

What Parents Want to Know

Book Content and Scheduling

To learn to draw artists have always focused on two groups of topics known as the elements of art and principles of design (composition). These are the chosen topics of each unit in this book. Each topic is explored in four unique ways, giving students enough experience with the topic, that they naturally incorporate it into the way that they draw. It becomes part of their thinking as they draw any kind of subject matter. This kind of focus, and many opportunities to practice, is how children learn to draw.

Building a Visual Vocabulary

First Page of Each Unit

Here students are shown which topic to focus on, explained in words and pictures. The creative exploration assignment guides students to observe the topic in their own environment, making connections to real-world experiences, and creating a work of art from their observations and ideas.

American Art Appreciation and History

Second and Third Page of Each Unit

Students see how the topic is used in master works and apply their new observations to a work of art that they create. Students learn about artists and the times they lived in.

Techniques

Fourth Page of Each Unit

Students learn how to use the materials and tools of art and apply that knowledge to make an original work of art.

Application

Fifth Page of Each Unit

Students do a final project incorporating new techniques and application of the topic while using a variety of references such as still life objects, landscapes, portraiture, photographs and more!

Scheduling Art Class Using this Book for One Full School Year

CLASSES PER WEEK: TWO

CLASS TIME: ONE HOUR

This schedule can be modified to fit yours. Keep in mind that students can work independently so it is their time you are scheduling, not your own. Schedule art class at a time when they can complete the art assignment, even if it runs over an hour. Once interrupted, students can rarely return to an activity with as much enthusiasm as they first had. The amount of time for completing each activity will vary greatly, depending on students experience and personalities, however you should see that as they learn to use more of the elements within their pictures that they are taking more time on each piece. A goal would be to work up to one hour by the end of the year.

What Students Want to Know

THE MYSTERIOUS LANGUAGE OF ART

If the secrets of great artists were contained in a book, would you open it? We hope your answer is YES! There is much to learn from artists who have created all their lives. The first great secret artists share with others is:

1. Learn to observe the world around you- to really see it.

"OK", you say, "I'm looking and I see the same things I've always seen." We won't let you get stuck there. The second part of this secret is:

2. Learn *what* to look for.

We tend to look at subject matter and make vague and arbitrary decisions about what we see. Comments such as "grass is green," "faces are hard to draw," "I can draw a horse from the side, but not from the front," all show that we are focusing on our ideas about the subject, and not on what we see. If you've ever made statements similar to these, you are simply focusing on the wrong type of information. As you look at the world in the ways artists do, and this book is designed to show you just what those ways are, your art will greatly improve.

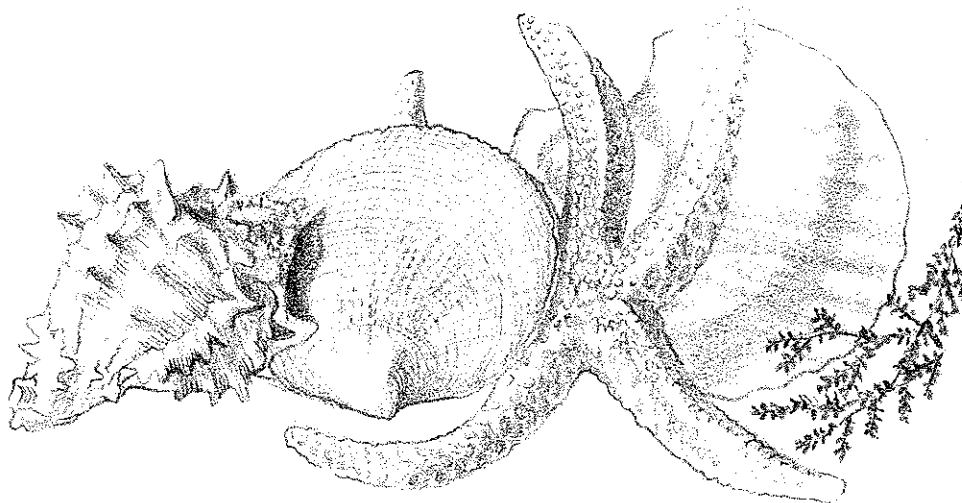
Do artists really *see* differently? After all, we all have the same kind of eyes and unless impaired in some way, we do see the same as everyone else. So artists see the same as everyone else, but they have learned to focus on a particular aspect of what they see, and at the same time block out other types of information. The language of art includes code words called the elements of art. You may have heard about these elements which include space, line, shape, texture, form, value, and color. The third part of that secret tells us how to see the world using the elements of art.

3. Learn to *focus* on one element of art at a time, while drawing, and *block out* the others.

With practice your mind can focus on any element of art you choose. Your mind can switch with lightning speed to any other element, and back again or onto another, making it a powerful focusing and blocking out tool.

Texture describes the surface of the object.

Textures can be: bumpy rough smooth and more!



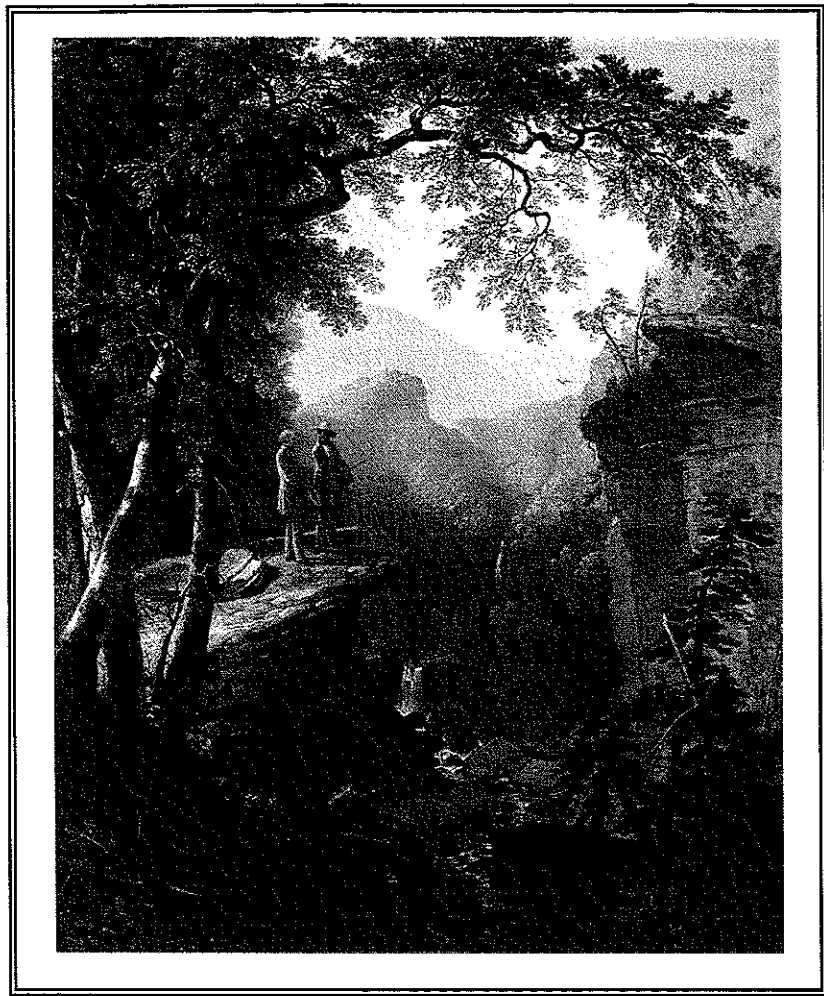
Explore Your World! A CREATIVE EXERCISE USING REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE

Art is an opportunity to use all of your senses. Many people rush through the day without taking time to experience what is around them. Artists stop to watch the sun set, to feel the texture of a leaf, or to enjoy other pleasurable experiences. Making art helps artists to be more sensitive to what they see, feel, taste, and experience. When artists become more sensitive to touch and texture, they are able to draw these things. Make art to become more aware of what you see.

TRY IT: Take a blind walk. A partner is needed for this activity. Have your partner place a blindfold over your eyes. With the partner as your guide, follow. The partner should hold your hands and place them onto different textures. Touch as many different kinds of textures as possible. This is a good activity for outdoors but can be done indoors as well. When finished, look at the textures you touched. Draw some of the objects. You will be drawing from observation, but because you've taken the time to touch, you will be more aware of the surface of what you see.

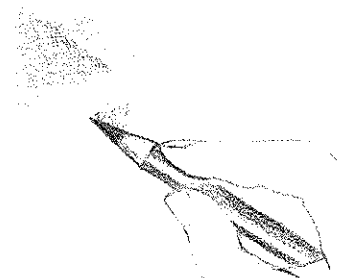
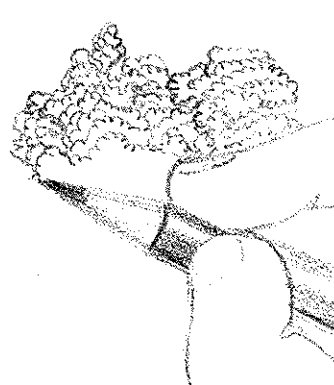
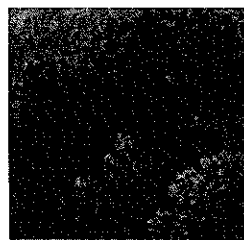
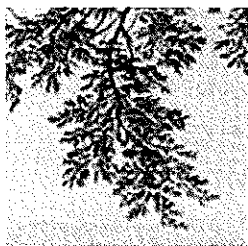
OBJECTIVE: to develop sensory awareness, aiding in the ability to draw textured objects.

Textures give the viewer a feeling of being within the scene. We can imagine the feel of the surfaces of tree bark, rocks, and grasses. This work by Asher B. Durand makes use of a variety of textures to portray the lush beauty found in nature.



Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849
Photo Credit: Dover Publications Inc

Take a look at how these painted surfaces could look in a drawing of the same subject.



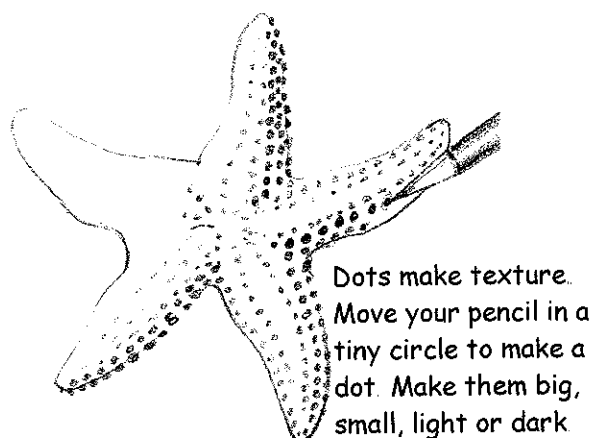
THE ARTIST:

Asher B. Durand (1796-1886)
American Landscape Painter

Durand was first trained in etching, as many American landscape painters of this time were. This printing process uses lines and tonal values to produce an image and those things show up in Durand's paintings. He believed that students should look at nature to paint it rather than learn techniques from the masters. He was fascinated with textured details of trees and masses of foliage. Durand was a "constant supporter of younger artists, generous with advice and encouragement" (McLanathan 249).

MAKE AN OBSERVATION

DRAWING! Do you have a spot of wilderness that you can walk through? Many cities have parks and walking trails. Observe nature like the American landscape artists did, and then sketch a scene on location. Draw some textures in your sketch.



THE TIMES:

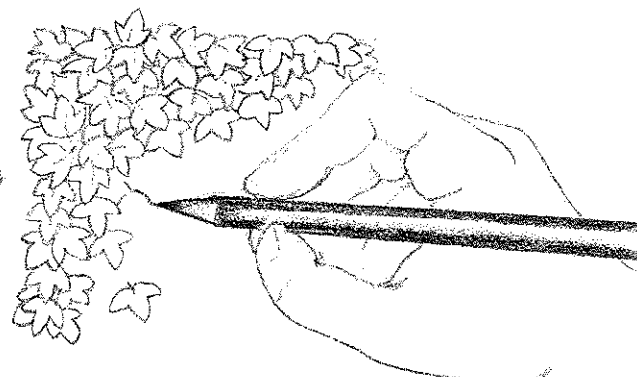
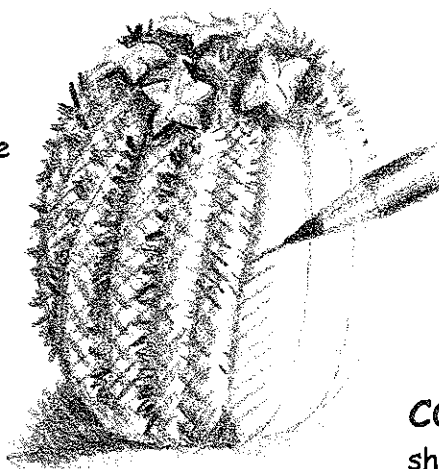
Native American cultures preserved the natural American landscape. Their way of life did not disturb or reshape the land. In the 1800's the American West remained an untamed wilderness. As the new nation began to move westward the people were awed by tall mountain peaks, valleys, natural streams, waterfalls and a vast variety of wildlife. They were also awed by the large scale of mountains which seemed to stretch upward to the heavens and trees which spread out to the horizon in every direction. These sites inspired the Hudson River School painters to become focused on landscapes. From 1800 to 1850 the country was fascinated by the majestic landscape paintings produced by men like Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Asher Durand, and others. "The landscape tradition brought an elevated status to artists, essentially because of the religious connotations of the subject matter" (Wright 40). Many of these artists recognized God as the creator of such magnificent sights and felt they had a moral duty to make them visible to those who could not travel to see the sites first hand. Thomas Cole, who arrived in America at age seventeen, walked daily in the wild forests and fields with sketchbook and flute in hand. He wrote, "creation!... all creation, lad and none know how often the hand of God is seen in the wilderness, but them that rove it." (McLanathan 239). The American Landscape tradition lasted into the 1900's. Americans were so fascinated by the beauty of the land that they preserved many areas as national parks.

How To Make a Variety of Textures

Lesson 3

Make textures by using different types of marks with the pencil. There is no specific mark that is right to use for a specific subject. It is up to the artist to decide what marks to use. Look at some different ways to make textures shown below.

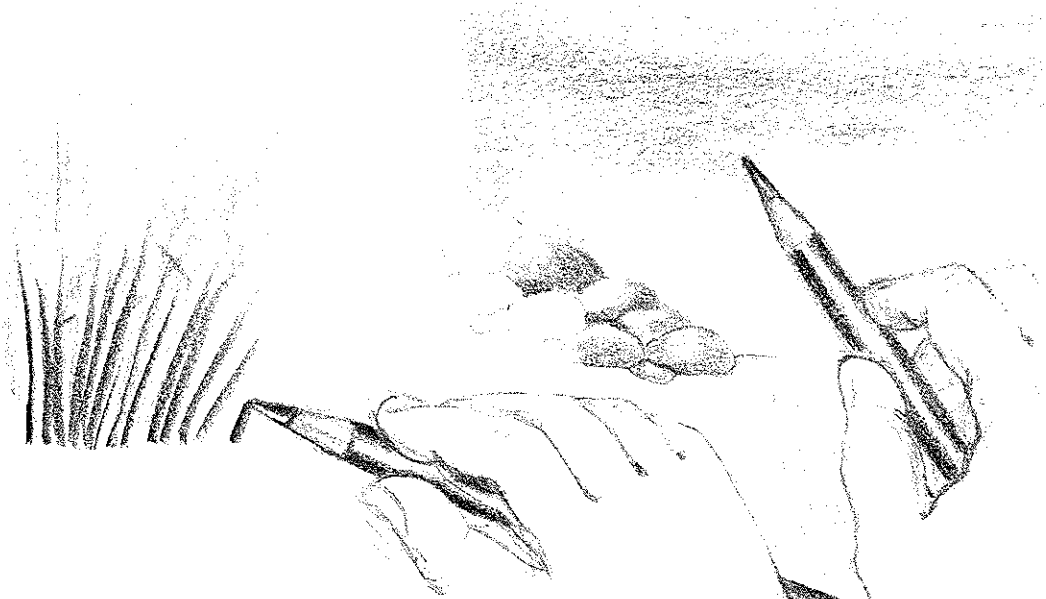
LINES: Hold the pencil as you do when writing. This allows you to use the point. Make short, parallel strokes.



COMBINING SHAPES: Repeat any shape to form a group of shapes and make a texture.

COMBINING GROUPS OF LINES:

Hold the pencil under your hand, using the side of the pencil lead. Drag the side of the pencil from one point to another. Lighten the pressure on the pencil as you near the end of the line.



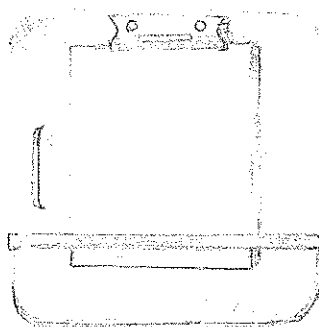
BLENDING: Hold the pencil under your hand as shown using the side of the pencil lead. Use a back and forth motion with even pressure. Make a wide line that blends with others, creating a solid area.

SOMETHING TO TRY: Draw several objects found outdoors. Use different types of marks to show the textures. Try textures shown on this page or make up unique ones of your own.

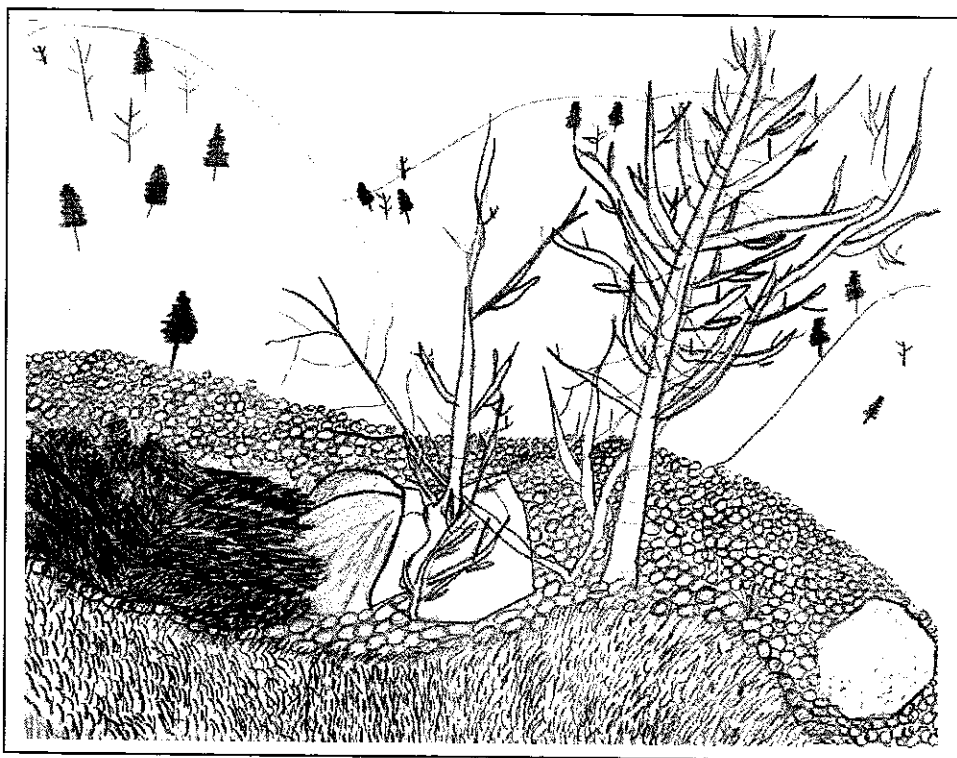
Final Project

Lesson 4

Gather drawing tools. Attach paper to a drawing board using the clip at the top. If your board has a rubber band, put it around the bottom of the board and slip it over the bottom edge of your paper. This will hold the paper in place on windy days. Sit in a comfortable spot that is not in direct sunlight. Draw a view that has different textures in it. Show these textures in the drawing by making different types of marks.



Student Gallery



Student work by Erin Craven uses different marks for grass, the evergreen bush, and the stone path. The student uses dark pencil marks so the trees are easily visible. This scene was observed from her aunt's backyard.

YOU WILL NEED

- Drawing pencil
- Vinyl eraser
- Drawing paper
- Drawing board
- Pencil sharpener

REFER TO THE FOLLOWING WHEN DRAWING

An outdoor scene that you observed from one of the following places:

- A yard
- A park
- A field
- A sidewalk
- A window

LOOK BACK! Did you show texture by using a variety of lines or marks in the drawing? Point out the textures to your parent or teacher.