



Image Credit: Marcel Mouly, La Chaise Verte (The Green Chair), 1991, Lithograph in color with embossing on Arches paper, 1998.3.32

## Observational Still Life

### OVERVIEW

This lesson will focus on a student's favorite space at home or school that they can draw from observation then share a narrative of why this space is important to them.

### STANDARDS

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can you accurately illustrate and explain a space found at home or school as a work of art?

#### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students Will:

- Learn how to observe their surroundings
- Convey a foreground, middle ground, and background in their artwork
- Express their thoughts about their chosen subject matter

#### STANDARDS: KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

##### | ART AND ELA

Kindergarten | VISUAL ARTS 3, 14 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 33, 37b

1st Grade | VISUAL ARTS 3, 5 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 34, 37

2nd Grade | VISUAL ARTS 2, 14 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 40, 45

3rd Grade | VISUAL ARTS 5, 14 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 33, 42

4th Grade | VISUAL ARTS 4, 5 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

(ELA) R5, 35

5th Grade | VISUAL ARTS 3, 5 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) R5, 34

6th Grade | VISUAL ARTS 6, 14 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 7a, 19

7th Grade | VISUAL ARTS 3 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 7a, 21

8th Grade | VISUAL ARTS 5, 10 | ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) 8a, 20

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### ART DISCUSSION

#### DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What space is important to you? Is it a space that you can curl up and read a book? Is it your dinner table where your family eats together? Is it the playground where you play with your friends?
- How do you want to express your choice for your work of art? Poem? Short story? Descriptive narrative?

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marcel Mouly's boldly colored, semi-abstract artwork appeals to private and public collectors around the world.

Whether they are still lifes, landscapes, interiors, boats, or port scenes, Mouly's works are collected with equal enthusiasm.

Having studied under the tradition of modern art masters such as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, Mouly created a unique trademark style and developed a reputation as one of the most important modern artists of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Mouly continually developed his technique, expertly incorporating his formal art education and the influences of artists such as Picasso and Matisse. One may note Mouly's use of the deep, bold colors typically used in Matisse's Fauvist works, and the recognizable Cubist influence of Picasso, but Mouly's style is uniquely and unmistakably his own.

"I like Picasso for form and drawing and Braque for rhythm, but Matisse remains my spiritual father," Mouly said. "He is the father of color."

Mouly's impact on lithography extends beyond his technical mastery. He produced lithographs that reinterpreted painterly subjects, proving that printmaking could rival the artistic achievement found in paint.

Despite the numerous, world-changing events that transpired during his lifetime, including World War II, the Cold War, the fall of the U.S.S.R., and the rise of digital technology, Mouly didn't let them seep into his subject matter. His art remained brilliantly colored, energetic, and transcendent.

"His art is pure and direct in its message," art historian and writer Joseph Jacobs writes. "It is an art about beauty and life, an art about the more familiar and comfortable world we live in and know. In this respect, Mouly is quintessentially French, his roots firmly planted in the School of Paris. Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Rouault, Vlaminck, Chagall, Vuillard, and Dufy are his patrimony, and he has carried their mantel with unflagging dedication."

## CURRICULUM CONTENT

In a poem, you can use words in a way that you can't necessarily do when you're writing a longer body of work. The words can be strung together because of the beautiful way they look next to one another, the song-like way they sound next to one another or the emotion that arises when you see them together—or just because you feel like putting them together.

### Free Verse

While many poems are highly formalized, others (called free verse) are written with few or no restrictions. Free verse poetry is great for beginners, because it can follow whatever pattern you want. It can rhyme, but it doesn't have to.

Poet and author Shel Silverstein (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *A Light in the Attic*) writes mostly free verse. Sometimes his poems rhyme, and they're usually humorous.

### Formal Poetry

Formal poems, like concrete poetry or Haiku, require a specific combination of meter, rhyme and/or form.

The meter of a poem relates to the number of syllables involved in a line, the length of those syllables and/or the number of stressed syllables.

Rhyming words, of course, sound like one another. In poetry, they can even be the same word repeated. Rhymes can be placed at the end of a line, but in some poems they are also found in the middle.

The form of a poem is the set of rules a specific type of poem must follow (for instance, the length of the line, the number of lines or the theme of the poem).

### Limerick

An example of a formal poem is a limerick. A limerick is a five-line poem. The first, second and fifth lines rhyme and have the same number of syllables. Also, the third and fourth lines rhyme and have the same number of syllables.

Limericks are usually somewhat silly, so they are fun for children—and adults—to write.

*Here's an example of a limerick:*

*I'm writing to parents and kiddies*

*Who live in both country and cities*

*Read on for more fun*

*Aimed at everyone*

*Who likes to write poems and ditties*

Not all poems have to rhyme. Children often think that rhyming is a must when it comes to poetry. Make sure they know it's not necessary for all poems to rhyme.

Be creative. Remember that the words in poems don't always have to be written out linearly, nor do they always have to follow regular grammar rules.



# Observational Still Life

## ART INSTRUCTION

### MATERIALS

paper, paint, brushes, cup of water, pencils, photo of space to draw or a clipboard to draw on site

### INSTRUCTIONS

**1** Choose a location that you enjoy to be in. This space can be found anywhere, but it is easiest to think of home or school. For example, your favorite place could be the couch where your animals sprawl out everywhere and you watch your favorite movies. The focus of this project should not be people but inanimate objects. Animals are okay to add, they are easier to draw than people, but they should not be the only focus of the work.

**2** Draw with a pencil as much detail as possible. Is there a side table with a lamp on? Are there shelves with books and a vase? Draw everything you see and fill up the whole page. It is okay if your perspective is a bit off, but keep in mind the foreground, middle ground, and background.

Your background would have details like pictures hanging on the wall. The middle ground would have furniture and carpets. The foreground would have anything that is closest to you, the viewer.

**3** Once you finish your pencil drawing, it is time to start painting. Mously focused on painting only blocks of color, simplifying all detail. For example, can you tell what that is a picture of hanging on the wall? No, me either. The artist turning what was most likely a beautiful and detailed work of art into a few lines. That said, you can still tell it is a picture hanging on the wall. Ensure that your work of art is still legible at the end of your hard work.

Watercolors would be more transparent so you can easily layer your art. You can also take a sharpie and outline your pencil lines first.

Acrylic paint makes it easier to correct a mistake. Once the paint dries, simply paint over that error and keep going!

**4** Once your painting is completed, start writing! How to you want to express why you chose this location? Poem? Narrative? Take the time to write based off what you have already learned in class.

Proudly hang your artwork with your writing below it.

## TERMS

**REALISTIC** - art work that attempts a photographic likeness of the subject matter; sometimes refers to the choice of subject that is commonplace as opposed to courtly and idealized.

**ABSTRACT** - artwork where objects have been changed or modified so they no longer look realistic. An abstract work of art does, however, use a recognizable object or thing as its reference or origin.

**OBSERVATION** -the act of careful watching and listening

**POETRY** - a type of literature, or artistic writing, that attempts to stir a reader's imagination or emotions.

**COMPOSITION** - the arrangement of the elements of art and the principles of design within a given work of art.

**FOREGROUND** -the part of a picture which appears closest to the viewer and often is at the bottom of the picture.

**MIDDLE GROUND** - Objects in the middle ground appear to be behind objects in the foreground

**BACKGROUND** -The background is the part of the painting farthest from the viewer. Objects in the background are usually smaller and less distinct than other objects in the work.

## YOUTUBE

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