

An Acrylic Painting Depicting an Environmental Issue LOW LEVEL 4



AGAINST THE BLOOD

I chose to do a painting of the wolf's head, pelt and skull to represent the devastating consequences of thoughtless and selfish acts. I am worried because in my Northern community these amazing animals have become endangered. This painting will give people an idea of why these animals are being hunted and killed. They lose their lives because humans value their fur. Sometimes they die merely because they become the target for someone who calls their action "sport". Animal ecosystems are also being destroyed, forcing wildlife to search for other sources of food in order to survive.

Robert Bateman inspired me with his realistic wildlife paintings. Like him, I also have had a great passion for painting animals. My painting demonstrates the use of texture, value and colour. Texture is represented in the hairy quality of the pelt. A variety of values are used through drybrush and blending techniques to add interest in the fur and skull with beige, black and white. I have organized the shapes in a circular direction to lead the viewer's eyes across the black areas. The main point of my painting is represented in the red background that symbolizes blood and death. I hope people learn how serious this problem is when they look at my painting.

Teacher's Notes

Knowledge/Understanding

- The student demonstrates considerable understanding of the elements and principles of design in the painting. He or she uses texture and value well to depict animal fur and a wolf's skull. The student makes a powerful visual statement with the limited range of colours he or she uses in the subject matter versus the stark, dramatic red of the background and organizes the subject matter in an interesting way (e.g., through overlapping and cropping). However, the inability to balance the positive and negative space in the painting effectively detracts from its overall success.

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student depicts an environmental issue in the painting with a high degree of effectiveness. The message, that the wolf is endangered, is clear from the three ways the animal is represented (i.e., alive, as fur, and as a skull) and from the blood-red background chosen for this subject matter.

Communication

- The student discusses artistic influences with a high degree of clarity. He or she plainly says why and in what way the work of one artist is an influence (e.g., the student says that he or she, like Robert Bateman, has “a great passion for painting animals” and that the “realistic wildlife paintings” of this artist are inspiring).
- The student explains his or her use of painting techniques with a high degree of clarity, providing detailed, lucid explanations about several of those used in the painting (e.g., “A variety of values are used through drybrush and blending techniques to add interest in the fur and skull with beige, black and white.”).

Application

- The student uses elements and principles of design and acrylic painting techniques to produce a highly effective art work. His or her ability to model

animal forms realistically, contrast textures (e.g., fur versus bone) skilfully, and use colour in a bold and meaningful manner all contribute to the success of the painting.

Comments

This work is representative of a low level-4 performance. The student demonstrates a high degree of achievement of the expectations in the Thinking/Inquiry, Communication, and Application categories of knowledge and skills. However, in the Knowledge/Understanding category, the student demonstrates a considerable degree of achievement – i.e., achievement that is more characteristic of level 3.

Next Steps

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

- develop a better understanding of positive and negative space so that he or she can arrange subject matter on the picture plane more effectively.