STEAM LESSON PLAN

Created by Joslyn Education Staff
Grade Level Middle school (adaptable for lower and higher grades)

THEME Controversy
INSPIRED BY Edgar Degas, Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old

PROJECT TITLE: BUSY AS BEES

DRIVING QUESTION
How would the depletion of bees affect artists?

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Put these on the board or have students write them in a notebook/journal.

• I will create art inspired by Edgar Degas and dancers.
• I will learn about controversies surrounding “Little Dancer” and respond with thoughts.
• I will learn about infographics and present my research in one.
• I will connect with the past as we discuss Paris in Degas’ time.

CONTENT STANDARDS
NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
IOWA CORE STANDARDS

THE FOUR C’S FOR STEAM CAREER READINESS SKILLS

• Critical Thinking: students will need to consider the idea of controversy and think about how it is woven into Little Dancer.

• Creativity: students will demonstrate their creativity from creating their artworks (including problem-solving) to presenting their honey bee research in an infographic.

• Collaboration: students will work together to learn how sculptors work with foundries to create their bronzes.

• Communication: students will share their research in a visually appealing manner by displaying their artworks and infographics created in this lesson. (Optional idea: work with a community organization like the Omaha Bee Club).

VOCABULARY: armature, beeswax, controversy, dancer, foundry, gesture drawings, honey bee, medium, plaster cast, sculpture

Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917), Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old (La Petite Danseuse de quatorze ans), 1881, cast ca. 1920–21, plaster, 39 x 19 ½ x 20 in., Gift of M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York, 1971.271.a-b
RESOURCES: Degas Teaching Poster; Degas Pinterest board; writing prompts (below); Nelson Teacher Resource Center

- Video – “How to Make Wire Armatures for Sculpture by Janice Tanton”
- Website – The Story of Sculpture: From Clay to Bronze,” Sculptureworks.
- Website – “Sawdust Clay Recipe,” PAH.
- Website – “Bees Making Wax,” Beeswax Co., LLC.
- Website – “Nebraska State Symbols”, Nebraska Access (Honey Bee is State Insect)
- Lesson – “Infographics” for Language Arts, Grades 6-8, Creative Educator
- Local – Omaha Bee Club.
- 3D View – “Little Dancer of Fourteen Years,” by Myo Studio; (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

SUGGESTED MATERIALS: newsprint, toned drawing paper, pastels, charcoals, pencils, pastels, images of Degas’ artworks, period music, beeswax or examples of products that use beeswax

PROCEDURE

- Engage: Introduce students to Edgar Degas’ Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old, and ask them "what does the honey bee have to do with this artwork?" After some brainstorming, show them the video “Little Dancer Aged Fourteen,” and share with them all of the different materials the artist used to create his sculpture, emphasizing pigmented beeswax.

- Deliverables: Tell students they will...
  1) practice creating gesture drawings.
  2) create a sculpture using similar techniques as Degas.
  3) develop an infographic to explain how beeswax is created or how it gets from bee to artist.

- Art Talk: Set the scene. Share Degas’ story with students and give it context by also talking about what it was like to live in Paris during the high points of his career, mid-late-19th century. Describe how the Paris Salon worked and how radical the artworks on display at that Impressionist exhibitions were considered. But, then Degas exhibited his sculpture, “The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer.”

Ask students...
  1) what do you think of this sculpture?
  2) how do you think the public received it? (focus on the subject of the sculpture)
     ➢ then show them typical Academic artworks including paintings in Joslyn’s collection by Jean-Léon Gérôme, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, and Georges Rochegrosse.
     ➢ tell them about how ballet dancers were viewed, especially young and inexperienced ones.
  3) now considering those two aspects in late 19th century Paris, how do you think the public received Degas’ “The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer?”
4) To keep in mind this idea of controversy, and how it surrounds this famous sculpture from the subject to the medium. How many different controversies will we discover in this lesson? Encourage students to keep a journal to record their thoughts and sort through their findings.

• **Description of Activity:** Get to know the sculpture.
  1) Degas frequently sketched ballet dancers in class, rehearsals, and performances. Have students practice gesture drawings using pencil, charcoal, or pastels. To set the mood, students should research the music to play while drawing. Students may take turns posing, use images of dancers, or copy Degas’ drawings. Remind students that it’s not about capturing an identical likeness, rather the motion or feeling of the dancer. Refer to Draw Like Degas (below) for more details.

  2) As you prepare to shift to three dimensions, show students the 3D view of “Little Dancer of Fourteen Years” scanned from the sculpture in Boston MFA’s collection. Students may view this sculpture from every angle and if your school has a 3D printer, download the file to print.

  3) When Degas created Little Dancer, he started with a framework. You can compare it to a skeleton. Share the x-ray scan and schematic diagram of the armature of the original wax figure.

  4) Provide students with armature wire to create their own framework. As you walk through creating the structure, compare it to parts of our skeleton. As students create their figure, have them refer to their sketches or images of dancers for ideas for poses. Have them physically recreate the pose to work through problems or understand the pose. Take the opportunity to discuss scale and proportion.

  5) You can have students use self-hardening clay or sawdust clay and wire mesh to build out the figure. Refer to the schematic diagram of the armature again, and provide students with additional materials (pine cones, rope, yarn, and more). The exterior of Degas’ original sculpture is beeswax, however it may not be the most cost effective option, so you may want students to finish the clay exterior.

  6) While the sculptures dry, have students research how a plaster cast (Joslyn’s Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old) is created from a wax original. Then discover how a bronze cast is made from that plaster version. Have students work in small groups to research foundries and how the process has changed or not changed from when Degas’ Little Dancer was cast 100 years ago.

  7) Beeswax. Why do you think Degas used that medium? Have students study how the honey bee produces the beeswax that artists use today. Students may choose to depict their understanding of the process of creating the beeswax or process from bee to artist, and they should create an infographic to share with the school.

  8) Study the controversy surrounding the depletion of bees. Consider working with the Omaha Bee Club to learn more about local beekeeping issues and promote positive bee advocacy in the community.

• **Closing:** Have students curate an exhibition to share their drawings, sculptures, and infographics.

• **Assessment:** Create a rubric appropriate for your grade level.
STEAM LESSON PLAN  Joslyn Art Museum uses the Nebraska Department of Education’s STEM Approach as a guide, but we took the liberty of adding the “A” to emphasize the ARTS.

NDE’s STEM Approach reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary philosophy to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaborative school-based, work-based, family-based, and community-based experiences as a context for helping students to master key competencies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Teaching and learning resources, experiences, and example activities included within NDE’s STEM Approach serve as a standards-based framework for supporting the engagement of students in hands-on, authentic, and contextual learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to learn STEM content while promoting essential career readiness skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

NDE’s STEM Approach strives for compatibility with all content-areas, all grade levels, and all career clusters, not just those traditionally defined as STEM.
DRAW LIKE DEGAS: THE ART MOVEMENT

Inspired by Edgar Degas, Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old

Created by Megan McLeay, Artist/Adjunct Faculty at Midland, Bellevue, and Creighton University. Mentor for Kent Bellows Mentoring Program at Joslyn, mcleaym@gmail.com

Grade Level Middle-High School

OVERVIEW

This will be a study in the movement of the human figure inspired by the drawings of Edgar Degas. Students will focus on the gestures and contours of live dancers, capturing the complexities of human strength and beauty. They will use soft pastels on toned paper emblematic of Degas and learn to use line and color as an expressive form of communicating volume, light, and motion.

ANTICIPATORY SET

The beauty of a ballerina is perhaps best captured by the artist Degas a master draftsman who brought to life the grace of drawing and the charm of color. Degas did not create portraits, but studies that addressed the movement of the human body, exploring the physicality and discipline of dancers through the use of contorted postures and unexpected vantage points. Like Degas we will capture the immediacy of the moment from live dancers using soft pastels.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

• Students will learn how to draw in gesture.
• Students will learn to capture movement.
• Students will demonstrate an understanding of form and volume.
• Students will investigate the complexities of the human figure from live models.

VOCABULARY:

• Contour: The outline of a figure or body; edge or line that defines or bounds a shape or object.
• Form: a three dimensional geometrical figure as opposed to a shape. The whole of a piece’s visible elements and the way those elements are united.
• Gesture: A quick drawing which represents the essence of an object’s or figure's position.
• Line Quality: List of attributes that define a line
• Proportion: relative size of parts of a whole
• Pastel: drawing medium composed of pure powdered pigment and a binder.
• Sketch: Quick informal drawing done from life, capturing the overall form, perspective, sense of volume, movement, and feeling. Sometimes suggests light and shade.
• Vantage Point: A position or standpoint from which something is viewed or considered. Point of view.
• Volume: size, bulk, and dimension of a particular object in relation to the space in which it occupies.

RESOURCES: Degas Teaching Poster; Videos – “Drawing Degas Dancer in Pastels,” Judiee and “Teacher demonstration: pastel Degas drawing,” Dk Mercer, Human Figure Proportions
LESSON OUTLINE
1) The beauty of a ballerina Students will be given the following:
   • two sheets of 18x24 toned sketch paper (newsprint)
   • One sheet of 18x24 toned Strathmore drawing paper (gray or tan)
   • Colored Pastels (red, blue, yellow, green, purple, blue, light, dark, and hot pink)
   • Colored Pastel Pencils
   • Eraser

2) Give students a small lecture and demonstration on the following subjects:
   • Materials: paper, pastels, drawing horse
   • Application: Mark making with pastels, value and line quality.
   • Composition: Picture plane and filling the frame
   • Technical Aspects: Proportions, vantage points, Building Form
   • Gestalt: Drawing gesture and full figure Sketches

3) Give students a handout of the proportions of the human figure and an example of a Degas drawing of a ballerina.

4) A set of five gesture drawings will be done in progression of the dancers on the sheets of sketch paper.

5) Full figure developed sketches will be completed of the live dancers on good drawing paper

EXTENSIONS
The skills acquired in drawing can transcend into everyday life skill. Drawing teachings you to observe with acute consciousness, increase your spatial awareness, improve fine motor skills, and foster creative thinking. Drawing is a wonderful activity that explores your inner thoughts of the world around you!

CONTENT STANDARDS
NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS
IOWA CORE STANDARDS
WRITING PROMPTS

Inspired by Edgar Degas, Little Dancer, Fourteen Years Old
Georges Rochegrosse, Salome Dancing Before King Herod

Created by Debra Wehrmann DeFrain, Director of Fine Arts Education, Nebraska Department of Education

Grade Level: All Levels

RESOURCES: Degas Teaching Poster, Rochegrosse Object Description

FAS K-2 FA 2.2.4.d Identify how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Degas: Tutus are worn for special occasions, usually for dances. Decorate a face that shows how YOU think the “Little Dancer” was feeling.

Rochegrosse: Respecting the wide variance in cultural views regarding gender and dress, teachers may choose to not share this artwork with K-2 students as a class.

FAS 3-5 FA 5.2.4.d Explore how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Degas: Choose a few words to describe the story your tutu would tell if you were Degas.

Rochegrosse: Respecting the wide variance in cultural views regarding gender and dress, teachers may choose to not share this artwork with 3-5 students as a class.

FAS 6-8 FA 8.2.4.d Explain how images and objects are used to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Degas: How does the length, color, or shape of the tutu make a difference in conveying the meaning of this art?

Rochegrosse: Respecting the wide variance in cultural views regarding gender and dress, teachers may choose to not share this artwork with 6-8 students as a class.

FAS 9-12 FA 12.2.4.d Connect images, objects, and a personal work of art to convey a story, familiar experience, or connection to the world.

Degas: If you were to design a “Little Dancer” tutu, describe how your design would differ from the Degas.

Rochegrosse: If you were to design a belt for Salome, describe how your design would differ from the Rochegrosse.