, etc.
Lesson Description continued

- Have students take a digital picture of their still life collage. Print a copy of each student’s still life picture (it does not need to be on photo quality paper).
  - Another idea would be to transfer each student’s picture in a file on the school server - especially if you have access to an InFocus projector in your room.

- Finally, have students present their still life to the rest of the class and explain why these items were chosen and how these objects are a representation of who they are.
  - This assignment could also be done by having the students draw their still life collages as well.
Enrichment

- Have students create a still life of images associated with a story they are reading or from a social studies lesson.
Bibliography/Resources

- Miller Painting Collection at the South Dakota Art Museum.
  - Myra Miller painting: untitled (pansies) SD Art Museum reference number 1995.02.1

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 (pansies)
Other Examples of Myra Miller’s Artwork
untitled (gladiolas)

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

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum