

An Acrylic Painting Depicting an Environmental Issue LOW LEVEL 3



BAD HABIT

My painting shows the destruction of forest fires carelessly created by humans who throw away their lit cigarettes. I was inspired by the expressive quality of Emily Carr's forest paintings.

I have exaggerated the size of my cigarette butt making it my focal point. Diagonal lines are used to show the leaning of trees as if they were trying to escape the deadly fire.

Contrasts in warm and cool colours are used to show the destruction. The background such as the sky, the grass and the trees are made of cool colours while the flames, with the exception of the cigarette, is only element that contains warm colours. Also, darker values are used in everything that the flames consumed, like the burnt tree trunks, whereas the untouched portion of the forest is painted in brighter values of the same colours. The short strokes of the pine needles and the thick smoke create contrast through texture. I used colour blocking in the sky and I blended the paint in the smoke and trees. I painted solid colour to create the blue sky and I used different greens to show value.

Teacher's Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student demonstrates considerable understanding of the elements and principles of design in the painting. He or she shows a good understanding of colour by using a broad palette and effectively contrasting warm and cool colours. The exaggerated size of the focal point (i.e., the cigarette) shows considerable understanding of how to manipulate proportion for the purpose of emphasis. However, he or she shows an insufficient grasp of composition (e.g., the focal point is too low and the tightly painted subject matter creates a feeling of constraint).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student depicts an environmental issue in the painting with considerable effectiveness. He or she delivers the message that forests are being destroyed by careless smoking in a powerful way through the stark image of trees in flames instead of opting for a more subtle approach that might have increased the visual appeal of the painting but diminished the force of the message.

Communication

- The student discusses artistic influences with some clarity. He or she mentions an artist (i.e., Emily Carr), but does not sufficiently explain how the work of this artist is reflected in his or her painting.
- The student explains his or her use of painting techniques with some clarity. References are made to a variety of techniques (e.g., texture and colour blocking), but no explanations are given about how they are used (e.g., “I painted solid colour to create the blue sky . . .”).

Application

- The student uses elements and principles of design and acrylic painting techniques to produce an art work of considerable effectiveness. He or she ably uses implied texture (e.g., in the trees) and value blending (e.g., in the smoke). The student shows a good understanding of depth (e.g., in the

placement of the trees) and the principle of emphasis (e.g., in the oversized cigarette). However, the student's weak grasp of the painting process (e.g., evident in his or her not having chosen the most effective direction for the canvas and the best placement of the shapes on the picture plane) lessens the painting's effectiveness.

Comments

This work is representative of a low level-3 performance. The student demonstrates a considerable degree of achievement of the expectations in the Knowledge/Understanding, Thinking/Inquiry, and Application categories of knowledge and skills. However, in the Communication category, the student demonstrates only some degree of achievement – i.e., achievement that is more characteristic of level 2.

Next Steps

In order to improve his or her performance, the student needs to:

- provide more detail in discussing artistic influences and painting techniques;
- build more knowledge of the painting process by increasing his or her understanding of the elements and principles of design.