

GREAT ART IDEAS FOR TEACHERS

FROZEN WINTER LANDSCAPES

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LEVELS 1–5

OVERVIEW

In this activity students will analyse the structure and mood of three artworks which convey the chill of winter. Next, taking inspiration from the works, they will use painting, collage and printing techniques to create their own frozen winter forest landscape with basic art supplies and household materials.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyse and discuss how each artist uses colour, tone and placement of elements of the composition to create balance, and suggest mood, weather and a sense of place
- Compare the visual conventions in Utagawa Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* prints with those in Australian artist Peter Booth's painting *Winter*, 1993
- Experiment with use of colour, denuded trees, and representations of snow to make a scene appear cold
- Use basic art supplies and materials found in the home to create a frozen winter forest landscape
- Create a short poem using kanji characters

STUDENT EXAMPLES



Eva, Year 3



Leila, Year 3



Luke, Year 1



Jerome, Year 3



Joss, Year 3



Benjamin, Year 2



Alyssa, Year 2



Luna, Year 1

DISCUSS

Utagawa HIROSHIGE

Snowy Morning on the Sumida River, Musashi Province

(1853–1856)

(*Musashi sumidagawa yukinoasa* 武蔵 隅田川 雪の朝)
from the *Famous views of the sixty odd provinces*
(*Rokujûyoshû meisho zue* 六十余州名所図会) series
1853–56

colour woodblock

34.3 × 22.7 cm (image)

37.2 × 25.5 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne

Felton Bequest, 1910



Utagawa HIROSHIGE

Gion Shrine in snow (1834)

(*Yukigeshiki Gion jinjya* 雪景色祇園神社) from the *Famous places in Kyoto* (*Kyôto meisho no uchi* 京都名所之内) series

colour woodblock

23.8 × 35.9 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne

Felton Bequest, 1910



Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) was a Japanese artist famous for his paintings and ukiyo-e (floating world) woodblock prints. His depictions of the landscape inspired many European artists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century who learned from his compositions, including cropping images to create drama and the suggestion of atmosphere or weather.

- What mood or feeling does Hiroshige create in each work?
- How does Hiroshige divide each composition into sections?
- How does he lead your eye through the work?
- How is white used?

Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints can have many boxes with titles, stamps and signatures for things such as the title of the scene, the series title, the artist's signature, the artist's seal, and the publisher's seal. They also include other inscriptions including poems, biographies, descriptive stories, and declarations. The placement of the titles, inscriptions and stamps is part of the composition of the work.

- Look at the prints by Hiroshige. Notice the placement of the inscriptions and stamps. Are the characters running vertical or horizontal? Might the stamp be a name or a poem?
- Look closely at the atmosphere, mood and subject matter in one of the *ukiyo-e* prints. Make a short poem to describe the scene using only three or four words. For example, *Heavy snow falls silently*.

Peter BOOTH
Winter 1993
oil on canvas
203.4 × 396.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne
Presented by the National
Gallery Women's Association,
2002
© Peter Booth/Licensed by
Copyright Agency, Australia



Peter Booth (b. 1940) is an Australian artist, whose works evoke strong feelings and moods through their thick, expressive application of paint and dramatic composition. Imagine you are in the forest in the painting.

- What sounds can you hear?
- What movement do you sense?
- What human characteristics might the trees have?

COMPARE

Look at the related artworks of art and use the following discussion prompts to explore landscape composition:

- Where is the horizon line in each work? Is the horizon line straight? Is it horizontal or at an angle? What is the effect of each of these things?
- Are there any people in the works? What suggestions of people can you find?
- Have the artists used warm or cold colours for the sky? What type of weather and time of day do these colours suggest?
- What do you notice about the artist's brush marks? Do they suggest still or windy, rough weather?
- Can you see the whole of each tree or are they cropped by the frame of the painting? What effect does cropping the trees have? Does the artist make you feel that you are brought in closer to the scene?
- The artists have chosen their composition for effect. What effect have they created?
- Compare the trees in the background to those in the foreground. Are they darker or lighter? Are they bigger or smaller? Are the trees in their own space or overlapping?
- Describe the snow falling. Are the snowflakes more concentrated anywhere in the work?

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

The following are suggested materials and objects often found around the house. Don't worry if you don't have all of them, be creative and see what you can create with similar objects or materials.

- Watercolour paper
- Paper (any type or size)
- Pencil
- Coloured pencils
- Black pen (preferably a thin felt tip)
- White paint
- Black ink
- Scissors
- Polystyrene trays
- Items from the pantry or fridge such as coffee, tea, turmeric, nutmeg, pomegranate, chilli powder and tea to make homemade paint
- Sponge piece
- Tissue
- Glue
- Glue brush
- Cottonwool bud
- Orange sacking (mesh bags that oranges are sold in)
- Cotton wool
- Elastic band
- Paper towel
- Small pieces of card with straight sides such as business cards or swing tags
- Skewers, chopsticks or matches
- Nail brush

CREATE

Students create their artwork using the following steps:

1. Draw a horizon line across your piece of watercolour paper in pencil.
2. Make "paint" by combining things from the pantry or fridge such as coffee, tea, turmeric, nutmeg, pomegranate, chilli powder or tea with a very small amount of tepid water to make a coloured liquid.
3. Dip your sponge piece in your paint and use it to apply layers of colour above the horizon line. Allow your painting to dry.
4. Once the paint has dried, tear small strips of tissue and glue them above the horizon line onto the sky – over the colour you painted previously.
5. Use a cottonwool bud to add some lines into the sky with your homemade paint.
6. Using coloured pencils in the same tones of colours used in the sky, make a small foreground – an area of colour that touches the bottom of your composition.
7. Make a stamp by putting cottonwool inside some orange sacking and close with an elastic band.
8. Dip your stamp into your home-made paint and blot on your paper towel before testing soft marks on some practice paper.
9. Once you are happy with your testers, stamp some soft sky reflections on your snowy foreground.
10. Dip the end of your skewer into your home-made paint and add small groups of dot marks in clusters to add interesting texture and balance to your foreground.
11. Dip the edge of a small piece of card into ink and then into water and practice printing trees in different sizes and darkness (values). Begin with a vertical line for the trunk and add smaller lines for the branches growing out and upwards from the trunk line.
12. Once you are happy with your practice, print some pale black ink trees in the background along the horizon line. Make these small.
13. Now, print some larger, darker trees in the foreground or middle ground of your landscape. The biggest trees should be positioned closest to the bottom of the page.
14. Dip your nail brush into the white paint and practice scraping your finger along it to make the paint spatter.
15. When you are ready, carefully spatter snow onto your wintery landscape with the white paint.

Extension: Ukiyo-e prints and Japanese characters

16. Practise the kanji characters for tree 木, sky 天 and small forest 林
17. Choose a combination of the characters for your vertical kanji poem
18. Cut a small rectangular piece of paper just big enough to write your poem
19. Write the characters vertically on the piece of paper in black pen
20. Glue this small poem down in a position you think it will create balance in your work.

PRESENT AND REFLECT

Ask students to share their works with one another:

- How is your frozen landscape like a Japanese *ukiyo-e* print?
- Which details have you included?
- Which details have you just suggested?
- How are each of your frozen landscapes different to your classmates' images?

Do, listen, learn:

- Let's grow up from the ground like a tree.
- Let's listen to Vivaldi's *Four seasons, winter section*.
- Let's read or tell stories that are set in forests. Are these forests, dark, scary, quiet, eerie? Are the characters in this story safe in the forest?
- How does the tilt and rotation of the earth impact the seasons?

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