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23 March 2012

**Lesson Theme:** Symbolism and Metaphor: What Does it Mean?!

**Grade Level:** Art I

**Time:** 3-4 class periods, 90 minutes each

**Lesson Overview:** The students will explore the concept of symbolism in metaphor through art. They will discuss their previous experience with symbolism as a class (specifically U.S. currency), and then independently research Gustav Klimt and his use of symbolism and metaphor. Next, the class will view and discuss the work of Paul Klee, and compare Klee's work to that of Klimt. In preparation for their final project, students will complete one sketch (to scale) of what they will be drawing for a trace monotype. They will use this drawing to create a trace monotype print (either a portrait or landscape) that incorporates visual symbols or metaphors that are meaningful to the student. Finally, each student will contribute to a class critique of everyone's work.

**Visual Culture Component/Relevance:** Students will examine the front and back of a U.S. one dollar bill and discuss the numerous symbols it contains. U.S. currency is one example of the symbolism that surrounds us in everyday culture, and is something that students have seen on a regular basis that they may not have necessarily looked at closely. This example will encourage students to look past the literal in works of art, and further their knowledge of symbolism as they look into the work of Gustav Klimt and Paul Klee, and then finally create their own work with symbolism.

**Virginia Standards of Learning:**

Visual Art Standards

- Al.7 - The student will use a variety of subject matter and symbols to express ideas in works of art.
- Al.8 - The student will create works of art that represent originality, personal expression, and craftsmanship.
- Al.18 - The student will identify and examine symbols in works of art and discuss possible reasons for their use.
- Al.20 - The student will critique works of art with reference to the elements of art and the principles of design.
- Al.24 - The student will describe criteria affecting quality in a work of art, including concept, composition, technical skills, realization of perceived intentions, and the work of art as a whole.
- Al.31 - The student will speculate on the intentions and choices of those who created a work of art.

**Lesson Objectives:**

The students will:

- Contribute to a class discussion about expression and symbolism. (See "Symbolism Discussion" under Questioning Strategies)
- Complete two pages of research in their sketchbooks pertaining to Gustav Klimt and his use of symbolism and metaphor. (See "Questions to be answered in Sketchbook" section of Questioning Strategies)
- Discuss the work of Paul Klee with their peers and compare and contrast this with their findings about Gustav Klimt

- Complete one sketch (to scale) of what they will be drawing for a trace monotype.
- Create a trace monotype print (either a portrait or landscape) that incorporates visual symbols or metaphors that are meaningful to the student.
- Contribute to a final class critique: speak using proper art vocabulary about their work and the choices they made to portray their subject, and also critique the work of their peers

#### **Vocabulary Words for Visual Analysis:**

- **Trace Monotype**- a printmaking process in which the artist transfers ink from a plate onto paper by placing the paper facedown on the ink, and drawing on the back of the paper
- **Print**- a shape or mark made from a block or plate or other object that is covered with wet color (usually ink) and then pressed onto a flat surface, such as paper or textile
- **Plate**- a sheet of any material prepared to be inked in order to make prints
- **Brayer**- a hand roller used in printmaking techniques to spread ink on the plate or block
- **Symbol**- a form, image or subject representing a meaning other than the one with which it is usually associated
- **Metaphor**- a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance
- **Landscape**- a painting, photograph or other work of art which depicts scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, oceans, etc
- **Portrait**- a work of art that represents a specific person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits usually show what a person looks like as well as revealing something about the subject's personality.

#### **Historical/Cultural/Artist Information:**

- **Paul Klee** - Paul Klee has been described as an artist who fits into many different categories and art movements. He was a Swiss painter, draughtsman, printmaker, teacher, writer, and color theorist during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. His work was deeply personal, but at the same time often displayed a sense of humor. He is known for his work in color, and strong use of symbolism to convey ideas visually. He often used the trace monotype technique, combined with drawing and other forms of printmaking. His work explored themes drawn from music, nature, and poetry. According to the MoMA website, which quotes the Oxford University Press, "Above all else he intended to take line and tonality beyond a simple mimetic function; in his own words, to achieve 'the pure cultivation of the means'".
- **Gustav Klimt**- Gustav Klimt was an Austrian painter who worked in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He is most famous for his paintings of women, which included detailed patterning and were often embellished with gold leaf. Klimt was inspired by his surroundings and his many travels, and used the unusual patterns and colors in his work to convey ideas and messages that were outside the realm of the literal.

Image Descriptions:



(1925)



Fish

Magic

Twittering Machine (1922)



Miraculous Landing (1920)  
(1937)



Legend of the Nile



(1938)

Insula Dulcamara

- Paul Klee's monotypes, paintings, and drawings are good examples of the trace monotype technique, and embody numerous symbols, from Klee's sense of

humor in his earlier work, to the bittersweet, personal messages conveyed through his later work when he was ill.



- These images of dollar bills will be used in the “Symbolism” discussion under Questioning Strategies to reinforce the importance of symbolism in visual images. There are numerous symbols to be found in the dollar bill, including: the number 13 (13 original colonies, 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 13 stripes on the flag, 13 steps on the pyramid, 13 letters in “E Pluribus Unum”, 13 stars above the eagle, 13 bars on the eagle’s shield, 13 leaves on his olive branch (symbolizing peace), 13 olives, and 13 arrows); the pyramid (the face is lighted, while its western side is dark. This is because at the time when the dollar bill was designed, the United States had yet to know their Western part); the eagle (a symbol of strength and intelligence, which grasps olive branches in one talon and arrows in another. The eagle is facing the side with the olive branches to demonstrate that it favors peace over war. The fact that the eagle’s shield has no support symbolizes the leaders’ expectation that the U.S. would stand on its own. On the front of the bill, the seal of the U.S. Treasury includes a balanced scale, which symbolizes the balancing of the budget.

### Questioning Strategies:

#### Symbolism Discussion:

- What is a symbol?
- What are some examples of symbols?
- How about metaphors? Can anyone give an example of a metaphor that you have seen or heard of?
- Can you spot any symbols in this dollar bill?
- What do they mean?
- What other examples of symbols can you think of?
- How do you think artists use symbols and metaphors in their work?
- Do you think these symbols could have multiple meanings?

#### Questions to be answered in Sketchbook:

- Which painting of Klimt’s did you choose to research? Why did you choose it?
- What kinds of symbols were you able to find?
- Where do you think Klimt drew his inspiration from?

#### Paul Klee Images:

- What are some observations you have about this piece?

- What does it remind you of?
- Which elements and principles of art can you point out in this piece?
- How do they work to communicate ideas?
- Do you notice any symbolism? What do you think it's about?
- Does hearing the title of the work change its meaning for you?

**Group Questions:**

- How is Paul Klee's work different from Gustav Klimt's? How is it similar?
- In your own project, how might you utilize visual symbols or metaphors?

**Final Critique:**

- What do you notice about (student)'s print?
- Where did (student) use the elements and principles? How do they work in the piece?
- What symbols or metaphors did you intend for your piece to convey at the beginning of this project? Did it change at all as you worked?
- How did you manipulate the medium to convey your ideas? Do you think you were successful?
- What elements of your piece are the most successful? What do you think you could have improved?

**Lesson Procedures:**

**Day 1:**

- The students will enter the classroom, and after gathering them around the projector, the teacher will begin class by facilitating a group discussion about expression and symbolism. (See "Symbolism Discussion" under Questioning Strategies).
- When the class arrives at the questions pertaining to the visual culture element (U.S. currency) the teacher will show the corresponding slides.
- The teacher will close the discussion by telling the students that they will be creating a trace monotype that utilizes symbolism and metaphor for their next project. The teacher will distribute the handout and rubric for the project, and explain the first part of the assignment (two pages in sketchbooks on Gustav Klimt and his use of symbolism- details for these requirements can be seen in the rubric).
- Students will be given the remainder of the class period to begin their research. They will be able to use books from the classroom and the school library, as well as computers.
- Ten minutes before the end of class, the teacher will direct the students to clean up, putting all materials back where they found them. Once they have finished cleaning up, they will return to their seats.
- The teacher will explain that any unfinished sketchbook pages are to be completed before the next class for homework. With any remaining time, the teacher will ask students to share what they have learned so far from their research.

**Day 2:**

- First, the teacher will gather the students around the projector screen to view the Paul Klee images listed under the “Image Descriptions” section.
- The teacher will facilitate a class discussion about the images. The questions listed in the “Paul Klee” section of Questioning Strategies should be used here.
- After the class has discussed the images, the teacher will give students a brief background on Paul Klee, which can be found under the “Artist Information” section. The teacher will then direct the students back to their seats.
- The teacher will explain that the students will have the rest of the class period to create a sketch that they will work from to create their trace monotypes. The sketch should be either a landscape or portrait, and make use of some kind of symbol or metaphor. It will be important to let students know that their image will be reversed when printed, and that whichever side of the printing paper they draw on will be the reverse side of their finished project.
- The students will have the remainder of the class period to work on the drawing. During this time, the teacher will walk around the classroom to check students’ progress, and see that each student completed the two pages of research from the last class.
- Ten minutes before class is over, the teacher will direct students to clean up, placing all materials back where they belong. The teacher will explain that the students should finish their sketches for homework, and come to the next class prepared to begin work on their trace monotypes.

### Day 3:

- When the students arrive, the teacher will gather them around one table for a demonstration.
- The teacher will have a drawing already completed on printing paper, and supplies for trace monotypes prepared. The first thing the teacher will need to show students will be how to measure and tape a frame on the plate so that their projects will have a neat border. Once this is done, the teacher will squeeze a small amount of ink on the plate within the tape lines, emphasizing that you can always add more ink, so it is better to start out with less than you think you need.
- The teacher will show students an example of a trace monotype that had too much ink, so that they know to be careful when applying theirs. Next, the teacher will spread the ink with the brayer, demonstrating the consistency and sound the ink should have on the plate.
- Next, the teacher will remove the tape from the plate, and position the printing paper on the plate so that the drawing is on top. The teacher will demonstrate how to retrace the lines of the drawing so that they will pick up the ink on the other side, explaining that the paper is sensitive and will pick up ink wherever it is touched.
- The teacher will also demonstrate ways of creating textures and lines in the ink using objects other than pencils, such as fingers and erasers. The teacher should encourage the students to experiment and try new things!

- After completing the drawing, the teacher will remove the paper from the plate and show students the result. The teacher will explain that students will be creating practice trace monotypes before they complete the final projects, so that they can experiment and get a handle on the media without worrying about messing up their projects.
- The students will be allowed 20 minutes to practice trace monotypes on scrap paper.
- After 20 minutes are up, the teacher will explain that for the remainder of class, the students are to work on their final trace monotypes. It will be important to emphasize that the trace monotypes must be completed by the end of class, or the ink will dry.
- The students will work on their trace monotypes for the rest of the class period.
- Ten minutes before class is over, the teacher will direct the students to clean up, washing all brayers and ink plates, and putting supplies back where they belong. Finished projects should be placed on the drying rack.
- After everyone has cleaned up, the teacher will dismiss the class.

#### Day 4:

- At the beginning of class, the teacher will call students to the drying rack to pick up their trace monotypes.
- Next, the teacher will direct the students to bring their projects and chairs to the area around the bulletin board for a critique. The teacher should explain that for this critique, four students' work will be displayed and discussed at a time, and then the next group of four will place their work on the board.
- The teacher will ask for four volunteers to pin their work to the board.
- The teacher will begin the critique, using questions from the "Final Critique" section of Questioning Strategies to facilitate discussion about each student's work. Each student should contribute to the discussion of at least one of their classmate's work, and also answer the questions about their own work.
- After each student's piece has been critiqued, the teacher will direct the students to place their artwork on the back table to be graded.

#### Evaluation: (Total Points Possible: 30)

Did You...	Accomplished	Emerging	Not Sufficient

Contribute to a class discussion about symbolism  <b>3 points</b>	Thoughtful and relevant contributions were made 3	Participated in discussion but did not add a lot 2	Participation was minimal  1
Complete two pages of research in your sketchbook pertaining to Gustav Klimt and his use of symbolism and metaphor  <b>5 points</b>	Entries are thoughtful and well-developed, and all listed requirements are met (2 pages completed) 5	Some elements are either missing or not well done  3-4	Only one page or less completed  1-2
Discuss the work of Paul Klee with your peers and compare and contrast this with your findings about Gustav Klimt  <b>4 points</b>	Thoughtful and relevant contributions were made 3-4	Participated in discussion but did not add a lot 2	Participation was minimal  1
Complete one sketch (to scale) of what you will be drawing for a trace monotype (Requirements: sketch must be a landscape or portrait, and incorporate visual symbols or metaphors that are meaningful to you. Craftsmanship is important, since you will be creating your trace monotype directly from this sketch.) <b>3 points</b>	Sketch is well thought out, original, neat, and meets all listed requirements  3	Sketch is not well thought out, or does not meet some requirements  2	Sketch displays little or no investment or doesn't meet requirements  1
Create a trace monotype print (either a portrait or landscape) that incorporates visual symbols or metaphors that are meaningful to you (Requirements: print must effectively convey your idea through symbolism or metaphor, be either a landscape or a portrait, and demonstrate effective use of the medium and good craftsmanship) <b>10 points</b>	Print meets the listed requirements, and includes symbolism of some kind. It also demonstrates good craftsmanship.  9-10	Print is lacking in concept or craft, but is complete.  7-8.5	Print is unfinished, or exhibits a severe problem with craft or complete lack of concept 6.5 or below
Contribute to a final class critique: speak using art vocabulary about your work and the choices you made to portray your subject, and also discuss the work of your peers  <b>5 points</b>	Contribution was thoughtful and showed serious reflection on both your work and the work of your peers 5	Contribution was acceptable, but did not demonstrate a lot of reflection.  3-4	Contribution was incomplete or not thoughtful.  1-2

### Materials and Preparation:



The materials needed for this lesson are:

- Plexiglass plates for printing
- Brayers
- Printing Ink
- Paper
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Masking tape (for borders)
- Images to show to class (powerpoint format)
- Books and computers to use for research
- Sketchbooks

**Resources:**

- "THE COLLECTION." *MoMA.org*. Web. 24 Mar. 2012. <[http://www.moma.org/collection/browse\\_results.php?criteria=O:AD:E:3130](http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O:AD:E:3130)>.
- "ArtLex Art Dictionary." *ArtLex Art Dictionary*. Web. 27 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.artlex.com>>.
- "The Klimt Collection." *The Klimt Collection*. Web. 27 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.gustavklimtcollection.com/>>.

**Special Populations:** For students with autism, the teacher may need to provide some extra instruction, explanation, or demonstration, depending on the need. Since children with autism sometimes have difficulties with transitions, it would be helpful for the teacher to keep a set routine and give the student advance warning about any transitions or clean up. Some autistic students will have difficulty communicating, so it will be helpful for the teacher to make sure all supplies and work areas are clearly labeled, and check with the student individually to ensure that he or she understands what to do. If the student has an aide, the aide should be informed ahead of time of the project requirements so that the teacher and the aide can discuss any additional necessary or helpful accommodations for that particular student.

# Symbolism and Metaphor: What Does it Mean?!

You will be creating a trace monotype print that utilizes symbolism or metaphor to convey a specific message or idea.

Over the next week and a half, you are responsible for:

- Two pages of research in your sketchbook pertaining to Gustav Klimt and his use of symbolism and metaphor (you will have time in class to complete this- I have lots of books, magazines, and articles you may use for your research!)
- Complete one sketch (to scale) of what you will be drawing for a trace monotype (Requirements: sketch must be a landscape or portrait, and incorporate visual symbols or metaphors that are meaningful to you. Craftsmanship is important, since you will be creating your trace monotype directly from this sketch.)
- One final trace monotype print that utilizes symbolism or metaphor to convey a specific idea. Your print must:
  - o Effectively convey your idea through symbolism or metaphor
  - o Be either a landscape or a portrait
  - o Demonstrate effective use of the medium and good craftsmanship



When your prints are done, we will have a class critique. There will also be discussions and practice activities throughout the next week as well- your attendance and participation is a must! Class discussions and critiques are important to help you improve and grow as an artist, so it will not be possible to earn an 'A' on this assignment if you do not fully and thoughtfully participate in these activities.

