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Lesson Theme: Reality v. Fantasy

Grade Level: Art II

Time: 5-6 class periods, 90 minutes each

Lesson Overview: Students will explore the ideas of reality and fantasy and its role in art. They will discuss their previous experience with the relationship between reality and fantasy as compared to a scene from the movie “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” and then independently research the photographer Jerry Uelsmann. Next, they will discuss the work of M.C. Escher as a class, and then break into groups to compare Escher’s work with that of Jerry Uelsmann. Students will then create a drawing to use as a basis for a linoleum block print. They will transfer this drawing to a block, and create an edition of at least three prints that effectively combines elements of both reality and fantasy. Finally, each student will contribute to a class critique of everyone’s work.

Visual Culture Component/Relevance: Students will watch a scene from the movie “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone”. The scene is the end of the Quidditch game between Gryffindor and Slytherin, ending with Harry catching the golden snitch and winning the game. There are many aspects to this scene that would be realistic for a sporting event (cheering crowd, players falling to the ground after being hit, natural scenery, etc) but they are fused with many fantastical elements (flying on broomsticks, sports equipment that moves without being touched, etc). Students will likely be able to draw upon other examples from movies to discover how reality and fantasy are often mixed in visual culture. The scene from the movie can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3YR1-gJjWM>.

Virginia Standards of Learning:

Visual Art Standards

- All.1 The student will expand the use of a sketchbook/journal by adding preliminary sketches, finished drawings, critical writings, and class notes.
- All.3 The student will demonstrate effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design in a variety of art media.
- All.14 The student will discuss or write about art history, using an expanded art vocabulary.
- All.20 The student will describe, analyze, interpret, and judge works of art, using an expanded art vocabulary.
- All.29 The student will support opinions by reasoned processes, using an expanded art vocabulary.

Lesson Objectives:

The students will:

- Contribute to a class discussion about reality and fantasy. (See “Reality v. Fantasy” under Questioning Strategies)
- Complete two pages of research in their sketchbooks pertaining to Jerry Uelsmann’s photographic images and how they relate to the idea of reality mixing with fantasy. (See “Questions to be answered in Sketchbook” section of Questioning Strategies)

- Discuss the work of M.C. Escher with their peers and compare and contrast this with their findings about Jerry Uelsmann
- Complete one drawing (to scale) of the image they will be transferring to the linoleum block for printing
- Create a linoleum block print edition (at least 3 prints) that mixes elements of both reality and fantasy
- 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:

- **Relief Printing** - Printing method in which a block of wood, linoleum or some other material's surface is carved so that an image can be printed from it - uncarved areas receive ink which transfers to paper when the block is pressed against it and burnished.
- **Linoleum Printing** - A relief printing technique in which a linoleum block is carved with a gouge to create a printing plate.
- **Artist's Proof** - The first prints used to determine if additional gouging is needed. Sign AP.
- **Edition** - A set of identical prints
- **Registration** - The way the print is lined up on the paper
- **Gouge** - An engraving tool used to carve out the linoleum
- **Brayer** - A tool used to roll ink onto the plate
- **Burnish** - to rub (Evenly burnish the paper over the inked linoleum to transfer the ink.)
- **Bench Hook** - A brace for holding the linoleum while making gouges.

Historical/Cultural/Artist Information:

- **M.C. Escher** (17 June 1898 - 27 March 1972)- a Dutch artist who is known for his often mathematically inspired woodcuts, lithographs, and mezzotints. His work explores the impossible, infinity, and fantasy, and often features tessellations. Escher traveled frequently, and was often inspired by the architecture and landscapes he saw. He once journeyed through the Mediterranean and referred to this journey as "the richest source of inspiration I have ever tapped". He used his observations as a starting point, and then injected his own sense of symmetry, mathematics, and fantasy into his iconic work.
- **Jerry N. Uelsmann** (b. 11 June 1934)- "An educator since the early 1960s, Jerry Uelsmann began assembling his photographs from multiple negatives decades before digital tools like Photoshop were available. Using as many as seven enlargers to expose a single print, his darkroom skills allowed him to create evocative images that combined the realism of photography and the fluidity of our dreams". -Chris Maher and Larry Berman

A few examples of Uelsmann's work:



Untitled (1986)

Untitled (2003)

Image Descriptions:



Balcony (1945)



Convex and Concave (1955)



Reptiles (1943)



Waterfall (1961)

- M.C. Escher's lithography is a brilliant combination of reality and fantasy. Many aspects of the above compositions are rendered realistically, but the added distortions and fantastical elements add an entirely new dimension to the work that makes the viewer question whether or not what he or she is looking at could possibly exist. These images will generate discussion among the students in the realm of blurring the lines between reality and fantasy.

Questioning Strategies:

Reality and Fantasy Discussion:

- What is the difference between reality and fantasy?
- Is it sometimes difficult to tell the difference between reality and fantasy?
- What might be an example of an instance where the lines between reality and fantasy might blur?
- How do you think life would change if we lacked fantasy? What about reality?
- What aspects of this scene from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone are realistic? Which ones are fantastical?
- What would the Harry Potter movies have been like if they were missing either the realistic or the fantastical element?
- Can you think of other movies that mix reality and fantasy?

Questions to be answered in Sketchbook:

- Which two works by Jerry Uelsmann did you choose to research? Why did you choose them?
- Which elements of the images you researched are realistic? Which elements are fantastical?
- How did Jerry Uelsmann mix reality and fantasy in the images?
- How might you use Uelsmann's work as inspiration for your own project?

M.C. Escher Images:

- What are some observations you have about this piece?
- Do you see any realistic elements? What are they?
- How does this piece mix reality and fantasy?
- Do you think this scene could ever possibly be real?
- What would the piece be like without the fantastical elements? What about without the realistic elements?

Group Questions:

- How is M.C. Escher's work similar to Jerry Uelsmann's? How is it different?
- Which artist, in your opinion, more effectively fuses reality and fantasy?
- How might you use the work of either (or both) artists as inspiration for your print edition?

Final Critique:

- What do you notice about (student)'s print?
- Where did (student) include realistic elements? Where are the fantastical elements?
- Do you think the elements are combined in a way that works?
- 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 an opening group discussion about reality and fantasy (See "Reality and Fantasy Discussion" under Questioning Strategies).
- When the class arrives at the questions pertaining to the visual culture element (Harry Potter scene) the teacher will show the corresponding video clip.

- The teacher will close the discussion by telling the students that they will be creating a linoleum block print edition that fuses reality and fantasy 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 Jerry Uelsmann - 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 M.C. Escher images listed under the “Image Descriptions” section.
- The teacher will facilitate a class discussion about the images. The questions listed in the “M.C. Escher” section of Questioning Strategies should be used here.
- After the class has discussed the images, the teacher will give students a brief background on M.C. Escher, which can be found under the “Artist Information” section.
- Next, the teacher will divide the class into groups of four students to briefly discuss the questions listed under the “Group Discussions” section of Questioning Strategies. After about 10 minutes of discussion time, the teacher will 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 drawing that they will be transferring to a linoleum block to create their print edition. The drawing should somehow combine elements of reality and fantasy, but may consist of any appropriate subject matter. It will be important to let students know that their image will be reversed when printed.
- 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 linoleum block.

Day 3:

- When the students arrive, the teacher will gather them around one table for a demonstration.
- The teacher will have all of the necessary supplies for carving the linoleum block ready, including one block that already has an image sketched on, and one that does not along with an image drawn on paper to demonstrate the way to transfer the image to the block.
- The teacher will begin the demonstration by showing students how to use the graphite transfer technique to transfer their drawing to the linoleum. It won't be necessary to show this entire process, as the block that already has the image transferred can be used to show the next step.
- The teacher will position the linoleum block with the image on it on the bench hook, explaining that the bench hook will keep the block braced for gouging. The teacher will next show students how to properly gouge the block, emphasizing safety measures such as gouging away from the body, and keeping the block on the bench hook. An iron may be used to soften the linoleum for easier cutting, and should be used only on the linoleum and placed in an upright position between uses.
- The teacher will demonstrate different methods of creating lines in the linoleum, emphasizing that it is better to make shallow cuts at first, since they can always be made deeper if need be. It will also be important to make sure students recognize that the raised parts of the block will pick up ink, whereas the gouged areas will remain the color of the paper.
- The teacher will send students back to their tables to work on their blocks for the remainder of the class period.
- Ten minutes before class is over, the teacher will direct the students to clean up, putting supplies back where they belong and making sure all irons are turned off. Sketches and blocks should be stored in cubbies.
- After everyone has cleaned up, the teacher will dismiss the class.

Day 4:

- Day 4 will follow the same procedures as day 3, excluding the demonstration. Students will have the entire class period to work on gouging their blocks, and ten minutes before class is over, they will clean and put away all supplies.

Day 5:

- First, the teacher will gather the students around one table for a printing demonstration. The necessary supplies as well as a gouged block will be ready to use. The teacher will demonstrate how to make a print from the linoleum block by rolling the ink onto the block using a brayer, and then placing the block facedown on the printing paper and burnishing. The teacher will explain that all three prints will be made in the same manner, and that students should take their time to make neat prints.
- The students will be allowed the remainder of the class period to finish gouging their blocks if need be, and then print their edition. Once all three prints have been made, they should be placed on the drying rack. If any

students finish early enough to allow time for their prints to dry, they may choose to use gouache or colored pencils to add color to one of their prints.

- Ten minutes before class is over, the teacher will direct students to clean up, washing all brayers and ink plates, as well as the linoleum blocks. All materials should be put away and tables should be wiped down with sponges.

Day 6:

- First, the teacher will ask the students to collect their prints from the drying rack, choosing their best one for critique.
- Next, the teacher will direct the students to bring their projects and chairs to the area around the bulletin board. 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 reality and fantasy 3 points	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 Jerry Uelsmann's photographic images and how they relate to the idea of reality mixing with fantasy 5 points	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 M.C. Escher with your peers and compare and contrast this with your research entry on Jerry Uelsmann 4 points	Thoughtful and relevant contributions were made 3-4	Participated in discussion but did not add a lot 2	Participation was minimal 1

Complete one drawing (to scale) of the image you will be transferring to the linoleum block for printing (Requirements: drawing must incorporate a fusion of realistic and fantastical elements. Craftsmanship is important, since you will be transferring this drawing directly to your linoleum block.) 3 points	Drawing is well thought out, original, neat, and meets all listed requirements 3	Drawing is not well thought out, or does not meet some requirements 2	Drawing displays little or no investment or doesn't meet requirements 1
Create a linoleum block print edition (at least 3 prints) that mixes elements of both reality and fantasy (Requirements: prints must effectively combine elements of both reality and fantasy, and demonstrate effective use of the medium and good craftsmanship) 10 points	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 5 points	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 to roll ink
- Linoleum blocks (8"x10"), one per student and a few extras
- Gouges
- Bench hooks
- Irons (to soften linoleum)
- Brayers
- Printing Ink
- Paper
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Images to show to class (powerpoint format)
- Books and computers to use for research
- Sketchbooks

Resources:

- "Jerry N. Uelsmann." *Jerry N. Uelsmann*. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.uelsmann.net>>.
- "The Official M.C. Escher Website." *The Official M.C. Escher Website*. The M.C. Escher Company DV, n.d. Web. <<http://www.mcescher.com/>>.

- "ArtLex Art Dictionary." *ArtLex Art Dictionary*. Web. <<http://www.artlex.com>>.

Special Populations: In order to ensure that at-risk students get the most out of this lesson, it will be essential to engage them from the start. The teacher should be sure to interact with these students as much as possible, helping them to connect personally to their projects so that they have more motivation to complete them to the best of their ability. It will also be helpful to place at-risk students in groups with more motivated students for group discussions, so that their peers might encourage them to complete their work.

How do M.C. Escher, Jerry Uelsmann, and Harry Potter relate to one another?



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Reality

v. Fantasy!

You will be creating an edition of prints using the linoleum block printing method that fuses reality and fantasy.

Over the next two weeks, you are responsible for:

- Two pages of research in your sketchbook pertaining to Jerry Uelsmann and the ways in which he combines reality and fantasy in his photographs (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 drawing (to scale) of what you will be drawing for an edition of linoleum block prints (Requirements: drawing must incorporate a fusion of realistic and fantastical elements. Craftsmanship is important, since you will be transferring this drawing directly to your linoleum block.)
- One final edition of prints that somehow combines reality and fantasy. Your prints must:
 - effectively combine elements of both reality and fantasy
 - 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.