



Visual Art

Eight In-Class Art Activities to Get Students' Creativity Going!

1-6

Lesson by Steve and Tonya Vistaunet

This lesson may be adjusted to fit whatever timeline you need. It can be the focus for one day, or worked on for an hour a day over a week or more.

Objectives

- Create art within certain limitations, rules and constraints
- Create art in response to something else

Background

Two of the best ways to get art students to produce great art is by limiting them somehow and in giving them something to respond to. See how setting limitations for students or creating an environment for them to create art in response to something else gets their creativity going!



Edith Taylor Roberson, *The Dance*, 2003, acrylic on board



John Alan Nyberg, *Play It Again James*, 1998, mixed media

Materials

- Colored markers
- Crayons
- Black pen
- Standard 8.5 x 11 paper

Images from the Museum Permanent Collection

- John Alan Nyberg, *Play It Again James*, 1998, mixed media
- Edith Taylor Roberson, *The Dance*, 2003, acrylic on board
- Carlos John Anderson, *Still Life with Guitar*, c. 1948-1952, oil on board

Utah Core Standards

Utah Visual Art Core:

- 1.V.CR.1 Engage collaboratively in exploration and imaginative play with art materials, and use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.
- 1.V.CR.3 Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.
- 2.V.CR.2 Experiment with various materials and tools to explore personal interest in a work of art or design.
- 3.V.CO.1 Elaborate on an imaginative idea and apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.
- 3.V.CR.2 Create a personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.
- 3.V.R.3 Evaluate an artwork based on given criteria.
- 3.V.CO.1 Develop a work of art based on observations of surroundings.
- 4.V.R.2 Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.
- 5.V.C.2 Experiment with and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.
- 5.V.CO.1 Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.
- 6.V.CR.3 Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.
- 6.V.R.2 Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.

Learning Activities

Setting Limitations in Art

In recent years, a design philosophy that limitations, rules and constraints can benefit your creativity, rather than constrict it has become quite popular. The idea that creativity thrives off constraints is one we often embrace as well. Often having limitations in our art can actually make it better. For example, something as simple as a deadline limits us in how much time we have to finish the project. Here are a few ways we have found helpful in limiting ourselves in creating art:

- Limit yourself to a 5-color palette
- Limit yourself to a color palette that you usually would never use
- Limit yourself to a certain size of art
- Limit yourself to how detailed (or not detailed) you can be



Learning Activity Continued

Examples of art projects to do in class setting limitations:

1. Heart Collaboration

Everyone gets a 5"x5" blank piece of paper. They then have 10 minutes to create a heart. No words. Just create a heart (or hearts). Once finished display them all together as a collaborative work of art. (Feel free to change the heart to a skull in October, etc.)

2. Paper Face

Place a piece of paper on your face. Then using a marker draw your face with as much detail as you can. Then display them all together.

3. Pen drawing for 5 minutes with no lines ever crossing

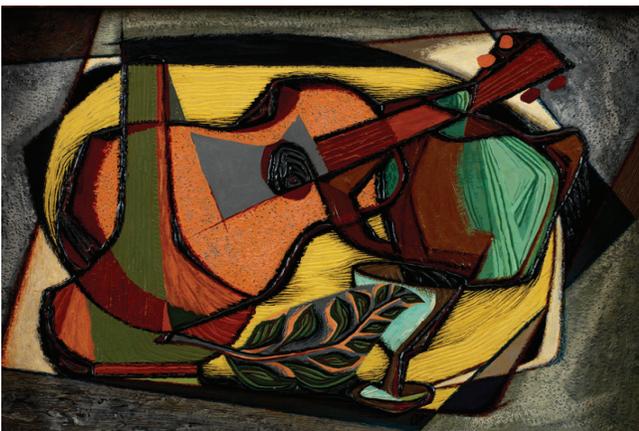
Simply have the students draw for 5 minutes without ever crossing the line. This certainly limits them in how they create the drawing.

4. Face Study

Limit your students on how they draw a face. Have them draw the same face a number of times, each time limiting them. For example, draw the face using their opposite hand, draw the face doing a blind contour, draw the face only using gesture, draw the face with a really thick marker, draw the face with a really thin pencil, etc.

5. Abstract-O-Meter

Have students draw any object using an "Abstract-o-meter" setting. A setting of 2 would be very simplified—very simple drawing. A setting of 9 would be quite detailed. Etc.



Carlos John Anderson, *Still Life with Guitar*, c. 1948-1952, oil on board

Responding to Something to Create Art

We have found that responding to something as simple as a song, or a color palette, or to a word or sentence can get our creative juices flowing. Sometimes making something from nothing can be quite difficult. But by simply responding to something, that initial starting process can be much easier and get you started on your project.

Examples of art projects to do in class responding to something:

1. Song Color Palette

Play a song for everyone. Have them turn that song into a 5-color palette. If that song turned into a color palette—what would the 5 colors be?

2. Classic Painting Color Palette

Have the student observe a classic painting (like Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows*) and have them choose the five most prominent colors they see and make a 5-color palette.

3. Respond to a Song

Play any song. Have the student respond to the song using only non-objective shapes and lines. Play another song and have them respond again, this time creating an album cover based on what they are hearing. What does the song look like? Switch it up and have them respond to a word or sentence. *Example: It had been under the bed for the past 8 days.*

Assessment

Students should follow limitation guidelines in order to make a completed art work and provide visual response(s) to external sources. Overall, students should demonstrate openness to new approaches to making art.

Extension

These creative activities can be used as class exercises, but can also be expanded into long-term projects. Encourage students to create an artwork that is centered on one or many of these exercises, and consider displaying each student's art in a class exhibition. Ask students to write artist statements to describe their process and share their experience with limitations and/or responding to external sources in their work.



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Edith Taylor Roberson, *The Dance*, 2003, acrylic on board



Carlos John Anderson , Still Life with Guitar, c. 1948-1952, oil on board