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Lesson Theme: Visual Puns and Imagination

Grade Level: Fifth Grade

Time: 3 class periods, 45 minutes each

Lesson Overview: The students will explore the concept of visual puns by recognizing examples of fish in the book "Dear Fish", and then comparing them to their own knowledge of puns in the English language. They will differentiate between literal and figurative elements in the work of three different artists, and describe how these artists create puns visually. Finally, the students will choose a fish to draw as their own visual pun, then research this fish and compare its actual characteristics with the figurative characteristics they included in their drawings.

Visual Culture Component/Relevance: Visual puns (and puns in the English language) are a frequent occurrence that students will encounter. This lesson will help students to differentiate between figurative and literal language, and learn how this element of language can be portrayed visually. Many types of animals (specifically fish) have names that could easily be interpreted as visual puns, for example, the Hammerhead Shark and the Banana Fish. By drawing these animals as visual puns and then researching them, the students will learn how visual puns can be used to communicate literal objects.

Virginia Standards of Learning:
Visual Art Standards
- 5.3- The student will use the elements of art-line, shape, form, color, value, texture, and space—to express ideas, images, and emotions.
- 5.6- The student will develop ideas for works of art by brainstorming, conducting research, and making preliminary sketches.
- 5.25- The student will apply specific criteria to assess a finished product.

Grade 5 Standards
- English 5.7- The student will demonstrate comprehension of information from a variety of print resources.
    a) Develop notes that include important concepts, summaries, and identification of information sources.
    b) Organize information on charts, maps, and graphs.

Lesson Objectives:
The students will:
- Participate in a discussion about visual puns, contributing ideas to the group.
- Analyze the work of three different artists who create visual puns through sculpture or digital means, and differentiate between the literal and the figurative elements of their work.
- Compare their knowledge of visual puns to the ones found in the illustrations of "Dear Fish" by Chris Gall.
- Create a sketch that depicts a visual pun of a fish.
- Create multiple relief prints of their fish by carving their sketch into a piece of Styrofoam and printing with ink.

- Research what the fish they portrayed actually looks like in nature, and create a Venn diagram that shows differences between their visual pun and the actual fish.

Vocabulary Words for Visual Analysis:
- Visual Pun- a play on words, usually assigning different meanings to similarly sounding words or phrases, conveyed through images rather than words.
- Plate- flat surface used for printing, the image will be backwards on it
- Proof- the first print made from a plate
- Edition- a series of prints made from the same plate
- Relief Printing- printing from a raised or depressed surface
- Ink- a pigmented matter that prints an image
- Brayer- a small roller used to apply ink to the page

Historical/Cultural/Artist Information:
- Woodcut is a type of relief print that involves cutting a design into a block of wood. The plate is then inked, and the raised parts of the wood catch the ink and form lines and shapes when pressed onto paper. This technique is the oldest form of printmaking, dating back to 5th century China.
- Meret Oppenheim was an early 20th century Surrealist and photographer. She created
  "Object" (Dinner with Furs) in response to a conversation she had with Pablo Picasso, where he admired her fur bracelet and remarked that one could "cover anything with fur".

Image Descriptions: Hairspray by Andrew Gueit (2006), Catching Zs II by Robert Deyber (2010), Object (Dinner in Furs) by Meret Oppenheim (1936).

Questioning Strategies:
Beginning of Class:
- Who knows what a visual pun is?
- Can you give some examples of what one might look like?

Visual Pun Images:
- What do you think this is an illustration of?
- Why do you think the artist made it?
- How do you think the artist made it?
- What's another way you could think of to show this pun?

"Dear Fish":
- Do fish really look like some of the ones in this book?
- Why did the author draw them that way?

- What kinds of visual puns did you see in the book?
- What other kinds of fish can you think of whose names could be a visual pun?
- How do you think the artist made these illustrations?

Final Discussion:
- How is the fish you drew different from the real one?
- How did you show the visual pun?
- Can you guess what (student's name)'s fish is?
- How did he/she show the pun visually?

Lesson Procedures:
Day 1:
- The teacher will begin class by asking the students the questions listed under the "Beginning of Class" section of questioning strategies.

- The teacher will show students the 3 examples of art featuring visual puns and facilitate discussion with the questions listed under "Visual Pun Images" of questioning strategies.

- The teacher will read the book "Dear Fish" to the class, making sure the students can see the illustrations, and pausing at appropriate times to ask the questions listed under the "Dear Fish" section of questioning strategies.

- The teacher will explain to students that they will be creating their own visual pun fish, and then show the class the 3 examples of the finished project, and explain that the first step will be to make a sketch of what their fish will look like.

- The teacher will pass around the container with fish names, and allow each child to choose one slip of paper. The children may trade among their tables if they wish.

- The teacher will allow students to work on their sketches until the end of class.

- To clean up, the teacher will direct students to place all materials in the center of the table, and place sketches in the class folder.

Day 2:
- The teacher will begin class by reviewing the concept of visual puns.

- Next, the teacher will introduce the process of printmaking to the class, and gather the students around one table for a demonstration.

- The teacher will show students how to place their drawing on top of a piece of Styrofoam, and use a dull pencil to draw on top of their sketch to press the lines into the Styrofoam.

- Once every line has been traced, the teacher will remove the paper and show students how to use the dull pencil to make sure the lines in their plate are carved deep enough. Next, the teacher will demonstrate the process of inking and printing, making sure to include proper vocabulary.

- Next, the teacher will allow students to go back to their seats. Those who have not finished sketching will be allowed to do so, and then begin carving their plates after the teacher has approved their design.

- The teacher will allow students to work until the end of class. (Students will most likely need another class period after this to complete their work).

- To clean up, the teacher will direct students to place all materials at the center of their tables, and ask for volunteers to clean the brayers and sponge off the tables. Prints should be placed on the drying rack, and sketches should go in the class folder.

- As a review, the teacher will go over vocabulary terms with the class and facilitate a mini-critique using the questions listed under the "Final Discussion" section of questioning strategies.

Evaluation:

Did the Student…	Accomplished	Emerging	Not Yet Observed
Participate in a discussion about visual puns			
Differentiate between literal and figurative elements of artwork featuring visual puns			
Compare their knowledge of visual puns to the ones found in the illustrations of "Dear Fish"			
Create a sketch that depicts a visual pun of a fish			
Create multiple prints of their fish by carving their sketch into a piece of Styrofoam and printing with ink			
Research what the fish they portrayed actually looks like in nature, and create a Venn diagram that shows differences between their visual pun and the actual fish			

Materials and Preparation:
The materials needed for this lesson are:
- Large prints of the artwork listed under "Image Descriptions"
- A copy of the children's book "Dear Fish" by Chris Gall
- Heavy cardstock- enough pieces for each child to make about 5 prints
- Flat piece of Styrofoam for each child (cleaned meat trays with the edges cut off work well)
- Sharp and dull pencils and erasers
- Ink in various colors
- Trays for ink

- Brayers
- Slips of paper with fish names (examples: angelfish, swordfish, tiger shark, hammerhead shark, catfish, clownfish, jellyfish, dragon fish, olive flounder, rockfish, zebra shark, lionfish, rice eel, ice fish, damselfish, bigmouth buffalo, soldier fish, milk fish, spaghetti eel, lamp fish, eagle ray, elephant fish, sea raven, x-ray fish, guitar fish, carpet shark, mudskipper, goat fish)

Resources:
http://www.saskschools.ca/~ischool/visualart/VA30/TeacherVocabulary.htm

Gall, Chris. *Dear Fish*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005. Print.

Gueit, Andrew. *Hairspray*. Digital image. Web.

Deyber, Robert. *Catching Zs II*. Digital image. *Robert Deyber*. Web.

Oppenheim, Meret. *Object (Dinner with Furs)*. 1936. Web.

"MoMA | The Collection | Meret Oppenheim. (Swiss, 1913-1985)." *MoMA | The Museum of Modern Art*. Web.

Extra Materials:
Sketch paper and colored pencils/markers for early finishers

Special Populations:
This lesson would need adjustment for any special needs students who need help with fine motor skills like drawing. If available, an extra adult volunteer could help these children with each step, but if not, the teacher will need to spend extra time with these students to make sure they are able to complete their projects. Another option would be to privately ask gifted students to help their classmates who are having trouble. Gifted students could expand on this project by adding color to one of their prints using oil pastels, or collaging part of one of their prints.