

5th Grade LWSD Art Docent Project: O’Keeffe Winter Trees

Element of Art: Value

Objective: to create a tree with many branches, each branch containing enough **value contrast** to make it appear three-dimensional

Artistic Influence: American artist, Georgia O’Keeffe



Elements of Art:

Value

Materials:

- **Soft pastels** (also called chalk pastels, especially white and brown, but all colors welcome)
- **Construction paper** (or any paper with enough tooth/texture to grab the pastel dust – the example shown was done on yellow construction paper)
- **Hairspray fixative**
Important: The fixative should be applied outdoors by an adult as soon as possible after the lesson. This is a necessary step, because the pastel dust will rub off easily otherwise.

Instructions and notes:

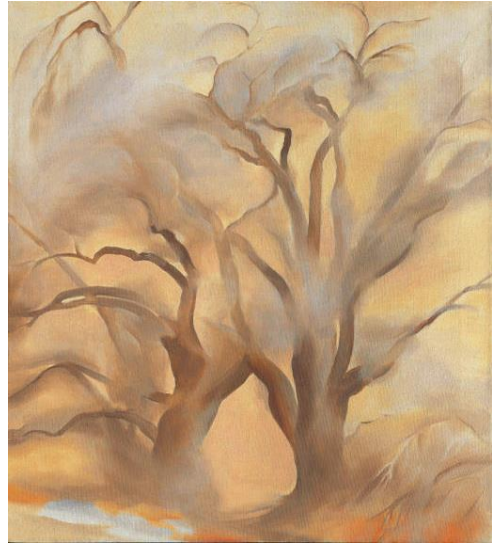
1. Make sure you have enough white and brown soft pastels for each student to have their own.
2. Go through the slides.
3. Spend some time on slide 9 talking about safety with soft pastels.
 - The students must not blow on their paintings.
 - Inhaling pastel dust can be irritating to the lungs.
 - Have students practice tapping their paper against their work tables.
 - **Remind them frequently to tap, tap, tap!**
4. Pause on slide 11 to have them write their names on the back of their papers. Then have them put away their pencils. They will do all of their drawings directly in pastel – no more pencil for the rest of the lesson.
5. Pause again on slide 12 to discuss what they notice in the photos of winter trees.
6. Follow the steps in the rest of the slide deck.
7. Invite students to share their art and talk about the process if time allows.
8. Distribute parent information page for students to take home, and print an extra page to post on your bulletin board with the finished art. See following page.
9. Please complete the brief [LWSD Art Docent Program Feedback Survey](#) for this lesson.
10. Thank you for supporting our elementary students’ visual arts education.

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The goal of this 5th grade lesson was to blend soft pastels in dark and light values to create branches on a tree with a three-dimensional appearance.



Winter Tree III, 1953, Georgia O’Keeffe



Winter Cottonwoods East V, 1954, Georgia O’Keeffe

WA State Visual Arts Standard

Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed. (VA: Re8.1.5)

In this art lesson taught by volunteer art docents, students learned that **value** is the lightness and darkness of a line, shape, or form. They used soft pastels (sometimes called chalk pastels) to paint a leafless tree in the style of American painter Georgia O’Keeffe, focusing on the lightness and darkness within each branch.

Georgia O’Keeffe was chosen as our inspiration for this project due to the series of winter trees she painted during her time in New Mexico. The subtle value contrast in the trunks and branches gives the trees depth and adds to their appeal.

The development of this Lake Washington School District art docent lesson was made possible by a grant from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation.