

An Acrylic Painting Depicting an Environmental Issue HIGH LEVEL 3



Deforest Through The Trees

In my painting I was influenced by two modern artists. René Magritte was an important Surrealist artist that often used 'sky images' in his works. Like my painting, these sky images are placed in a surprising and unexpected way.

The other artist I chose was M.C. Escher, another modern artist who plays with reality to confuse the viewer and like Escher, I have played around with the positive and negative space to create an optical illusion. In my painting, which is called Deforest Through The Trees, I am attempting to show the issue of clear cutting of our natural resources (trees) and it's negative effect on our environment. I have shown a good variety of vertical lines (trees). The repetition of line also creates visual movement. I have shown a good balance of positive and negative space and I have shown depth with my use of value and the placement and size of the trees. My painting is asymmetrical.

I have dabbed the paint onto the canvas in a pointillistic fashion to create different values of colours. I loaded my brush with plenty of colour to create a thick application of the paint in the foreground and the leaves. The trees were colour blocked and then I dry brushed some highlights onto them. I made a wash of lighter paint to show where the clouds overlap the trees.

I have attempted to add a sense of mystery by offsetting the focal point (tree stump) which is symbolic of the issue of deforestation.

Teacher's Notes**Knowledge/Understanding**

- The student demonstrates considerable understanding of the elements and principles of design in the painting. He or she creates a dynamic and playful composition in which positive and negative space are juxtaposed to give the illusion of depth. The student demonstrates a considerable understanding of line quality (e.g., in variety of tree shapes) and a good grasp of balance and placement of subject matter on the picture plane. A clear attempt at developing a focal point is evident (e.g., in the size and placement of the tree stump in the foreground). However, value and texture in the trees, foreground, and blue colour blocks are underdeveloped.

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student depicts an environmental issue in the painting with considerable effectiveness. He or she presents the issue of deforestation through a deft visual narrative (i.e., with the sky visible through the trees and the stump in the foreground, the trees appear to be doomed). However, the painting could have more than one meaning.

Communication

- The student discusses artistic influences with a high degree of clarity. He or she concisely ties aspects of his or her painting to features in the works of specific artists (e.g., Magritte's non-traditional placement of "sky fragments" and Escher's optical illusions).
- The student explains his or her use of painting techniques with a high degree of clarity. Information about a number of techniques, including explanations of why they are used, is provided (e.g., the student says pointillism is used "to create different values of colours").

Application

- The student uses elements and principles of design and acrylic painting techniques to produce an art work of considerable effectiveness. His or her

use of pointillism (e.g., in the mixing of dabs of paint to show value) shows competence, and the attempt to create spatial tension is successful. However, the rendering and positioning of the cloud shapes and the interplay between positive and negative space need to be developed.

Comments

This work is representative of a high 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 a high degree of achievement – i.e., achievement that is more characteristic of level 4.

Next Steps

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

- study more landscape paintings, paying particular attention to forest shadows, the textures of trees, and the effects of light;
- closely examine works of art that play with perspective to increase his or her knowledge of how the effects in such works are achieved.