



VISUAL ANALOGS PART II

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As three art teachers at the same high school, we are fortunate to work closely with our students. We have developed and implemented a sequence of design lessons we have found to be quite successful. They begin with ideas from the inventive use of design principles in Nicholas Roukes' *Design Synectics*. Roukes uses the term "synectics" from the Greek word for "bringing different things into unified connection," in relation to design. According to Roukes, a design analog is a visual image or construction that looks similar to an object in terms of its form.

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In a previous lesson (found online, August/September 2007 *SchoolArts*), we had our students divide a 12 x 18" (30 x 46 cm) white paper into 3" (7 cm) squares and fill them with black-and-white images that showed asymmetry and variety. They drew very simple designs across the top and down the left-hand side of the paper. Students repeated their designs horizontally and vertically so the designs overlapped to create new, complex designs, using fine-tip permanent markers.

Oil Pastel Painting

We asked students to choose one of their 3" black-and-white designs from this project to expand for another project. We asked that they lightly sketch out their chosen design onto 12" square heavy watercolor paper and then use oil pastels and odorless paint thinner to create a painting based on the black-and-white fine-point marker design.

We gave students small pieces of watercolor paper to try these effects: blending from one color to another, creating a wash with the odorless paint thinner, creating shades with darker colors and scraping into thick layers of oil pastel to make designs (sgraffito).

We discussed color schemes: triads, complementary, and warm/

cool. Students were encouraged to let their personalities really come through in this portion of the unit. Some of the paintings had hard edges and showed precision while some of them were more painterly and expressive. We were quite pleased with the results. ☺

Resource

Roukes, Nicholas. *Design Synectics*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, 1988.

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WEB LINK

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synectics

