Week 13
Winslow Homer
Water Color Snowman

Breezing Up, Winslow Homer, 1876

Objective

Our project this week will be of an everyday figure of winter, the snowman. Students will learn how to use a solid medium underneath water color to resist the paint. This will create a sharp-edged figure, even when using the difficult medium of watercolor which bleeds easily.

The skill of light pencil drawing will be used to provide a guide for the shape of the central figure. The lesson will also include a review of the horizon line and the rule of thirds.

The project will further help students to learn how to blend and bleed different color paints into what appears to be a single color.

Discussion of line will be expanded to explain how motion can be shown by the choice of lines

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Supplies

- **White paper -** 1 sheet per student
- **Water color paper -** 1 per student
- **White crayons -** 1 per student
- **Watercolor paints** in winter snow colors (pink, pale blue, lavender)
- **Pencils -** one per student
- **Brushes -** one per student
- **Water cups -** one per two students
- **Orange, black and green crayons**

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Teacher Prep

- Set out plain white paper, reserving water color paper.
- Set out pencils, crayons, water cups, and paints, reserving paint brushes.

Background Information

Winslow Homer began using water color in 1873. Watercolors are an especially difficult medium to work with, and Homer gained fame and financial gain from his success.

In review, the rule of thirds tells us that good composition can be achieved by placing the horizon line either one third of the way from the top or one third of the way from the bottom of a picture. Homer used this rule in most of his paintings!

Watercolor often includes the mixing of color on the canvas, as repeated layers blend and interact with one another. Creating a winter look requires more than just white. A careful eye will notice that white is usually a blend of subtle colors giving the overall appearance of white. Mostly, your brain knows snow is white, so it assigns the label white to it without really processing the actual colors. Good colors to try when mixing for white are pale, cool colors like pink, lavender, and light blue.

Crayons, being wax based will repel any watercolor placed over the top of them. When crayon is intentionally used to resist water-color paint, it is called a water-color resist, or crayon resist. It is important to lay down a solid coat of wax to achieve a full resist.

Watercolor Snowmen

Element of Art

Line - motion

Terms to Know

Shape

Circle

Blend

Horizon line

Perspective

Resist

Skills to Learn

Light pencil drawing

Shape drawing

Solid coloring

Watercolor blending

How-to-draw a snowman

Depicting motion

Art Appreciation

- Our new artist is Winslow Homer. Show picture of *Breezing Up* to students.
- "What type of lines do you see in this painting?" (guide students until they notice that the boat and sail have strong diagonal lines. The ocean waves even have diagonal elements.)
- "Does it look like the boat is still and peaceful, or moving?" (moving, tipping, scary)
- Show the picture of *The Boat Builders*.
- "What type of lines do you see in this picture?" (vertical and horizontal, some curves in the people and rocks)
- "Is this picture stormy or peaceful?" (peaceful)
- Winslow Homer knew that the type of lines he chose would influence how the picture made us feel.

Instructions

- We will use lines formed into the shape of a circle to draw a simple snowman, then see how slanting those lines can simulate movement.
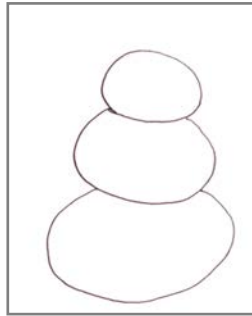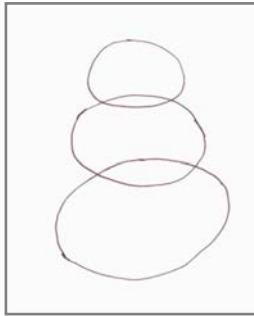
- Demonstrate motionless snowman on white board by drawing three progressively smaller ovals, starting at the bottom, overlapping slightly.
- Next erase the overlapping parts.
- Have students try this on their paper.
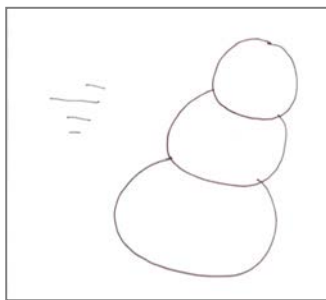
- Now draw another example with the ovals offset, making a slanted snowman.
- Does he look like he is moving?
- Add lines behind him to increase his "speed."
- Have students try this on the back of their paper.
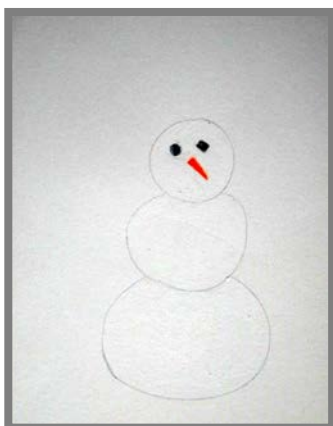
- Now for the final artwork.
- Have students draw the snowman very lightly on water color paper. Erase extra lines.
- Add his nose and eyes.
- Color snowman in solidly with a white crayon. This will repel the water based paint we will use later.
- Add a few sweeping lines in the snow with white crayon to create a nice effect.

- Review the idea of horizon line and the rule of thirds with the students.
- Show the students how to draw sweeping lines across the horizon line to show snow, choosing where the horizon line falls.
- Older students can draw some simple fir trees using the concept of distance that they learned. (to make trees farther away make them smaller and place them higher on the page)

- When students are finished drawing, take a moment to analyze the color seen in the art of Winslow Homer. Is the water blue? What about the sky? If you wish, show some pictures of snow to see if they can isolate the various colors. Looking for actual color in addition to perceived color is a great exercise for the growing artist.

- They can now use water colors to provide subtle color to the snow.
- Snow is very reflective, and therefore has many colors in it other than white. Pale blue, lavender and pink are good choices.
- It should be applied in the shadows, not filled in solidly.

- Mixing slightly different colors will help the sky to look different from the snow. Here is an example of adding a concentration of purple to create a cloud.
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- Add additional crayon details if time allows.
- Mount on construction paper with spray adhesive to create a frame and a great finished project!

- *Challenge older students to be creative and create a picture with more interest. For example, an army of snowman marching over the hill or a snowman doing a specific activity. Remember to use what you know about line and movement as well as distance and perspective.*