ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

LESSON PLAN

AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Illustration Study
INSTRUCTIONS

INSPIRATION ARTIST:

Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937)

Henry Ossawa Tanner was an American artist whose paintings and drawings depicted scenes of Black life, landscapes, and religious themes. Tanner was the son of a preacher and a formerly enslaved woman. His perseverance, talent, and commitment to a career in art helped propel him to worldwide recognition.

Even though Tanner's father discouraged him from a career in the arts, Henry worked hard to make money to be able to study at the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia where he was the only Black student in attendance. With the help of a wealthy benefactor, Tanner was able to travel to and enroll at the Academie Julian in Paris in 1891. This was the beginning of the blossoming of Tanner's reputation and international career. Tanner found that racial difference was less stigmatized in France and he was able to flourish artistically, get married, raise a family, and receive incredible honors there.

Photo by Frederick Gutekunst, 1907

Tanner's paintings utilized the manipulation of light and shadows to create realistic representations. By 1894 his paintings were being shown in the Paris Salons and he won a medal for his painting, *The Raising of Lazarus* (about 1897), a rare achievement for an American artist. In 1923 the French government made Tanner a chevalier (knight) of the Legion of Honour, and in 1927 he became the first African American to be granted full membership in the National Academy of Design. During his career, Tanner also drew and painted illustrations that would accompany stories and poems in major publications, adding to his fame. In 1969 the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. exhibited several of his works, which was the first major solo exhibition of a Black artist. In 1991, nearly a hundred years after the height of his fame, the Philadelphia Museum of Art mounted a touring retrospective of hundreds of Tanner's artworks.

LESSON PLAN

Daniel in the Lion's Den, 1895

The Raising of Lazarus, 1897

The Thankful Poor, 1894

MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:

- Family Photo to look at for Inspiration
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Black or dark colored pen, marker, or Sharpie
- Any coloring tools you have at home (Colored Pencils or Crayons or Markers)
- White Paper (like copy or printer paper)
- Scrap Paper (to put underneath the white paper while creating your art- not part of the art project)
- Scissors (if available, but not essential)

ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Participants will work through the process of creating a realistic illustration by looking at a photograph, creating a black and white drawing of it called a "study", then creating a full color illustration with additional details. This project is inspired by the artwork, *The Banjo Lesson,* by Henry Ossawa Tanner.
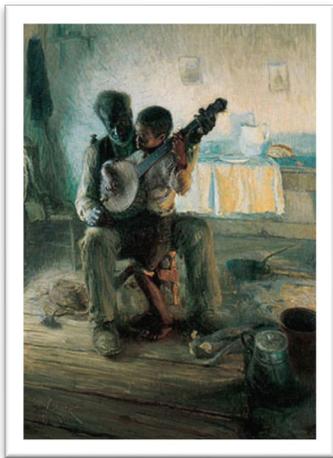

Photographic Study for *the Banjo Lesson,* for *Harper's Young People* illustration, 1893

Illustration for *Harper's Young People* 16, no. 736 (5 December 1893)

The Banjo Lesson, 1893. Oil on canvas. Hampton University Museum, Hampton, Virginia

VOCABULARY:
Illustration: a decoration, interpretation or visual explanation of a text, concept or process
Study: a drawing, sketch or painting done in preparation for a finished piece, or as visual notes; often used to understand the problems involved in rendering subjects and to plan the elements to be used in finished works, such as light, color, form, perspective and composition
Realism: an art style that focuses on making pieces look as realistic and true-to-life as possible
Tone: refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of an area, varying from bright white through shades of gray to the deepest black shadows

PROMPT QUESTIONS:
1. Have you ever drawn a sketch before you did a drawing? Have you ever thought of it as a "study" where you are figuring out the issues you want to work out before you start your drawing?
2. Have you ever tried to draw and duplicate an image from a photo? Did you try to make your drawing realistic? Did it look exactly like the photo?
3. How can you make individual artistic choices in your art while still making your drawing look realistic?

ART MAKING PROCESS:

Step 1:
Choose a photograph that shows a special moment between your family members **(FIG.1)**. It can be on your phone, on your computer, can be printed out, whatever way makes it possible for you to have the photo where you can see it during the whole art project. Perhaps it's a grandparent reading to a grandchild, two brothers popping their heads out from underwater in a pool - any photograph you think shows a great moment for your family.

Step 2:
Take your white paper and fold it in half so you create 2 equal size rectangles. Unfold your paper and if you have scissors you will cut along the folded line. If you don't have scissors, fold your paper again along the same fold but in the opposite direction than your first fold. Press down firmly along the fold line. Unfold the paper and gently tear the paper along the fold line. The edges may fray a bit which is fine. Now you should have 2 equal size white rectangle papers **(FIG.2)**.

Step 3:
Create a black and white study: Arrange the scrap paper under your white paper. Look closely at the photograph you have chosen, study it with your eyes. In this first drawing "study", you want to notice the big shapes and darks and lights in the images you will be using in your drawing. You also want to think about what things in the photograph you don't want to include in your study. Since you are the artist, you make the choices, you don't have to copy the photo exactly. Take your pencil and start drawing the large shapes you want to include in your drawing. For now, a head can be represented by an oval, a body can be an outline of the shape. Start adding a few more areas as lines and shapes within your drawing, but remember you don't need to add any details **(FIG.3)**.

Step 4:
Once you have all the large shapes you want outlined lightly in pencil, make decisions on what you want light and dark. Choose the black and white tones you will use in your artwork. What areas of your final illustration will have dark colors? What areas will have bright light? Where will you have shadows? Use your black marker to draw over your outlined pencil lines. Fill in some solid areas that you want to be dark using your black marker. For areas that will be lighter draw a series of lines filling the shape to show that there will be color there, but it will be lighter than the solid color areas. When drawing these lines, the lines that are closer together represents darker tones, and the lines drawn farther apart, represent lighter tones **(FIG.4)**. When you have finished adding the tones to your study you can put this paper aside to look at for reference while working on the next step. Don't worry about erasing pencil lines or making this study look neat. It's a reference and it's about what you learn from it. It is not a finished work of art.

Step 5:
Create an illustration: Now you will use the other piece of white paper to work on your realistic illustration. Use your pencil to lightly draw the same basic shapes you drew on your black and white study, and begin to add more detail to each part **(FIG.5)**. For instance, the head that was an oval shape can have more contour to the lines. You will lightly draw the details of the face. Continue to make choices, since you are the artist, of what details you want to have included in your illustration to make it look realistic (and remember that it doesn't have to look exactly like the photograph). Erase any pencil lines that you don't want in your artwork.

Step 6:
Add color! Look at your black and white study as a guide while you are adding color to your illustration. See where you filled in black areas of your study to represent shadow. In your illustration you don't have to use black, but you will use a dark color in that area. Notice where you left light tonal areas in your study and use light colors in those areas of your illustration. Where there are bright tonal areas in your study, you may leave those areas white. Begin to add color to all the details you have drawn **(FIG.6)**. Have fun making art decisions about light and dark colors and details throughout your illustration!

POST PROJECT PROMPT QUESTIONS:
1. How did it feel to create a study of your drawing before you actually did it?
2. Would you do this again when creating other art?
3. How do you like creating Realistic art?
4. What other photographs would you like to use as inspiration for your art?

ART PROJECT STEP- BY-STEP EXAMPLES:

FIG.1

FIG.2

FIG.3

FIG.4

FIG.5

FIG.6

EXTRA FUN:

- Show your family the artwork you created and how you worked through a "study" to plan your artwork!
- If the family member in the photograph you used doesn't live with you, send them a photo of the artwork you created or mail them your artwork!
- Do a drawing for each member of your family (and remember to do a black and white "study" each time so you have a plan for your artwork).

OTHER ARTISTS FROM THIS ERA TO CONSIDER (Jim Crow From 1878 to the Great Depression, 1878-1932):

- Grafton Tyler Brown
- Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller

CITY OF CARLSBAD LIBRARY SOURCES:

Digital:
Gale in Context: Biography database
Gale on Context: High School database
Britannica School: High database
SIRS Discoverer database
SIRS Issues Researcher database
ProQuest e-Library

Print:

Children's:

J 811.008 WOR
Words with wings: A treasury of African American poetry and art / Rochelle, Belinda

Adult:

759.13 TAN Oversize
Henry Ossawa Tanner / Mosby, Dewey F.

973.0496 GAT Oversize
Life upon these shores: Looking at African American history, 1513-2008 / Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.

ONLINE SOURCES:

1. Black Past: https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/tanner-henry-ossawa-1859-1937/
2. Smithsonian American Art Museum: https://americanart.si.edu/artist/henry-ossawa-tanner-4742

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