

BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

Lesson: Beyond Landscape



Anselm Kiefer (German, born 1945). *der Morgenthau Plan (The Morgenthau Plan)*, 2012. Acrylic, emulsion, oil, and shellac on photograph mounted on canvas. 110 x 224 inches (279.4 x 569 cm). Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Sarah Norton Goodyear Fund, George B. and Jenny R. Mathews Fund, by exchange and George B. and Jenny R. Mathews Fund, 2013 (2013:6a-c). © Anselm Kiefer

Artists: Anselm Kiefer

Artwork: *der Morgenthau Plan (The Morgenthau Plan)*, 2012, and *die Milchstrasse (The Milky Way)*, 1985–87

Period/Movement: Neo-Expressionism, Contemporary Art

Grade Level: K–12

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?

LESSON

Conceptual Basis:

Best known for his monumental textured paintings, German artist Anselm Kiefer's encrusted surfaces of thick impasto confront themes of memory, history, identity, and culture. Through texture, Kiefer's landscape paintings portray rough emotions and symbols with meaning to the artist. In this lesson, students will explore the principles of texture and landscape while reflecting on the personal significance landscapes may have on different people's lives.

Materials:

Younger Students

- Real flowers
- Digital image of landscapes
- Computer device such as desktop, laptop, or tablet
- Computer drawing program such as Microsoft Paint
- Printer (optional)
- Middle and Older Students
- Canvas board

Large image of a landscape (older students: a landscape with a personal meaning)

- Matte medium
- Glue sticks
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes
- Textural materials (such as sand, straw, clay)

Vocabulary:

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

implied texture: appearance of a touchable sensation on a surface area

The Morgenthau Plan: post-World War II plan that proposed the deindustrialization of Germany

landscape: picture of a natural scene of land

ARTMAKING ACTIVITIES

Younger Students

Before the artmaking activity, introduce students to a computer drawing program such as Microsoft Paint. This can be done in collaboration with a technology teacher or during your own classroom time. It can be helpful to introduce the different tools and applications of the program prior to this lesson. Demonstrate how students can open and save the program, undo any errors they may create, and how to choose different paint colors. Once students have a general knowledge of the program you will be using, students can begin working on their final artwork.

To begin the artmaking activity, students will select a landscape photo as the base of their artwork. The landscape image should be a large-sized image. This can be found via an Internet search engine. It is helpful to search for backgrounds or desktop wallpaper images of landscapes to acquire a large-sized image. Students may need assistance uploading the image to a computer drawing program. With the image uploaded, students can begin using different tools on the program to draw directly over the elements of their landscape scene. Encourage students to mimic the lines or shapes that appear in their landscape.

When finished, print out both the original image and the new, re-created landscape. These can be hung together to show the inspiration behind the implied texture artwork. In a wrap-up activity, students can compare and contrast both images while identifying the textures created.

Middle Grades

To begin the artmaking activity, instruct students to find an image of a landscape that would fit a canvas board or thick painting surface. Once students have a printed image of their landscape, use a glue stick to glue the image to a canvas. Remind students that Kiefer's artmaking process is similar to this lesson, but on a much larger scale. If matte medium is available, apply one coat of the medium over the painting. Allow for it to dry. This step will help reinforce the paper on the image.

Have students identify the various implied textures and landscape planes on their image. Students will begin building up actual texture on top of their landscape image. Students can apply thick globs of paint directly onto their image to begin building texture. Sand, when mixed with paint, can create grainy texture. Students can even glue crumpled pieces of tissue paper or straw onto their canvas. Once the added textures in their artwork have set and dried, students can paint directly on top of their textural landscape. Students can add additional layers of texture if they choose.

High School

Older students will use a meaningful photograph of a landscape for their painting. The photograph can be an actual image taken by the student of a real landscape or of an image that reminds students of a personal experience. Once students have their image, follow the steps outlined in the middle grade artmaking activity to create a textured landscape.

Lesson Tips

- This lesson can be tailored to focus on different subject areas or themes such as the seasons, plants, and social studies topics. Students can capture nature, plants, and geographical areas in a science-based landscape lesson. Students can also study the historical significance different land areas had on civilizations. They can create a landscape based on a battle or an ancient civilization, with the intent of depicting emotion or historical importance.
- Showing students video clips from YouTube of Anselm Kiefer working in his studio can illustrate the artmaking process and scale of the artwork.
- If computer devices or programming are not readily accessible for younger grades, students can create a texture collage using various mixed media materials. Students can use crumpled up tissue paper, fabrics, straw, beads, sand, and more to create their own textured collage using their sense of touch.

Optional Reflections and Lesson Wrap-Up

Reflecting on their landscapes, students can write an essay about the personal significance of their landscape. Students should write about where this landscape is from, why it is meaningful to them, and how they feel about the landscape. Students can share their essays and artworks with the class. For younger grades, students can write a paragraph describing the textures they have created. Encourage students to use a variety of adjectives to describe their landscapes.

Younger Student Artmaking Activity

Before the artmaking activity, introduce students to a computer drawing program such as Microsoft Paint. This can be done in collaboration with a technology teacher or during your own classroom time. It can be helpful to introduce the different tools and applications of the program prior to this lesson. Demonstrate how students can open and save the program, undo any errors they may create, and how to choose different paint colors. Once students have a general knowledge of the program you will be using, students can begin working on their final artwork.

To begin the artmaking activity, students will select a landscape as the base of their artwork. The landscape image should be a large-sized image. This can be found via an Internet search engine. It is helpful to search for backgrounds or desktop wallpaper images of landscapes to acquire a large-sized image. Students may need assistance uploading the image to a computer drawing program. With the image uploaded, students can begin using different tools on the program to draw directly over the elements of their landscape scene. Encourage students to mimic the lines or shapes that appear in their landscape.

When finished, print out both the original image and the new, re-created landscape. These can be hung together to show the inspiration behind the implied texture artwork. In a wrap-up activity, students can compare and contrast both images while identifying the textures created.

Middle Grade Artmaking Activity

To begin the artmaking activity, instruct students to find an image of a landscape that would fit a canvas board or thick painting surface. Once students have a printed image of their landscape, use a glue stick to glue the image to a canvas. Remind students that Kiefer's artmaking process is similar to this lesson, but on a much larger scale. If matte medium is available, apply one coat of the medium over the painting. Allow for it to dry. This step will help reinforce the paper on the image.

Have students identify the various implied textures and landscape planes on their image. Students will begin building up actual texture on top of their landscape image. Students can apply thick globs of paint directly onto their image to begin building texture. Sand, when mixed with paint, can create grainy texture. Students can even glue crumpled pieces of tissue paper or straw onto their canvas. Once the added textures in their artwork have set and dried, students can paint directly on top of their textural landscape. Students can add additional layers of texture if they choose.

Older Student Artmaking Activity

Older students will use a meaningful photograph of a landscape for their painting. The photograph can be an actual image taken by the student of a real landscape or of an image that

reminds students of a personal experience. Once students have their image, follow the steps outlined in the middle grade artmaking activity to create a textured landscape.

Lesson Tips

- This lesson can be tailored to focus on different subject areas or themes such as the seasons, plants, and social studies topics. Students can capture nature, plants, and geographical areas in a science-based landscape lesson. Students can also study the historical significance different land areas had on civilizations. They can create a landscape based on a battle or an ancient civilization, with the intent of depicting emotion or historical importance.
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- If computer devices or programming are not readily accessible for younger grades, students can create a texture collage using various mixed media materials. Students can use crumpled up tissue paper, fabrics, straw, beads, sand, and more to create their own textured collage using their sense of touch.

Reflections and Lesson Wrap-Up

Reflecting on their landscapes, students can write an essay about the personal significance of their landscape. Students should write about where the location of the landscape, why it is meaningful to them, and how they feel about the landscape. Students can share their essays and artworks with the class. For younger grades, students can write a paragraph describing the textures they have created. Encourage students to use a variety of adjectives to describe their landscapes.

Building Visual Literacy: Art Detectives

For a fun activity to support class discussion and visual literacy, students can piece together clues about an artwork like a detective. During a discussion, students can view the different elements of the work. Studying the work, they can identify key features and assess their feelings about what they see. Ask students to consider what other clues can be collected by looking at the title. Based on the evidence they have collected, students can draw conclusions about what the artwork represents. With students working in groups, this detective activity can be a way to approach looking at and talking about art. When viewing *der Morgenthau Plan und die Milchstrasse*, ask students to describe what they see. Do they look like places they have been before? Ask students to describe any elements or principles of art that they may observe, including color, line, movement, and texture. Can students describe the textures that they see with adjectives?

To create *der Morgenthau Plan*, Anselm Kiefer photographed fields of wildflowers outside of his studio. He printed one photograph on large sheets of paper, fitting the sheets over the canvas. Kiefer then painted directly on top of the photograph. He also used different materials, adding them into his painting. Some materials included ash, straw, and even glass. Explain Kiefer's artmaking process to your students.

For a deeper discussion about the artwork for middle and older students, create an interdisciplinary connection to Social Studies through the discussion about World War II and German culture during that time. Explain to students that Kiefer, as a child, grew up in a country that was still damaged from war. During World War II, aerial strikes heavily damaged the landscape, buildings, roadways, and railways in Germany. After the war, the Morgenthau Plan was proposed, which would have deindustrialized Germany, reverting it to an agricultural nation, in turn leading to the death of millions of Germans. Ask students why the floral landscape might have the title der Morgenthau Plan. Can students identify different feelings the artist may have felt about the proposed plan? Have students brainstorm different landscapes that they may have seen. Compare and contrast the landscapes that Kiefer may have experienced as a child and their personal experiences with landscape.

Breaking down the different layers of meaning in an artwork allows students to build abstract thoughts based on concrete observations. It is an interactive way to teach visual literacy in your classroom.

New York State Standards:

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.

Standards:

The New York State Visual Arts Standards for High School Students are divided into 3 categories, Proficient, Accomplished, and Advanced rather than by grade level. Please feel free to choose the standard that best applies to the needs of your students and class curriculum.

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 Connections: Science, Engineering

Teacher Example:



Example of finished artwork based on lesson plan.
Artwork by former School Program Coordinator Kelly Macagnone.