

I Can Hear You Dancing!

Julie Stone

Art Exemplars

Edgar Degas, *Three Dancers*, 1889.
Charcoal and pastel.

Edgar Degas, *The Dancing Class*,
1876.

Edgar Degas, *A Ballet Seen from
an Opera Box*, 1885.

Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril
Dancing at the Moulin Rouge*,
1892.

Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril at
the Jardin de Paris*, 1893.

Toulouse-Lautrec, *Mlle Eglan-
tine's Dancers*, 1896.



The Gymnastics Girls, Summer Bias

*"I wanted to show the girls in the studio practicing.
My influence of music was the Nutcracker Suite."*

Artistic Behaviors

1. Using a viewfinder for more focused observation.
2. Drawing positions and movements of dancers.

Major Concept

Movement and music can inspire the creation of art.

Vocabulary

viewfinder, movement, focal point, perspective, gesture, figure drawing

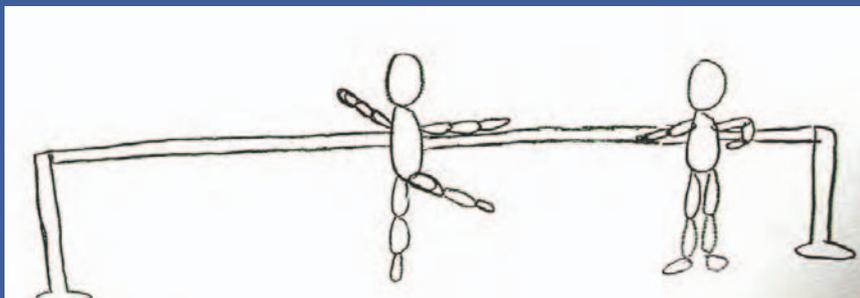
Prior to the Lesson

I made a 4 x 5" (10 x 13 cm) tag-board viewfinder for each student, using an Ellison die-cut machine to cut out an oval from the center.

I gathered appropriate music that would complement Degas and Lautrec's artwork: Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, "Vienna Blood," waltz, Op. 354" by J. Strauss Jr., and Cole Porter's "Can Can." I prepared and rehearsed questions to guide observation and practice.

Introduction

We listened to Tchaikovsky as we described the features and qualities of Degas' artworks. I played Cole Porter's "Can Can" while we talked about Toulouse-Lautrec's compositions. As students compared and contrasted the works by these two artists, they responded to questions such as: What art techniques were used? What do these artworks have in common? Compare the costumes. Where are the dancers performing? How are the poses of the dancers similar or different? How is the overall appearance of the artworks different? I reminded students to think of these same questions as they created their own dance scenes.



Gesture Drawing.



The Gesture Girls, Emily Eastlock.

“The dancing for the Can Can Girls was more exciting, and that is what I wanted to capture in my drawing.”

Observing

I explained to students how to use the viewfinder by holding it up and moving it closer to, or further away from, the eye and focusing on what can be seen within the oval. Using the viewfinder helped students zoom in on any part of a pose and to observe more accurately.

I turned the music on and chose four students to come up to the front of the class and strike a pose. Students studied the frozen poses of their classmates through their viewfinders and sketched what they saw on 9 x 12" (23 x 30.5 cm) newsprint. I rotated students to allow everyone to participate in posing.



The Can Can Girls, Dysean Broome.

“I preferred the music better. The sound was steady and smooth and complemented the dancers.”

Practicing

Students practiced drawing gesture poses with ovals, starting with the head as a circle. The body was an oval. The arms were two connecting ovals that began from the shoulder to the elbow and elbow to wrist. The hands were small ovals. The legs were two connecting ovals starting at the end of the body at the hip to the knee and the knee to the ankle. The feet were small ovals.

Composing

We discussed the importance of a focal point and the need to show perspective. I reminded students that in their finished drawings the figures in the background would be smaller and the figures in the foreground would be larger.

Referring to their many practice drawings, students began to create a composition of dancers on 8 x 18" (20 x 46 cm) strips of white drawing paper. Music played in the background. Students felt the music and interpreted their favorite dancing poses, complete with costume and setting. Students used oil pastels to color their drawings. They blended their colors, moving to the beat of the music.



The Sparks, Jessica Eady.

“The costumes were more appealing to me. I loved using the bright colors. The movements were really cool.”

Students felt the music and interpreted their favorite dancing poses, complete with costume and setting.



The Flowering Fairies, Sydney Fazio.

“The Nutcracker Suite made me think of flowers in the sky”

Reflecting

We displayed the artworks in the classroom and critiqued them. We looked for the movement in each artwork and guessed what music was playing while the dancers were dancing. Students shared thoughts about using ovals to capture the positions and movement of models. Most thought the use of ovals gave them more confidence and made their drawings look more realistic. Overall, students learned to look at artwork differently. 🌀

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The Pink Dancers, Cathy Lam.

“My artwork is a ballet dance. The dancers are dancing to the Nutcracker suite”



Resources

- Tanya and Emily in a Dance for Two*, Cauch, Patricia. Puffin, 1998.
- Angelina on Stage*, Holabird, Katharine. Pleasant Company Publications, 2002.
- The Magic House*, Eversole, Robyn. Orchard Books, 1992.
- Dancers (The Performers)*, Conlon, Laura. The Rourke Book Company, 1994.

Books about the Artists

Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists Henri De Toulouse-Lautrec, Venezia

Music

- Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky
- “Can Can” by Cole Porter
- “Vienna Blood,” waltz, Op.354 by J. Strauss Jr.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art-making.

WEB LINK

Paris Web Museum
www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/degas/ballet