



Huntington and Scott Gallery Programs

FAVORITE PAINTING PROJECT

A reflective, interdisciplinary lesson in art
and its emotional impact on the viewer



Grades 4–12

I. Introduction

The visual arts are a powerful form of communication. Artists use their work to visually "speak" to the viewer: to tell a story, communicate emotion, convey a political message, or describe a scene. The elements that they use to communicate their messages are varied and may include color, shape, lines, texture, or the actual subject matter depicted in the art work. The message may be conveyed symbolically, didactically, or may be hidden. Whatever the method, the artist hopes to elicit some sort of a response in the viewer to his or her work.

This activity will encourage students to choose a favorite painting at the Huntington, one that "speaks" to them in some way, and that they respond to, and then to in turn communicate that response to others in writing, visually, or even musically. There are no wrong answers in this exercise!

II. Objective

- ◆ Students will be able to identify the various ways that elements in art can be used to capture a feeling in an artwork, through the selection of their own "favorite painting," chosen for the way that it affects them emotionally in some way.

III. Standards Assessed

Los Angeles Unified School District, 1998 edition

- ◆ Use the elements and principles of the visual arts in verbal and visual imagery, analyze images by investigating the compositional, expressive, and metaphorical aspects of works of art.

- ◆ Apply the visual arts vocabulary in oral and written form; use refined and subtle discriminations to analyze the interrelationships of the elements and principles of the visual arts found in the students' own work, the work of others, and the environment.

Visual Arts Standards, California Department of Education

- Standard 1. Artistic Perception: Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the arts.
- Standard 4. Aesthetic Valuing: Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about artworks.
- Standard 5. Connections, Relations, Applications. Connecting and applying what is learned in each art form to learning in other art form, subject areas, and careers.

IV. Materials Needed

- ◆ A selection of images of art work from the Scott or Huntington Galleries, that the students will see during their visit and that evoke emotion of some kind in the viewer.

Images are available on the Huntington Web site (<http://www.huntington.org>). Or, images of different art works can be obtained from art magazines or slide collections (many modern artists, such Munch, Picasso, Kathe Kollwitz, O'Keefe have a number of emotionally powerful images).

V. Preparation

If you plan to use images from the Huntington Web site and will be using a projector, it is advisable to choose your images and download them ahead of time to avoid having to wait with your students for the image to appear. If you are using images that you have obtained from art magazines and the like, create an art gallery in your classroom of the images on the bulletin board or on the wall, complete with labels showing title and the name of the artist.

VI. Lesson Activities

Part I, Pre-Visit (in the classroom)

Discuss with the students how art is used as a vehicle to express emotions or a message of some sort, or to evoke feeling in the viewer (for example, peacefulness, fascination, anger).

1. What elements do artists use to communicate in this way (e.g. color, heavy lines, subject matter, etc.)?
2. Have they ever used art to express their feelings?

3. In preparation for your students' visit to the Huntington, tell them that they will be choosing a favorite painting while there, based on their emotional response to the art work. Ask them to take mental notes about what it was about the art work that caused them to respond in some way.

Part II (at the Huntington)

1. Before entering the Huntington, remind your students about their assignment to choose their favorite art work.

Part III, Post Visit (back in the classroom)

1. This is reflection time. Ask the students to spend a few minutes recalling the art work that they chose, and picturing it in their mind. What was it that they liked about the painting that caused them to choose it as their favorite? What techniques and elements did the artist use to communicate some kind of emotion?
2. After they have a few quiet moments to think, have the students then write a paragraph, a poem, or a song about their favorite painting, to be shared with the rest of the class.