Creating Depth with Bonnie Kelso   Grades 1 – 3

Understanding the roles of background, middle ground, and foreground when creating depth in 2D and 3D visual imagery.

"Creating Depth" is a two-part lesson. In the first part I will explain each term as I show examples of images that use background, middle ground, and foreground to create depth. Together we will create a simple drawing with hills and trees to solidify understanding of each plane. Next I will discuss the use of grayscales and color temperatures to increase depth. Participants will be encouraged to try these methods. In the second part we will create simple shadow boxes out of found objects. Each plane will be illustrated with drawings or magazine clippings and glued into position to create a composition with visual depth. I will encourage them to look for more situations in their everyday life that could be illustrated using these techniques.

Materials: Color construction paper or found paper, white copy paper, scissors, scotch tape, pencil, crayons or colored pencils, white school glue or glue stick, magazine (optional), small found cardboard box

The Lesson:
1.   Self-introduction, project overview, and materials.
2.   **Part 1: 2D Background, middle ground, and foreground.** Explain each term. Show examples of foreground, middle ground, and background in works of art.
3.   Have participants look at their surroundings and identify what is in the foreground, middle ground and background.
4.   With pencil and blank paper, draw a foreground line near bottom of paper. Add a large tree to the far right.
5.   Draw a middle ground line starting about two inches above the first line. Add a medium sized tree on the left side of the page.
6.   Draw the background line starting about one inch above the middle ground line. Add a small l sized tree in the center.
7.   Explore the use of grayscales to increase depth.
8.   Explore the use of warm and cool colors to increase depth.
9.   **Part 2: 3D Background, middle ground, and foreground.**
10.   Prepare found box by cutting out a window. Remind participants to ask an adult for help if needed.
11.   Participants will select three images from a magazine or draw three images of their own. Remind them to think about what kind of story these images tell.
12.   Participants will trace the box over their background image to size it. Next they will cut out the image. Then they will cut silhouettes out of their middle ground and foreground images. Ask them to position images on top of one another to check if the sizing is appropriate for showing depth. Have them make adjustments as necessary.
13.   Participants will glue the background image to the inside back of the box.
14.   Next they will create a tab and glue the middle ground image.
15.   They will create a tab and glue the foreground image to the front of the box. If the paper is floppy, they can glue it to cardboard left over from cutting the window.
16.   Encourage participants to observe scenes from their everyday life, identifying what is background, middle ground, and foreground. Challenge them to illustrate these scenes in 2D or 3D.

Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts
• Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.

• Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external content.

VA:Cr2.1.1 Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.
VA:Cr2.2.3 Repurpose objects to make something new.
VA:Cr3.1.1 Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.
VA:Re8.1.1 Interpret art by categorizing subject matter and identifying the characteristics of media and
            composition.
VA:Cr1.3.1 Elaborate on an imaginative idea.

Connection to Literacy: "Creating Depth" connects to literacy through the exploration of several vocabulary words including foreground, middle ground, background, horizon line, depth, perspective, grayscales, warm colors, and cool colors. Participants will also be encouraged to create a story around their shadow box project. Throughout the lesson, I will be giving them step-by-step instructions, so listening to and following directions will be emphasized as well. I will also include slides that can be read that list materials required and simplified step-by-step instructions.

Resources
"Making Shadow Boxes and Shrines," by Kathy Cano-Murillo

Prompt for further exploration:
Choose a favorite memory to illustrate using foreground, middle ground, and background. Think about where you were, what was happening, and who you were with. Try to add as many details as you can. If you have one, add a photo of yourself smiling into the composition. Keep this drawing or shadow box somewhere you will see it often.

About the Artist
Bonnie Kelso
Bonnie Kelso writes and illustrates books for children and adults that encourage individualism and brave creative self-expression. She facilitates creative workshops online and in-person. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Bonnie has a background in exhibit design and has worked on projects for NASA, National Geographic, and the Smithsonian Institution. She traveled all the way around the world… twice! Bonnie still enjoys indulging her wandering nature whenever she gets the chance. Currently, she lives in Las Vegas with her partner and two sons with whom she enjoys many real and imaginary adventures.

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Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster

T*he Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster* is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/