

BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

Lesson: Realism



Gustave Courbet (French, 1819–1877). *La Source de la Loue (The Source of the Loue)*, ca. 1864. Oil on canvas. 42¼ x 54½ inches (107.7 x 137.5 cm). Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum. George B. and Jenny R. Mathews Fund, 1959 (1951:1).

Artists: Gustave Corbet

Artwork: La Source de la Loue (The Source of the Loue), ca. 1864

Period/Movement: Realism

Enduring Understanding 2.3:

People create, respond to, and interact with objects and places in ways that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

Essential Question: How do objects and places shape lives and communities?

LESSON

Conceptual Basis:

During the nineteenth century, when French paintings often depicted romanticized scenes of daily life, artist Gustave Courbet chose to paint “observed realities,” making bold statements on society with his artwork. Criticized for painting peasants and workers, Courbet captured life including scenes from his home region, Ornans, France. One of the area’s natural wonders is the source of the Loue River, which flows through Ornans. Courbet was fascinated by the geologic structure of this caved grotto. In *La Source de la Loue*, ca. 1864, Courbet painted this special place realistically, adding textural features intended to awaken the viewer’s senses. This lesson explores the way art can be experienced through the senses and how the senses can inspire artmaking.

Vocabulary:

Realism: creating art that appears real

texture: physical feel or appearance of a touchable sensation on a surface area

Lesson Objectives:

- Become familiar with the artist Gustave Courbet and the Realism movement in France.
- Use the sense of touch to explore an environment.
- Add texture to a painting using techniques that create visual texture.
- Create an artwork based on sensory experiences.
- Support the understanding of basic art elements and principles.

Discussion:

Most people have a special place where they like to be. Courbet’s was the landscape around his hometown of Ornans, which included the source of the Loue River. Ask your students to brainstorm places they like to visit. The places can be somewhere outdoors, at home, in school, or another location. Have students write out different adjectives, or sensory words, about this place and how they make them feel.

Materials:

Canvas paper

Acrylic or tempera paint and paintbrushes

Materials for creating texture such as sand, dirt, and rocks (optional)

Additional collage material (optional)

Palette knife (optional)

Artmaking Activity

For this artmaking activity, students will create artworks that represent their special places. These can be realistic artworks that re-create the places or abstract artworks that capture the elements of the places. You can tailor the art making lesson depending on grade level.

For realistic artworks:

- Students bring in pictures of their special places. They can create paintings of their scenes. To capture the texture created in Courbet's painting, instruct students on how they can create visual texture through brush strokes. They can also build up paint or add sand and different materials into their paint to create additional texture in areas of their paintings.

For abstract artworks:

- Have students collect different items, pictures, or thoughts about their spaces. For example, if a student's special place is in their grandparents' garden, flowers, rocks, or dirt from the garden can be used as materials for their abstract collage. Focusing on the feelings or senses the students have when in their places, have them each create a collage using the collected materials.

New York State Standards:

ANCHOR STANDARD 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

2.3

Artistic Process: CREATING

Process Component: MAKE

Enduring Understanding 2.3: People create, respond to, and interact with objects and places in ways that define, shape, enhance and empower their lives.

Essential Questions:

How do objects and places shape lives and communities?

How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems?

How do artists and designers create works that effectively communicate ideas or influence people's lives?

Grade	Code	Standard
K	VA:Cr2.3.K	Note similarities and differences of objects through drawings, diagrams, sculptures and other visual means.
1	VA:Cr2.3.1	Create art that represents natural and constructed environments.
2	VA:Cr2.3.2	Repurpose objects or materials to make something new.
3	VA:Cr2.3.3	Individually or collaboratively construct representations, diagrams, or maps of places that are part of everyday life.
4	VA:Cr2.3.4	Identify, describe, and visually document places or objects of personal significance.
5	VA:Cr2.3.5	Document, describe, and represent constructed environments of regional or historical significance.
6	VA:Cr2.3.6	Design or redesign objects, places, or systems that meet the identified needs of diverse users.
7	VA:Cr2.3.7	Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art or design that clearly communicates information or ideas.
8	VA:Cr2.3.8	Select, organize, and design images and text to make visually clear and compelling artistic work.

Grade Level 9-12	Code	Standard
Proficient	VA:Cr2.3.HSI	Develop a proposal and create sketches or a model for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience and perception of a particular place.
Accomplished	VA:Cr2.3.HSII	Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues.
Advanced	VA:Cr2.3.HSIII	Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual culture define, shape enhance, inhibit, and/or empower people's lives.

Interdisciplinary Objectives:

- This lesson can be connected to ecology in a Science lesson. Studying plants and animals that live in caves—including how they adapt to the darkness of caves—can lead to discussions to promote cross-curriculum learning. A geology connection can include studying aspects of cave formations such as stalactites and stalagmites.
- Ask each student to write an essay using their place as a setting. This writing piece can be a narrative about how the student feels when they are in their special place.

Teacher Example:

