

~Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting ~
~ Peace Week Poetry ~
~ Rosemary KimBal ~



Purpose:

This big idea for this lesson is to introduce my students China, contemporary and ancient Chinese Ink Painting and incorporate poetry into their artwork.

Essential Questions:

1. What is similar and different about ancient and contemporary Chinese ink painting?
2. Why would an artist want to create art in a way that has been around for decades and centuries?

Target Grade Level:

This lesson is designed for 9th and 10th grade art students. This lesson could also be used in intermediate elementary art and middle school with slight adaptation. I would work larger and go into more detail about the poetry portion of the lesson for high school. For intermediate and middle school I would focus more on the ink painting than the poetry and work in a smaller scale.

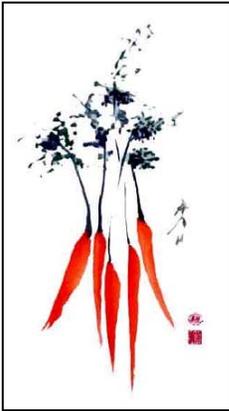


Rationale:

The art of Chinese brush painting is thought to be a very peaceful and relaxing art form, not only for the viewer but for the artist as well. Our school puts on a weeklong celebration for Peace week in the month of March, which includes a student art show. With the theme of 'Peace', I felt that teaching my students about Chinese ink painting was inline with the theme. I also want the students to create and thus individualize their artwork with a poem they create about peace.

Resources ~ Teacher Preparation:

- Background information on Chinese Ink painting.
- Background information on Rosemary KimBal.
- Power point presentation and/or paper presentation of the artwork of KimBal.



Materials:

- Newsprint paper – practice
- Watercolor paint
- Black ink
- Water and cups
- Bamboo brushes in a variety of sizes
- Visuals
- How-to hand out
- Instructions for creating a Chinese Quatrain Poem
- Power point presentation of Chinese Ink Paintings, ancient and the contemporary work of KimBal.

Activities:

Day One: Introduction, demonstration and studio

Introduce lesson:

This lesson will begin with a video tour of China to introduce my students to the country and culture. The art lesson will begin by viewing ancient and contemporary Chinese Ink Paintings through a power point presentation. (Only I will know which artworks are old or new.) The students will try to decide which artworks are old and which are new. Then the students will try to figure out how the artworks were made, for example is it a painting, drawing, or print. From here we will discuss what ink painting is and how they are created. I will then give a brief explanation of how ancient Chinese Ink Paintings are created and how our featured artist still uses the same techniques centuries later.

(Refer to teacher resource pages)

Demonstration and Studio:

1. I will demonstrate how to paint bamboo.
2. The students will practice painting bamboo.



Day Two:

Introduction of Quatrain style poems:

1. I will introduce Chinese Quatrain poetry by reading some poems and then give the students the instructions on how to write the poem.
2. The class will create a Quatrain poem as a group.

Homework assignment:

1. The homework assignment will be given: create a Quatrain poem working with the theme of 'peace'. Bring poem to the next class.

Demonstration and Studio:

1. I will demonstrate painting bamboo again and incorporate my poem into the artwork.

2. The students will continue to practice the bamboo and incorporate their poem into their work.
3. The students can also experiment by using other images, such as mountains, landscapes, and tree branches to paint. (I want them to create an image that goes along with the theme of their Quatrain poem.)

Day Three:

Studio & Poetry Readings:

1. The students will begin the class by reading their poems to the class. We will discuss the poems and help each other if necessary.
2. The students will continue to practice their ink painting.
3. The students will come up with a plan to incorporate their poem into a painting that works with their theme.

Day Four:

Studio:

1. The students will begin work on their final artwork.

Day Five:

Studio:

1. The students will complete their ink painting and poem.

Day Six:

Final Critique:

The students will display their painting and poem and we will view and discuss them as a class. We will have an open discussion of the artwork and the poem and how the two elements work together.



Requirements:

- The students will create an Ink painting based on the work of Kim Bal.
- The students will create a poem with a 'peace' theme in the style of a Chinese Quatrain poem.
- The students will create a painting and the poem that with a common theme.
- The students will employ the principals of design into their artwork.

Standards:

- Research and provide examples that show the relationships of visual art to other subject in the curriculum (e.g., English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science).
- Connect a variety of contemporary art forms, media and styles to their cultural, historical and social origins.
- Evaluate their choices of compositional elements in terms of how those choices affect the subject matter of the work.
- Analyze and describe the visual aspects of their own artwork and the work of others.

~ Teacher Resources ~

Chinese Ink Painting:

Ink painting has evolved from Chinese calligraphy. For example the brush stroke that forms the character for number one becomes the trunk and the branches for a bamboo tree. The basic brush strokes for calligraphy are the same for painting and are considered to be “twin arts”. In Sumi-e the artist must capture the spirit of the subject through as few brush strokes as possible. “The tools necessary to a painter are called the “THE FOUR TREASURES”. These are the Ink SUMI, Grinding Stone SUZURE, Brush FUDE and paper KAMI.” (*Sumi*)

Chinese Quatrain Poetry:

A Quatrain is a style of poetry found in China and through out the world. A Quatrain poem has 4 lines, and the version specific to China have 5 to 7 words per line. (*Chinese 251 Writing Assignments*) The word quatrain is derived from Latin and French words meaning “Four.” (*Quatrain*) In Chinese poetry the last word in the second and last stanza must rhyme. In China these poems followed the theme of the landscape. The interesting thing about Chinese Quatrains is that the Chinese language does not have articles like (“a” and “the”). (*Chinese 251 Writing Assignments*) This sounds confusing but once you try it, it becomes easy and fun.

Here are some ideas from a middle school lesson:

“Lyrical Lesson Quatrain

1. Choose a theme that you recently heard in a song.
2. Brainstorm ideas for purpose and mood.
3. Add Descriptive words and phrases (This would be a GREAT time to use figurative language!)
4. Write two joining couplets that “paint” a complete word picture. Proofread. Revise.
5. Design an album cover that would best illustrates the theme of your quatrain.” (*Quatrain*)

Rosemary KimBal:

“Though Rosemary KimBal majored in art at the University of California, Santa Barbara, her true artistic career did not begin until age thirty-five when she first visited the Tassajara Zen Center in Northern California.” This is where she was introduced to calligraphy and through it she found her own kind of ‘personal tranquility’. This was the cross road of her life and from this point on she was a new person. She said, “I feel like I have new cells.” KimBal now considers her self a Zen artist and creates inspirational ink paintings. (*Silver*)

“KimBal paints everything from landscapes to figures to animals. Each of her paintings elicits a calming energy. Sometimes a painting is done in a single

brush stroke. This does not imply carelessness, it can take many days and many attempts to achieve the perfection in the simplicity of a single stroke.” (Silver)

Annotative Bibliography

Chinese Ink Painting

British Museum. *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*. Thames and Hudson, Inc., 1992

This book covers Chinese art history and begins with a historical introduction. From there the chapters are broken down by art form, from ancient times to today. This book would be best used by a teacher to gather information or for a high school student doing a research paper on Chinese art. I found the information to be very thorough and gave me insight into the art form of ink painting and poetry.

Chinese 251 Writing Assignments. ohio-state.edu (2004)
<http://deall.ohio-state.edu/denton.2/courses/c251/c251ass.htm>

This site gives assignments from a Chinese writing class and one assignment is on writing a Chinese Quatrain poem. The author gives information on how the Chinese language works and thus adds a sense of realism to the poem. This site could help a teacher create an authentic writing assignment that the students could easily understand.

Chunchen, Wang. *How Far Chinese Ink Painting Goes?*
CHINAARTNETWORKS.com (2004)
http://www.chinaartnetworks.com/exhibitions/ink_water/article/shtml

This article discusses how Chinese ink painting has changed in the past 20 years. Chunchen talks about how in the 1980's the art was based more on tradition and how in the 90's the focus is open to ideas and experimentation. He also states how he sees the future of ink painting as an expression of the social reality. This article is best suited for teachers to get a deeper impression of the contemporary Chinese artist

Glubok, Shirley. *The Art of China*. The McMillan Co., 1973

This book is a simplified version of an art history book and is most likely meant for elementary aged students. It could be read out loud to a class but it would take some time. The images are incorporated into the text and help to further explain what the author is describing.

Juliano, Annette. *Treasures of China*. Richard Marek Pub., Inc., 1981

This book has lovely images of Chinese art. The text is easy to understand and would be appropriate for middle and high school students. The

chapter on painting was located in the 'Treasure' section and did a nice job on explaining the symbolism in Chinese art. The pieces on poetry and art were translated so it was easy to see the unity of the two art forms.

Legacy and Transition of Ink Painting Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from Taiwan, A Perspective on Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting in Taiwan Chinese Culture Center (2003)
<http://www.c-c-c.org/ex/ink/ink.html>

This is an in depth article that discusses a show of 10 contemporary Chinese ink painters and their work. The author gives an overview of the history of Chinese ink painting and how the art form has evolved over time through historical events. The best use for this article is to help a teacher understand how the cultural influences of the times molded the work of Chinese artists.

Moore, Janet Gaylord. *The Eastern Gate, An Invitation to the Art of China and Japan*. William Collins Pub., Inc., 1979.

This was my favorite book on incorporating poetry into a painting. This text explained the thought behind it and showed me how to explain the idea to my high school students. The information was thorough and easy to understand. The images and poetry were excellent and were also translated to I could actually understand the work. Middle and high school students could use this text to explore Asian art and to research Chinese ink painting.

Quatrain. Harris Middle School. (2003)
<http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/quatrain.htm>

This was an excellent web site that easily explained how to write and define a Quatrain poem. This site could be used by elementary to high school students. What I liked best was how simple the Quatrain was to understand and the author even gave steps on how to create a Quatrain poem.

Schlessinger, Andrew and Tracy Mitchell, ex. Prod. *Marco Polo* (video recording). Wynnewood, PA: Schlessinger Media, c2000

This video is 23 minutes in length and is well suited for intermediate to middle school students. Two young hosts meet Marco Polo and learn of his friendship with Kublai Khan, the great Mongol ruler who allowed him to travel through China to collect information about the country and the people. This is a fun video that will hold the student attention.

Shuziang, Lv. One Hundred Quatrains by the Tang Poets.
<http://www.lingshidao.net/hanshi/quatrain/htm>

This site really has 100 Quatrain poems. I must warn you because true Quatrain poems have 4 lines of 5 words and these poems are in English and have more than 5 words. In Chinese they do not have articles like (“a” and “the”) and these poem do. The best thing about these poems is to gain an understanding the fabric of Chinese poetry

Silver, Helene D. *Contemporary Zen Artist.* Dancingbrush.com (2004)
<http://dancingbrush.com/contempo.htm>

This article focuses on the artist my student focused on for their ink-painting lesson, Rosemary KimBal. Silver describes KimBal as a Zen artist who lives her life ‘Zen’ style, in Southern California. Silver describes KimBal’s artwork through her thoughts and feelings about her art. She says that KimBal does not practice traditional Zen art but has allowed it to liberate her painting style. KimBall says that Zen has showed her how to convey the essence of an image in as few brush strokes as possible. This article is best suited for the teacher to gain some insight into what Zen is about.

Sumi-e. Sumi-e Society Midwest. <http://www.watercolorpainting.com/sumi.htm>

This is an excellent site for explaining Chinese Sumi-e ink painting in a simple and understandable manner. The philosophy of Sumi-e is also explained, which seems to inline with the Zen philosophy. Another nice thing about this site is they include pictures of the materials need to create ink paintings and online art lessons. This site could be easily used for student in intermediate elementary through high school.

Week in the Life of a Chinese Student. AIMS. 1986

This video is best suited for intermediate through high school, with a running time of 20 minutes. The film shows what a typical school day is like for a fourth grade student and a middle school student in Beijing. The thing I liked most about this video is that it enables my American students to understand the similarities and differences in our cultures.

Winthrop, Emilie. *California Women profile of Dancing Brush Artist, Rosemary KimBal.* (2003) DancingBrush.com
http://dancingbrush.com/images/Theda-8_small.jp

This article discusses how KimBal created a mural at a hospital in Southern California. What is most interesting about this article is how she took her

art form from a small format on paper to a 26' mural. There are a number of slides of KimBal's work. It shows how she expanded her art and challenged herself. I think this would be an excellent point to share with students to show them how artists continue to challenge themselves and grow.